

TOWN OF AJAX REPORT



REPORT TO: General Government Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Martin de Rond
Director of Legislative and Information Services / Town Clerk

SUBJECT: **Ajax Council Composition and Ward Boundaries Review**

WARD(S): All

DATE OF MEETING: June 13, 2016

REFERENCE: *Municipal Act, Municipal Elections Act*

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS the Council of the Regional Municipality of Durham intends to grant a fourth seat at Regional Council to the Town of Ajax; and

WHEREAS final approval of the new Regional Council Composition requires a regulation by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and successful completion of the “Triple Majority” provisions in the *Municipal Act*; and

WHEREAS an additional Regional Councillor seat, together with continuing strong but irregular population growth, requires that the Town undertake both a Council Composition Review and a Ward Boundaries Review in order that changes will be approved by the end of 2017 and in effect for the 2018 regular elections;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

1. That, based on the expectation that Ajax will be assigned four seats on Regional Council for the 2018 elections, the composition of Town Council for the 2018 elections be as follows:
 - a. That the size of Town Council be **???** members;
 - b. That Town Council be composed of:
 - i. Mayor
 - ii. Three Regional Councillors
 - iii. **???** Local (Ward) Councillors
 - c. That the Regional Councillors be elected **by Ward or At-Large**
2. That Legislative Services staff commence preliminary work on possible ward configurations to be presented to Council once a new composition of Regional Council has been finally approved; and
3. That a short list of ward configuration alternatives be presented for public consultation prior to a final recommendation being considered by Council.

BACKGROUND:

The Town's existing ward boundaries were last adjusted prior to the 2010 elections in order to better balance the Town's strong but irregular population growth across the four traditional electoral wards. It was acknowledged at that time that the eventual restoration of fair representation to Durham Regional Council would necessitate a more substantive review of the size and composition of Town Council, together with the number and configuration of electoral wards.

In March 2016, Regional Council resolved to modify the composition of Regional Council, including the granting of a fourth seat to the Town of Ajax. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently commenced the process to enact a regulation that would allow the Region to undertake "Triple Majority" process specified within the *Municipal Act*, by which the proposed new 28-member composition of Regional Council would be formally approved.

A map of the existing four electoral wards and populations from the 2011 census is attached.

DISCUSSION:

Successful completion of the Triple Majority process later in 2016 will allow the Town to study, consult and implement changes to the composition of council and configuration of wards. The deadline for changes to be in effect for the 2018 elections is December 31, 2017, which includes settlement of any potential appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board that may challenge Council's ward boundary adjustment decisions.

The addition of a fourth Ajax seat on Regional Council introduces several potential changes to the composition of Ajax Town Council and the ward system, such as:

- Changing the size of Council
 - If the size of Town Council is to be changed, what would the optimal size be and how would the seats be distributed?
 - Would changing the size of Council impact matters such as ward boundaries, Committee structure, remuneration, etc.?
 - Five, seven, nine and eleven member Councils are possible, and each configuration may be more or less appropriate than others
- Balance between Regional and Local Councillors
 - At present, the Town has two Local Councillors for each Regional Councillor (excluding the position of Mayor).
 - If the Town is to be granted a third Regional Councillor (in addition to the Mayor), would the number of Local Councillors be increased as well, or would the balance be changed instead?
- Ward Structure
 - Will changing the balance between Regional and Local Councillors or the size of Council require changing the number and boundaries of wards?
- Method of electing members
 - Might the three Regional Councillors be elected at large by all electors in the Town, like the Mayor?

The size, composition and method of electing (ward vs general vote) a local municipal council may be determined by council. While not required, it is anticipated that public consultation would be a critical part of this process.

Uncertainty about when the Regional “Triple Majority” process will be completed means that there could be significant time constraints for resolving the Council size, composition and ward configurations by the December 31, 2017 deadline.

As a result, based on the assumption that Ajax will be granted a fourth seat on Regional Council for the 2018 elections, it is proposed that Council determine at this time:

1. The Preferred Size of Council

Increasing the size of Council to nine or eleven members (or decreasing the size to five members) may create difficult scenarios for the number of local councillors and wards, and could require that Regional Councillors be elected at-large.

It is the Clerk’s recommendation that Council should remain at seven members, especially if ward elections are preferred for both Regional and Local Councillors. In such a scenario, there would be three wards in Ajax, each with one Local and one Regional Councillor.

2. Whether Members will be Elected by Ward and/or At-Large

While some Regional Councillors in Durham are elected at-large (notably Whitby and, sometimes, Oshawa), it is recommended that both Regional and Local Councillors be elected by wards in Ajax.

