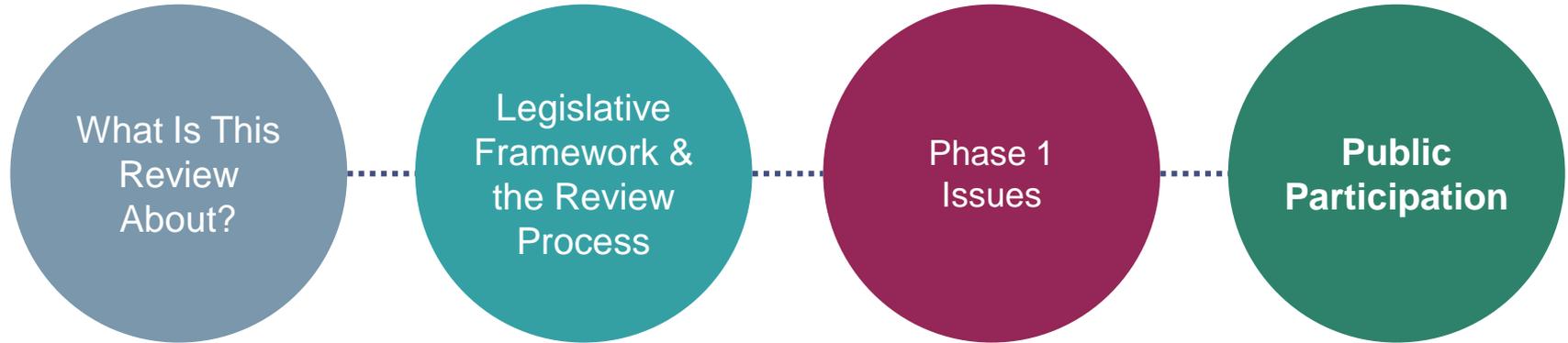




Municipality of Trent Hills Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review

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What Will Be Covered Tonight?



Introduction



- Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams, was retained by the Municipality of Trent Hills to conduct a Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review
- The Review will explore the following questions:
 - How well does the present electoral structure serve the citizens of Trent Hills?
 - Does the present electoral structure provide fair and effective representation?
 - Would an alternative system provide better representation for the citizens of Trent Hills?

Why a Council Composition Review?



The primary purpose of the study is to prepare Trent Hills Council to make decisions on:

- whether to change or retain the way the Deputy Mayor is selected;
- whether to change or retain the present composition of Council; and
- whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative arrangement.

The first phase of the Review will primarily address the two initial decisions and the second phase, the third one.

Legislative Framework



- Ontario’s Municipal Act, 2001 is silent on essential features of the municipal system of representation. The Act merely authorizes a lower-tier municipality to determine:
 - the “composition of council” (that is, the size of council)
 - how Council (other than the Mayor) will be elected (“by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards”); and
 - “to divide or re-divide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards” through a by-law of Council

Legislative Framework (cont'd)



- No stipulated schedule, standardized process or established criteria exist for electoral reviews in Ontario
 - each municipality must set its own terms of reference, parameters, guiding principles, etc.
 - a review is typically framed by well-established procedures and principles applied in numerous municipalities across Ontario (and by the Ontario Municipal Board – now the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal)

Review Process

Phase 1



1

Research &
Data Compilation

2

Interviews With
Council/Mayor &
Senior Staff

3

Public
Consultation

4

Develop
Recommendations
to Council

Review Process

Phase 2, if required



1

Population
Forecasting/Data
Modelling

2

Development of
Preliminary Ward
Boundary Options

3

Public
Consultation

4

Develop Final
Ward Boundary
Options &
Recommendations
to Council

Roles of Council



- **CONSULTANTS** work at arm's length from Council & staff
- All members of **COUNCIL** were interviewed as part of information gathering about the municipality, its communities and the present political representation arrangements in the municipality.
- **COUNCIL** has the authority to;
 - Establish the number of councillors and to determine whether they “shall be elected by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards.” (Municipal Act, 2001 s.217)
 - Pass a by-law to “establish” wards (MA, 2001 s.222) that may be appealed to L.P.A.T. (MA, 2001, s.223)

What Does a Successful Review Look Like?



