

THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES

Report CL 14-2024

Council Meeting Date: July 16, 2024

TO: Mayor Cook and Members of Council

FROM: Stephanie Troyer-Boyd, Director of Corporate Services

RE: Ward Boundary Review

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CL 14-2024 “Ward Boundary Review” be received; and

THAT staff be directed to provide a Ward Boundary Review report using the two options for seven wards contained in the 2020 Sancton Consulting Report.

SUMMARY

This report is presented to receive direction on what manner Council wishes to proceed with a Ward Boundary Review in advance of the 2026 municipal election.

BACKGROUND

Early in this term, Council adopted the 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities plan. Under the area of Governance and Organizational Management, Council identified the need to undertake a ward boundary review.

Lambton Shores has not finalized a ward boundary review since its inception in 2001. A ward boundary review is a healthy exercise to ensure an effective and equitable system of representation on municipal Council. The goals of a review should include the balancing of the current and future population distribution between wards, respecting established communities of shared interests and history along with geographic features and defining natural boundaries. A successful ward system should ensure that all areas of the Municipality are represented fairly and accurately so that voices and needs are reflected in Council decision making and to ensure that the electoral system functions in a way that is representative of the entire community.

Legislative Authority

The Municipal Act, 2001, as amended (“the Act”) provides the legislative framework for municipalities to change its composition of council and review ward boundaries. Section 222(1) provides that a municipality is authorized to “divide or re-divide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards.” Section 222(3) requires that a municipality provides public notice that a ward boundary by-law has been passed within 15 days after

the by-law is passed. The notice must specify the last date for filing a notice of appeal. Section 222(4) of the Act states that within 45 days of the ward boundary by-law being passed, it may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (Formerly the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, and the Ontario Municipal Board before that). For any changes to be in effect for the 2026 Municipal Election, the by-law establishing new ward boundaries must be in force before January 1, 2026. This means if the by-law establishing new boundaries is appealed to the OLT, the notices of appeal must be withdrawn, or the Tribunal must have issued an order to affirm or amend the by-law before that date.

Previous Review

Council may recall that a similar priority was identified in the 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities Plan. The priority was slightly different in that a Council composition component was included in the review. At that time, the project was awarded to Andrew Sancton Consulting and in December 2020 the final report was presented.

The consultant report included recommendations for Council composition and a ward structure that would accommodate growth and population shifts for a minimum of three (3) municipal election cycles. The recommendation in the report was to reduce the number of Council members from nine to seven and create five new wards. A copy of the 2020 preliminary and final reports are attached. Council is reminded that the report is 4 years old; however, the population and elector counts in the previous review can be updated by staff to 2024 numbers.

At this time, staff is asking Council to review the options presented in the 2020 reports from Andrew Sancton Consulting to determine whether the options for ward boundary changes are to be used or whether Council wishes to engage a consultant to undertake the process again. As noted, the 2020 work did include a Council composition component as well; that goal has not been included in the current Strategic Priorities Plan but could be reviewed if Council wishes. There has been no budget allocated to do a full Ward Boundary Review in 2024.

The disparity in elector count per ward (used in the 2022 election) is very clear as shown in the chart below.

Ward	Electors	Percentage +/- Average
01	2,045	17.12%
02	2,243	28.47%
03	2,571	47.25%
04	1,616	-7.45%
05	1,447	-17.12%
06	823	-52.86%
07	1,475	-15.52%
Total	12,220	

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

Staff are requesting Council consider whether to use the options from the 2020 consultant report (with updated elector information) or engage a new consultant to do a Ward Boundary Review.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Staff recommend Ward Boundary Changes based on the 2020 Preliminary Report Options 2 or 3 prepared by Andrew Sancton Consulting Ltd.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact if Council chooses to use the options contained in the 2020 consultant report. If a full Ward Boundary Review is to be completed, staff estimate the cost to be approximately \$ 50,000-\$ 60,000. There is no budget for a Ward Boundary Review in 2024; the process would need to begin in 2024.

CONSULTATION

Steve McAuley, CAO