

Ward Boundary and Governance Review

Presented To:	City Council
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Type:	Managers' Reports
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Corporate Services

Report Summary

This report provides information requested by Council regarding a ward boundary or governance review.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to operational matters.

Financial Implications

Costs of a Ward Boundary or Governance Review, if directed by Council, would be funded from the Election Reserve Fund.

Introduction

In 2022, the Finance & Administration Committee passed a motion directing staff to perform a review of total compensation for the offices of Mayor and City Councillor during the following term of Council. Resolution FA2022-02 reads as follows:

WHEREAS compensation paid to members of Council for the City of Greater Sudbury has not been reviewed since 2006;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council for the City of Greater Sudbury direct staff, with the assistance of a third party consultant, to compare total compensation for the offices of Mayor and City Councillor with other Ontario single tier municipalities with a population over 100,000 residents and that the results together with recommendations for each respective office be provided to the Finance & Administration Committee during the next term of Council, and that the costs be funded from the Human Resources Management Reserve Fund.

AND THAT the report and associated recommendations address:

- base compensation and benefits;
- remuneration associated with required Council membership for Committees of Council and related boards; and,

- other relevant data that may be of assistance in providing a useful comparison with other municipalities.

AND THAT prior to the commencement of the review in 2023 that the Clerk provide a report regarding a governance and ward boundary review that could be conducted prior to, or as part of, the remuneration review.

This report responds to last part of the motion and provides Council with information concerning governance and ward boundary reviews should it wish to direct staff to pursue one or both of those reviews as part of the compensation review.

Part I - Ward Boundary Reviews

Background

Canada's democratic institutions are based upon the principle of representative democracy. One of the basic tenets of this principal provides that the geographic areas used to elect representatives should be reasonably balanced with one another in terms of population. This model emphasizes that every citizen within those geographic areas has the right to be represented in government, and the vote of each citizen carries equal weight regardless of where the voter lives.

Effective representation requires that voters have an equitable opportunity to access their elected representative and that there is a balance between distinct groups and the broader population base.

Ward boundaries are the geographical limits of specific areas in a municipality called "wards" that are determined by council for the representation of constituents. Ward based electoral systems are structured to ensure equal representation from all areas in a community and direct contact between elected officials and the citizens whom they represent.

Ward boundary reviews seek to adjust the existing physical boundaries of the wards to reflect changing community and population demographics, while typically retaining existing governance structures.

Section 222 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, (the "Act") authorizes municipalities to divide or redivide the municipality into wards or dissolve the existing wards. In 2008, the City of Greater Sudbury adopted a Ward Boundary Review Policy (Appendix "A") containing guidance on criteria and process for the review of existing wards. The Policy has two parts. The first requires staff to provide Council with demographic information on the existing wards after every 3rd municipal election to guide Council's decision making as to whether to initiate a ward boundary review. The second part sets out the guiding principles that are to be taken into consideration during any ward boundary review process that is approved by Council.

Reports providing demographic information regarding ward boundary reviews were brought forward to Council in 2015 and 2018.

In accordance with Part A of the policy, a ward boundary review would be recommended by staff where it is found that the number of eligible electors in any one ward is, or within twelve years will be, +/- 25% of the average number of electors per ward, a recommendation will be made to Council to initiate a ward boundary review. In addition, the policy provides that staff would provide options to Council if it is found that the number of eligible electors in any one ward is, or within twelve years will be, +/- 20% of the average number of electors per ward and a significant community of interest is negatively affected.

The last ward boundary review in Greater Sudbury occurred in 2005. At that time, Council dissolved the then six ward structure which had two councillors per ward and established the current twelve ward structure with one councillor per ward.

Demographic Data

Overall Ward Population

Population data was provided by the City of Greater Sudbury's Planning Department from the 2021 Census to determine the total population of the municipality's twelve (12) wards following the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election.

Table 1 below illustrates the populations of the individual wards along with the percentage of deviation from the average ward population of 13,852.

Table 1 – 2021 Census

Ward	Population	% of deviation from avg. pop
1	13,640	-1.5%
2	13,390	-3.3%
3	13,640	-1.5%
4	14,160	2.2%
5	15,105	9.0%
6	12,765	-7.8%
7	14,140	2.1%
8	11,230	-18.9%
9	14,550	5.0%
10	15,800	14.1%
11	14,223	2.7%
12	13,577	-2.0%
Average	13,852	

Future ward population growth should also be taken into consideration bearing in mind the impact of that growth on the ability of elected officials to effectively represent their constituents. Data provided by Hemson Consulting based on 2021 Census information was used to forecast overall ward populations and deviations from the average through to the year 2046 as illustrated in table 2 below.

