

# City of Guelph Council Composition Virtual Town Hall

Date, 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. WebEx

## Meeting Transcripts

### Introduction

**J Miller:** Thank you very much. Good evening everyone. My name is John Miller. I am here on behalf of Watson & Associates, a small team that you will get to know this evening. Thank you for joining us on this webinar and being able to interact with this webinar as well. It will run from 6 until 7:00. Basically, what we are here to do is we are here to talk about, and to explore the topic of the Council composition. What is it, and how can I help inform the development of the Council that we can all make use of? That is the topic of the day, council composition. All right? I cannot emphasize this enough, and I'm going to keep on repeating it all evening, is that we are looking for your ideas, your wisdom, your insights, your whys, not just your whats. Some of you maybe logged in WebEx, in which case, as we go through the evening, if you have questions or comments, you just put them straight into the chat and we will be harvesting them throughout the evening. If you are watching on Facebook.com/cityofguelph on their facebook page, there is obviously a chat function in facebook so add your questions and comments there. If you are watching the live stream on the [guelph.ca/live](http://guelph.ca/live) page, you won't be able to add your comments directly there, the same with people who have phoned in, you will be able to hear but you won't be able to see and it will be really hard for you to add your comments. It is really important that we provide you with some additional ways of providing you input. The most important place for you to navigate to sometimes in the next week or so, is a page called [HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca](http://HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca). When you get there, you will see a couple of options and one of the options is council-composition. If you click on that, then you will be into an engagement place where you can ask more questions, get answers, read some background documents and information. It overlaps a lot of what you are going to hear today and, most importantly, again, there is a survey tool there where these questions that are being posed tonight and framed up for you tonight, will be open there for you to answer, and to explain and elaborate a little bit further. It is not just an open and shut thing. It is a place to have a bit more of a discussion almost. That is the most important page for you to get to. Tonight, the purpose really is to learn enough about this project to be able to provide deep insight, and focus really, and you are giving it to the people that are on this line, and the people who are listening. It is actually on that HaveYourSay website. There is contact information as well under a head called Who is Listening. All of your input will be gathered, and it will come out in the form of a report that will be formulated to Council in October for their consideration in November. Your wisdom and insight here at this stage of the larger project informs thinking about changes or recommendations around the ward boundaries, and there will be another round of consultations around the ward boundaries in early 2021. This is more just an education so you can be involved as possible. The agenda tonight, pretty straight

forward in a way. We are getting started. I will invite Stephen O'Brien to provide an official welcome from the City, and then we will hand it over to the consulting team, David Siegel, Robert Williams. They will be describing the scope of this project, what is in scope and what is out of scope, and then straight into the big questions around size of council; should you have ward elections or at-large elections? Should you have one Councillor, or should you have more than one Councillor per ward? Should they be full time or part time? I know you are thinking about them. At every step of the way, we will just take a little pause and we will remind you to put your questions down, right. Put your questions in the chat on Facebook or on WebEx, and we will be keeping track of those throughout the evening and harvesting them up. Then, at the end of the evening, at about 6:45, we will take a look at all these questions and start pulling them out on the table and getting David and Robert to answer them for you. If there is anything that we don't answer, it will be back on that HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca engagement site. We will try to address all of your questions as best we can. Now this evening, when we have these big questions, David and Robert will be providing all of that context that you might need around these questions, and then we pause you think, hm, what questions does it raise for me, what ideas do I have, you write them down, and then we move onto the next presentations. We are not actually going to be dealing with questions as we go along. We are going to be collecting questions as we go along, but we are going to keep moving through the presentation so that we have time at the end to deal with all these questions. Like I said before, anything that doesn't get answered, you will find it on the HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca website. If you are engaged on WebEx, it will look different depending on what kind of device you are using, but you are probably seeing my face and some slides, and a couple of other faces across the top of your screen. There is a little button down at the bottom for the chat, if you open that up and you put your questions in there, they don't go out to everybody and they only go to the people who are eagerly awaiting your input and are going to be copying and pasting that into a document that we can report from. This whole consultation is not just this evening, it is open until September 4. Tell your neighbours, tell your friends, get everybody involved that you can. You can send an email to the Clerk's Office at [clerks@guelph.ca](mailto:clerks@guelph.ca). You can even send them an old-fashioned letter if you want to City Hall. You can phone them at the number on the screen, 519-837-5603. Any form of input is welcome, the most important thing is HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca, that website and then the subpart is the Council Composition. Do your survey, ask more questions, and read the background research. If you want to just keep your eye on the project, there is a page on the main site, [guelph.ca/council](http://guelph.ca/council), and on that page, there is a whole bunch of basic resources, including pointers to all of these resources here. There is lots of ways and lots of time for you to continue to have input. Some guidelines for this evening; I like to think that any kind of a conversation is going to be driven by some assumptions and some values that we hold, and these are the ones that we hold and are going to try and uphold for the evening, and that is that we really do believe that everyone has wisdom and that we need everyone's wisdom for the wisest results. The people listening in are citizens of Guelph; you have on the ground experience, and that is what we need. It doesn't mean that your every idea will be implemented because it has to form

