



Rideau Lakes – Council and Ward Structure Review

Addendum

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Background

In July 2016, the Township of Rideau Lakes (the “Township” or “Rideau Lakes”) retained StrategyCorp Inc. (StrategyCorp) to conduct a Council and Ward Structure Review (the “Review”).

On November 14, 2016, StrategyCorp presented a Final Report to a special meeting of Rideau Lakes’ Council. The Final Report included an analysis of nine different council and ward structure options, including a Preferred Recommendation and an Alternative Preferred Recommendation, as set out in the Review’s Terms of Reference.

Following the receipt of the Final Report, Rideau Lakes’ Council created an opportunity for members of the public or members of council to submit additional or alternative council and ward structure options.

One additional option (Option 3A) was received by the submission deadline on December 6, 2016.

The Township retained StrategyCorp to review and assess Option 3A according to the Evaluation Framework set out in the Final Report.¹ The scope of this engagement was limited to providing commentary on the proposed option. It did not include further public consultation or mapping related to new ward boundary adjustments.

Option 3A

Like Option 3, Option 3A consists of a seven member council, including the mayor, five ward councillors and one at large councillor. Option 3A calls for:

- The more suburban, eastern part of Ward 4 – South Elmsley be ceded to Smiths Falls; and,
- All five ward boundaries be adjusted so that the total population of each ward falls within the +/-25% range set out in the Evaluation Framework.

The submission accompanying Option 3A recommended that new ward boundaries be developed through additional public consultation.

The submission did not suggest where those ward boundaries should be, although the submission noted that the boundaries of Ward 5 – Newboro could be expanded to include parts of Wards 1, 3 and 4.

Potential Adjustment of the External Boundary of Rideau Lakes

Option 3A calls for the adjustment of the boundary between Rideau Lakes and Smiths Falls.

The adjustment of boundaries between municipalities, also referred to as municipal restructuring, is a complex process subject to a set of rules and policies set out in Part V of the *Municipal Act*. Proposals for change must be submitted in a prescribed form, following consultation with affected

¹ The Final Report is available online [here](#). The Evaluation Framework is set out beginning on page 11.

communities. Approval authority ultimately rests with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It is not a process that Rideau Lakes (or the United Counties) could undertake unilaterally.

External boundary adjustments were not contemplated by the Review’s Terms of Reference.

Without expressing any opinion on whether it would or would not be appropriate to enter into restructuring discussions with a neighbouring municipality, we note that such a process would be lengthy and could not be concluded prior to the 2018 election.

To the degree that option 3A relies on adjusting the boundary with Smiths Falls, we conclude that the option fails to meet the needs of the Terms of Reference.

Internal Ward Boundary Adjustments

Option 3A also calls for adjusting Rideau Lakes’ ward boundaries so that each ward falls within the +/-25% range set out in the Evaluation Framework.

The submission accompanying Option 3A did not specify where these boundaries should be, and calls for further public consultation to determine ward boundary adjustments.²

As an exercise in drawing lines on a map, it would be possible to create five wards within the +/-25% range.

As noted in the Final Report and seen in the table immediately below, there is a very significant imbalance in the populations of Wards 1-4 and Ward 5.

Ward	Total Population	Population per Councillor	Variance from Average
1 – Bastard and South Burgess	4,900	2,450	+21%
2 – South Elmsley	5,051	2,526	+25%
3 – South Crosby	4,379	2,190	+8%
4 – North Crosby	3,517	1,759	-13%
5 – Newboro	381	381	-81%

Figure 1: Population Variance with 9 Councillors

From a population per councillor perspective, the imbalance in the populations of Wards 1-4 and Ward 5 is exacerbated by the switch from 9 ward councillors to 5 ward councillors, as proposed under Option 3A and shown in the table immediately below.

Ward	Total Population	Population per Councillor	Variance from Average
1 – Bastard and South Burgess	4,900	4,900	+34%
2 – South Elmsley	5,051	5,051	+39%
3 – South Crosby	4,379	4,379	+20%
4 – North Crosby	3,517	3,517	-4%
5 – Newboro	381	381	-90%

Figure 2: Population Variance with 5 Councillors

² As noted above, additional ward boundary mapping is outside the scope of this addendum report.

