

Toward More Effective Representation:

The Final Report of
the Ward Boundary
Commission

May 2020

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Edmonton

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FRONT MATTER		WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS	37
Letter of Transmission	3	Use of a Residents' Commission	37
Acknowledgements	4	Process and Commission Timeline	37
Executive Summary	4	City Administration Support	39
Background	6		
Mandate	7	APPENDICES	42
Policy Criteria	8	Appendix 1: Terms of Reference Ward Boundary Commission	43
Process and Methodology	9	Appendix 2: City Policy 469A Ward Boundary Design Policy	46
WARD BOUNDARY RECOMMENDATIONS	12	Appendix 3: Boundary Recommendation Rationale Sheet	50
Population Distribution Data	13	Appendix 4: Boundary Recommendation Ward Maps	52
Background Considerations	14	Appendix 5: Public Engagement What We Heard Report	64
Rationale for Recommended Boundaries	18	Appendix 6: Stakeholder Engagement Summary Report	79
WARD BOUNDARY DESIGN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	21		
Commission's Approach to Policy Review	21		
The Policy Statement	21		
Policy Purpose	23		
Definitions	23		
Criteria Section	29		
Considerations	33		
Procedure	34		

Toward More Effective Representation:

The Final Report of the Ward Boundary Commission

Your Worship and Members of City Council,

The Ward Boundary Commission, appointed pursuant to Bylaw 18893, has undertaken all requirements and completed its deliberations regarding the review of existing ward boundaries and the *Ward Boundary Design Policy*.

The Commission has the honour of submitting its final report for the consideration of Council.

Respectfully submitted,

WARD BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ward Boundaries Commission (Commission) respectfully acknowledges that public engagement, deliberations, and the preparation of this final report, took place on Treaty 6 Territory and the traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.

The Commission thanks members of the public, Councilors, and stakeholders for the valuable advice and suggestions provided throughout the boundary review process.

The Commission is also grateful for the support services provided by:

- + Office of the City Clerk, City of Edmonton
- + Geospatial Information Services, City of Edmonton;

- + City Plan, Urban Growth, and System Analytics, City of Edmonton;
- + Public Engagement Services, City of Edmonton;
- + Communications and Engagement, City of Edmonton; and
- + Maria deBruijn and the staff at Emerge Solutions, Inc.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edmonton has experienced some of Canada's most dynamic population growth over the last decade. These demographic changes have significant implications for public policy making, particularly in terms of ensuring all Edmontonians benefit from *effective representation* when it comes to their City Council.

At present, there are sizable disparities in the size of the city's twelve (12) wards – both geographically and demographically. Some neighbourhoods have grown more quickly than others, for instance, while entirely new communities have been brought into Edmonton as a result of annexation. These variances challenge the principle of voter parity: people's votes in certain parts of the city carry more weight in terms of electing a Councillor or Mayor than their counterparts' in other areas. At the same time, residents in some neighbourhoods were raising concerns about being separated from like-minded communities of interest as a result of previous ward boundary revisions.

The Ward Boundaries Commission felt a responsibility to assist Council with redrawing the City's electoral map, and revisiting the boundary revision process, to respond to these challenges.

Based on an extensive consultation process with Councillors, stakeholders, and members of the public, the Commission's recommendations highlight the need to balance the rights of individual residents, first and foremost, with the need to preserve communities of interest. This definition of *effective representation* lies at the heart of the proposed ward map and recommended revisions to the boundary design policy.

In keeping with this theme, the Commission recommends substantial changes to the shape and size of wards south of the North Saskatchewan River. These modifications are necessary to account for population shifts and expected growth in certain areas. In the north end of the City, the Commission's proposed map looks comparatively similar to the existing ward structure, with a narrower scope of revisions based on smaller population changes and feedback from residents and stakeholders.

The Commission proposes to streamline and clarify the existing ward boundary design policy to help guide future redistricting exercises. By consolidating and prioritising the factors involved, and by separating mandatory criteria from desirable considerations, the revamped policy offers clearer direction from Council as to how to achieve *effective representation* when redrawing future electoral maps.

BACKGROUND

On June 18, 2019, City Council approved *Bylaw 18893 Ward Boundary Commission* as amended by *Bylaw 19284* on April 27, 2020, for the purpose of establishing a Ward Boundary Commission as a temporary Committee of Council.

This Commission, the first in Edmonton's history, was tasked with reviewing the current state of Edmonton's ward boundaries, comprehensively evaluating the existing ward structure against the criteria established in the *Ward Boundary Design Policy*. In addition, the Commission was directed to review Council's existing *Ward Boundary Design Policy C469A* and provide recommendations to guide future ward boundary amendments.

Commission members were selected by the Executive Committee of City Council following an open competition, initial screening and interview process. The Commission was composed of seven (7) members, representing a number of perspectives in related fields, including political science, public policy, and urban planning. The City's Returning Officer (the City Clerk) was an ex officio non-voting member of the Commission, responsible for providing advice and administrative support, as required by *Bylaw 18893*.

Project Management support was provided by the Elections and Census office, who coordinated the public facing, consultation and logistical elements of the Commission's work. Elections and Census Office staff did not serve as members of the Commission.

The Commission held its inaugural meeting on September 30, 2019. In meetings throughout the fall, the Commission worked collaboratively to develop the terms of its review ([see Appendix 1](#)), including plans for public consultation. Following a period of consultation with Councillors, school boards, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, and the public (December 2019 and January 2020), the Commission produced this written report to City Council.

MANDATE

The Ward Boundary Commission was established as a temporary Council Committee, as stated in *Bylaw 18893 Ward Boundary Commission*. As such, the powers and duties of the Ward Boundary Commission, its Chair and Members are described in *City Policy C575C: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Committees*.

According to *Bylaw 18893*, the mandate of the Commission was as follows:

The Ward Boundary Commission will, within one year of the date this bylaw comes into force:

- (a) review the existing Ward Boundary Bylaw and provide a written report to Council with recommendations regarding new boundaries without increasing or decreasing the number of wards; and
- (b) review Council's Ward Boundary Design Policy, C469A, and provide a written report to Council with recommendations regarding the criteria and procedure for future ward boundary amendments.

POLICY CRITERIA

Throughout its work in proposing new ward boundaries and revisions to the manner in which future redistricting efforts should be conducted, the Commission was required to apply its collective interpretation of the criteria outlined in the existing ward boundary design policy ([see Appendix 2](#)).

The following criteria are to be used by the Returning Officer in creating or designing Ward boundaries:

2.01 Population vs. Number of Electors

The Population per Ward, not the number of Electors per Ward, will be the primary factor in designing Ward boundaries. The optimum Population per Ward will be determined by dividing the City Population by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the Population of each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

The optimum number of Electors per Ward will be determined by dividing the number of Electors in the City by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the number of Electors in each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

Respecting these "+/-" ranges will ensure that Wards are substantially equal with each other in both Population and number of Electors.

2.02 Future Growth

Ward boundaries are to be designed with the goal of lasting at least three municipal general elections before a major revision is necessary. The potential for growth or decline in each Ward over the next three elections will be taken into account by having the highest Ward Populations and number of Electors in stable or declining Wards and the lowest Ward Populations and number of Electors in growth area Wards.

2.03 Respecting Community League Boundaries

Since Community Leagues reflect the borders and concerns of neighbourhoods, Ward boundaries are to be designed so no Community League is split between two Wards.

Since Community League Boundaries are not controlled by the City and are subject to change, it may be necessary to make minor modifications to the Ward boundaries prior to the major revision planned for every three (3) municipal general elections.

2.04 Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards

Ward boundaries will be designed to ensure communities with common interests or sharing a common roadway access are kept within the same Ward.

Also, where possible, the distribution of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and green space areas between Wards will be taken into account so that each Ward contains a mixture of these developments.

2.05 Easily Identifiable Boundaries

Wherever possible, Ward boundaries will be readily identifiable to the public by utilizing major streets and significant natural and man-made barriers such as the river, ravines, railways, etc.

2.06 Least Number of Changes

Ward proposals developed by the Returning Officer should involve the fewest changes possible to accomplish the required adjustments.

2.07 Block-Shaped Wards

Ward boundaries are to be designed relatively block-shaped with straight sides. This will help to ensure that Ward boundaries are drawn impartially. Ward boundaries which are long, narrow and twisted, or have saw-toothed or indented sides are more likely to give the appearance of being designed in a biased approach to achieve a specific result.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Proceedings

On September 30, 2019, the Commission held an initial organizational meeting to review its mandate, develop its terms of reference, and sketch an initial workplan. Members also met with Emerge Solutions, Inc. regarding the strategic intent of the Ward Boundary Review Public Engagement Plan. They tasked Administration with producing an initial set of four concept maps based on the prioritization of various sets of criteria in the existing ward boundary design policy.

At its second meeting (November 5, 2019), the Commission approved its terms of reference ([see Appendix 1](#)) and phased work plan. Members also discussed and approved four phases of the public engagement plan, including elements involving Councillors, stakeholders, and the general public. The Commission also provided initial feedback on three concept maps developed for their review by Administration.

On November 26, 2019, the Commission devoted its third meeting to refining the concept maps. Two (2) concepts were finalized and approved for incorporation into the public engagement process at the Commission's fourth meeting on December 18, 2019. At the same session, the Commission refined the online engagement survey questions and tools, as well as the key messages and tactics developed by Administration to promote the public engagement activities.

Contracted by Administration, Emerge Solutions conducted a series of five (5) drop-in sessions across the City:

- + Millwoods Senior and Multicultural Centre (January 7, 2020)
- + Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre (January 8, 2020)
- + Orange Hub (January 9, 2020)
- + Abbottsfield Recreation Centre (January 14, 2020)
- + City Hall (January 15, 2020).

Several Commission members were in attendance at each of the drop-in sessions, where a total of fifty-seven (57) residents provided in-person feedback on the mapping concepts as well as elements of the design policy.

Over a thousand (1,079) residents participated in the online survey on the same topics, with an additional four (4) submissions received by the Commission via email. In total, over 5,430 individual comments were processed to produce the *What We Heard Report*. For an overview of emergent themes, [please see Appendix 5](#).

In accordance with the Ward Boundary Commission Bylaw, members of the Commission engaged with:

- + a total of ten (10) members of City Council between December 2019 and January 2020;
- + the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL), including its Executive Director and members of EFCL Administration (January 7, 2020);
- + the Edmonton Public School Board, including the Chair of the Board of Trustees and members of administration (December 11, 2020);
- + the Edmonton Catholic School District, including the Chair of the Board of Trustees and members of administration (February 11, 2020).

An invitation was extended to the Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord. No response was received.