part of that bigger picture, that principle of the whole being greater than just the sum of its parts means that everybody has a piece to the puzzle so share it. Even if you are little bit bashful and say I only have half an idea, get it out there and it might be that half an idea that influences our thinking. Another principle is that there is no wrong answers. Just set aside rightness and wrongness and get your ideas out there. If you have questions, there is no dumb questions because chances are if you are thinking of a question, you don't have to be shy, chances are somebody else is thinking about it too. It is important to understand that disrespectful or rude comments, we can't even share them, so keep it clean, keep it respectful, and that way we can actually respond to it. Let me introduce your panelists this evening. I am going to start with me because I am talking right now. I am a facilitator. I am certified and all that. I have been in practice for 25, well since 1992 really. Most of my work, as you can tell by the picture, is live, in person stuff and, of course, now we are working all online. I design and I lead participatory group processes, and I working with Watson & Associates on this larger engagement around ward boundaries in Council composition. The two main panelists this evening, hired to do the heavy lifting on this project, are Robert Williams, he is a Public Affairs Consultant. He is retired from a career at the University of Waterloo as a professor of political science. He has been consulting with Watson & Associates, and independently, on a lot of ward boundary reviews and council composition studies. He has done a lot of work in this area since 2008, and it was his area of expertise as a professor as well. Our other expert is David Siegel. He is also a retired professor of political science, from Brock University. He is the founding director of the Niagara Community Observatory. He is also the author and co-author of many, many books and publications in the field of municipal government and administration, public administration. He is bringing all of this background as well, so you are in good hands when it comes to the kind of research that has to be one in order to produce these reports. Finally, I want to introduce our host, Stephen O'Brien. He is with the City and he is the General Manager of the City Clerk's Office. Typically, you would say oh, he is -- City Clerk's, okay. He has been working in the municipal sector for 12 years, half of that with the City of Guelph so he knows it really well. He worked in a range of other municipalities, regional municipalities, small rural municipalities, it is quite the range. He has a lot of interest in some of the modern concerns that municipalities are wrapping their head around, like digital government, privacy, transparency, and transformation of government services. He is the one who is responsible for this overall project and that the Watson team is, in the end, going to bring our report to. I think that brings the context setting to an end. I'm going to hand it over to Stephen to give us a formal introduction. Thank you.

**S O'Brien:** Great. Thanks so much, John. It is really a distinct pleasure to be here and thank you to all the residents of Guelph that have connected in, whether that be on Facebook Live, on Guelph.ca/live, with us on WebEx, or whether you are phoning in, we are really quite pleased to have everyone join in. I can't impress upon folks how important a body of work this is for not only the staff in the City but also, I think for the community at large. We are just very, very excited that everyone can be here to participate. I can't encourage everyone enough to get in

and submit comments in the chat feature on WebEx, submit comments through Facebook, however you are connecting tonight, even if it is an email to clerks@guelph.ca. Please do connect in and share your thoughts as we move through this evening, and obviously, as John eluded to, as we continue on through the engagement process. This is a very important part of our work and on our work plan this year and I know that Council is awaiting this feedback and engagement from the community as well. With that, what I would actually like to do now is important for us to do whenever we meet and gather, even if it is digitally, is to make a territorial acknowledgement. I will say that as we gather, we are reminded that Guelph is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Inuit and Metis people today. As a City, we have a responsibility for the stewardship of the land on which we live and work. Today, we acknowledge the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek Peoples on whose traditional territory we are meeting. I would also like to bring greetings from Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council. This was actually discussed last night at City Council and the Mayor made a public announcement about this engagement this evening and the continuation of this engagement over the next couple of weeks. I want to bring greetings from the Mayor and Members of Council, and I think I can say on their behalf that they also are keenly aware of the importance of this project. I am happy to bring that forward. With that, I will turn it over to our consultant team and they can walk us through the scope of the project.

**R Williams:** Thank you, Stephen. My name is Robert Williams and I am a partner with Watson & Associates, a consulting firm that has been retained by the City of Guelph to conduct this project formally titled "Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review". The team responsible for the project also includes David Siegel, an ICA Associates, and you have met John Miller as part of that, who are managing the public engagement component of the review. As John mentioned earlier, before I started working with Watson & Associates, I was a faculty member at the University of Waterloo for 35 years plus. I have been working with Watson for about ten years now on more than a dozen ward boundary reviews, and I am excited to bring that expertise, and the expertise of this entire team, to this project in Guelph. I have with me here tonight David Siegel, who is recently retired as a professor of political science from Brock University and is also involved in the project. Hi David.

D SIEGEL: I am involved in this project because Guelph has some very important decisions to make. The current electoral system has been in place since the 1991 election, which is almost 30 years, so it is not surprising that Council has decided that it is now time to have a review of this before the next municipal election in October 2022, so this is where Robert and I come on the scene.

## **Project Scope**

**R Williams:** We are currently in Phase 1 of this project, which is focusing on Council composition and employment status. There are a number of key questions, five in particular, that we are going to walk through tonight, that are part of that component of the review. How many City Councillors should there be? How many

per ward? Should they be elected in wards at all and if so, how many wards, and finally, whether they should play the role in a full-time or part-time basis; that is the employment status part of that. Once that component has been resolved by Council, which we hope will happen in November, we will then embark on Phase 2 of the review, starting at the end of the year and into early next year, where we will review the boundaries of the wards that will be used to elect the next City Council in Guelph. There is another process that will follow from that, and this will be led by City staff. This will involve whether to modify the system of election in Guelph to allow for what is called a ranked ballot that would be used for the election of Mayor and Council, and another review that would determine the actual level of compensation for members of Council.