Under a five ward councillor model, to fall within the +/-25% range included in the Evaluation Framework, a ward’s population would have to be within a range from a low of 2,734 residents (i.e. minus 25%) to a high of 4,556 residents (i.e. plus 25%).

For Ward 5 to reach the bottom of the range, it would be necessary to increase its population by an additional 2,353 residents.

One way this could be achieved is by transferring approximately 800 residents from each of North Crosby, South Crosby and South Elmsley.

Such a change would have a significant impact on the boundaries of Ward 5 as well as the other wards.

- It would increase the population of Newboro by more than 600%; and,
- It would involve changing the ward affiliation of roughly 13% of the total population of Rideau Lakes, from their existing ward to Ward 5.

Other variations would also be possible – as long as the total number of residents transferred to ward five was sufficient to get its population up to approximately 2734 residents (the lower end of the minimum).

Evaluation

Option 3A: Reduce Size, Significant Ward Boundary Changes, Add At Large Position	
Council Size	7
Method of Election	Combined
Number of Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Ward Councillors (1 per Ward) • 1 At Large Councillor
Number of Wards	5

Analysis

- The external boundary element of the proposal is not practicable under the Terms of Reference, which anticipated a change being implementable in time for the election.
- The population increase needed to bring Ward 5 into the +/-25% range would require a series of internal boundary changes that would not respect Rideau Lakes’ pre-amalgamation boundaries. Specific boundary changes were not specified by the proponent, and are beyond the scope of this addendum report.
- The goal of the proposal would seem to be the preservation of Ward 5 as a distinct community. It would be up to the eye of the beholder to determine if increasing Ward 5’s

population by more than 600% would achieve this, or whether it would fundamentally alter what makes Ward 5 a distinct, pre-amalgamation community.

- The option would seek to recognize Newboro (while fundamentally altering it) but not other villages/hamlets, and not other historic boundaries.
- At large councillor may increase Township-wide focus and create opportunities to represent additional communities of interest.
- It is unknown if the approximately 2,400 residents who would become attached to Ward 5 would consider this appropriate.

OPTION 3A: Meets Test of Effective Representation? Undetermined	
KEY FACTORS	ANALYSIS
1. Representation by Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All five wards fall within +/-25% range
2. Communities of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would change the boundaries for approximately 2400 persons • Likely to significantly change existing pre-amalgamation historical boundaries • Increase the population of Newboro by over 600% • At large councillor creates opportunity for a Township wide perspective and representation for certain communities of interest (lakefront residents, villages/hamlets)
3. Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown – would depend on where new ward boundaries are drawn
4. Quality of Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May reduce cost of council (three positions) • May increase Councillor workload • At large position may balance some workload increase • Odd numbered Council

Conclusion

A complete evaluation of Option 3A would require further work, including the development of specific ward boundary alignments.

The time required for the study and public consultation would significantly delay Council’s decision making process.

We also note that the public has not been consulted on this option.

During the public consultation, participants emphasized striking a balance between resolving representational issues and respecting historic boundaries.

This preliminary analysis points to a fundamental challenge: it is certainly possible to create five wards using a five ward councillor structure that fall within the +/-25% range included in the Evaluation Framework.

However, given the current population disparity between Wards 1-4 and Ward 5, the changes needed to transfer sufficient population into the expanded Ward 5 would alter the boundaries of the other wards so that they would no longer reflect Rideau Lakes' pre-amalgamation communities.

Indeed, as noted above, increasing the size of Ward 5 by more than 600% may fundamentally alter what makes Newboro a unique and distinct community within Rideau Lakes, potentially defeating the motive behind the option in the first place.

We conclude that it is undetermined if Option 3A could meet the test of effective representation. Core elements of the Evaluation Framework cannot be properly or fully evaluated in the absence of specific ward boundary lines.