Engagement with each of these stakeholders followed a common interview framework, probing their perceptions of the current state of ward boundaries and the *Ward Boundary Design Policy*, [see Appendix 6](#) for a summary of their input.

The Commission held its sixth meeting on January 29, 2020, to receive a status update on these public engagement processes. They also received updated population growth projections from Administration, and approved the structure of the final report. Responsibility for producing the first draft of separate sections of the report was assigned to several subgroups of members.

At its seventh meeting (February 26, 2020), the Commission reviewed the summary public engagement report produced by Emerge Solutions, Inc. Commission members held a high-level discussion about recommendations to the *Ward Boundary Design Policy*. They tasked a subgroup of members to make adjustments to the mapping concepts based on feedback from the public engagement sessions and newly-available population data.

The Commission convened its eighth meeting virtually (March 17, 2020). Members discussed the potential impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on the Commission's work. Commission members expressed a desire that Administration's resources are allocated to areas of emergent need. The Commission agreed to move to an ad-hoc working model, and to suspend in-person meetings and to review milestones within the approved Report Development plan. Commission members and subgroups agreed to continue to work on assigned sections of the draft report as individual circumstance allowed.

The Commission held its ninth meeting on April 7, 2020, again on a virtual basis. Members of the Commission agreed that they continued to have the individual and collective capacity to deliver the final report to Council as assigned. In light of pressures facing Council's agenda, the Commission passed a motion to support Administration's request that bylaw adjustments be made to allow the Ward Boundaries Commission's report to be presented at a later date, if necessary (*Bylaw 19284* on April 27, 2020). The Commission narrowed their focus to a single concept map, requesting minor revisions be made for final consideration. Members also reviewed and provided feedback on the first draft of the policy recommendations.

The Commission's tenth meeting was convened on April 28, 2020. Members addressed remaining questions and concerns with the draft sections of the final report.

The Final Report was discussed, and the anticipated presentation to Council on May 25, 2020, was discussed, at the Commission's eleventh meeting on May 12, 2020.

The Final Report was approved at the Commission's twelfth and final meeting on May 13, 2020.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The Commission relied upon Administration to provide advice on a general approach to their work, based upon Administration's preparatory research into the methods used by other select Canadian municipalities, best practices, and the available data, resources, and the timeline provided. For further information on the public engagement processes, please see the *What We Heard Report* ([see Appendix 5](#)). For data inputs, the Commission primarily used population broken down by neighbourhood and Ward, and late in the process was provided growth projections by neighbourhood.

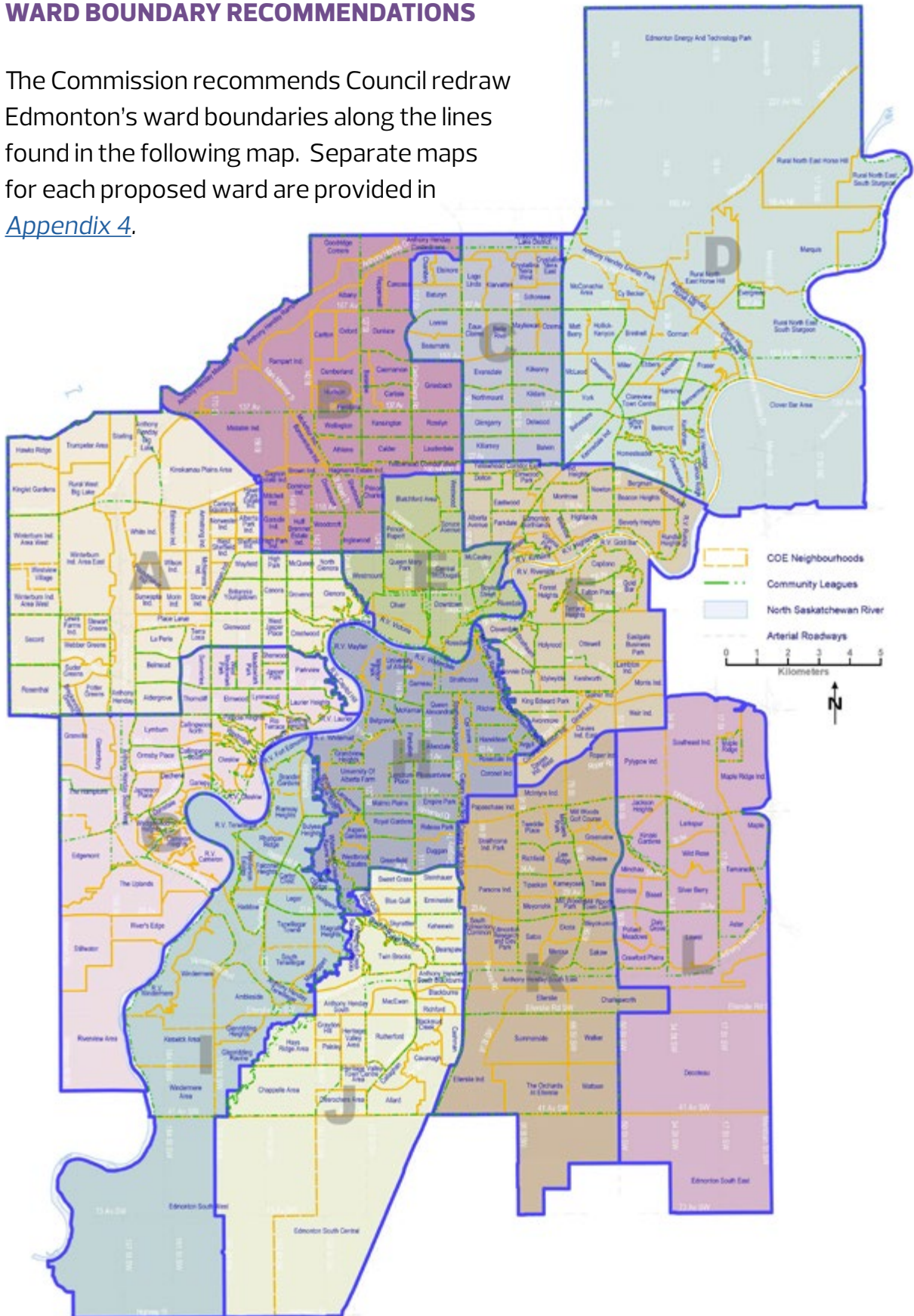
To support the calculation of variances and growth potential, the Commission relied on Administration's support in obtaining and analyzing several sets of population data. The population of current wards and the corresponding variances were determined through an application of data extracted from the 2019 Municipal Census. Population projections for each of the proposed wards were created by the City Planning branch of Administration in support of the draft City Plan.

This methodology factors in a changing urban form and different distributions and densities of population over time as Edmonton grows from 1 to 2 million people. It blends statistical data available through plans such as Area Structure Plans and Neighbourhood Structure Plans with an application of a neighbourhood lifecycle model that anticipates how local infrastructure development and demographic shifts within the local population might impact mature communities through proposed policy articulated in the draft City Plan.

All new population and employment growth is planned to occur within Edmonton's existing municipal boundary. The information presented is based on estimates for the distribution of 1.25 million people specifically.

WARD BOUNDARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends Council redraw Edmonton's ward boundaries along the lines found in the following map. Separate maps for each proposed ward are provided in [Appendix 4](#).



POPULATION DISTRIBUTION DATA

The following data corresponds with the recommended ward boundaries map.

Ward	2019			2030 (projected)		
	Population ¹	Variance ² (%)	# Eligible Voters ³	Variance	Population ⁴ <i>(approx)</i>	Variance (%)
		from Optimum of 81019		from Optimum of 51950		from Optimum of 103750
A	74121	-8.52	48573	-6.50	102000	-1.69
B	88375	9.08	56003	7.80	104000	0.24
C	83002	2.45	55003	5.88	93000	-10.36
D	84971	4.88	52425	0.91	97000	-6.51
E	70089	-13.49	50012	-3.73	96000	-7.47
F	85049	4.98	64703	24.55	105000	1.20
G	91654	13.13	60466	16.39	102000	-1.69
H	74205	-8.41	50544	-2.71	90000	-13.25
I	76628	-5.42	46231	-11.01	117000	12.77
J	76058	-6.12	43864	-15.56	115000	10.84
K	88382	9.09	52371	0.81	119000	14.70
L	79286	-2.14	43210	-16.82	105000	1.20



¹ Source – 2019 Municipal Census, City of Edmonton

² As per City Policy C469A Ward Boundary Design Policy, “The optimum Population per Ward will be determined by dividing the City Population by the number of Wards.”

³ Source – Elections Alberta, 2019

⁴ Source – City Plan, Urban Growth, and System Analytics, City of Edmonton

BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

In developing the recommended ward boundaries, the Commission drew on a number of resources and considerations. These included consultations with key stakeholder groups, including City Councillors, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton Catholic School District, as well as public engagement, both in person as well as online ([see Appendix 5](#) and [Appendix 6](#)). Additionally, the Ward Boundary Commission was guided by the *Ward Boundary Design Policy* in the development of its recommendations.

To the greatest extent possible, the Commission adhered to the *Ward Boundary Design Policy* in the development of concept maps that would be used for public engagement. The criteria, as well as Edmonton's geography and growth, created challenges for the development of the map. Examples of challenges included:

- + Significant natural and human-made boundaries (criterion 2.5) made the creation of block-shaped wards (criterion 2.7) difficult, particularly given the presence of the geographical or human-made features (e.g., the North Saskatchewan River, Whitemud Ravine, Mill Creek Ravine, Yellowhead Drive, Whitemud Drive, and Anthony Henday Drive).
- + Because Community Leagues are not consistent in size or shape, and are not present uniformly throughout the city, criterion 2.03 prompted changes to the ward boundaries that were not necessarily congruent with the Commission's preference to achieve effective representation, including the 'one person, one vote' principle.
- + Areas in southern Edmonton are projected to grow at a faster rate than other parts of the city, making a more balanced distribution of population among wards more difficult to achieve, particularly without the ability to increase the number of wards.

Two (2) concept maps were presented as part of the Commission's public engagement. The concepts allowed for public feedback to be collected on major themes about the ward boundary development process and the wards themselves.

It is important to note that the Commission made significant effort to communicate that the maps presented for public and stakeholder engagement were concepts, not final options. They were designed to facilitate meaningful discussion about effective representation.

Out of respect for the value of public engagement, the Commission strived to avoid presupposing public sentiment regarding mapping options, and as a result it waited until after public engagement was complete to develop a final map.