Table 2 – 2021 Census Hemson Forecast

Ward	2026	%	2031	%	2036	%	2041	%	2046	%
1	14,210	0.3%	14,430	0.2%	14,650	0.0%	14,890	0.2%	15,170	0.5%
2	13,660	-3.6%	13,880	-3.6%	14,110	-3.7%	14,260	-4.1%	14,470	-4.2%
3	13,920	-1.7%	14,190	-1.5%	14,450	-1.3%	14,640	-1.5%	14,880	-1.5%
4	14,490	2.3%	14,780	2.6%	15,030	2.6%	15,270	2.7%	15,540	2.9%
5	15,340	8.3%	15,540	7.9%	15,735	7.4%	15,925	7.1%	16,120	6.8%
6	13,105	-7.5%	13,380	-7.1%	13,610	-7.1%	14,150	-4.8%	14,315	-5.2%
7	14,450	2.0%	14,680	1.9%	14,920	1.9%	15,090	1.5%	15,310	1.4%
8	11,360	-19.8%	11,350	-21.2%	11,470	-21.7%	11,510	-22.6%	11,570	-23.4%
9	15,060	6.3%	15,490	7.6%	15,940	8.8%	16,260	9.4%	16,630	10.1%
10	16,030	13.2%	16,280	13.0%	16,500	12.6%	16,700	12.4%	16,920	12.1%
11	14,533	2.6%	14,823	2.9%	15,143	3.4%	15,358	3.3%	15,833	4.9%
12	13,822	-2.4%	14,007	-2.7%	14,212	-3.0%	14,307	-3.7%	14,442	-4.4%
Avg. Pop	14,165		14,403		14,648		14,863		15,100	

Potential Elector Counts 2022-2034

In addition to overall ward populations described in tables 1 and 2, the growth of the electoral population in each of the twelve wards and the number of electors that each Councillor will represent also warrants consideration. Potential elector counts (eligible voters) are generated from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation's People Portal and these counts reflect ongoing updates processed within MPAC's Names Databases from a variety of sources:

- information from MPAC's Property Assessment Database;
- information that electors themselves update through the voterlookup.ca online service;
- updates resulting from data-matching vs. data received quarterly from the National Register of Electors (Maintained by Elections Canada);
- updates resulting from MPAC's processing of Voters' List revisions submitted by the municipality.

These counts are intended to provide estimates for municipal planning purposes when ward boundaries are being reviewed or revised and as such are projected to coincide with Municipal and School Board election years.

Table 3 below illustrates potential elector counts following the election in 2022 through to the 2034 Municipal and School Board Election and the deviation from the average number of eligible electors per ward.

Table 3 – MPAC Elector Counts

Ward	2022 Elector Count	Variation	2026 Potential Elector Count	Variation	2030 Potential Elector Count	Variation	2034 Potential Elector Count	Variation
1	11,949	-1.42%	11,784	-0.76%	12,099	-1.68%	12,177	-2.31%
2	12,601	3.96%	12,391	4.35%	12,572	2.17%	12,872	3.27%
3	11,217	-7.46%	10,906	-8.16%	11,449	-6.96%	11,691	-6.21%
4	11,485	-5.24%	11,228	-5.44%	11,701	-4.91%	11,884	-4.66%
5	11,404	-5.91%	11,070	-6.78%	11,665	-5.21%	11,848	-4.95%
6	12,396	2.27%	12,080	1.73%	12,678	3.03%	12,868	3.24%
7	12,194	0.61%	11,911	0.31%	12,394	0.72%	12,500	0.28%
8	9,892	-18.39%	9,703	-18.29%	10,065	-18.21%	10,187	-18.27%
9	12,674	3.74%	12,402	4.44%	12,896	4.80%	13,036	4.59%
10	14,481	19.47%	14,314	20.54%	14,593	18.59%	14,658	17.60%
11	13,161	8.58%	12,917	8.78%	13,402	8.91%	13,593	9.05%
12	11,994	-1.05%	11,788	-0.73%	12,153	-1.24%	12,260	-1.64%
Avg.	12,121		11,875		12,306		12,465	

The data above reveals that most of the City's wards still have population and elector counts that are relatively in-line with the average of all wards. Wards 8 and 10 contain the most significant variations of elector counts from the average at +/-18-20%; however these variations are still under the general requirement that representation by population be within +/-25%.

Information on ward boundaries is being provided for information. While the demographic data does not merit a staff recommendation to conduct a ward boundary review at this time, Council could nonetheless provide direction to proceed with a review.

When deciding whether to proceed with a review of the City's existing ward boundaries, consideration should also be given to whether the wards in their current form are allowing elected officials to effectively represent their constituents and whether the current model is sustainable in future years. Changes to ward boundaries could impact school board zones and areas as some typically rely upon or cross municipal ward boundaries and may also include portions of adjacent municipalities and unorganized townships.

