

# Questions and answers

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## Council composition

The following questions and answers were asked and answered during the Council composition virtual town hall on August 25 via WebEx and Facebook live.

### Size of council

#### How would changing the number or configuration of the wards affect the distribution and cost of services and/or community funding?

Wards are part of the election system in Guelph. It is our understanding that the delivery of services in the City is not affected by the configuration of wards. Therefore, a change in the ward system would have no impact on the distribution and cost of services or other aspects of community funding.

#### For how long has Guelph had 12 part-time councillors?

Reaching too far back in history can be a bit murky. According to the [Canadian Encyclopedia](#) the number of councillors fluctuated between 11 and 18 from Guelph's founding in 1856 until 1930 when it was fixed at 11 councillors elected at-large

This was changed to 12 councillors elected from six two-member wards for the 1991 election. Throughout this time, all councillors have been part time.

#### What is the average number of councillors per capita in a city of comparable size for our projected 2040 population?

The table below shows the population per councillors for comparable municipalities in 2020. It is difficult to project forward to 2040 and, in fact, our review is aimed at designing wards based on population projections out to 2030, not 2040. A reasonable assumption would be that whatever changes affect Guelph over the next 20 years would have a similar impact on these comparable municipalities, so the actual numbers will change, but the relationship between them will likely stay approximately the same.

Municipality	Population	Number of councillors	Population/Councillors
Sudbury	168,813	12	14067.8
Barrie	149,302	10	14930.2
Guelph	143,169	12	11930.80
Kingston	135,204	12	11267.0
Thunder Bay	112,740	12	9395.0
Chatham-Ken	105,666	17	6215.6

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## **With the idea of growing demand how would it be if we would had 7 Councillors and and 7 wards would that relieve the growing demand of the citizens on the Councillors**

Reducing the number of councillors from 12 to seven would increase the workload on those councillors. Of course, if they became full-time the expectation would be that they could devote full-time to their council work. The alternative of reducing the number of councillors is open to Guelph City Council and will be addressed in the Phase 1 report to Council in November.

## **How has the ratio of population to representation changed over the years in Guelph?**

The table below shows the trend since the current system of 12 councillors elected from six wards has been in place:

<b>Census Year</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population per Councillor</b>
1991	12	87976	7331
2001	12	106170	8848
2011	12	121700	10142
2016	12	131705	10975

## **Wards or at Large**

**In 2006, we had a referendum to make the decision to keep the ward system. Would we have a referendum again this time? How would you ensure that any change to an at-large system would be democratic?**

A referendum (referred to as a 'question on the ballot' or 'question to electors' in the Municipal Elections Act) can be requested by City Council through a by-law. Currently, staff do not anticipate recommending a question to electors on the topic of Council Composition. Instead, staff will recommend that City Council make the decision based on the recommendation of third-party subject matter experts and the results of this community engagement.

**What does research show about the number of women and minorities elected in at-large vs. ward systems?**

At this point we are not aware of any research in Ontario that addresses this issue. There is a new database that should allow research on this question, but this database has only become available recently.

**Are there any advantages to having "councillors -at-large" added to one councillor per ward.**

This mixed system was used in most large cities in Ontario in the 19th and early 20th century. The at-large members formed what was called the Board of Control. This was abandoned in most places in the 1960s or 1970s. It caused tension around the council table because it created two classes of

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councillors. Thunder Bay has used this system as a product of the amalgamation that created the city in 1970. By most accounts it has worked well there because it has a lengthy history. Kingston instituted a mixed system like this when it was reorganized by amalgamation in 1998. It abandoned the system after one term. A form of this is used in some regional governments where regional councillors are elected at-large and serve on the councils of area municipalities.

The lesson seems to be that this system can work where it has historical roots or is a by-product of a larger system such as regional government. However, the fact that it can create two classes of councillor has caused other municipalities to steer away from it. It is not clear what role a number of councillors-at-large would play in Guelph.