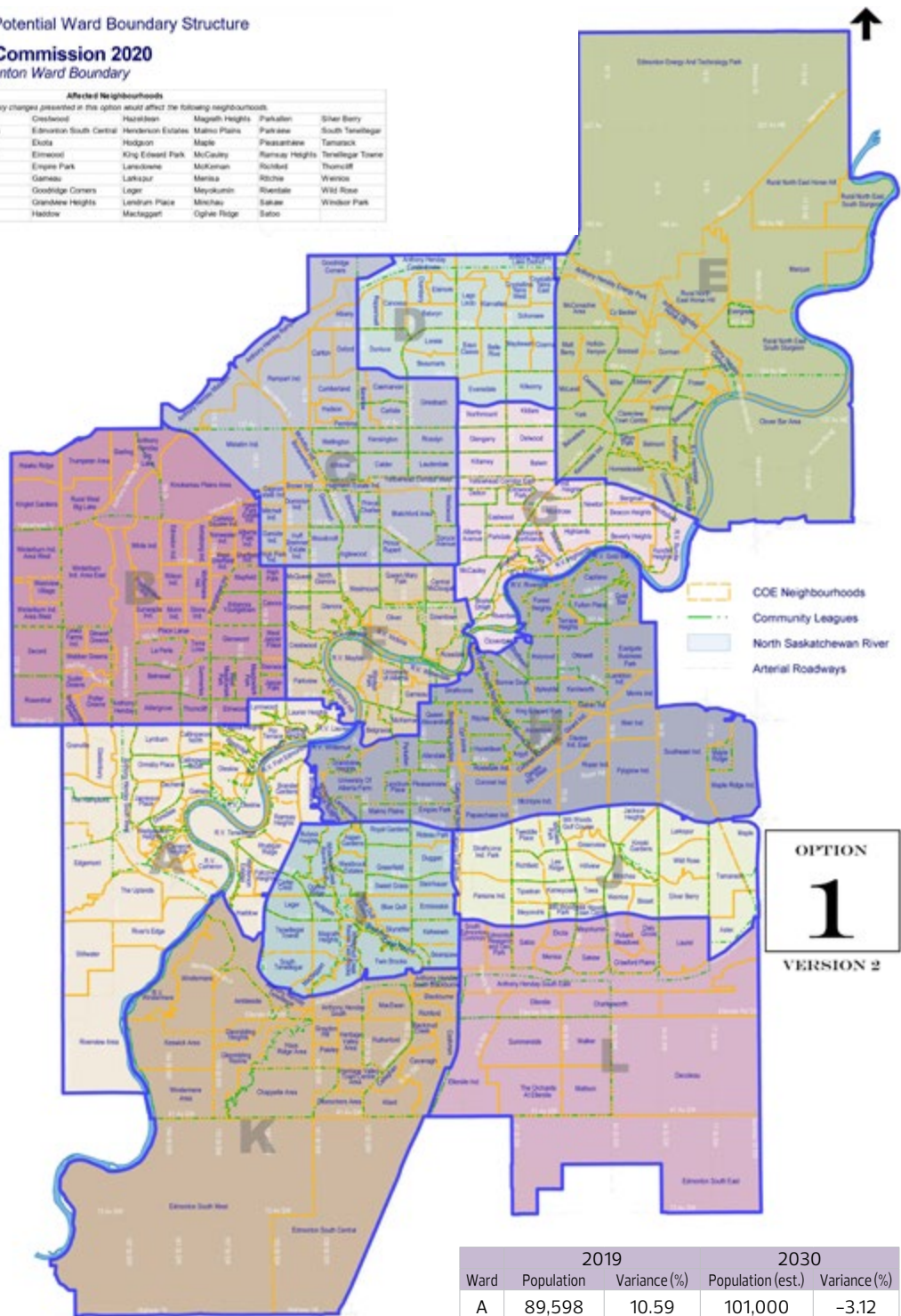
The Commission is conscious that its recommended map differs from the two (2) concept maps that were presented during public engagement. It is also important to note that, in preparing its final recommendations to Council, the Commission applied a lettering order starting at the top left and continuing down left to right. This means that the ward labels in the two (2) concept maps are different from the ones found in the recommended boundary map.

Ward Boundary Commission 2020
 Prioritizing City of Edmonton Ward Boundary

Affected Neighbourhoods

The boundary changes presented in this option would affect the following neighbourhoods:

Albert	Blythe Street	Crestwood	Hazelgreen	Magrath Heights	Parkview	Silver Berry
Altendale	Blonder Gardens	Edmonton South Central	Henderson Estates	Malmo Plains	Parkview	South Tenetlagar
Argyll	Brookside	Exalta	Hodgson	Maple	Pleasantdale	Tamarack
Austin	Buysra Heights	Emerson	King Edward Park	McCaughey	Romney Heights	Tenetlagar Towne
Avalonpark	Colaghan	Empire Park	Lambertown	Mulholland	Rosburg	Thornhill
Belgrave	Carfax Crest	Garnets	Larkspur	Merisa	Robiche	Wenlock
Bloss	Castman	Goodridge Corners	Leger	Meysokum	Rivendale	Wild Rose
Blackburne	Cavanagh	Grandview Heights	Lendrum Place	Mitchau	Sabae	Windsor Park
Blackmut Creek	Clevedale	Hastrow	Mactaggart	Ogive Ridge	Saboo	



Option 1 presented options that saw Wards A and F (as labelled in this specific concept) crossing the river.

This allowed the commission to receive feedback on the idea of having a ward that bisects the river, as well as the concept of a ward that included both downtown and the University of Alberta North Campus.

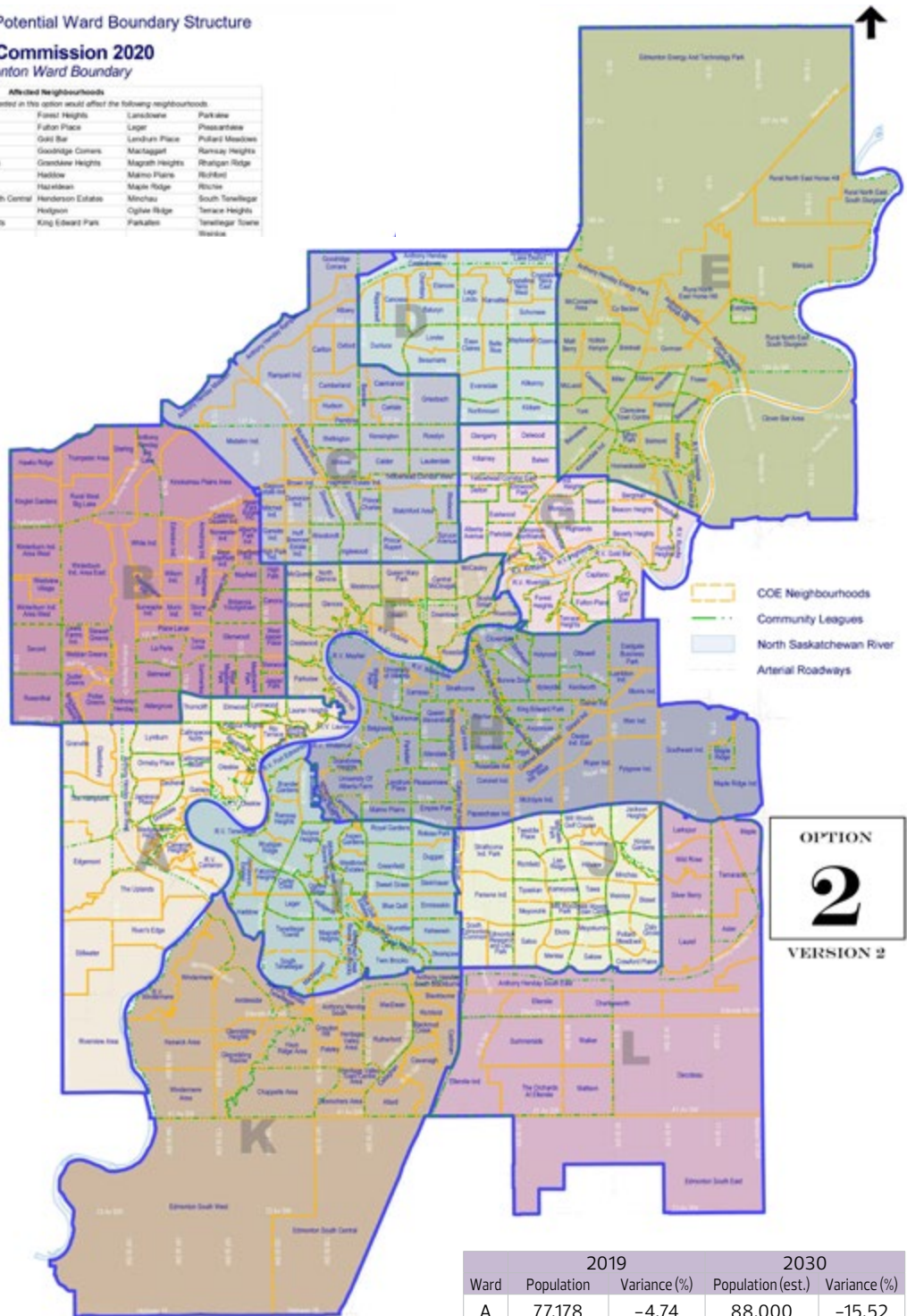
Ward	2019		2030	
	Population	Variance (%)	Population (est.)	Variance (%)
A	89,598	10.59	101,000	-3.12
B	79,859	-14.32	108,000	3.60
C	82,467	1.79	101,000	-3.12
D	74,993	-7.44	85,000	-18.47
E	84,963	4.87	97,000	-6.96
F	78,602	-2.98	105,000	0.72
G	77,622	-4.19	94,000	-9.84
H	87,294	7.75	107,000	2.64
I	80,131	-1.10	87,000	-16.55
J	81,333	0.39	101,000	-3.12
K	70,251	-13.29	143,000	37.19
L	84,795	4.66	122,000	17.03

Ward Boundary Commission 2020
 Prioritizing City of Edmonton Ward Boundary

Affected Neighbourhoods

The boundary changes presented in this option would affect the following neighbourhoods:

Altard	Caplans	Forest Heights	Lansdowne	Parkview
Albion	Carleton Place	Fulton Place	Leger	Prossermead
Argyll	Carleton	Gard Stee	Lansdowne Place	Pulford Meadows
Aurora	Cawston	Goodridge Corners	Macgregor	Rainbow Heights
Bassett	Crescent Plains	Goodshaw Heights	Magrath Heights	Royalton Ridge
Blackburne	Crestwood	Hawthorn	Mahiro Plains	Rutherford
Blackmut Creek	Daily Grove	Hazeldeen	Maple Ridge	Riviera
Brander Gardens	Edmonton South Central	Henderson Estates	Minchau	South Tawellage
Brookside	Empire Park	Holmgren	Cyprus Ridge	Terrace Heights
Buyles Heights	Falconer Heights	King Edward Park	Franklin	Towneview Square



Option 2 presented a more compact downtown ward, and Ward G (as labelled in this specific concept) that included neighbourhoods on both sides of the river.