- To be successful, the review should operate with a high degree of independence from political involvement and include effective engagement with residents
- An open review process requires:
 - transparency and consistency in the review process and its outcomes
 - clear and workable guiding principles to evaluate alternative electoral systems and ward designs that fit the unique requirements of a municipality

Study Objectives



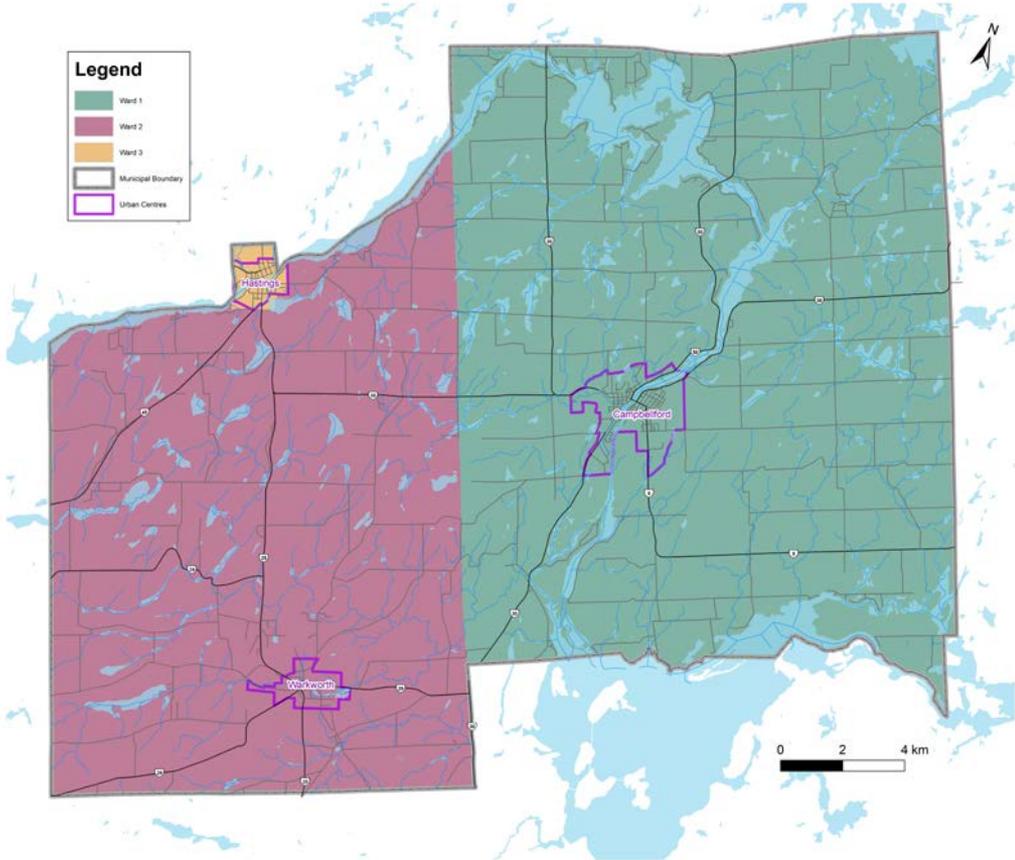
- 1** Develop a clear understanding of the present electoral system, including its origins and operations as a system of representation
- 2** Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the present electoral system through the identified guiding principles
- 3** Deliver a report that will identify (and inform the community about) plausible modifications to the present electoral structure so that Council can provide direction for Phase 2 of the Review (a Ward Boundary Review)
- 4** Conduct an appropriate consultation process to ensure community support for the review and its outcome

Context



- Trent Hills was created by Ministerial Restructuring Order (March 2000):
 - an amalgamation of the former Village of Hastings, the former Township of Percy and the former Municipality of Campbellford/Seymour (itself the result of an earlier amalgamation in 1998)
- Council comprised of a Mayor (elected at-large) and six Councillors (elected in three wards), one of whom is selected by Council to serve as Deputy Mayor
- The ward structure deliberately retained the boundaries of the three pre-amalgamation municipalities; boundaries have not been adjusted since.

Existing Ward Map



Two Considerations



The ward system in Trent Hills is not typical in Ontario since the wards each elect a different number of Councillors

It is timely to step back to consider the viability of that arrangement today (the number and design of the wards, the representation attached to each ward)

In the 2018 Municipal Election, five of the seven lower-tier municipalities in the County of Northumberland elected their Deputy Mayor by general vote. The two exceptions are Port Hope and Trent Hills.

Is the status quo defensible?
If not, what can be changed?