Settling these issues now will allow staff to proceed with detailed analysis of different ward configuration alternatives over the summer months. Once the Triple Majority is confirmed, staff will prepare a report to propose a terms of reference to guide the review of the various ward boundary alternatives and the public consultation process. Assuming this process may commence by the end of 2016, new ward boundaries should be approved by June 2017, thereby allowing some additional time in the event that appeals are filed with the Ontario Municipal Board.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The primary financial impact would be the remuneration and support costs associated with increasing the size of Council. Considerable staff time will be required to investigate and identify ward boundary options. While the full ward boundary review will be undertaken by staff, it is anticipated that some consulting costs will be required to ensure that staff work is reviewed by experts in this field. Expert review will be extremely beneficial in the event that Council’s decision is appealed to the OMB.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES:

N/A

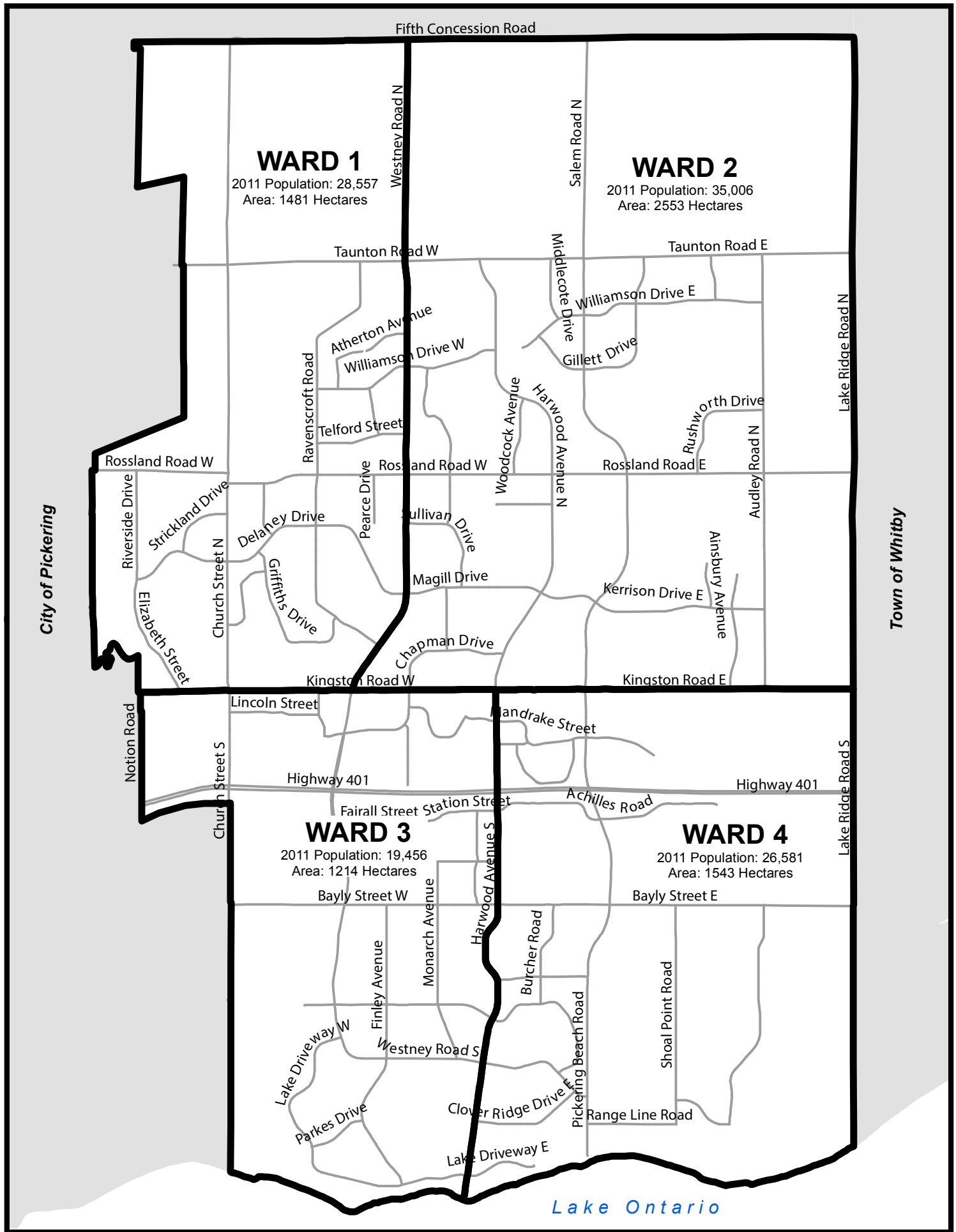
CONCLUSION:

Beginning early on the council composition issues will save valuable time and allow better management of the detailed ward boundary review process to be commenced in late 2016.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATT-1:
Town of Ajax Ward Population Map, 2011 Census

Martin de Rond, Director of Legislative and Information Services / Town Clerk



Town of Ajax
Ward Population Map
2011 - Census



Single Line Road Network © Regional Municipality of Durham. Other Sources: Town of Ajax, 2013. Census Information - Stats Canada 2011