## **Background**

**D Siegel:** We started Phase 1 in December 2019 and we planned to have a series of Town Halls in March and April of 2020 before the Covid pandemic intervened. We have now adjusted both the method of public engagement and the timing, so we are now having this virtual public engagement and there is a variety of other ways of getting involved, as John Miller mentioned earlier. A key component is the survey that is available, and it will be available until September 4, 2020. We at Watson will be sending a report to Council in time for its November 5, 2020, meeting. That is a little bit later than we had planned when we started this project, but it is still plenty of time to move on the other phases so that everything will be ready in time for the municipal election in October 2022.

**R Williams:** Before we actually start discussing some of the changes that could be made in the current electoral system in Guelph, we should review the key features of the existing system. Guelph's Council consists of 13 members, a Mayor who is elected at-large, that is across the whole city, 12 City Councillors who are elected in six wards, which therefore means two Councillors per ward. You are going to hear about this a number of times this evening, but that is the basic structure that we start with. The Mayor is elected at-large, as I said, meaning that every qualified elector gets to cast a vote. The Mayor is determined to be the candidate who wins the most votes in the election, even if that is not a majority of the votes cast. This system is set out in the Ontario Municipal Act and has been that way for many, many years. Municipalities have limited opportunity to change that arrangement, however in 2018, a modification to the Act was passed which would allow municipalities to determine to use an alternative method, what is called a ranked ballot, where the candidates are marked, however many there are, first preference, second preference, and so forth. Those ballots are redistributed to candidates based on those markings until one of the candidates has been the preferred choice of a majority of the votes cast that is 50%. That would be a fairly important change in practice and, as we suggested a moment ago, staff will be initiating a review of that process once we determine the first phase of the review in time to qualify for that change in the next election. Phase 1 will not talk about this change in the way Councillors are elected and we will concentrate on determining how many of them there are.

## Current Status

**D Siegel:** The City of Guelph is currently divided into six wards, as you can see on this map. Each ward elects two Councillors, which means that each voter has two votes and the two highest vote gatherers among the candidates are declared elected as Councillors in that ward. The next graph that we will look at shows the permanent population in the wards and what you can see there is that Ward 6 in particular has considerably larger population than the other wards and that also is the ward that is experiencing the greatest growth right now. What that means is that there is an imbalance in the wards, and something needs to be done with the ward boundaries between now and the 2022 election or the imbalance that you see on this graph will become even larger.

## Possible Changes

**R Williams:** [Inaudible 0:21:44.6] to make that change, to change the number of wards and the number of Councillors, and that is a key part of this Phase 1 of the review. For example, the six wards could be changed to elect one member per ward, the overall number could change, and a number of other modifications are there. We are going to turn to those alternatives after John Miller makes a quick comment about how you can participate in the review.

## Meeting Housekeeping

**J Miller:** Thanks Bob. Thanks David. It is really important that as we go through this evening, if the people who are listening, if questions pop into your mind at any point, just put them in the chat so that we can collect them as we go along. Don't wait until the end because by then you might forget. Put them in the chat, either in WebEx or in Facebook and we will catch it later. That's it. Why don't we turn our attention to the size of Council, those questions now, please?

## Engagement Overview

**R Williams:** Right. There are really three key questions that we want to address in this review. They are listed there on the screen. How many Councillors should the City of Guelph Council have? How many Councillors should be elected from each ward? How many wards should the City be divided into? Many of you will realize that if you answer two of these questions, the third one is pretty well determined, but they are separate questions that we need to address about how the Council is going to be composed in the future.

## First Engagement Question

**D Siegel:** Let's start with the first question about the number of Councillors. In fact, if Guelph decided to go within an at-large system, this would be the only question that we need to address. Within very broad limits, Council has the authority to decide on the number of Councillors. The Ontario Municipal Act says that there must be a minimum of four Councillors, but the Act does not specify any maximum. Beyond that specified minimum, there is no real standard, or formula that determines the appropriate size of a municipal Council. It is something of a balancing act. Figuring out how many Councillors you want is something of a

balancing act. If you have a large number of Councillors, that increases the ability of residents to have access to their local Councillor. It also means that Council will be large enough to represent the diversity of the community in terms of things like neighbourhood, gender, ethnicity, and so forth. However, when a Council gets too large, it can slow down and complicate the decision-making process if every Councillor needs to participate on every item that comes before Council. A larger Council also increases the cost of Council, although the total cost of Council compensation is a pretty small percent of the total budget. The next table that we look at shows the number of Councillors that Guelph and some comparable municipalities have. Guelph's 12 Councillors make it quite similar to the other comparable municipalities. This table also suggests that if Guelph decided to either increase or decrease the number of Councillors that it has, it is still going to be within this comfortable range. Since we don't have any real rational scientific guidance about how to determine the idea number of Councillors, one thing that we could do is begin with our current number of 12 and ask ourselves a couple questions around that number. Is that number 12 so large that it complicates the Council decision making process? We could ask a question in the opposite way; is the number so small that it limits the ability of Council to represent the demographic diversity found within the city? This is what I mean by the balancing act. The answer to those two questions will guide us to the idea of do we think 12 is fine or would we like to have a smaller or a larger number of Councillors?