Phase 1 Decisions



Essentially up to four “layers” of sequential decisions for Council to make:

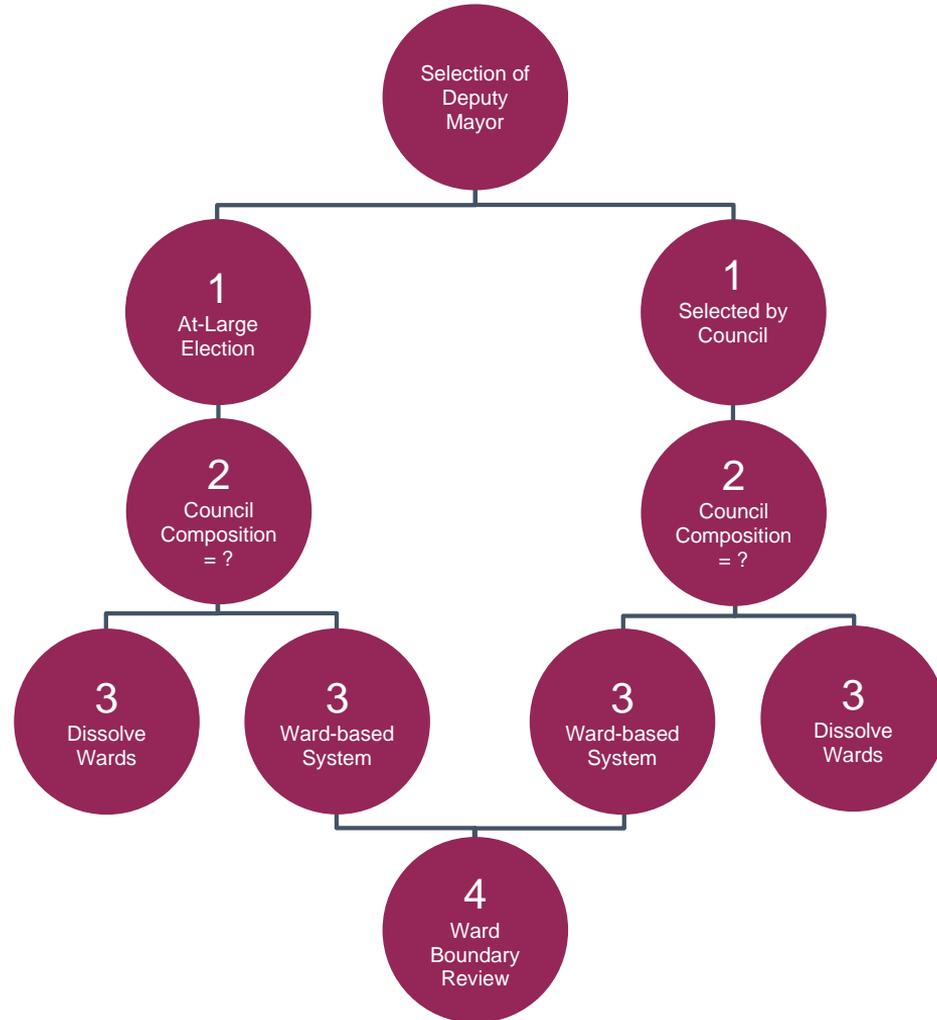
- 1 Confirm the method of selection for the position of Deputy Mayor;
- 2 Agree on the size of Council beginning in 2022 (the “composition” of Council);
- 3 Decide whether to retain a ward system or to dissolve the wards in favour of a general vote (that is, an at-large) system.
 - If wards are to be continued, confirm the number
 - If wards are to be dissolved, the Review is concluded.

Phase 2 Decisions



- 4** If wards are to be used, initiate a Ward Boundary Review (W.B.R.) to ensure that the wards constitute an equitable and effective electoral arrangement in terms of agreed-upon guiding principles
 - W.B.R. begins with an assessment of the present ward system to determine whether it provides “effective representation” to the inhabitants of the municipality
 - If not, Consultant Team will formulate alternatives so that the community and Council can make an informed choice among them.

Four “Layers” of Sequential Decisions



Role of a Deputy Mayor



- No specific reference to the office of Deputy Mayor in the Municipal Act, 2001
- Generally two models found across the Province
 - appointed by Council to perform additional local responsibilities (e.g. chairing committee meetings)
 - a second representative of the municipality on County Council
- In Trent Hills
 - acts in absence of the Mayor; however,
 - no specific duties assigned to the Deputy Mayor
 - Deputy Mayor only attends County Council in the absence of the Mayor

Selection of a Deputy Mayor



- No consistency across Ontario
- In some cases, the office is filled by election
 - any eligible elector can seek the position through the ballot and the position is a separate component of the Council structure
- In other cases, determination of the Deputy Mayor is the prerogative of Council and the only eligible candidates are those already elected as members of Council; Deputy Mayor continues to serve as a Councillor
- In Northumberland County only Port Hope and Trent Hills use the latter model

Selection of a Deputy Mayor

Legitimate contrary views about the two models



Deputy Mayor Selected by Councillors (current system)

- Many residents are not well-informed about the expectations for a Deputy Mayor; members of Council are thus better able to judge the qualities needed for the position.
- The selection of the Deputy Mayor by Council is not an “all or nothing” situation; that is, those not selected to fill the office continue to serve on Council.
- The Deputy Mayor would continue to be the point of contact for residents of one particular ward and as a ward councillor would still be expected to pay close attention to issues that are ward-specific.
- There is no apparent public pressure to make a change.