Should Council wish to proceed with a ward boundary review, costs for the retention of a consultant with expertise to conduct the review are estimated at \$50,000 to \$75,000 and would be drawn from the Election Reserve Fund. It is estimated that the entire process would take approximately eight to ten months to complete. The process would be supported by the Clerk's Services Section.

A review would include extensive public consultation opportunities providing an opportunity for citizens to provide feedback or receive information about the implications of ward boundary changes. Following these public processes, feedback from both the public and Council would be compiled and taken into account to prepare final options for Council's consideration.

Any changes to ward boundaries would be enacted by by-law which may be appealed within 45 days of its passage. In order for any ward boundary changes to come into effect for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, a by-law to establish new wards must be passed and all associated appeals, if any, concluded before January 1, 2026. Otherwise, the ward boundary changes would not be implemented until the 2030 Municipal and School Board Election.

Part II - Governance Reviews

Background

At the time of the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, the City of Greater Sudbury will have been operating under the same Mayor and twelve councillor model for twenty-five years. The current model was designed in 1999 by Hugh J. Thomas, Special Advisor on Local Government Reform, and came into effect on January 1, 2001, at the time of amalgamation.

Through the amalgamation process, the City of Greater Sudbury was divided into six wards with each represented by two councillors and a Mayor elected at large. This structure was based on the principles of:

- reducing the inside/outside friction;
- establishing a council size sufficient to provide representation of two councillors per ward;
- preventing the problem of dominance by any one area;
- enhancing the ability of council to set priorities and long-term goals;
- creating a feeling of “ownership” amongst the politicians;
- enhancing the working relationship between the council and staff, who have a common goal;
- creating wards of relatively equal population;
- recognizing the communities of the municipality where French is predominant.

The six wards with two councillors per ward model was found to be an ineffective means of representation due to overlap of work and responsibilities between the councillors. Effective for the 2006-2010 term of Council, the City redivided the community into twelve wards with a single Councillor to represent each ward.

Principles of Governance Reviews

It is important to distinguish a governance review from a ward boundary review. While both processes can encompass changes to existing ward boundaries, a ward boundary review focuses on redividing the existing wards while maintaining the same number of wards. Consideration is given both to population numbers within the wards and the impact of the boundaries on communities of interest within them. If required a boundary review adjusts the boundaries of the wards accordingly to achieve balanced populations and effective representation throughout the municipality.

Governance reviews are more complex in nature and are undertaken as a means of evaluating the existing structure of elected municipal government to determine if the current model is the most effective governance format for the municipality or if changes are required. They typically consider the following:

- the size of the municipal council;
- representation;

- how councillors are elected (ward based, at large, hybrid model); and,
- how councillors are compensated (part-time or full-time role).

Unlike ward boundary reviews, governance review decisions and changes to council size and structure are not subject to appeal. It should be noted, however, that a governance review would typically include ward boundary changes if Council ultimately selects a structure that is different than the current one.

There is no corporate policy, best practice or threshold to trigger a review of the City of Greater Sudbury's municipal government structure. While the legislation includes provisions for the minimum size of a council (five members) and how the members of council are elected to office, the legislation is largely silent on matters concerning the appropriate size of a municipal council or the modification of council structure.

Every municipality is unique as are the governance challenges within them. There are no overarching best practices or formulas to apply when considering governance reviews. Rather, what must be considered is whether or not the current governance structure allows the council of a municipality to effectively and equally represent constituents and whether or not the current model of governance is sustainable for future iterations of council.

Prior to undertaking a governance review, the following questions should be considered:

- does the current model ensure effective representation for all citizens and balance the needs of the community at large with the many communities of interest, be they geographical, historical, linguistic, demographic, cultural, social or otherwise that continue to evolve?
- does the model allow for effective recognition of and debate about both local, neighbourhood, and city-wide issues and policies?
- is there a clear community understanding of how decisions are made and who is accountable for those decisions?
- as decision making and responsibilities become more complex, do the members of council have the time and resources required to make the best decisions?

Consideration must also be given to the number of constituents a councillor is currently representing or could potentially represent, whether the councillor will represent them in a part-time or full-time role and how the councillor will be compensated. Appendix "B" illustrates the Councillor to constituent ratio in Greater Sudbury from the time of amalgamation and includes projected populations through to the 2034 Municipal and School Board Election.

There are very few municipalities in Ontario that have full-time councillors and those that do are generally the largest of Ontario municipalities (i.e. Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton).

