

Consultation with Other Municipalities

1. Approach

In November 2015, Legislative and Legal Services completed research on electoral system types. This research included conducting a survey of 37 municipalities across Alberta and Canada.

There were very few municipalities to compare to that had Strathcona County's unique urban/rural blend and similar municipal legislation. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo was the only specialized municipality with similar population and provincial legislation that we surveyed. In order to maximize the information provided to Council, the scope of the criteria was broadened for selecting municipalities for the study. The following criteria was used:

- Municipalities within Alberta that have specialized municipality status (regardless of size);
- Municipalities across Canada which have the unique combination of a large urban centre and a rural area;
- Municipalities of comparable size to Strathcona County's urban population and rural population; and
- Municipalities known for sophistication within their organization.

The 37 municipalities surveyed included:

City of Airdrie	Town of Okotoks
City of Calgary	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
City of Camrose	Camrose County No. 22
City of Edmonton	Mackenzie County
City of Lethbridge	Municipality of Jasper
City of St. Albert	Lethbridge County
City of Red Deer	Red Deer County
City of Grande Prairie	County of Grande Prairie No. 1
City of Fort Saskatchewan	Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
Regina (SK)	Municipal District of Foothills No. 31
Saskatoon (SK)	Parkland County
City of Fredericton (NB)	Rocky View County
City of Brandon (MB)	Sturgeon County
City of Victoria (BC)	Town of Cochrane
City of Thunder Bay (ON)	Town of Chestermere
Cape Breton Regional Municipality (NS)	Town of Canmore
Halifax Regional Municipality (NS)	Mountain View County
Region of Queens Municipality (NS)	Clearwater County
Rural Municipality of Springfield (MB)	

Municipalities Utilizing a Ward-Based Electoral System

Municipality	Geographical Size	Rural/Urban	Population	# of Elected Officials	Electoral System	# of Wards	Single or Dual Representation	# Residents/ Ward
Brandon (MB)	465 km ²	Urban	46, 061 (2011)	11	Ward	10	Single	4, 606
Calgary	825 km ²	Urban	1, 195, 194 (2014)	15	Ward	14	Single	85, 371 (2015)
Camrose County No. 22	3, 321 km ²	Mixed (hamlets and rural)	8004 (2014)	8	Ward	7	Single	1, 103
Cape Breton Regional Municipality (NS)	2, 741 km ²	Urban	109, 330 (2001)	13	Ward	12	Single	9, 110
Clearwater County	18, 692 km ²	Rural	12, 278 (2011)	7	Ward	7	Single	1, 754
County of Grande Prairie No. 1	5, 863 km ²	Rural	20, 347 (2011)	10	Ward	9	Single	2, 260
Edmonton	699 km ²	Urban	877, 926 (2014)	13	Ward	12	Single	73, 160
Fredericton (NB)	130 km ²	Urban	56, 224 (2011)	13	Ward	12	Single	4, 685
Halifax Regional Municipality (NS)	5, 490 km ²	Urban	390, 096 (2011)	17	Ward	16	Single	24, 381
Lethbridge County	2, 838 km ²	Rural	10, 061 (2011)	7	Ward	7	Single	1, 437
Mackenzie County	80, 478 km ²	Mixed - Specialized Municipality	10, 927 (2011)	10	Ward	10	Single	1, 092
Mountain View County	3, 779 km ²	Rural	12, 359 (2011)	7	Ward	7	Single	1, 765
Municipal District of Foothills No. 31	3, 643 km ²	Rural	21, 258 (2011)	7	Ward	7	Single	3, 036
Parkland County	2, 388 km ²	Rural	30, 568 (2011)	7	Ward	6	Single	5, 094
Red Deer County	4, 042 km ²	Rural	18, 639 (2015)	7	Ward	6	Single	3, 106
Regina (SK)	145 km ²	Urban	213, 780 (2013)	11	Ward	10	Single	21, 378 (2013)