Additionally, Option 2 presented Millwoods as a contiguous ward, rather than dividing a potential community of interest in half.

This impacted the shape of Ward L (as labelled in this specific concept), which lost its block-shaped characteristic as a result.

Ward	2019		2030	
	Population	Variance (%)	Population (est.)	Variance (%)
A	77,178	-4.74	88,000	-15.52
B	73,506	-9.28	101,000	-3.04
C	82,467	1.79	101,000	-3.04
D	81,141	0.15	91,000	-12.64
E	84,971	4.88	97,000	-6.88
F	78,492	-3.12	103,000	-1.12
G	70,912	-12.48	84,000	-19.35
H	87,970	8.58	113,000	8.48
I	98,907	22.08	106,000	1.76
J	77,951	-3.79	81,000	-22.23
K	70,251	-13.29	143,000	37.27
L	78,993	-2.50	142,000	36.31

The Commission heard a number of messages through stakeholder engagement which influenced its recommendations. A full summary of the feedback that the Commission received is available in [Appendix 6](#).

Finally, the Commission considered data provided by the City of Edmonton regarding anticipated future growth. This was a critical piece of data, given the dynamic growth that Edmonton has experienced and will continue to experience. An inherent tension exists in the *Ward Boundary Design Policy* with regard to growth. Criterion 2.01 requires that wards maintain a range of +/- 25% of the optimum, or average, ward population. Criterion 2.02 projects a goal of ward boundaries that can remain largely unchanged for three (3) election cycles.

Accomplishing this requires larger populations in wards that are unlikely to grow significantly, and smaller populations in wards that are likely to grow significantly, while taking into account the +/- 25% range for both current ward population as well as anticipated future ward population.

The City of Edmonton provided the Commission with population projections for the year 2030, down to the neighbourhood level. Growth is not projected to be geographically uniform, with significant growth concentrated in the south and west of the city and other high-growth pockets within mature parts of the city, with relative stability in established neighbourhoods. This dynamic and uneven growth presents a significant challenge for developing ward boundaries that will continue to provide effective representation for multiple election cycles.



RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDED BOUNDARIES

In developing the recommended ward boundaries, the Commission took into consideration the *Ward Boundary Design Policy*, stakeholder and public engagement, and data provided by the City of Edmonton. All of these considerations impacted the development of the recommended ward boundaries.

The following considerations were particularly impactful in the development of the recommended boundaries:

Equal representation, as measured primarily by population of residents

The Commission prioritized the *Ward Boundary Design Policy's* emphasis on resident population rather than population of electors. As a modern global city with a young population, Edmonton's members of Council are responsible for representing young people who have not reached voting age, as well as non-citizens who are not entitled to vote under the *Local Authorities Election Act*. Ward boundaries should be created taking these populations into consideration even if they are not entitled to vote.

The Commission was able to compare the amount of electors per ward in 2019. This data is sorted by postal codes and is therefore an imperfect indicator of the number of electors within wards. All proposed wards are within the +/- 25% variance threshold for number of electors. The Commission was unable to provide data for the number of electors per ward in 2030 that was sufficiently reliable.

Maintaining as low a population variance as feasible

In public engagement, the Commission heard concerns regarding the size and population discrepancy among current wards, as well as the current +/- 25% allowable variance for ward populations.

The Commission agrees that the variance currently allowed under the policy has the potential to create inequitably large population discrepancies, as large as 50% variance between a large and a small ward. As outlined in the Policy Recommendations section of this report, the Commission urges Council to consider reducing this allowable variance for future boundary adjustments. In creating its recommended map, the Commission kept variance for current population and projected 2030 populations to under 15%, and in most cases under 10%.

Resilience of ward boundaries

In developing ward boundaries, the Commission worked to ensure that the boundaries could withstand population growth and remain stable for three (3) election cycles. The Commission did this in two (2) different ways. First, the Commission proposed wards with lower current populations in areas where significant growth is anticipated. Second, where possible, the Commission structured wards in such a way as to balance growing areas with stable areas. Specifically, the Commission sought to balance neighbourhoods that were envisioned to have low or no anticipated growth with neighbourhoods that were envisioned to have higher anticipated growth. This results in more stable growth in population across different wards and more resilient ward boundaries. In doing this, the Commission worked to ensure that considerations such as natural and human-made boundaries as well as communities of interest were also taken into consideration.



For instance, proposed Wards I, J, and L are below the optimal ward population currently, but are projected to be significantly above the optimal population in 2030 due to population growth. These wards were structured in a north-south orientation to balance the population stability of more central neighbourhoods with the anticipated growth of southern neighbourhoods.

The neighbourhood as the basic unit for building wards

The Commission strived to maintain neighbourhoods as distinct units within wards, and not to split neighbourhoods between wards. While Community League boundaries often coincide with communities of interests and neighbourhood boundaries, this is not uniformly the case. For this reason the focus of the Commission was maintaining neighbourhood integrity.

Natural and human-made boundaries are important, but not impermeable

The geographic and human-made landscape of Edmonton helps to create distinct areas and communities. However, these demarcations are not impermeable, and are a secondary consideration to issues like communities of interest and future growth.

The Commission members agreed that proposed wards may straddle natural and human-made barriers if there is a fair distribution of neighbourhoods on either side of the barrier.

For instance, proposed Ward F contains neighbourhoods on both sides of the North Saskatchewan River. The Commission found this to be an acceptable proposal because it did not involve one or two isolated neighbourhoods on one side or the other, but rather includes significant populations both north and south of the river.

Similarly, proposed Wards A, D, G, I, J, K, and L are bisected by Anthony Henday Drive, though significant populations live on both sides. Conversely, proposed Ward B contains a single neighbourhood north of Anthony Henday Drive and proposed Ward D has neighbourhoods south and east of the North Saskatchewan River as well as neighbourhoods northeast of Anthony Henday Drive. Another example is proposed Ward I, which has a single neighbourhood north and east of Whitemud Drive and west of the Whitemud Ravine. Typically the Commission would not isolate a neighbourhood in this way, however the man-made boundaries of the city make it unavoidable in these cases.

Representing communities of interest and diversity within wards

The Commission heard mixed feedback on the issues of communities of interest and diversity during its stakeholder and public engagement sessions. On the one hand, the Commission heard about the importance of maintaining communities of interest within the confines of a single ward. On the other hand, the Commission heard about the importance of preserving diversity within wards, both in terms of interests as well as land use.

The Commission attempted to identify and align neighbourhood interests, priorities, and character in making decisions regarding the placement of ward boundaries. Following feedback garnered from the public engagement, the Commission also strived to support diversity within wards. Through developing the Ward Boundary and policy recommendations, the Commission attempted to appropriately balance these concepts by representing a diverse array of communities of interests within each ward without splitting those communities of interest among wards.

Considerations by ward

Appendix 3 provides a high-level, but not exhaustive, summary, of some of the special considerations that influenced boundary determinations for each ward.

Note: Wards in this proposal are designated by letter, rather than number. This is an intentional differentiation from Edmonton's current ward system, which is numbered. This is to avoid a direct comparison between the current wards with the proposed ward boundaries, some of which are significantly different from the current map.

The Commission does not have a formal position on whether wards should have numbers or letters. However, the Commission recommends considering a system that is more intuitive to residents than the current one.

WARD BOUNDARY DESIGN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended ward boundaries were drawn under the guise of the existing *Ward Boundary Design Policy*. Council also tasked the Commission with reviewing the policy to provide “recommendations regarding the criteria and procedure for future ward boundary amendments.”

Commission's Approach to Policy Review

In defining the term “policy”, the Commission informally developed the following framework:

A Council policy provides direction to assist Administration in carrying out their mandate. Council policies are optimal where there is a lack of statutory direction, where Council has the purview and desires to supplement statutory direction, and where Council has a specific expectation in what and how things are done, to what standard or level, in order to achieve a policy or outcome. A Council policy should be at a governance level, with administrative/operational detail left to Administration to sort through, congruent with bylaws enabling Administration. Policies should have longevity, although it is expected that each Council will review its policies to ensure they support the policy objectives. With procedural details left to Administration, the longevity of the policy is supported, because how things are done can and should change with the times and should not be hampered by unnecessary Council approval process.

Prior to undertaking any work, the Commission reviewed and discussed the existing *Ward Boundary Design Policy* to arrive at a consensus about expectations laid out in the policy. The Commission collectively provided comments on each section of the policy in November 2019 and then again in February 2020, while also making observations about its experience in applying the current policy to the boundary redesign and public engagement activities. Based on the above framework, public and stakeholder engagement, observations and discussions, the Commission has the following recommendations for updating the policy.

The Policy Statement

The Policy Statement is a concise account of Council's policy objective, philosophy, or desired outcome. According to the existing Policy Statement:

“Clear, distinct and easily identifiable ward boundaries are essential to the municipal election process. Ward boundary design should also respect the democratic principle of “one-person, one-vote” by striving to keep ward populations substantially equal.”

The Commission recommends that the following policy statement replace the existing policy statement:

Ward boundaries shall be reviewed and adjusted periodically to maintain Effective Representation. Effective Representation requires that boundaries are drawn with primary regard to Voter Parity, while considering Communities of Interest and other Criteria and Considerations that enhance Effective Representation.

In reviewing the existing policy statement the Commission reflected on the following underlying questions:

- + What is the fundamental guiding principle that should guide ward boundary development?
- + What is the purpose of ward boundaries?

The Commission approached addressing these questions by looking at the existence of direction or guidance across Canada.

The Commission looked into any provincial guidance or requirements for ward boundary design, and found none. The *Alberta Municipal Government Act* does not prescribe how wards are designed, only that Councils may create them, S.148 (2): "A council may by bylaw (a) divide the municipality into wards and establish their boundaries".

The Commission believes that modeling the electoral structures of the higher orders of government is prudent in that residents would reasonably expect there to be consistency in electoral structural matters. For this reason, the Commission looked at the federal legislative framework for any relevant guidance, understanding that municipalities are within provincial jurisdiction but approaching the issue from a contextual perspective.

As elections are a definitive feature of our democracy, the Commission also consulted the constitution for fundamental guidance. The *Canadian Constitution Act 1982*, Part 1, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, S. 3, establishes the following democratic right of citizens:

"Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein."