**J Miller:** The question --

**R Williams:** Sorry John.

**J Miller:** Sorry?

**R Williams:** Go ahead.

**J Miller:** One of the questions that we need some solid input from a lot of people is what makes sense for the City of Guelph. How many Councillors should serve on the City of Guelph's Council? The best place to put that is at the HaveYourSay site. If you have questions, in particular if you questions about size of Council, now is the best time to put it in the chat so that we can deal with it at the end, and then you are really clear about what the implications might be. Okay, let's keep moving.

## **Second Engagement Question**

**R Williams:** The second question we mentioned was the number of Councillors per ward. Ever since the ward system was established in Guelph, it has been a Council of 12 members elected in two-member wards. That is what everyone in Guelph understands as the way to do it. There are other ways to do this and if we look at that comparison chart a moment ago, you will see that a great many of municipalities use a different number. Many of them have only one member per ward, which if, again, related to that if it is a bigger Council, there would be more wards. Guelph is an exception in here among that first group on the table, but there are other variations as you can see. Chatham-Kent with a system with wards of different sizes, that is not very often found across Ontario, and that is typically because, as in the case of Chatham-Kent, it is a municipality that was created by an

amalgamation and the system was built upon recognizing those historical circumstances. This is not a system that is very straight forward, and it is often unfair. Some people get to elect three members of Council, others only get to elect one. These are not factors that necessarily would be an improvement in Guelph's situation. In a two-member system though, there are questions that need to be asked. We are not saying it is the right or the wrong one, the system has its own features. The two-member system is more likely one in which a constituent has been able to get, as we put it, the ear of the councillor. At least one Councillor is likely to be available in a two-member system and maybe the other one is unreachable. There is also a chance, and it does happen in the political world, that not everyone agrees with you. It may be that if there are two Councillors, it increases the chance that the resident will find someone who would find their perspective one that they can sympathize with. On the other side, of course, it is one of the factors that contributes to a larger Council. Two-member wards also increase the size of wards. As we saw on that map, Guelph is cut into six parts. It is a big city to be in only six parts so that is one of the negatives. Of course, what often happens too is if you do have two Councillors, as a citizen, and you approach both of them, it could very well be that they both take these matters up with Staff, which means we have duplication of activity, and if the question is asked differently, we may get some kind of confusion as to which is the right answer. Again, it is not a system that is straight forward, yes or no, but it is a question that residents of Guelph need to think about.

**J Miller:** Once again, if we could just pause for a second and all the people who are listening and viewing, if you could make note of any questions you have around how many Councillors should be elected from each ward, and write those in a chat, either here in WebEx, or on Facebook. If you have some ideas and suggestions, the best place for that is [HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca](http://HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca). Let's take a look at the next question if we could please. This is addressing the question of changing the number of wards.

### **Third Engagement Question**

**D Siegel:** The third question has to do with the number of wards. Once you have determined the number of Councillors, and the number of Councillors per ward, you have really determined the number of wards. It is worthwhile at this point to look at the result of that and decide whether you are satisfied with the number of wards that you have created. Phase 2 will look at the specific size and shapes of the wards. What we are doing in this Phase 1 is just addressing this in a broad way, looking at the size of the City of Guelph, and determining how many wards would be ideal. This is a matter of balance, just like I was talking earlier about the number of Councillors, there is no ideal solution here. If you have a small number of relatively large wards, then it could be difficult for Councillors to have easy access to -- it could be difficult for residents, I should say, it could be difficult for them to have easy access to their Councillors. It also increases diversity in the ward, which can make it difficult for the Councillor to represent that ward well. On the other hand, if you have a larger number of small wards, it makes citizen access easier and it increases the ability of Councillors to represent that ward, and that is good, but a larger number of wards will also increase the size of Council, which

adds to the complication and the time consuming nature of some Council discussions. The table that we looked at earlier indicated that most comparable other municipalities use either 10 or 12 wards so Guelph with six has so much fewer wards than the other comparable municipalities. We could follow the same line of reasoning here that we did with the number of Councillors and think about how well this six-ward system has functioned in Guelph for the last almost 30 years. If we think that the wards are too large because they are too diverse and they don't have proper representation, then we probably would like to have a larger number of wards. If you feel that they are too small and they make the Council too large, then you would want to have a smaller number of wards. This is the third question in this group that we were talking about.

**J Miller:** Once again, this is that other aspect of these intertwined questions. Maybe this is the one that drives your thoughts, I don't know. How many wards should the City of Guelph be divided into? That is a big question. If you are not clear about any aspect of that, put your question in the chat on WebEx, or on Facebook, and if you have some ideas about how many wards the city needs to be divided into, you put it into the HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca website where it says Council Composition. You have to pick the right one. Again, it is a balancing act, so what makes the most sense for Guelph; that is the really big question, what makes the most sense for Guelph.