Municipality	Geographical Size	Rural/Urban	Population	# of Elected Officials	Electoral System	# of Wards	Single or Dual Representation	# Residents/ Ward
Region of Queens Municipality (NS)	2, 392 km ²	Urban	10, 917 (2011)	8	Ward	7	Single	1, 559
Rocky View County	3, 885 km ²	Rural	38, 055 (2015)	9	Ward	9	Single	4, 228
Rural Municipality of Springfield (MB)	1, 100 km ²	Rural	14, 069 (2011)	6	Ward	5	Single	2, 813
Saskatoon (SK)	170 km ²	Urban	222, 189 (2011)	11	Ward	10	Single	22, 218
Strathcona County	1, 265 km ²	Mixed - Specialized Municipality	Rural - 27, 757 Urban - 64, 733 (2015)	9	Ward	8	Single	11, 561 (2012)
Sturgeon County	2, 089 km ²	Rural	19, 578 (2011)	7	Ward	6	Single	3, 263

Municipalities Utilizing a Mixed Electoral System

Municipality	Geographical Size	Rural/Urban	Population	# of Elected Officials	Electoral System	# of Wards	Single or Dual Representation	# Residents/ Ward
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	63, 637 km ²	Mixed - Specialized Municipality	116, 407 (2012)	11	Combination - Councillors are elected at-large within wards	4	Multiple and single	29, 101
Thunder Bay (ON)	448 km ²	Urban	109,140	13	Mixed: 5 at-large Councillors and 7 ward Councillors	7	Single	15,591

Municipalities Utilizing an At-Large Electoral System

Municipality	Geographical Size	Rural/Urban	Population	# of Elected Officials	Electoral System
Airdire	33 km ²	Urban	58, 690 (2015)	7	At-large
Camrose	42.5 km ²	Urban	18, 038 (2014)	9	At-large
Canmore	68 km ²	Urban	13, 077 (2014)	7	At-large
Chestermere	32 km ²	Urban	17, 203 (2014)	7	At-large
Cochrane	30 km ²	Urban	20, 708 (2014)	7	At-large
Fort Saskatchewan	48 km ²	Urban	22, 808 (2014)	7	At-large
Grande Prairie	72 km ²	Urban	68, 556 (2015)	9	At-large
Lethbridge	127 km ²	Urban	94, 804 (2015)	9	At-large
Municipality of Crowsnest Pass	373 km ²	Mixed - Specialized Municipality	5, 565 (2011)	8	At-large
Municipality of Jasper	925 km ²	Mixed - Specialized Municipality	4, 584 (2014)	7	At-large
Okotoks	19 km ²	Urban	28, 016 (2015)	7	At-large
Red Deer	69 km ²	Urban	100, 807 (2015)	9	At-large
St. Albert	48 km ²	Urban	63, 255 (2014)	7	At-large
Victoria	19 km ²	Urban	78, 057 (2006)	9	At-large

2. How Are Ward Boundary Reviews Conducted?

The *Municipal Government Act* and the *Local Authorities Election Act* do not prescribe when or how ward boundary reviews should take place for Alberta municipalities. With the exception of City of Edmonton and the City of Calgary, most Alberta municipalities do not have a policy that outlines the timing, process and framework of ward boundary reviews.

Our survey results have indicated that there are four different ways that reviews are completed. The municipalities that we surveyed do not appoint Elected Officials to their ward boundary commission or committee as it could disadvantage the other Elected Officials.

1. Utilize internal resources consisting of the Returning Officer and staff from relevant departments to develop boundary options. These options are presented to Council who make the final decision on which one to implement. This was the approach used by Strathcona County in previous ward boundary reviews and which is currently used at the City of Edmonton;
 2. Hire an external consultant to complete the review with assistance of internal staff. Ward boundary recommendations are presented to Council who make the final decision on which option to implement;
 3. Establish a Ward Boundary Commission or Committee to review the electoral structure. The commission or committee must be established by bylaw and follow a very strict process with defined decision points, timelines, actions and processes. Recommendations are presented to Council who make the final decision which option to implement. The City of Calgary utilizes this approach when completing major revisions. Revisions are considered major when they examine the whole city as if no current boundaries existed.
 4. Establish a Ward Boundary Commission who makes the final decision. In Saskatchewan, both Regina and Saskatoon, a Municipal Wards Commission is appointed by City Council and is comprised of a Justice, a representative from the University and the City Clerk. They follow guidelines outlined in the Cities Act to develop new ward boundaries. The population cannot vary more or less than 10% of total population in each ward and must be completed at a minimum of every nine years. Once completed, they present to Council the revised ward boundaries.
- Note: Some municipalities have conducted a plebiscite to decide whether or not to change their current electoral system from one type to another.