While the Constitution does not have much to say about boundary design, the Supreme Court of Canada provided thoughtful guidance on the subject in the *Supreme Court Reference Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.) 1991*. The specific case is about provincial boundaries, but the Commission believes it is prudent to follow the Court's reasoning in drawing Edmonton's ward boundaries. The Commission agreed to refer to the Supreme Court reference as the guideline in the absence of provincial legislation or direction.

Across most jurisdictions in Canada, including Toronto, Winnipeg, and Saskatoon, there is broad agreement that the Saskatchewan decision should guide approaches to redistricting.

In particular, the Supreme Court Reference provides the following guidance:

*"The purpose of the right to vote enshrined in s. 3 of the Charter is not equality of voting power per se but the right to 'effective representation'. The right to vote therefore comprises many factors, of which equity is but one. The section does not guarantee equality of voting power. Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation. Deviations from absolute voter parity, however, may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility or the provision of more effective representation. Factors like geography, community history, community interests and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. Beyond this, dilution of one citizen's vote as compared with another's should not be countenanced."*¹

Based on this guidance, the Commission recommends that the Policy Statement be revised to encapsulate the notion of Effective Representation with reference to the other factors listed in the Reference.

Specifically, the Commission determined that Effective Representation requires that boundaries are drawn with a balance of *individual* (one person, one vote) and *group* (communities of interest) concerns in mind. Per the Supreme Court's guidance, Voter Parity should be the primary consideration, with deviations based on group factors being justified accordingly. The factors to be taken into account are provided under the Criteria section of the policy.

¹ Supreme Court of Canada. 1991. *Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>

POLICY PURPOSE

The Commission supports the existing Purpose elements of the *Ward Boundary Design Policy* and has no changes or recommendations.

DEFINITIONS

The Commission spent a considerable time discussing key terms in the *Ward Boundary Design Policy* – *what they mean and how to apply them*. Some of the key terms were defined within the Criteria section; some were in the Definitions but required more clarity; others were not defined at all.

The Commission recommends expanding the Definitions section of the policy by adding key terms used within the policy.

Embedding explanations of key terms in the Definitions will support consistency in policy interpretation in future boundary review efforts while improving efficiency. Definitions provide clarity and assist interpretation of the policy, and are consistent with how bylaws are written.

The Commission recommends revising the Policy to incorporate the following definitions:

RECOMMENDED DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<p>Average Population</p> <p>The Average Population per Ward is determined by dividing the City Population by the number of Wards.</p>	<p>The current policy talks about <i>optimum population</i>, where in fact it means <i>average population</i>. The term Average Population is more precise and clearer. The term “Optimum” suggests that voter parity is ideal, whereas Effective Representation involves both individual and group-based factors.</p>
<p>Average Number of Electors</p> <p>The Average Number of Electors is determined by dividing the Number of Electors in the City by the number of Wards.</p>	<p>The current policy uses the term <i>optimum number of Electors</i>, where in fact it means <i>average population</i>.</p>
<p>Community League Boundary</p> <p>The boundary of a community league as established by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.</p>	<p>This is the current definition, no change recommended.</p>

RECOMMENDED DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<p>Communities of Interest</p> <p>Typically considered as those groups of people within a geographic area that share a common set of attributes, goals, or pursuits.</p> <p>Geographically localized community within the larger city, social communities with considerable in-person interaction among residents which provide the personal settings and situations where residents seek to realise common values, socialise youth, and maintain effective social control.</p> <p>Of relevance are interests primarily determined through proximity/geographic location. The attributes of Communities of Interest may be historical or dynamic. Attributes can be defined according to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + location, as with a neighbourhood or a set of boundaries, including Community Leagues, school catchment areas, and Business Revitalization Zones; + the product of a common pursuit, such as shared local improvement concerns and neighbourhoods with longstanding mutual engagement; + the presence of a common trait, such as shared neighbourhood maturity and design, or common socio-economic characteristics (e.g., social, cultural, historical, or demographic composition), or economic ties. + any other factor that a Ward Boundary Commission deems is demonstrative of the existence of a community. 	<p>The Commission spent a significant amount of time trying to determine the meaning of the term “communities of interest”. The Commission generally shared the view as expressed by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada in his 2005 recommendations to Parliament to amend the <i>Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act</i>:</p> <p><i>“The difficult task of an electoral boundaries commission is to determine which of the many overlapping communities that exist in our society (if any) is most salient to people’s effective representation, and to balance that determination with the predominant goal of population equality... adding to the Act an open list of factors that are generally understood as possible contributors to the definition of a community may help commissions decide between competing concepts of community...The list of factors that may be considered should not be closed. In any instance where a case can be made that a particular community should be taken into account to achieve the goal of effective representation, the commission must feel free to consider that factor.”</i>²</p> <p>The Commission determined that Community Leagues, School Catchment Areas, and Business Revitalization Zones as examples of Communities of Interest. Whereas the existing policy references school board boundaries, through consultations with the school boards and the public, the Commission’s insight was that catchment areas better reflect the needs of residents and their view of the world, more than school board boundaries.</p> <p>Input from Stakeholders consulted by the Commission cautioned against defining Communities of Interest in a manner that may be perceived as prioritizing the interests of a particular socio-economic or demographic group. While grouping residents with similar perspectives and priorities remains important to ensuring Effective Representation, there is a risk of organized and active interests dominating the views of residents who are less vocal or organized. Wherever possible, the Commission felt that each Ward should encompass a diverse set of Communities of Interest.</p>

² Elections Canada. “Enhancing the Values of Redistribution. Recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada Following the Representation Order of 2003.” Government of Canada. May 2005. Source: https://elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/recom_redis&document=ch2&lang=e#a

RECOMMENDED DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<p>Electors/Number of Electors</p> <p>Eligible Voters, as defined by the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i>. The Number of Electors shall be the latest Elections Alberta <i>List of Electors</i>.</p>	<p>The Commission recommends adding the official source for determining the number of Electors to ensure ongoing comparability of data; the City of Edmonton does not have a register of electors.</p>
<p>Effective Representation</p> <p>Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation. Effective representation and good government compel that other factors, such as geography and community interests, be taken into account in setting electoral boundaries to represent the diversity of the social mosaic. However, there cannot be wide variations in population size among the Wards.</p>	<p>The Commission was not able to locate an authoritative definition for Effective Representation, but this principle is at the heart of the <i>Ward Boundary Design Policy</i>. The Supreme Court of Canada's 1991 Reference, in whole, is as close as there is to a definition; for this reason the Commission captured the reasoning provided by the Supreme Court Justices.</p> <p>During the engagement phase of its work, the Commission heard Council members indicate that their ability to be effective is considerably affected by factors such as the geographic size of their wards, the number of people in their wards, and the organized Communities of Interest active in their wards, among other factors that are not related to Ward boundaries. This reality is acknowledged in the definition and addressed through the boundary design criteria and service standards. Public input also specified that boundaries should support effective representation.</p> <p>A system that dilutes one citizen's vote unduly as compared with another citizen's vote runs the risk of providing inadequate and unfair representation.³ The ability of elected officials to effectively represent the population in their Wards is included in this definition.</p>

³ Supreme Court of Canada. 1991. *Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>. This definition is based on the reasoning per Gérard V. La Forest, Charles Doherty Gonthier, Beverley McLachlin, William Stevenson and Frank Iacobucci: "Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation. Deviations from absolute voter parity, however, may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility or the provision of more effective representation. Factors like geography, community history, community interests and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. Beyond this, dilution of one citizen's vote as compared with another's should not be countenanced."

RECOMMENDED DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<p>Growth</p> <p>Population growth as projected by the City, based on sources such as Area Structure Plans, growth analysis and demographic modelling. The growth in the Number of Electors shall be taken from sources such as Elections Alberta and extrapolations of relevant data provided by Administration. Population Growth and the Number of Electors are forecast at the neighbourhood level.</p>	<p>Having officially identified data sources and expectations for modelling would expedite future boundary review work in that Administration could then be more prepared to provide timely data analysis.</p>
<p>Major Adjustment</p> <p>A boundary adjustment with a scope encompassing a significant number of Wards or looking at the entire City Ward structure.</p> <p>Minor Adjustment</p> <p>A boundary adjustment limited in scale and affecting a small portion of the City, e.g., local, neighbourhood level adjustment between two Wards; or a minor corporate boundary adjustment that affects one or two Wards.</p>	<p>The Commission determined that a formal distinction is necessary to help determine whether a boundary adjustment could be made by Administration (<i>Minor</i>) or whether a Boundaries Commission should be struck (<i>Major</i>).</p>

RECOMMENDED DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<p>Neighbourhood</p> <p>The City of Edmonton defines distinct technical boundaries, which may be different from residents' conception of their social neighbourhoods (as exemplified by discrete neighbourhoods covering purely industrial or commercial areas), but they provide a known and identifiable unit to work from.</p> <p>The <i>Neighbourhood</i> is the basic constituent unit of Ward boundaries.</p>	<p>The Commission determined that there needs to be a formally identified basic unit, the Neighbourhood, which serves as the building block for creating Wards.</p> <p>Wards, therefore, comprise a set of abutting Neighbourhoods.</p>
<p>Population/City Population</p> <p>The total number of people residing within the municipal boundary of the City of Edmonton; and at a Ward level, within the boundaries of the Ward. Population numbers shall be taken from the latest federal census or municipal census, whichever is the most recent.</p>	<p>The official data source should be included to expedite work and to ensure consistency in periodic reviews. Administration advised the Commission that the frequency of the municipal census is under review, therefore the data source is twofold.</p>

RECOMMENDED DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<p>Variance</p> <p>The maximum acceptable divergence of the Ward Population or Ward Number of Electors from the Average Population or Average Number of Electors for the City, respectively, with the ideal being as close to the average as possible, with a target of +/-10% in established or slow growth wards and +/-20% in wards where significant population growth or decline is anticipated during the term of the new Ward Boundary design. Variance is considered throughout the duration of the ward boundary structure, such that targets are met at the time of redrawing and for three subsequent elections.</p>	<p>The existing threshold of +/- 25% is consistent with both the provincial <i>Alberta Boundaries Commission Act S15(1)</i> and the federal <i>Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act S15(2)</i>. However, given feedback from Councillors and the public that the population variances are too large, the Commission recommends a two-tiered variance range, as is employed in several jurisdictions across Canada, including Alberta.⁴ With both provincial and federal districts being geographically much larger than wards, and given the sparse populations of certain geographic areas both nationally and provincially, there is arguably good reason to have a broad variance range for those districts. However, Edmonton is relatively compact and geographically accessible, with a population density that is more evenly distributed. The current population discrepancy in the annexed areas provides support for a broader variance range, but less than the +/- 25% for higher orders of government. The two-tiered target for variance recognizes the population disparity between certain areas of the city and their respective population growth potential. The intent is to prioritize voter parity, thus the +/-10% target for established areas. The variance also recognizes that absolute equality in populations is not possible if all criteria and input is taken into consideration. Therefore the variance is defined as a target rather than a limit.</p>
<p>Voter Parity</p> <p>The notion that every vote carries the same weight. Voter parity is achieved by creating electoral districts that contain roughly the same number of voters.</p>	<p>The Supreme Court interpreted the purpose of the Canadian Charter Chapter 3 dealing with the Democratic Rights of Citizens as Canadians having a right to “effective representation in a system which gives due weight to voter parity but admits other considerations where necessary.”⁵</p>
<p>Ward</p> <p>A municipal electoral district for the purpose of electing members of Council and School Board Trustees, created under the <i>Municipal Government Act S. 148(2)(a)</i> and <i>Bylaw 18893 Ward Boundary Bylaw</i>.</p>	<p>This is the current definition, no change recommended.</p>

