

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 3, 2002

WARD REVIEW

Recommendation

The City Clerk in consultation with the Deputy City Manager and City Solicitor recommends that this report be received and referred to a future Working Session for full discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the electoral wards to determine if any changes are necessary or desirable prior to the 2003 election.

Background - Analysis and Options

Ward Structure

The City's current five-ward system was established prior to and came into effect for the 1994-1997 term of office. The ward boundaries that were adopted attempted so far as was practicable to create areas of relatively equal population so as to ensure proportionately equal representation reflecting the principle of representation by population. Variances in average population were permitted where necessary to accommodate communities of interest and future growth. It was anticipated that the wards that were adopted would be in place for approximately 10 years although it was acknowledged that this would be primarily dependent upon the rate of growth experienced by the municipality.

At this time it is appropriate to review the wards to determine if any changes may be necessary. According to the recent federal census the population as at May 2001 of the City and the various wards is as follows:

Ward 1	46 925
Ward 2	41 038
Ward 3	23 924
Ward 4	36 228
Ward 5	<u>33 907</u>
Total	<u>182 022</u>

It is recognized that this figure is lower than the population estimates provided by the Region of York Planning Department that estimates Vaughan's population at approximately 210,000 as at February 2002. However, the Federal census figures are based on a complete enumeration and are likely the most accurate figures available. Vaughan's population increase between 1996 and 2001 according to the census indicates that Vaughan's annual growth rate is approximately 7.5%. Applying this growth rate, Vaughan's current population is approximately 200,000.

Using the 2001 figures, Vaughan's average ward population is 36,400. As noted above, the wards range in size from Ward 1 at 46,925 to Ward 3 at 23, 924. The question whether this range in population is appropriate or acceptable is to a large extent a political one. Ideally votes should carry equal weight. Also to be considered is the workload of individual Councillors. Most recently municipalities have been allowing for plus or minus 25 per cent variance from average ward population. It is noted that the $\pm 25\%$ is based on provincial and federal guidelines. Further, the Province directed that $\pm 25\%$ be used when the City of Toronto wards were established at the time of amalgamation. This was appealed to the OMB, which upheld the use of the $\pm 25\%$

variance. In Vaughan's case $\pm 25\%$ would allow for a variance of from 27,300 to 45,500. It is recognized that Vaughan exceeds this variance.

Also to be considered is whether the population in a given ward is of a size that can be effectively represented. Again the question of whether a ward is too large to be effectively represented is largely political in nature. Factors other than population such as workload, ward make-up, development potential, et cetera, should also be considered. Chart # 1 lists a number of municipalities that are comparable to Vaughan and the ranges in population per ward. Vaughan is at the upper end with an average population per ward of 1:36,409. However, in larger municipalities the ratio is higher such as in Mississauga at 1:76,600 and in Toronto at 1:56,400.

In determining whether Vaughan residents are adequately represented it is probably more appropriate to consider the ratio of population per member of council. Chart #2 depicts these ratios for the same municipalities shown in Chart #1. In this case the figures seem to indicate that Vaughan residents are reasonably represented relative to comparable municipalities to the extent that numbers alone determine adequate representation.

Representation on Regional Council

Also on the same agenda as this report for consideration is a report addressing increased representation for the City of Vaughan on Regional Council. As part of the review for increased representation and recognizing that the trend is to fewer municipalities and fewer politicians, staff considered the feasibility of reducing the number of Local Councillors in Vaughan by one. If this were to be done, Vaughan Council could remain the same size with one more representative on Regional Council. However, the average population per ward with 4 wards would be 45,500. This would be well above the average population per ward of comparable municipalities as noted in Chart #1. Further with Vaughan's expected growth the average ward size will grow considerably. Consequently this strategy of reducing the number of wards was considered not to be feasible.

Should Council consider that additional local representation by increasing the number of wards is desirable due to the fact that Vaughan wards are too large to be able to be effectively represented, a case can be made for this increased representation. Chart #2 indicates that Vaughan has a relatively small council and Chart #1 shows that Vaughan's ratio of population per Local Councillor is on the high side. Thus it could be argued that Vaughan residents should receive additional local representation. As noted above, this runs counter to the current political direction and may not be an option Council wishes to pursue.

Conclusion

Council has a number of options depending on what it may determine an optimum ward size to be for effective representation. As noted in the report, Council could increase its size to enhance representation at the local level. Should Council consider the population variances between the wards to be inappropriate it could direct the Clerk to bring forward a report addressing new ward boundaries. Alternatively, the status quo could be maintained and a ward review conducted after the 2003 Election.

Attachments

Chart #1

Chart #2

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach, City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Leach, City Clerk

CHART #1

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION*	#OF LOCAL COUNCILLORS	#OF WARDS	RATIO
RICHMOND HILL	132,030	6	6	1:22,005
MARKHAM	208,615	8	8	1:26,076
BRAMPTON	325,428	11	11	1:29,585
LONDON	336,539	14	7	1:24,038
KITCHENER	190,399	6	6	1:31,729
HAMILTON	490,268	15	15	1:32,684
VAUGHAN	182,022	5	5	1:36,404
OAKVILLE	144,738	6	6	1:24,123
OTTAWA	744,072	21	21	1:35,432

*TAKEN FROM 2001 CENSUS

AVERAGE RATIO 1:25,580

CHART #2

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION*	COUNCIL SIZE	#OF WARDS	RATIO
RICHMOND HILL	132,030	9	6	1:14,670
MARKHAM	208,615	13	8	1:16,047
BRAMPTON	325,428	17	11	1:19,142
LONDON	336,539	15	7	1:22,435
KITCHENER	190,399	7	6	1:27,199
HAMILTON	490,268	16	15	1:30,641
VAUGHAN	182,022	8	5	1:22,752
OAKVILLE	144,738	13	6	1:11,133
OTTAWA	744,072	22	21	1:33,821

*TAKEN FROM 2001 CENSUS

AVERAGE RATIO 1:21,985