## **Forth Engagement Question**

**R Williams:** The last question that deals with the election system itself is whether Guelph should use an at-large electoral system or a system of wards to elect its Councillors. Any old timers on the call tonight would know that from 1901 through to 1987 the Councillors in Guelph, and at one time there were as many as 18 of them, were elected by general vote, that is they were elected at-large. It has only been since 1988 that Guelph has elected its Councillors in the six wards that we have been talking about along the way and, in fact, back in 2006, Guelph electors endorsed keeping that system, but in 2020, Council has decided that it would like to consult with the public about whether this system should be changed. Now in an at-large system, there are no geographic divisions within the municipality. All candidates run across the entire municipality and voters choose candidates who will represent the entire municipality. If it were an at-large system and 12 Councillors, everyone would get to vote for 12 candidates, or whatever the number might be. You choose from all of the candidates and compose your Council out of that pool of talent. The practice of using an at-large election in Ontario is most common in smaller municipalities, often rural municipalities that don't really have significant size to deal with, or geographic differences within the municipality. The largest municipality in Ontario with an at-large system is actually the City of Niagara Falls with a population of 85,000 people. Vancouver, with a population of over 600,000, also has an at-large system but it runs its Council on a party system, so candidates are not simply one big pool, voters are making their choice among teams of candidates. That is not the case here in Guelph. Both of those cities have had periodic discussions about switching to a ward system.

## Discussion

**D Siegel:** The alternative to the at-large election is the ward system, which is the system that Guelph has used since the 1991 election. In this system, the city is divided into geographic areas referred to as wards and candidates choose which ward, they want to run in, and the electors in each ward vote for the candidate to run in that ward. Most medium and large municipalities, particularly those that have natural divisions, such as different types of residential areas, or maybe areas with different historical backgrounds, choose to have the ward system of election.

**R Williams:** Which compares the two approaches, for example, voters are able to select candidates they think will do the best job rather than having to make a choice among candidates who happen to run in their own ward. In an at-large system, it encourages candidates to focus on city wide issues rather than simply basing their campaign on the ward issues, which, as we put it here, can lead to turf protection; my ward is the priority, the City is secondary. An at-large system turns it around the other way, the City is more important than the neighbourhood. In an at-large system, there is also some issues about who would be approached for assistance in the event that you have a question or a matter to raise.

**D Siegel:** I agree that an excessive focus on neighbourhood issues and turf protection to the exclusion of city wide issues could lead to turf protection sorts of issues. I think it is also important to have someone whose job it is to stand up for my particular neighbourhood. In fact, in an at-large system, I am not even sure which of those large number of Councillors I should go to when I have a neighbourhood issue. What if none of the at-large Councillors who are elected come from my neighbourhood, then what do I do? The other concern that I have about an at-large system is that it is going to be quite expensive for candidates to run across the entire municipality and that means that good candidates might choose not to run or might not be able to run because they simply won't be able to raise enough money to afford to run across the entire municipality.

**R Williams:** All the municipalities can combine an at-large and a ward system, but this is relatively rare in a single tiered municipality like Guelph. The problem is with a hybrid system of that kind, it creates an awkward relationship between the two types of Councillors. All Councillors at the table are supposed to be equal. When Councillors are elected from different electoral basis, does this mean that some of them are seen to be more important than others, or more equal than others? A key decision that will come out of the Phase 1 of this review is whether City Councillors in Guelph will continue to be elected in wards or whether the City would revert to the at-large system that it used for a good part of the 20th Century.

**J Miller:** Thank you. This is another opportunity for a little reminder to folks. If you have questions about this notion of ward system versus an at-large system, now is a really good time to put them in the chat, either on Facebook, or on this WebEx call. If you have opinions and insights that you want to be absorbed into this consideration, then make sure you go to [HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca/council-composition](https://HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca/council-composition), and in there is a survey where you can share some of your ideas, and the reasons why you think your idea is a good idea. Any questions about the at-

large or a ward system to elect Councillors in Guelph. If you have questions, type them. If not, let's keep moving on. We are going to change gears here a little bit.

### **Fifth Engagement Question**

**R Williams:** Thank you, John. The last question on the agenda this evening, the last of the big five, should Councillors in the City of Guelph be considered full-time or part-time and be accordingly? There is a perception that the workload of Councillors has been steadily increasing as the complexity of government activity has grown and there are challenges to performing that role for part time Councillors. Residents also have increasing expectations of their Councillors to be available for various reasons in the course of the year so this can lead to many Councillors devoting more time than they have in the past. The Municipal Act doesn't make a distinction between full-time and part-time Councillors, a Councillor is a Councillor, and each one has the same powers and duties regardless of the amount of time they spend on the job. The difference then, in terms of this discussion, is what the expectations of the residents of Guelph are for their Councillors and whether there would be an adjustment in how much they are paid to play that role. We have also done some research on this across Ontario and I have another table here which shows the way Councillors are compensated in a number of single-tier municipalities in Ontario. This table shows us that in fact only three cities are Councillors considered to be in a full-time role, Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton. In some regions, and there are exceptions to this chart, where Councillors serve on a local municipal Council but also on a regional Council, each one of them treats it as a part-time activity and when you put the two of them together, it becomes close to a full-time employment. That is not what we are looking at here; we are looking at municipalities that are like Guelph and in the same, certainly in the area from London down, are roughly similar in population. If Councillors in Guelph were to be considered full-time, this would be a fairly important change and Guelph would, in fact, be the smallest municipality on this list by some considerable difference if it were to compensate its Councillors at a full-time rate.

