

Memorandum

Date: September 29, 2020

To: Members of Council

From: Laura Hall, Acting General Manager, Corporate Services / Acting Town Clerk

Subject: Ward Boundary Review Update and Public Engagement Campaign

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the progress of the Town's ward boundary review to date. Further, the related public engagement campaign is highlighted as it has recently been launched to raise public awareness about the project and seek feedback from residents.

Background and Progress

At the February 18, 2020 Town Council meeting the recommendations within [Staff Report 2020-0007](#) were adopted and staff were directed to retain a consultant to undertake a ward boundary review. Since the current ward boundaries were established in 1994, the Town's population has almost doubled, and continued growth is projected for the future. Further, entirely new communities have been developed while existing villages have expanded and changed. Therefore, the purpose of the ward boundary review is to evaluate whether updates to the Town's ward structure are necessary to improve effective representation. Through the process, key factors including future population trends, existing physical and natural boundaries and communities of interest are balanced with the principle of representation by population.

In spring 2020, Watson & Associates Economists LTD. (Watson) was retained to carry out the ward boundary review. Through June and July, 2020 staff worked to compile and provide information to Watson required for the review such as planning and building permit data, population forecasts, past electoral reports and an inventory of local community and business groups. Watson has also completed interviews with members of Council and senior Town staff to support the review.

Public Engagement Campaign

Staff are working with Watson to develop a public engagement campaign comprised of two phases. Phase 1 focuses on raising public awareness among residents and promoting interest in the ward boundary review. Online channels such as the Town's website, social media and email newsletters are being used to create interest in the project. Staff have already launched a dedicated webpage for the ward boundary review (caledon.ca/wbr) that includes the following opportunities for the public to become educated about the important project:

- frequently asked questions section with background about the project;
- short video that describes the ward system and purpose of the review;
- interactive map for residents to locate their ward and learn about Council;
- fun online quiz about the Town's history, demographics and wards; and

- online survey for residents to gather opinions on the current ward structure and priorities for a new system.

Phase 2 will focus on hosting public open house opportunities which the public can participate in to directly provide input and feedback on the ward boundary review. At present, staff intend to hold five (5) meetings at which Watson will provide a presentation on the project before answering public questions and responding to comments. Although the five (5) meetings are each intended to focus on a separate ward, any residents or other members of the public may attend. Due to COVID-19, staff are still determining if the public meetings will be conducted virtually through a similar format as WebEx or in-person.

Next Steps

As noted above, Staff have already launched Phase 1 of the public engagement campaign which will continue to provide updates to the public throughout the duration of the ward boundary review. The open house meetings will be carried out as part of Phase 2 in November 2020. Watson will then complete its analysis through the end of the year and a report will be provided to Council in the first quarter of 2021.