Deputy Mayor Determined in an At-Large Election

- The Deputy Mayor should have the confidence of electors across the whole Municipality, not just in one ward.
- The present arrangement only requires Councillors to make their case to one another to win the position rather than seeking public endorsement.
- The present selection process may be based on personal relationships rather than demonstrated capacity.
- An at-large election involving the entire community is clearly more democratic but also potentially costly for candidates.
- Establishing a separate elective office has implications for the overall size of Council.

Selection of a Deputy Mayor



The first decision for Council in this review:

retain the present system in which the Deputy Mayor is selected by Council from among the ward Councillors

OR

change to a system to determine the Deputy Mayor through a separate at-large (or general vote) election in which all electors of Trent Hills can participate

The Composition of Council



- The minimum size for the council of a local municipality in Ontario is five, “one of whom shall be the head of council”
- No clear principles at play, no “standards” and no formulas to apply” in determining the appropriate size of Council
- The composition of local councils in Ontario varies widely and is noticeably quirky
- Trent Hills council is composed of seven members, two above the minimum
- Within Northumberland County, there are four seven-member Councils and three five-member Councils

Council Composition Decisions



- If Council determines that the position of Deputy Mayor is to be filled in future by an at-large vote (that is, by creating a separate elective office)
 - would the Deputy Mayor be an additional member of Council (making an eight-member Council), or;
 - would the number of councillors be reduced from six to five to retain a seven-member Council?
- If the Deputy Mayor continues to be elected from within Council, the number of Councillors could still be changed.

System Attributes



The two systems offer alternative attributes:

- **No wards:** all officials elected on the same basis
 - Must campaign across and represent all parts of Trent Hills – but no designated voices for particular parts of the municipality
 - Electors get to choose from among all candidates
- **Wards:** Councillors elected in specific areas, choices and responsibility clearer for electors, should reflect population distribution and community identities across the municipality



If a Ward System Is Retained

The Ward Boundary Review (Phase 2)

Do the wards provide “effective representation” based on an evaluation through established “guiding principles”?

- representation by population;
- protection of communities of interest;
- recognition of natural or man-made barriers or dividers as boundaries;
- recognition of density;
- recognition of areas of growth/decline;
- ward boundaries that accommodate growth/shifts in population for at least 3 municipal elections.

Do the Wards Need to Be Changed?



- If the wards do not provide “effective representation” based on the “guiding principles”, possible alternatives to “re-divide” the municipality will be developed taking into account quantitative and qualitative data and subjected to the same principles
- No ward system design can uniformly meet all the “guiding principles”: some designs may be judged more desirable because they more successfully achieve certain principles
- Which principles have the highest priority in Trent Hills?
- Alternatives will be filtered through the set of “guiding principles” or criteria, case law and successful models adopted in other municipalities.

From Phase 1 to Phase 2



The Interim Report will contribute to Council taking action to:

- 1** Confirm the method of selection for the position of Deputy Mayor;
- 2** Agree on the size of Council beginning in 2022 (the “composition” of Council);
- 3** Decide whether to retain a ward system or to dissolve the wards in favour of a general vote (that is, an at-large) system.
 - If wards are to be continued, how many wards will be used and how will the Councillors be distributed among them?
 - If wards are to be dissolved, the Review is concluded.

Your Contribution to This Review

Key Issues

- Should Council continue to select the Deputy Mayor from among the Councillors or should the office be filled by an at-large vote of electors?
- Should the Deputy Mayor be an eighth member of Council or should the composition remain at seven? Should Council be smaller?
- Should Councillors in Trent Hills be elected in wards or by an at-large vote of electors?
- Should wards in Trent Hills elect different numbers of Councillors or an equal number of Councillors?



Phase 2 Contribution

- If Council determines that Councillors in Trent Hills will be elected in wards, which guiding principles should be given the greatest priority?

While public input provides valuable insight into the Review, it is not relied on exclusively.

Public input is utilized in conjunction with professional expertise and experience and guided by best practices to develop recommended options.



Project Next Steps



- Based on feedback from this public consultation and its Interim Report, next steps will include:
 - Seeking formal direction from Council on the Phase 1 issues;
 - Preparing alternative ward designs that will be brought to a public consultation on May 12 (If Council decides to continue with wards);
 - Making recommendations to Council for a change to the present ward configuration (If existing ward configuration is determined to not meet the guiding principles);
 - A by-law to enact the new boundaries would be brought to a later Council meeting for adoption (If Council approves a recommendation for a change to the present ward boundaries).

Questions?