**D Siegel:** The next table shows the results of a survey that was conducted as a part of this review. It indicates that current Guelph Councillors estimate that they spend an average of about 20 hours per week on Council business. However, that average disguises the fact that there are significant variations over the year caused by things like budget time that is very busy, there can be periodic crises that take up more than that 20 hours so 20 hours is more than one thinks of as typical full-time employment but that 20 hours uses up so much time from a Councillor and it is unpredictable. What that means is it is very difficult for a Councillor to get some sort of supplementary full-time employment, or even to find a regular fixed schedule part-time job. The opportunity to serve on Council should be open to anyone who meets the qualifications of citizenship, residence, and age. On the current Guelph Council, several Councillors have retired, or they are entrepreneurs, or they have freelance employment that allows them to set their own hours. There are only two Councillors who have full-time employment. Guelph Councillors might have arrived at the awkward position where their workload as a Councillor is not really full-time in terms of the hours involve, but it is so time consuming and

unpredictable, that is a very important factor in this, that it restricts the ability of Councillors to pursue supplementary conventional 9 to 5 type employment.

**R Williams:** The idea of moving from part-time to full-time Councillors does not necessarily involve a large increase in expenditures. We have again prepared a slide which involves a little bit of that information. This, of course, is going to be dependent on earlier questions, how many Councillors are there. It shows some possible costs associated with that. If, for the sake of argument, the compensation for each Councillor were increased from approximately 40,000 to 80,000, and the number of Councillors remained the same, if it did, this would involve an increase of about \$584,000 which really is a very tiny fraction of the overall budget of the City. If the compensation were doubled and the number of Councillors reduced, it really wouldn't amount to a big increase either and the only adjustment would have to do with benefits. There are other factors that would come into this in terms of creating office space for Councillors if they are working from City Hall, presumably space would be needed, and there would probably also be some administrative costs for those Councillors. Overall, the cost factor is surprisingly modest in terms of the overall budget of the City and we should also note in passing, of course, that the actual rate of salary, we are picking a for the sake of argument number, that is a separate process that will come in the new year. Currently, we are asking to think about whether a change in the role of Councillors should be undertaken for the City of Guelph. There will be hesitation on the part of many residents about accepting the idea of full-time Councillors but residents need to decide if they want to continue the status quo, which as Dave suggested, forces people to make sacrifices to become a Councillor and likely restricts the type of people who will make themselves available to run for office; or, on the other hand, whether they want to compensate Councillors at a full-time so that they can concentrate primarily on their Council responsibilities.

## **Discussion**

**J Miller:** Thank you, Bob and Dave. This is a tricky question. It is kind of a philosophical question really. Do you think the City needs full-time or part time Councillors and, as you can imagine, it is woven with your other ideas too? If you have questions about full-time versus part-time, now is the best time to put it in the chat, either on WebEx or on Facebook, any questions about full-time or part-time Councillors, put them in there. If you have any comments or opinions, then you go to the [HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca/council-composition](https://www.haveyoursay.guelph.ca/council-composition), the engagement platform there has a whole bunch of ways to engage. There is a lot of information there and there is a survey where you can put your ideas. There is more than just four or five questions there because we want to understand why and not just the what of your opinion. Now we are moving into an interesting part of the evening where we get to grab questions as they have been coming in on Facebook and on this WebEx call. I will just be doing through some of them and putting kind of a range of questions to Bob and Dave, and perhaps sometimes Stephen. If it is kind of out of scope and it is a bit more administrative, then Stephen might want to chime in on this. We have a lot of questions that we have gathered up here, and good ones too. A quick question David, how long has Guelph had 12 part-time

Councillors? Can you remind us of that? How long have we had 12 part-time Councillors, any idea?

**D Siegel:** I'm pretty sure that would be the 1991 election. Prior to that, it was at-large, wasn't it, yeah. It is 30 years, 31 years by the time we have the next election. It is something that people are quite familiar with, obviously, in the city.

**R Williams:** If I can jump in there quickly, John. I think the tradition has always been that municipals are part-time, so the number 12 really dates from that time, but for as long as we've had municipal governments, Councillors in smaller places have always been considered doing a service to their community. Getting paid was a kind of bonus. It wasn't a job in the same way. The idea that Councillors are still part-time here in Guelph, and across every municipality except for three, is part of a very long tradition in Ontario.

**J Miller:** Thank you. Do you have any figures, even ballpark, on what the average number of Councillors per capita in a city of comparable size, sort of Councillors per capita?

**D Siegel:** When we were talking about this, showed the cities that were comparable to Guelph in size so the answer to that is that the other cities are going to be just about the same as Guelph. I don't have my calculator here that I can do that sort of calculation, but they are going to be about the same. We deliberately looked in that table at other municipalities, single-tier municipalities, that are in the 100,000 to 200,000 population range. They are going to be quite comparable. It would be easy enough to do that calculation, but I don't have the ability to do it right now.

**J Miller:** It is worth pointing out that on the HaveYourSay website are some background documents. There is a whole bunch more research than we can cover in these presentations, if I'm not incorrect.

