

2023 Council Composition & Ward Boundary Review Municipality of North Perth

Discussion Paper A: The North Perth Electoral System

The Municipality of North Perth has retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and Dr. Robert J. Williams, hereinafter referred to as the Consultant Team, to conduct a comprehensive and independent Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review (C.C.W.B.R.).

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare North Perth Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing council composition and ward structure or to adopt an alternative. A *Backgrounder* provides the context for the C.C.W.B.R. and sets out the parameters for the review, including five questions related to the council composition component. Each of these topics will be addressed separately in a brief discussion paper; Discussion Paper A sets out the basic features of the present electoral system in North Perth leading to the following questions that will be considered in a comprehensive Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review:

- Is it appropriate to consider changing the composition of Council as part of the review (that is, the size and the way members of Council are elected)?
- Is it appropriate to consider dissolving the wards to elect all Councillors at-large (in what the *Municipal Act, 2001* calls a “general vote” system)?
- If Councillors will continue to be elected in wards, what is the optimal number of wards and how many Councillors will be elected in each one?
- If Councillors will continue to be elected in wards, what considerations and guiding principles will be observed in the design of the wards?

This C.C.W.B.R. is premised on the legitimate democratic expectation that municipal representation in North Perth will be effective, equitable, and an accurate reflection of the contemporary¹ distribution of communities and people across the municipality.

Setting

The Municipality of North Perth came into existence on January 1, 1998 as a result of a Ministerial Restructuring Order for the County of Perth dated June 26, 1997. The new

¹ While the Review will occur in 2023, any changes adopted by Council will not take effect until the 2026 municipal election.



municipality, originally called the Town of North Perth, is an amalgamation of the former Townships of Wallace and Elma and the former Town of Listowel. The impetus for amalgamation originated at Queen's Park but, despite some local resistance, Countywide negotiations led to the creation of the new municipality that would be governed by a council structure that reflected the pre-amalgamation relationship among the three separate participants.

The Municipal Council now consists of ten members: a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, each elected at-large, and eight Councillors elected in three wards, two of which elect three Councillors each and one ward that elects two Councillors. The boundaries of the three wards basically follow the boundaries of the three pre-amalgamation municipalities and have only been adjusted slightly since North Perth was created (see map at end of document).

The Municipality has three seats on Perth County Council: the individuals occupying the offices of Mayor and Deputy Mayor are designated members of Perth County Council by being elected to those offices and a third representative is appointed by Council from among the eight ward Councillors. Each of the three representatives is entitled to cast two votes at County Council under its weighted vote formula.

Discussion Papers B to G

The Discussion Papers each address one of the topics to be considered in this review:

- Discussion Paper B – the size of council
- Discussion Paper C – the component parts of council
- Discussion Paper D – the method of election for members of council
- Discussion Paper E – ward magnitudes
- Discussion Paper F – the conditions for a ward boundary review
- Discussion Paper G – principles for designing wards



Map 1 – Existing Ward Structure