⁴ NB, SK, MB, apply two-tiered approaches: <https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=loi/com/arc/com2016&document=p1&lang=e>

⁵ Supreme Court of Canada. 1991. *Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>

CRITERIA SECTION

The current policy lists seven criteria (each with brief explanation) that must be applied in shaping ward boundaries:

1. Population vs. Number of Electors
2. Future Growth
3. Respecting Community League Boundaries
4. Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards
5. Easily Identifiable Boundaries
6. Least Number of Changes
7. Block-Shaped Wards

The Commission discussed the above criteria and how to apply them in its boundary redesign work. Councillors, stakeholders, and the public were asked for their perspectives on the criteria, including views on which were the most important, whether any criteria was missing, and what "communities of interest" means to them. The Commission's own discussions and the information gathered from the public and stakeholders informs the recommendations below.

The Commission recommends the following revisions to the Criteria:

1. List Criteria in order of priority
2. Distinguish between Criteria and Considerations
3. Move descriptions of terms to the Definitions section

At the outset of its boundary redesign work, the Commission determined that there cannot be equal weight given to all the listed criteria. There was no direction on prioritizing in the existing policy, however. The rationale for the prioritization of the recommended criteria are provided below, and reflect the approach the Commission took in its application of the current policy.

The Commission determined that some criteria were "things to consider" rather than requirements. These factors can be brought forward for application to fine-tune draft boundary designs.

The policy is heavy on definitions which are currently provided throughout the document, even though there is a Definition section. The policy should focus the Criteria section on providing guidance for applying the criteria and considerations.

The Commission recommends that the existing Criteria section of the policy be replaced by the following:

Criteria

In determining Effective Representation in the design of Ward boundaries, the following criteria should be employed in order of priority:

RECOMMENDED CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Population</p> <p>The Population per Ward is the primary criterion in designing Ward boundaries. In determining Population distribution across wards, the Average Population of the City will be used as a benchmark against which acceptable Variances per Ward are determined. The Average Population per Ward should be substantially equal.</p>	<p>In the 1991 Saskatchewan Reference, the Supreme Court determined that there cannot be wide variations in population size among the constituencies⁶. It is the Commission's view that elected officials represent the interest of all persons residing in their electoral boundaries, not simply electors. Therefore, population is the primary factor in designing boundaries for Effective Representation</p>
<p>Number of Electors</p> <p>The Number of Electors per Ward is the secondary criterion for determining Ward boundaries. The Average Number of Electors of the City will be used as a benchmark against which acceptable Variances at the Ward level are determined. The Average Number of Electors per Ward should be substantially equal across Wards.</p>	<p>The Supreme Court has determined that "Relative parity of voting power is a prime condition of effective representation."⁷</p>

⁶ "Equally important, each vote must be relatively equal to every other vote; there cannot be wide variations in population size among the 64 southern constituencies" Supreme Court of Canada. 1991. *Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>

⁷ Supreme Court of Canada. 1991. *Reference re Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>

RECOMMENDED CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Growth</p> <p>As a third criterion, Ward boundaries should be designed with the goal of lasting at least three (3) municipal general elections before a Major Adjustment is necessary. Consideration should be given to both changes in Population and the Number of Electors, with the averages of both used to assess distribution and boundary alignment. Boundaries should be aligned so that the level of Variance is greater for growth-area Wards and lower for Wards in areas with stable or declining populations.</p>	<p>Projected changes in Population and the Number of Electors should be used to validate the resilience of the proposed Ward boundaries. Areas with higher growth potential over the three (3) election periods should have room to grow.</p>



RECOMMENDED CRITERIA	RATIONALE
<p>Communities of Interest</p> <p>Preserving Communities of Interest is the fourth criterion for adjusting Ward boundaries. The following key attributes should guide the application of this criteria, wherever possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Neighbourhoods should not be divided between Wards. + Each Ward should be composed of a variety of Communities of Interest. + School catchment areas should be considered in boundary composition. + Ward composition should be a balance between established and new Neighbourhoods; between low growth and higher growth Neighbourhoods; and among different types of land use. + A Community League should not be split between Wards. 	<p>Communities of Interest must be considered to achieve Effective Representation, yet not all groups' interests can be taken into account when delineating Ward boundaries. Not all common interests are geographically grouped; often they span across different parts of the city. Others are short lived and dynamic, and would not appropriately be a defining feature for the duration of the boundary design, which is three (3) election cycles.</p> <p>As the most intuitive definition of community for most people living in Edmonton, the Commission used Neighbourhood as its most basic geographic unit when constructing the proposed Ward boundaries. The existing policy states that: "Since Community Leagues reflect the borders and concerns of neighbourhoods, Ward boundaries are to be designed so no Community League is split between two Wards." The Commission found this existing criterion extremely difficult to apply. While some Community League boundaries are synonymous with Neighbourhood boundaries), other Community Leagues encompass several neighbourhoods, span very large geographic areas, or contain relatively small or large populations. Moreover, not all areas of the city have Community Leagues. For these reasons, the Commission recommends that boundary revisions respect Community League boundaries wherever possible, but that splitting Community Leagues be permitted.</p> <p>With respect to the school boards, the utilization of the neighbourhood boundary was also identified as important. The school boards who met with the Commission recognized that perfect alignment between their boundaries and the City Ward boundaries would not be possible. They indicated that what was more important to them were school catchment areas.</p> <p>Stakeholders and the public thought it important to ensure equitable and diverse representation across different Communities of Interest and demographics. Stakeholders and the public noted considerations for creating all-urban and -suburban Wards. While the public desired a balance within Wards, Councillors were wary that creating all-urban and -suburban Wards would be detrimental to effective representation.</p>

CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission distinguished between Criteria (requirements) and considerations (secondary factors to take into account). Distinguishing between Criteria and Considerations helps simplify the design process which has many complex variables to satisfy. The Commission's intent is that Ward boundaries are drafted based on the Criteria, and fine-tuned based on Other Considerations. After the requirements under the Criteria are met, the following Considerations (not in order of priority) should be taken into account to fine-tune drafted ward boundaries:

RECOMMENDED CONSIDERATION	RATIONALE
<p>Readily Identifiable Boundaries</p> <p>Wherever possible, Ward boundaries should be readily identifiable to the public. Consideration should be given to utilizing major transportation infrastructure and other significant artificial barriers and natural boundaries (e.g., river, ravines, parks) for aligning the Ward boundaries.</p>	<p>The Commission retained the wording for "Readily Identifiable Boundaries" from the current policy, but shifted it from a Criterion to a Consideration.</p>
<p>Mix of Zones</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the distribution of residential, employment, institutional and green space areas between Wards. A Ward should not be dominated by any of these features and such features should be distributed among several Wards.</p>	<p>The Commission added a new Consideration: Mix of Zones. The existing policy references related attributes under "Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards." The Commission determined that while land use and zoning can define neighbourhoods and influence Communities of Interest, it deserved a secondary lens for boundary review because land use types tend to be geographically concentrated and can dominate local dynamics.</p>

For clarity, the Commission recommends removing two Criteria currently included in the Policy: "*Least Number of Changes*" and "*Block Shaped Wards*".

As a policy criterion, requiring reducing the number of changes can be in conflict with the primacy of other criteria. To achieve Effective Representation, boundary design should be unhitched from requirements that do not directly support that objective. While reducing the number of changes would help with public awareness of Ward boundaries, effective communication of boundary changes can accomplish the same goal. By the same token, preserving Communities of Interest will help to ensure important elements of familiarity are maintained.

Requiring a block shaped Ward design with straight lines similarly does not directly support achievement of Effective Representation. The primacy of other criteria and considerations, such as population distribution and Communities of Interest, plus identifiable geographic features, should define the shape of Wards.

The use of Neighbourhoods as the basic geographic unit, and the desire to respect Community League boundaries wherever possible, help to ensure that Ward boundaries are not drawn arbitrarily.

PROCEDURE

The Commission recommends that items in the Procedure section, which includes specifics on how boundary design is undertaken, should be removed from the Policy and included in an Administrative Directive. The components related to roles/responsibilities and consultations should be kept in the policy under separate sections.

As indicated in the above section on the Commission's Approach to Policy Review, the Commission's framework for the policy review includes the postulate that:

“A Council policy should be at a governance level, with administrative/operational detail left to Administration to sort through, congruent with bylaws enabling Administration.”