**R Williams:** I will also jump in too to reinforce something David said earlier when we were walking through that, there is no set of expectations from the Province or elsewhere. Every decision is local, how many are we comfortable with, and that is what we see even in that sort list where the number is locally driven and it is not comparable, it can't say because Guelph has 12 Councillors and Hamilton has 15, well Guelph is half the size of Hamilton so should double it. It doesn't really work that way. It has to do with your local circumstances. Some might say Hamilton's Council is too small. Others will say Guelph is too big. It is not something easily transferable and this is what the community itself believes is appropriate for its circumstances.

## **Questions from audience**

**J Miller:** Thank you. There is a question of clarification here. I found this one kind of public adminish. What other elements of City life are based on ward boundaries? If you change the ward boundaries, or the number of wards, or configuration of the wards, does it effect the distribution of services directly?

**S O'Brien:** I'm getting the proverbial nod from our consult team. From the City Service delivery standpoint, really the wards are about representation by elective people. What I will say, though, is if you strip away the service, and Dr. Williams and Dr. Siegel alluded to this, sometimes those wards, depending on the size and scale of them, can actually impact civil life in a unique way because they can be very much aligned with sort of traditionally defined neighbourhoods or communities within the city. Sometimes they sort of have not necessarily a direct linkage to City Services, but they have a deep connection to the community and the communities within the city.

**J Miller:** It is more about expression.

**S O'Brien:** Yeah.

**J Miller:** This is a good question, and I'm not sure if either Bob or Dave will be able to answer it. What does the research show about the number of women and minorities elected in at-large versus ward systems because there seems to be a fairly large concern, if we look at the feedback we've had so far online, with diversity and inclusion. Is there any research that shows that one model is better at teasing out that diversity than another? That's a good question.

**R Williams:** There is no research that would demonstrate that. That would be a topic that would require a fair bit of effort to collect for a start and the composition of a Council related to those kinds of factors would again be very largely driven by the nature of the political process in that community. I'm not sure that there is a definitive answer on that. It touches back on some of the points that David did raise in, for example, an at-large system, individuals who are not well known, who may not have resources, who may not have, if you will, a high profile, who may fall into those minority categories, would be at a distinct disadvantage. There are always exceptions. There are always people who can cut through that and make their mark in a community. Again, it is not something that we can pin down with any accuracy; it really relates to the dynamics of the community itself and how well, or how poorly, those kinds of interests are represented around the Council table after the election.

**S O'Brien:** John, maybe I can jump in there as well just to add some context. I am aware of some research that has been done at sort of the subnational and national level by a researcher at the University of Western Ontario named Kate Graham. Kate is a researcher that I think was featured on sort of a Canada 20/20 podcast about actually female First Ministers. I don't know, and I will defer to the research experts on the panel, but it feels like it is a growing area of research. I would love to see it sort of spill down to the local level but if there are those that are interested, I think there probably could be some comparatives and maybe analogies drawn between what drives, in the case of gender, female candidates to run for office as opposed to male candidates and those kinds of things. Again, probably a little bit of a gap in the research from what the consultant team has shared.

**J Miller:** I have a question of clarification. It is straightforward but it is worth untangling here from a woman by the name of Tanya. I don't understand how two Councillors per ward leads to increased sizes of wards. How does that work?

**R Williams:** Because you divide the city into smaller chunks. If it is a 12-member Council and it is two members per ward, you divide the city up into six parts. If, for sake of argument, it were a nine-member Council and each ward elected one person, you would cut it up into smaller pieces. That sounds rather drastic, but you would group neighbourhoods to come up with nine parts. By definition, those parts are likely to be smaller. You take the city population and divide it by six, you get one; if you divide it by nine, you get a smaller number. That would be the kind of dynamic that a two-member system would lead to, again, with that fine lined number at the top of 12.

**J Miller:** Thank you. Thank you. I have a very broad question, kind of the opposite kind of question. I'm not quite sure who to put it to, but I think either Bob or Dave. It started out as more of a statement about the importance of values and governing these kinds of conversations. If I turn it into a question, what values or principles are guiding this review?

**R Williams:** That is a tricky one. I'm not sure what Dave would contribute to that. I think at a broad level I would say that like many parts of the City's operation, it is important at a certain point to step back and say why are we doing it this way? Why is the structure this way? This applies in all manner of City Services. You don't leave City Services untouched for 30 years and say well, it was good enough then, we had a fire truck, we don't need to replace it, we have one, or whatever it is. I am being a little facetious, but the point is it is important to step back and look at your democratic structure and these questions came out of perspectives that we know were around the Council table. The issue of full time and part-time has been around since 2012, is this the right way to do it, and the issues we talked about in terms of growing demands are there and it is important to step back and just say is there a better way to do it. This is really what leads us to this Phase 1 to ask those questions. It may be that having looked at it all, Council said it's fine the way it is, don't change anything. Okay but at least you have drawn that line and said okay, we have evaluated it, we have looked at some of the rationale for doing it this way, and we have reached a conclusion.

**J Miller:** Okay. I realize we are at 7:02 and I have a lot of questions but there is a fair bit of duplication right now. There was one question, I'm just looking for it, that had to do with future population and population projections. I'm not seeing it but it has to do with -- it is one thing to know what the population breakdown is today, and we have a chart for that, how far out into the future are we looking in terms of population projections?

