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Ward Boundary Review Terms of Reference

OBJECTIVE

To conduct a comprehensive review of the Township of Ramara's ward boundaries and make recommendations as to options that would achieve an effective system of fair representation for residents.

CONTEXT

Pursuant to section 222 of the Municipal Act, a municipal council has the authority to divide or re-divide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The review will have regard to the following guiding criteria, subject to the overriding principle of "effective representation" as set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Reference re Provincial Electoral Boundaries* and elaborated by successive OMB/LPAT decisions:

- **Representation by Population:** wards should have relatively equal population totals. However, a degree of variation is acceptable given differences in geography and population densities as well as the town's characteristics;
- **Population and Electoral Trends:** consider current and anticipated population increases/decreases so that ward sizes will be balanced for up to three terms of Council;
- **Means of Communication and Accessibility:** group existing neighbourhoods into wards that reflect current transportation and communication patterns;
- **Geographic and Topographical Features:** use geographical and topographical features to delineate ward boundaries while keeping wards compact and easy to understand; and,
- **Community or Diversity of Interests:** as far as possible, ward boundaries should be drawn around recognized settlement areas, traditional neighbourhoods and community groupings – not through them.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Having regard to the Municipal Act and the Guiding Principles, the review of the ward boundaries will consider:

1. Acceptability of the status quo;
2. Options for reconfiguration of ward boundaries;

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

In order for the Ward Boundary Review to be completed and take effect for the 2022 Municipal Election, the By-law to amend the City's Wards must be adopted and in full force and effect by December 31, 2021. Under the Municipal Act, there is a 45-day appeal period once the By-law is adopted by Council.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Council

- Approve terms of reference
- Monitor public consultation, provide input on options
- Decision maker on final recommendations

Consultant

- In consultation with the Clerk, develop a communication plan to inform the public of the ward boundary review.
- Review all pertinent background information made available by the Town
- Review OMB cases, best practices and other relevant resources
- Consult with Council, Ramara staff, school boards and any other significant stakeholders
- Organize public consultation in a manner consistent with the Township's current COVID 19 protocols in collaboration with the Clerk
- Prepare appropriate public consultation materials, which shall include a description of the process, the current ward boundary structure and provide an opportunity for the public to give ask questions, receive answers, and give input for inclusion into the review.
- Receive and review comments and submissions from stakeholders and the public
- Develop a report detailing options and present to Council for consideration

CAO, Clerk & Township Staff

- Work in collaboration with consultant, to assist in scheduling necessary consultations with Council and the public, in a manner consistent with norms of the Township
- Provide information regarding current population and projected population forecasts
- Promote the ward boundary review using normal Township communications channels
- Maintain a webpage on the review
- Draft all required staff reports to accompany the consultant's recommendation.