Given the complexity and potential impact of a governance review should Council wish to proceed with one, it would be expected that a consultant with expertise in this area be retained with support from the Clerk's Services Section and other City staff as required. Costs for a governance review are estimated to be in the range of \$100,000 to \$125,000 and would be funded from the Election Reserve Fund.

Based on the experiences of other municipalities, it can be anticipated that the entire process would take between eight and twelve months to complete. The process would involve a review the existing governance structure and presentation of potential options for changes to council size and structure. Council would then be asked to decide whether or not they wish to proceed with the recommended changes to the governance structure or maintain the current model.

Public engagement aimed at informing residents about both the review, key factors being considered and the potential implications of adopting a new model or maintaining the status quo would form the foundation of the

process. Public input and feedback from citizens about the existing governance structure, alternative models and the impact that any changes would have to the existing ward boundary structure would be gathered. All information would then be used to formulate recommendations on governance structure changes and, if required, ward boundary changes for consideration by Council.

As indicated in Part I of this report, changes made to ward boundaries as a result of any changes to the governance structure would be subject to appeal within 45 days of the passage of the by-law.

Conclusion

As stated above, this report is for information only. Council could provide direction to staff at any time should it wish to proceed with either a ward boundary review or a governance review. Absent any direction, staff will proceed with the council compensation review directed by resolution FA2022-02 as described in the introduction of this report.

Resources Cited

Ward Boundary and Governance Review Report: October 8, 2019 - <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=29993>

Ward Boundary Review Policy Report: September 15, 2015 - <https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=820&itemid=10323>

Municipal Act, 2001 - <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01m25>

Hugh J. Thomas Report - [Sudbury 2001: Report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on Local Government Reform for Sudbury](#)

Appendix “A”
City of Greater Sudbury Ward Boundary Review Policy

PART A: Frequency of Ward Demographic Reviews

A review of ward demographics will be initiated after every 3rd municipal election. The most recent Ward Boundary Review was completed in 2005 and implemented on December 1, 2006.

Staff will use demographic data as gathered in the most recent census, to conduct a detailed review of ward populations over the past ten years and giving consideration to anticipated population growth over the next twelve-year period.

Where it is found that the number of eligible electors in any one ward is, or within twelve years will be, +/- 25% of the average number of electors per ward, a recommendation will be made to Council to initiate a Ward Boundary Review.

Where it is found that the number of eligible electors in any one ward is, or within twelve years will be, +/- 20% of the average number of electors per ward and where a significant community of interest is negatively affected, options for a Ward Boundary Review will be presented to Council for consideration.

PART B: Ward Boundary Review Guiding Principles

- Representation by Population: Voters should be equally represented and wards should have reasonably equal population totals, with no more than a +/-25% difference from the average number of electors per ward.
- Community of Interest: Ward Boundaries will respect the principle of effective representation, including the development of ward boundaries that reflect communities of interest and traditional neighbourhoods.
- Recognition of distinct geographic features: Ward boundaries will be drawn impartially and with consideration to using distinct physical and geographic features as ward boundaries and to ensuring that ward boundaries are reasonably simple and identifiable.
- Accounts for future changes in ward population: Take into consideration anticipated changes in population of a period of twelve years, or three elections.
- Public Consultation: The Ward Boundary Review process will include broad and effective public consultations.

Appendix “B”

Councillor to Constituent Ratio 2001 – 2030

The numbers in the table below illustrate the number of residents represented by one ward Councillor:

* At amalgamation the City of Greater Sudbury was comprised of six wards each represented by two members of Council. The current twelve ward model was implemented following the 2006 election.

Ward	2001*	2003*	2006	2010	2014	2018	2022	2026	2030	2034
1	12,868	12,709	13,277	12,853	13,548	13,415	11,949	11,784	12,099	12,177
2	13,681	13,076	12,142	12,443	13,168	13,155	12,601	12,391	12,572	12,872
3	12,734	12,837	13,420	12,793	12,894	12,854	11,217	10,906	11,449	11,691
4	12,514	12,247	17,733	12,485	12,235	13,356	11,485	11,228	11,701	11,884
5	14,391	14,220	12,175	12,204	13,190	13,046	11,404	11,070	11,665	11,848
6	14,380	13,637	13,499	13,468	13,827	14,212	12,396	12,080	12,678	12,868
7			12,712	12,722	13,581	13,642	12,194	11,911	12,394	12,500
8			11,783	11,953	11,356	11,510	9,892	9,703	10,065	10,187
9			12,564	13,029	13,135	14,174	12,674	12,402	12,896	13,036
10			15,876	15,652	15,288	14,736	14,481	14,314	14,593	14,658
11			13,780	13,784	13,551	13,329	13,161	12,917	13,402	13,593
12			13,495	13,222	14,501	14,102	11,994	11,788	12,153	12,260