**R Williams:** I'm going to let Dave pick up on what he was going to suggest on the last one and then I'll answer this.

**J Miller:** Okay.

**D Siegel:** I just wanted to weigh in on the values. It seems to me that the sorts of values that the City of Guelph has brought to this, and I think the consultants also are governed by, is first of all, public engagement. We were ready to have the face to face public meetings and now we have gone to considerable effort to have a different kind of public engagement. I think the public involvement is certainly one of the major values that we bring to this. Transparency is another. We have produced the websites, the information for the website, and we are trying to be as transparent as we can about how we view these issues. I think we have also been concerned about equity sorts of issues because we have talked about the need to have a Council that is large enough to reflect the demographic characteristics of the City of Guelph. Just off the top of my head, I think those are quite a few of the significant values that are driving the exercise from our perspective.

**R Williams:** That previous question, John, I am on now.

**J Miller:** You are on.

**R Williams:** Okay, thanks. That really is Phase 2 of the report. As I suggested earlier, we may come out of Phase 1 with Council saying let's just keep six wards and go from there. We may come out of it with some other number. The second phase is a ward boundary review. Even if there are still only six wards, as we saw in the information provided, they are very badly balanced. There are a couple of wards that are much larger than others, so a ward boundary review is appropriate. That review has a set of guiding principles that have been identified to guide it and that does include the idea of future growth. As I like to suggest, you don't design a ward system that is out of date the day after you approve it, so you try to build in some attention to where the growth is going to be. That is where the other part of this team comes in. Watson & Associates economists are part of the team that will provide that information. That is the work that they do, demographic work related to Guelph and other municipalities across Ontario, tracking where residential growth is going to happen, the nature of that growth, and other demographic factors that would allow us to project into the future. The timeline is three elections, that would be 22, 26 and 30. That is roughly the same cycle that is used for federal redistributions. Seats in the House of Commons are reviewed after every census, i.e. ten years, so this is a comparable exercise to think out what the city is going to look like in roughly a ten year interval based on the expertise of the other part of this team. They are not here tonight because this is our part. We will be in that next phase, but they will be bringing up the evidence to reinforce ward boundaries, not only in 2021 but out toward 2030.

**S O'Brien:** John, maybe before we move to the final slide, if I can just add a little context too. If individuals are looking to get more information about population projections, what Dr. Williams mentioned is absolutely spot on. Another thing to keep an eye on is the shaping Guelph, which is Guelph's growth management strategy. The City will be engaging on that, asking feedback about where and how Guelph should grow. It is coming soon and that will actually be -- some of those projections will be determined by where and how we grow to a certain degree, and as Dr. Williams alluded to, Watson & Associates is in step with that to determine, and monitor, and keep tabs on those projections. The other thing I would mention

is the different values and principles guiding this body of work, I think it comes back to sort of the vision that the City's strategic plan sets out for the City, which is an inclusive connected prosperous city where we as Guelphites look after each other and our environment and some of the values that are underpinning that strategic plan like inclusion, the fact that we are stronger because of our differences, integrity, being honest and ethical, and having nights like this where we can have open conversations and use the HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca tool. Those are some of the values and principles that sort of are underpinning this body of work. I'll pull up the last couple of slides now, John.

**J Miller:** All right. Thank you very much. There are a few more questions out here that I think are pretty straightforward and are answered on the website for sure, and we will be reinforcing them. Just a reminder of the questions that you will be asked and that we want your feedback on, and I hope you gather a sense that these are not simple questions. They are not formulated. The inquiry that we are making of you, the citizens of Guelph, is truly open and we as a consulting team, we are just dying to know why you think what you think about these questions of how many Councillors should there be, how many per ward, should there be wards or should it be at-large, and how many wards, and should we be approaching this viewing the role of a Councillor as a full-time job or a part-time job and paid accordingly. These big questions are in the survey that you would find, and on the next slide you have the link, that you would find on [HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca/council-composition](https://HaveYourSay.Guelph.ca/council-composition). That is the most important place for you to go. You can read more background information. You should be able to replay this video if you wish. You can add your insights. You can also see what questions other people have had and add your questions and direct your friends to this. You can share these links on your social media. If you just want to keep your eye on things, then the [guelph.ca/council](https://guelph.ca/council) page has a lot of your essential pointers to where you can find everything that you need. I thank you very much for sticking with us for this whole evening. We have run nine minutes over time, my apologies for that. It was my fault right at the very beginning because there is so much context to cover. We are really looking forward to hearing what you think, reading what you think, and I want to say thank you very much for your patience and your insights, and these great questions too. You wanted to say something?

**R Williams:** I was going to say be ready for Phase 2. We want to hear you when we get to that part as well.

**J Miller:** Yeah. Be ready for the report that goes to Council before even that happens. We will be coming back to you folks in 2021 with maps and lines on maps and gathering your insights because only you, the citizens of Guelph, really have your finger on where we can draw these things. Without any further ado, I think we are at the end. Thank you very much folks. Have yourselves a pleasant evening. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much David and Robert and Stephen.

## **Conclusion**

**R Williams:** Thanks everybody.

**J Miller:** And all the people behind the scenes as well, thank you. We're no longer live.