The Commission recommends that the Policy have an Expectations or Service Level section to determine requirements for specific activities undertaken in the course of Ward boundary design. The following elements should be included in this section:

RECOMMENDED EXPECTATIONS OR SERVICE LEVEL	RATIONALE
<p>Public Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The City's Public Engagement Framework will guide the public consultation for boundary reviews. (b) For Major Adjustments where a Commission is appointed, the Commission directs the development and deployment of the public engagement efforts. (c) The public and stakeholders must be consulted on drafted Ward boundaries to inform the final proposed boundaries for Council approval. (d) A report on the results of the consultations is to be provided to Council. 	<p>Currently, the requirement for consultation appears both in the <i>Ward Boundary Commission Bylaw</i> and in the <i>Ward Boundary Design Policy</i>. While the Bylaw empowers the work of the Commission, Council should set expectations in the policy as to what consultations are desired. The Bylaw only requires the Commission to undertake public engagement with the public whereas the City has a Public Engagement Framework that in reality shaped the consultation approach for the Commission's work. The existing policy only requires a public hearing.</p>

RECOMMENDED EXPECTATIONS OR SERVICE LEVEL	RATIONALE
<p>Stakeholder Consultation</p> <p>(a) The following stakeholders are to be provided an opportunity to provide input into the Ward boundary design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + All members of Council + The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues + Community Leagues + School boards operating within City limits <p>Any other stakeholder group not identified here that self identifies through the design process must be provided an opportunity to provide input.</p> <p>(b) A report on the results of the consultations is provided to Council.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the existing list of required stakeholder consultations, with the addition of individual Community Leagues. This is based on feedback from both the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Community Leagues themselves, and public comments. There were no other specific stakeholders suggested by stakeholders or the public that stood out as a missing group. Instead, there were a myriad of groups that were recommended. Many would fall under the definition of Communities of Interest. The approach the Commission took was to provide for stakeholder input through the online survey that was open to anyone; this included an option to provide a written submission to the Commission via email by stakeholder groups.</p>
<p>Periodic Ward Boundary Reviews</p> <p>(a) Ward boundaries are reviewed for alignment with the Policy after each general municipal election by Administration and a report is provided to Council on whether any Major Adjustments or Minor Adjustments are needed.</p> <p>(b) The Returning Officer may undertake a review of the Ward boundaries if Minor Adjustments are required.</p> <p>(c) A Ward Boundary Commission may be appointed by Council to review the Ward boundaries if Major Adjustments are required.</p> <p>(d) Any Major Adjustment by a Commission should commence in Year 10 of the 12 year expected longevity of Ward boundaries, providing sufficient time for updating <i>Bylaw 18892 City Of Edmonton Ward Boundaries And Council Composition</i> prior to the election in Year 12.</p> <p>(e) Council may direct a review of boundaries at any time. Triggers for a review not related to elections include, but are not limited to: annexation, legislative impacts, changes in number of Wards, or upon recommendation by Administration.</p>	<p>This was the first time Council appointed a Commission to undertake the Ward boundary review. Previously, Administration, specifically the Elections Office, did this work. The Commission supports an ongoing resident-led review when a Major Adjustment is warranted. The Returning Officer can provide a recommendation to Council to strike a Commission or Council can direct Administration to undertake a review, as determined by a status report from the Returning Officer. The Commission also observed that this specific review was triggered by the annexation of significant amounts of land but the policy did not specify a review except post elections. A new clause enables such reviews.</p>

RECOMMENDED EXPECTATIONS OR SERVICE LEVEL	RATIONALE
<p>Policy Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The policy is to be reviewed after each general municipal election. (b) Any changes to the policy shall be effective for the following ward boundary review. 	<p>Currently there is no stated requirement to review the <i>Ward Boundary Design Policy</i>. It is best practice for newly-elected Councils to review their policies after their installment. It is also important that the policy stay current with any legislative changes or developments in jurisprudence. The Commission supports its given direction that the work it is doing on the policy review be used to inform subsequent Ward boundary review work.</p>

The Commission recommends that the policy provide clarity for roles and responsibilities under a separate section.

The Purpose section of the *Ward Boundary Design Policy* refers to defining the responsibilities in the review process, but there is no specific section for this. There is some mention of responsibilities in the policy, but it is uncertain that these are complete.



WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

The drawing of the Ward boundaries for 2021 represents the first time in Edmonton's history that the public led the review process, and there were many lessons learned. In this section the Commission provides an overview of the successes, issues, and challenges it encountered, along with clear solutions to address any shortcomings should another Commission be convened.

The Commission had sufficient information to make informed recommendations. The observations and recommendations on the Ward Boundary Commission process are intended to improve the process in the future, with particular attention to the timing in which information is made available to future Commissions.

Use of a Residents' Commission

Overall, the Commission believes in the value of using a Council-appointed, resident-led commission to recommend to Council major changes in Ward boundaries.

This approach ensures that the recommendations for boundaries are reflective of extensive public and stakeholder consultation. It offers the public transparency in the process, and ensures that a neutral third party makes recommendations to Council and Administration. While the ultimate decision on boundaries will rest with Council, public leadership in this approach helps assure Edmontonians that the recommendations reflect their views, values, and the diversity of the population, while building a strong template for their representation. The Commission found the process rewarding and has no doubts that a public commission should be the approach used for future recommendations to Council when significant changes to the Ward boundaries are warranted.

The Commission composition reflected a group of Edmontonians who brought diverse professional backgrounds to the process. This blend of background and expertise was valuable, as it imparted varied perspectives and fostered thoughtful discussion. The Commission recommends that the composition of future commissions continue to seek a variety of experience and knowledge among the members.

Residents with backgrounds in political science, municipal governance, general research and statistics, urban planning, and social science methodology would again be valuable to the Commission's mission. Seeking persons who can in addition to this represent a diversity of demography and life experiences will also be important.

Process and Commission Timeline

The inaugural Commission was to have existed approximately 9 months, having been installed by Council and undertaken its first meeting in October 2019 with a mandate to deliver the final report and disband by June 1, 2020. Within this time, it is important to note that the final report had to be delivered to the City Clerk's office approximately 1.5 months in advance of the end date to allow for Administration to place it in queue and slot to an available Council meeting date. Therefore the working time was reduced to 7.5 months; of that, further time should be discounted for the Christmas holidays break, approximately 2 weeks, as well as the time for the Commission to convene its first organizational meeting after members had been appointed by Council, approximately 1 month. The Commission therefore had a full working timeframe of 6 months.

Given the amount of work to be done and with consideration for the fact that many details had to be worked out as the Commission's work proceeded for the first time, this was not a satisfactory period of time to complete the work. The Commission is confident in its recommendations, even given the compressed timeline. Allowing for a greater amount of time to run the Ward Boundary review would be greatly beneficial to ensuring a complete and informed process, and ensuring that both Administration and the Commission have adequate working time and all necessary inputs and information available to them.

It is the Commission's understanding that the Ward Boundary Commission was to have been established and begun work approximately six months earlier, in spring of 2019 rather than fall 2019. It is the Commission's understanding that administrative challenges pushed back the commencement to fall 2019. Had the Commission begun work in spring 2019, this would have allowed greater time for research and investigation of best practices and comparative processes elsewhere, more time to prepare iterative concepts, and more time to conduct a fulsome public engagement program with multiple touchpoints to first collect public input, then return to the public to review and validate the proposals.

The ideal timeframe for the work of a future Ward Boundary Commission would be a minimum of 18 months, plus an additional 6 months of lead time for Administration to prepare background research, compile demographic statistics, assemble neighbourhood growth projections, and establish a proposed methodology for the Commission's consideration. The division of time should break down accordingly:

Months 1-6	Administration prepares background report(s) on current state of Edmonton municipal Wards, including population and elector changes and future growth projections. Other supporting materials are compiled, internal staffing commitments and support are secured, and recommended methodology and resources are compiled to support the Commission.
Months 7-12	The Commission is established with members appointed and the first, organizational meeting convened in Month 7. In Months 8-9, the Commission undertakes initial work to review Administration's background information, identify additional information or support requirements, and recommend then approve a Communications Plan and a Public Engagement Plan. Months 10-12 provide time for the Commission to develop the methodology or framework for its work, then produce iterative Ward Boundary scenarios which will be used in the next stage of work and for public engagement.
Months 12-18	The first round of major public engagement is undertaken. Councillor and stakeholder engagement is undertaken. The results of both are collected and reported. The Commission incorporates the results of engagement to develop successive iterations for Ward Boundaries.
Months 19-21	The second round of public engagement is undertaken on a second set of maps. Councillor and stakeholder engagement is undertaken on a second set of maps. The draft of the final report is prepared.
Months 22-24	The final report is prepared. Council meeting date(s) are secured. The Commission presents the final report to Council.

CITY ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Dedicated support from the City Administration has been and remains critical for the Commission to carry out its mandate. The undertaking of this first Commission revealed ways to enhance this support, including in the areas of:

+ **ADMINISTRATION**
+ **LOGISTICS**

+ **CITY PLANNING /
MAPPING / DATA
ANALYTICS**

+ **PUBLIC AND
STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT**

Administration

The Commission was provided significant support from the Office of the City Clerk and Returning Officer, Election and Census section, including two senior members who attended all meetings, stakeholder engagements, and public engagements. Their presence ensured that the meetings and events were well organized, necessary materials and information were available, that notes were kept, and that Commission requests for actions/information were collected and acted upon. They were in turn supported by the wider staff pool in their office. This was invaluable to the smooth operation of the Commission, and these same resources must be provided for future Commissions.

Logistics

City Administration provided support to schedule meetings, supply required materials, coordinate public and stakeholder engagement, and related tasks. The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing public health restrictions on gatherings of people and social distancing interrupted the ongoing meetings of the Commission starting in March 2020 and for the remainder of the Commission's term. Arrangements were quickly made to provide for online Commission meetings without interruption to the Commission's schedule. This was indispensable to the smooth operation of the Commission and would be a benefit if provided for future Commissions.

City Planning / Mapping/ Data Analytics

At the core of the Ward Boundary process is the need for current and reliable information on neighbourhood populations, demographics, and elector counts. The policy required the Commission to consider population data, elector data and population growth. Several issues arose which prevented the Commission from examining this data in a timely fashion.

City planning was concurrently updating the City's strategic plan and the supporting population growth data. This timing impeded the Commission's access to up-to-date / finalized data. It is recommended that Administration coordinate such projects and determine in advance the official data sources that will be used to support boundary reviews. The data analytics can be done in advance of the Commission's formation.

Secondly, the City does not collect data on the number of electors. Data was only obtained from Elections Alberta in March 2020, which was after the initial concepts were developed and presented to the public. Growth projections for the number of electors were made on the same basis as population growth, however more rigorous modeling is required to support this level of analysis in the future. This information should be collected and modeled on an ongoing basis to support future reviews. Significant baseline information is necessary to enable the Commission to begin and undertake its work in an informed manner, and responsive support from the City on these fronts is necessary in order to ensure the Commission does not face delays in delivering its work.

Administration was challenged to provide timely support in these areas, due to what the Commission understands were significant strains on the City Planning team's resources with updates to the City Plan happening concurrently. As a result, the type and amount of demographic information including elector counts was not readily accessible as the Commission began its work. The Commission's requests for projected neighbourhood populations were not met until very late in the process. This significantly impaired the Commission's ability to move forward in an informed manner. One of the Commission's members undertook a manual tabulation of possible future growth based on publicly available statutory neighbourhood plans as a stopgap solution so that the Commission's work could continue.

For future Commissions, the Administration must prepare essential information and projections based on what is included within the policy's criteria and considerations, and ensure these are made available when the Commission is convened. The City must also ensure that specific planning and mapping capabilities are dedicated to the Commission to ensure that work proceeds with proper inputs and according to schedule. Constraints on City Planning's resources should be anticipated so that dedicated attention can be paid to the work of future Commissions.