### **Is a hybrid option possible with one for each ward and the rest at large?**

Yes, hybrid options (with some councillors serving wards and others serving at-large) are permitted and are being considered as part of this review.

### **Is it better to have wards of different sizes and populations to match the distinct neighbourhoods in Guelph (which are of different sizes), or keep wards equivalent populations but blend more than one unique neighbourhood?**

You point to an inevitable problem in creating wards. Wards should have relatively equal populations (one person, one vote), but they should also be built around existing communities of interest. Sometimes these two considerations can work at cross-purposes. This can be a problem in drawing ward boundaries, but usually a reasonable compromise can be worked out that involves recognizing these two (and other) considerations but bending to a certain extent.

There are very few examples of municipalities using wards of different sizes and presumably electing different numbers of councillors. One we are aware of is Chatham-Kent where this came about as a result of an amalgamation in 1998. It seems to work reasonably well there because of the historical circumstances. Niagara Falls used a similar system in the 1960s and 1970s as a product of an amalgamation, but eventually eliminated it. One crucial consideration in a system of this kind is that it would give an advantage to the residents of some wards not others; that is, some people could get to vote for two or three members of council and others only one. This would not be an equitable system.

### **Is there a breakdown of projected population growth by ward as they are currently available at this time? Seems it might be helpful in making this decision**

These projections are available and they will be used in drawing ward boundaries in Phase 2 of this project. It is a widespread practice in drawing ward boundaries that current populations as well as projections into the future are considered. In the Guelph ward boundary review we will use population projections to 2030 to design wards for the next three municipal elections (2022, 2026 and 2030). Wards need to be of reasonably equal size now, but it is undesirable to change ward boundaries too frequently so both current population and future growth are considered.

**Why have "student populations" been excluded from the "Population per Ward" Table 1 in the background document: "Guelph's Current Electoral System"? Roughly 30,000 students attend the University of Guelph. While they are resident in the City, they are eligible to vote like any other citizen. If we are going to uphold the principle of "One person, one vote" in relationship to generally equal electorate sizes in each ward, then it is critical that the student population be included. With the set date for municipal elections, we know that the civic election will always take place during the academic year.**

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The figures used for reference in Phase 1 were compiled from the 2016 Census which does not include post-secondary students who reside in Guelph only during the school year and were included purely as an illustration of the differences in ward populations in Guelph today. A key component of the ward boundary review in Phase 2 will involve the compilation of accurate data on post-secondary students that will involve consultation with all post-secondary institutions in Guelph to obtain complete figures. The Ontario Municipal Board confirmed in a case in 2013 that post-secondary students must be considered in a ward boundary review and that precedent will apply in this review.

### **How would changing the number or configuration of the wards affect the distribution and cost of services and/or community funding?**

The current wards serve primarily as electoral boundaries and do not significantly impact City services or funding.

### **One Representative or More Per Ward**

#### **I don't understand how 2 councillors per ward leads to "increased size of wards"**

Having two councillors per ward generally leads to a lower overall number of wards than if one councillor is elected per ward. A lower number of total wards means a higher population in each ward. In this case, "increased size" refers to population counts and not necessarily geographical size.

#### **Has the option of a mixed member representation been considered?**

Mixed member proportional representation typically refers to electors placing one vote for a local/ward candidate and one vote for a political party. As political parties are not permitted at the municipal level in Ontario, mixed member proportional representation cannot be considered.

### **Full-Time or Part-Time Role**

#### **Do these other cities also have part-time councillors, or are they full-time?**

We're not sure what the questioner means by 'these other cities.' Our research indicates that only three cities in Ontario pay councillors what could be considered full-time pay Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton. All three of these cities use single-member wards.

