



Report
Staff Report
The Corporation of the City of Brampton
6/19/2024

Date: 2024-06-10

Subject: **Ward Boundary Review – Update on Population Data**

Contact: Shawnica Hans, Program Manager, Elections, City Clerk’s Office
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Report number: Legislative Services-2024-494

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Shawnica Hans, Program Manager, Elections, City Clerk’s Office to the Committee of Council Meeting of June 19, 2024, re: **Ward Boundary Review – Update on Population Data**, be received.

OVERVIEW:

- On February 28, 2024, Council passed Resolution C036-2024, directing staff to initiate an internal-led ward boundary review in advance of the 2026 Municipal Election.
- On May 10, 2024, a Council Workshop took place to provide Members of Council with an update regarding the ward boundary review and to discuss next steps. A discussion regarding population forecasts took place and Council expressed an interest in including the undercounted population as a consideration for the ward boundary review.
- This report provides an update regarding the projected population forecasts that will be used for the ward boundary review.

BACKGROUND:

Initiating the Ward Boundary Review

At its February 28, 2024 meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

Resolution C036-2024

2. That direction be provided to staff regarding a review of Council composition:
 - (i.) be based on a ten-ward model continuing, unless informed by the Province that representation by population will be established for Region of Peel Council, for Mississauga and Brampton;
3. That direction be provided to staff to:
 - (i.) Commence an internal-led ward boundary review, (including approval of Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference – Ward Boundary Review);
4. That, subject to Council approval of an internal-led ward boundary review, a budget amendment be approved and a new capital project be established in the amount of \$100,000 for public consultation and engagement, with funding to be transferred from Reserve Fund #25 – Municipal Elections;
5. That reporting thereon be brought to Committee of Council for consideration, including on appropriate phasing and the convening of a workshop; and
6. That correspondence be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advising of Ward Boundary Review underway in Brampton.

On March 7, 2024, in relation to recommendation #6 above, a letter was sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advising of the ward boundary review underway. No response has been received to date.

On May 10, 2024, staff presented a ward boundary review update at a Council Workshop. The workshop covered the following topics:

- Basic assumptions for conducting the review
- Guiding principles and review criteria
- Timelines
- Council composition scenarios
- Review of population forecasts
- Plans for public consultation
- Considerations for Council and next steps

During the workshop, questions arose from Council Members regarding the population forecasts, and a desire to include undercounted/unreported populations as part of the review. Examples of undercounted populations included the international student population in Brampton and the multi-generational population (e.g. senior parents living as part of an extended household).

At the workshop, staff indicated that opportunities to incorporate the undercounted population data would be explored.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Projected Population Forecasts

Staff has initiated a review of the ward boundaries using population forecast data provided by the Planning, Building and Growth Management department. This data results from the preliminary population forecasts provided to the Region of Peel by Hemson Consulting Ltd. and incorporates 2021 Census data.

Updated population forecasts are expected to be released by the Region in June 2024, which will incorporate Bill 23 growth targets. Planning staff will review the updated population forecasts and advise on the appropriateness of incorporating the revised figures into the data being used for the review.

Additional Population Data Sources

Since the workshop, staff has considered Council's request to include additional data sources to address undercounted populations and met with an external resource to discuss the challenge of incorporating such information into the review.

It is important to note the following considerations and possible implications of incorporating additional data sources:

Municipal Best Practices

Section 222 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that municipalities can establish, re-divide or dissolve existing wards. While the Act states that a municipality has the authority to change their ward boundaries, it does not specify how to conduct such a review or any parameters to consider – this extends to population forecast data sources.

While legislation does not provide any direction on required data sources for population forecasts, a benchmarking of other municipalities that have recently completed ward boundary reviews concludes that data used for the reviews was provided by respective Planning departments, and was based on Official Plan data, as well as Census data. No external data sources were used.

Data at the Small Geographic Unit (SGU) Level

In order to conduct the review, Planning staff provides population forecasts at the small geographical unit (SGU) level. SGUs for Brampton range in size from 0 residents up to 17,000 residents (on average there are approximately 2,000 residents per SGU).

When mapping potential boundary change options, staff moves SGUs between wards and then calculates the resulting ward population changes. This analysis helps form options for Council consideration.

Additional data sources referenced during the workshop are only available at the city-wide scale, which is not suitable for a ward boundary review. In comparison with Census data, these additional data sources may not have undergone the same level of scrutiny and review and may be considered less reliable.

Without data that is available at a smaller scale, it will be challenging for the review team to incorporate additional data sources.

Approved Population Forecasts Must be Used for Planning and Managing Growth

Population forecasts used in the Official Plan are endorsed by the City and have undergone several levels of review and scrutiny. The population forecasts currently being used for the review incorporate Census data which is the most reliable data available at the ward level. Additionally, policies within “A Place to Grow: Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe” state that population forecasts established by an upper-tier municipality are to be used for planning and managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The recently completed Development Charges Study utilized the same Official Plan data.

The outcome of the ward boundary review is appealable to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). All activities undertaken in relation to the review, as well as data sources used to conduct the review, should follow the policy direction established by the Province and best practices. If Brampton’s ward boundary review is appealed, the City must be able to rely on the data sources used to complete the review.

Next Steps Regarding Population Data

When reviewing best practices, following provincial policy direction to plan for and manage growth using established population forecasts, and the availability of reliable SGU-level data, staff will complete the ward boundary review utilizing the population forecasts approved and endorsed by the City; additional data sources will not be incorporated as part of the review.

Staff will report back to Committee of Council in September 2024 with an update and proposed options for boundary realignment.

Additionally, staff will consider the upcoming population forecast updates from the Region and Planning staff will determine if and how they can be incorporated as part of the review.

Upcoming Review Work

Public messaging, including a webpage, is being planned to inform residents about the review for launch in the coming weeks. In addition, meetings will be held with Members of Council to gain important insights about their wards.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications:

Legal Implications: There are no legal implications resulting from this report. Use of Council-endorsed Official Plan population forecast data will ensure population projections are defensible in the event of an appeal.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This report achieves the Strategic Focus Area of Government & Leadership by facilitating a dialogue on representative government.

CONCLUSION:

The ward boundary review work is proceeding using the existing population forecasts provided to the Region of Peel by Hemson Consulting Ltd. While it is understood and acknowledged that there are various elements to the undercounted population in Brampton, there is currently no available data at the SGU level which can be incorporated into the review.

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