#### **Will there be any discussion on the roles, responsibilities of councillors and how much time they currently spend fulfilling their duties? I believe this needs to be disclosed before making any decision.**

A breakdown of the number of hours that councillors spend fulfilling various duties is available as [part of the 'full-time or part-time councillors?' backgrounder document](#) on Guelph.ca/council.

#### **Can you please mention current Guelph Councilor are working full time or part time Thank You.**

Guelph City Council has several councillors who have jobs (part-time and full-time) in addition to their roles as councillors.

#### **What is there to stop "full-time" councillors for taking on additional part-time work?**

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There is nothing which would prohibit part-time councillors from taking on additional part-time work. In addition, there is nothing in provincial legislation that would prevent a full-time Councillor from taking on additional work.

**Is it possible to maintain current size of council and number of wards but pay councillors a full-time salary rather than part-time basis as is presently the case?**

Yes.

**Any data/research which shows whether full-time or part-time positions support the participation of women or minorities?**

We are not aware of any research on this issue. The relatively small number of municipalities with full-time councillors in Ontario would make it difficult to do very much research which would yield statistically significant results. We understand that other aspects of female representation are being considered and may be viewed at [nosecondchances.ca](http://nosecondchances.ca)

**Can you repeat how many councillors currently work full-time?**

Guelph City Council has several councillors who have jobs (part-time and full-time) in addition to their roles as councillors.

**How many Councillors (probably "Aldermen" at that time) did we have in 1909 when the population of Guelph was 11,500? Were they full or part-time?**

Reaching too far back in history can be a bit murky. According to the Canadian Encyclopedia the number of councillors fluctuated between 11 and 18 from Guelph's founding in 1856 until 1930 when it was fixed at 11 councillors elected at-large [Canadian Encyclopedia article](#). This was changed to 12 councillors elected from six two-member wards for the 1991 election. Throughout this time, all councillors have been part-time.

## **Additional Questions**

**I saw in comments on Guelph Today that people think we should limit Council and the Mayor from being elected for more than two terms. Is the allowed?**

Discussion of term limits for City Councillors is not a part of the Council composition review. At this time, Canada has no legislated or mandated term limits at any level of elected government. The City cannot impose term restrictions because it would conflict with provincial legislation. This does not mean that the suggestion has not been made at other levels of government where changes could come forward in future legislation

**I recognize that this process is operating under time constraints and that the original plans for community engagement were derailed by the pandemic. However, would it be possible to extend this consultation period for at least another two weeks until September 18th? Public consultation is normally not conducted during the summer as people are away and generally disengaged from politics. While many people had been staying home, the stops seem to have opened on vacationing this August. The decisions that will arise out of this process are critically important. Many people may tune in after Labour Day to find that the window for input has closed**

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You are correct, the consultation period was delayed due to a full pause on all public engagement by the City during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally this engagement period was to run through an earlier part of this year and include both in-person and online components. Consideration was given to extending public engagement post-summer vacation months. The timelines of the project make it difficult to extend engagement periods in phase one (Council composition) without affecting phase two (ward boundary review) since one requires completion before moving on to the second phase. The ward boundary review also requires completion with enough time to manage any potential appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal so that results can be in place, in advance of the 2022 municipal and school board elections. While the revised online engagement plan is not what we had originally envisioned, we are offering a thorough three-week virtual engagement that includes: online survey, question boards, virtual town hall (which will be recorded and shared after the fact online and through local Rogers broadcasts) thorough communication and advertising, set virtual office hours for the project team answers questions via phone, e-mail or video calls. This engagement will provide members of the public the opportunity to safely, within the guidelines we know that public health is recommending and requiring that we follow, effectively engage with the project while maintaining the original intention of having composition and ward boundary changes in place for the 2022 municipal election. The final decision regarding Council composition will take place at a Special City Council meeting this November; ensuring delegates and City Council have a dedicated meeting at which to consider the topic. In addition to this first round of engagement, there will also be a second round of engagement related to the ward boundary review early next year.

## **For more information**

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