Public Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement was important to the Commission's work. The City provided extensive support including the use of a consultant team to deliver engagement sessions, and in-house resources to deploy online surveys. This support is necessary and should continue to be delivered with the operation of future Commissions.

Administration provided for a public engagement program which utilized both online and in-person public sessions. The variety of methods employed are useful and suitable to this task, but it is likely that the approach used does not fully capture the diversity of experiences and opinions in Edmonton's resident population. This is a known failing of the City's standard public engagement, which was not addressed in this particular process. The approach of online information sharing and surveys, and open house sessions are suitable for reaching the highly engaged portion of the population, which one may surmise are those who are already engaged with local issues and representation.

More needs to be done in the future to actively reach out to unengaged, under-engaged, or under-represented demographic groups to properly consult a representative sample of Edmonton's residents. This may require a proactive approach to the City's extensive stakeholder networks and community organizations, across many aspects of civil society at varying levels.

The in-person public consultation open houses must also provide greater efforts and sensitivity to achieving maximum public participation, especially given the significant staff and consultant time and cost involved.

Given the time constraints and timing, the Commission was left with little choice but to hold in-person public engagement sessions in the first two weeks of January. It is known that this period tends to provide low participation due to seasonal holidays, inclement weather, and as many people are distracted with other commitments. The five sessions attracted only 57 members of the public, which provides relatively poor value for time and money in this part of the Commission's work.

In addition to properly allocating resources, practicing sensitivity to scheduling, and ensuring a diverse reach, future Commission processes should include two major rounds of public consultation. The first round should introduce the public to the Commission's mandate, methodology, and initial concepts or scenarios, as was provided in this instance. A second round should be undertaken later in the process to test the results of further Commission work and demonstrate to the public how their input and new information has been incorporated (or not). The entire public engagement program should not be seen singularly as just about the drawing of Ward boundaries, but should be considered as part of a wider effort to inform and include Edmontonians in their municipal governance system.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Terms of Reference | Ward Boundary Commission

Appendix 2:

City Policy 469A Ward Boundary Design Policy

Appendix 3:

Boundary Recommendation Rationale Sheet

Appendix 4:

Boundary Recommendation | Ward Maps

Appendix 5:

Public Engagement | What We Heard Report

Appendix 6:

Stakeholder Engagement | Summary Report



Chair: Jared Wesley

Vice Chair: Sean Lee

Commission Members: Levi Bjork, Maya Pungur-Buick, Stephen Raitz, Alayne Sinclair, Kai So

Date Adopted: November 5, 2019

Updated:

Purpose

On June 18, 2019, City Council approved *Bylaw 18893 Ward Boundary Commission* for the purpose of establishing a Ward Boundary Commission as a temporary Committee of Council.

This Commission, the first in the City's history, will undertake a review of Edmonton's current electoral ward boundaries, comprehensively evaluating the existing ward structure against the criteria established in the Ward Boundary Design Policy (C469A).

Following a period of consultation with Councillors, school boards and the public, the Commission will submit a written report to City Council that, if the Commission deems necessary, recommends adjustments to the boundary structure.

In addition, the Commission will review Council's existing Ward Boundary Design Policy C469A and provide recommendations to guide future ward boundary amendments.

Exclusions

The Commission's recommendations must adhere to the criteria as described in the Ward Boundary Design Policy. As per Bylaw 18893, the Commission may not submit a recommendation that increases or decreases the current number of wards (12).

Commission Composition and Appointment

The Commission will be comprised between three and seven members, representing a number of perspectives in related fields, including political science, public policy, urban planning or any other field that Council deems to be an asset.

Commission members will be selected by the Executive Committee of City Council following an initial screening and interview process.

The City's Returning Officer (the City Clerk) will be an ex officio non-voting member of the Commission, responsible for providing advice and administrative support, as required by Bylaw 18893.

Project Management support is provided by the Elections and Census office, who will coordinate the public facing, consultation and logistical elements of the Commission's work. Elections and Census Office staff will not serve as members of the Commission.

Term of Appointment

The Commission will remain active until submission of the written reports required by City Council, upon which the associated bylaw will be repealed and the Commission disbanded. According to the terms of the Bylaw 18893, Council expects to receive the Commission's written report by June 1, 2020.

Powers and Duties

The Ward Boundary Commission is established as a temporary Council Committee, as stated in *Bylaw 18893 Ward Boundary Commission*. As such, the powers and duties of the Ward Boundary Commission, its Chair and Members are described in *City Policy C575C: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Committees*

Responsibilities

Commission Members

The Commission is responsible for:

- the collaborative development of a comprehensive review of the city's existing ward structure, measured against the criteria described in the Ward Boundary Design policy (C469A);
- a review City Policy C469A - *Ward Boundary Design* to determine recommendations regarding the criteria and procedures for future boundary adjustments

Commission Chair

The Chair of the Commission is responsible for:

- performing the functions required of all Commission members;
- directing the development of the written reports required by City Council.

Returning Officer

The Returning Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring the recommendations provided by the Commission align with provincially and municipally legislated requirements;
- Performing related duties consistent with the function of their office.

Governance and Quorum

As a temporary committee of City Council, the governance and quorum processes described in Bylaw 18156 - *Council Committees* and Bylaw 18155 - *Council Procedure* will be adopted by the Ward Boundary Commission.

As such,

- The Ward Boundary Commission is accountable to City Council
- A Chair must be appointed in the Commission's first meeting
- Quorum for the Ward Boundary Commission is the majority of Commission members, excluding the Returning Officer and other members of Administration

Agendas and Minutes

Meeting Agendas will be developed by the Chair and Administration and circulated to Commission members one week prior to the date of the meeting.

Minutes will be developed by Administration and will remain in draft pending their approval by the Commission at the subsequent meeting.

Provision of Information

Requests for information will be submitted to the Chair prior to the distribution of the meeting agenda for the Commission's consideration. Provision of information requests will be approved by motion.

Frequency of meetings

A meeting schedule will be determined by the members of the Commission and attached to the Terms of Reference document as an appendix item

Remuneration

As per Bylaw 18892:

- Commission members will receive a one-time honourarium of \$2000 once the required written reports required are presented to City Council.
- The Chair of the Commission will receive an additional honourarium of \$500.
- Commission members will be reimbursed for all actual expenses incurred while carrying out their duties and approved by the City Manager.
- Members of Administration who support the functions of the Commission, including the Returning Officer, will not receive remuneration.

Appendix

Guiding Policies and Bylaws

- Ward Boundary Commission [Bylaw](#)
- Ward Boundaries and Council Composition [Bylaw](#)
- Ward Boundary Design [Policy](#)
- Council Committees [Bylaw](#)
- Council Procedures [Bylaw](#)

APPENDIX **2** CITY POLICY 469A WARD BOUNDARY DESIGN POLICY



CITY POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: C469A

REFERENCE:

City Council
11 October 1994

ADOPTED BY:

City Council
17 February 2009

SUPERSEDES:

C469

PREPARED BY: Corporate Services Department

DATE: 28 January 2009

TITLE: **Ward Boundary Design Policy**

Policy Statement:

Clear, distinct and easily identifiable ward boundaries are essential to the municipal election process. Ward boundary design should also respect the democratic principle of “one-person, one-vote” by striving to keep ward populations substantially equal.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Establish criteria to be used by the Returning Officer in developing proposals for Ward boundary changes.
2. Define the responsibilities in the Ward boundary review process.
3. Provide a framework for the Ward boundary review process with regard to timing, involving stakeholders and establishing reporting procedures.



CITY PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: C469A

AUTHORITY: City Council

EFFECTIVE DATE: 17 February 2009

TITLE: **Ward Boundary Design Policy**

PAGE: Page 1 of 3

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.01 Community League Boundary - the boundary of a community league as established by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.
- 1.02 Electors - eligible voters, as defined by the Local Authorities Election Act.
- 1.03 Population - the total number of people residing within a defined area.
- 1.04 Ward - a municipal electoral district for the purpose of electing members of Council and School Board Trustees, created under the Municipal Government Act and the Ward Boundary Bylaw.

2. CRITERIA

The following criteria are to be used by the Returning Officer in creating or designing Ward boundaries:

2.01 Population vs. Number of Electors

The Population per Ward, not the number of Electors per Ward, will be the primary factor in designing Ward boundaries.

The optimum Population per Ward will be determined by dividing the City Population by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the Population of each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

The optimum number of Electors per Ward will be determined by dividing the number of Electors in the City by the number of Wards. Ward boundaries will be designed so the number of Electors in each Ward is within a range of +/- 25% from the optimum.

Respecting these "+/-" ranges will ensure that Wards are substantially equal with each other in both Population and number of Electors.

2.02 Future Growth

Ward boundaries are to be designed with the goal of lasting at least three municipal general elections before a major revision is necessary. The potential for growth or decline in each Ward over the next three elections will be taken into account by having the highest Ward Populations and number of Electors in stable or declining Wards and the lowest Ward Populations and number of Electors in growth area Wards.



CITY PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: C469A

AUTHORITY: City Council

EFFECTIVE DATE: 17 February 2009

TITLE: **Ward Boundary Design Policy**

PAGE: Page 2 of 3

2.03 Respecting Community League Boundaries

Since Community Leagues reflect the borders and concerns of neighbourhoods, Ward boundaries are to be designed so no Community League is split between two Wards.

Since Community League Boundaries are not controlled by the City and are subject to change, it may be necessary to make minor modifications to the Ward boundaries prior to the major revision planned for every three (3) municipal general elections.

2.04 Communities of Interest and Diversity Within Wards

Ward boundaries will be designed to ensure communities with common interests or sharing a common roadway access are kept within the same Ward.

Also, where possible, the distribution of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and green space areas between Wards will be taken into account so that each Ward contains a mixture of these developments.

2.05 Easily Identifiable Boundaries

Wherever possible, Ward boundaries will be readily identifiable to the public by utilizing major streets and significant natural and man-made barriers such as the river, ravines, railways, etc.

2.06 Least Number of Changes

Ward proposals developed by the Returning Officer should involve the fewest changes possible to accomplish the required adjustments.

2.07 Block-Shaped Wards

Ward boundaries are to be designed relatively block-shaped with straight sides. This will help to ensure that Ward boundaries are drawn impartially. Ward boundaries which are long, narrow and twisted, or have saw-toothed or indented sides are more likely to give the appearance of being designed in a biased approach to achieve a specific result.



CITY PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: C469A

AUTHORITY: City Council

EFFECTIVE DATE: 17 February 2009

TITLE: **Ward Boundary Design Policy**

PAGE: Page 3 of 3

3. PROCEDURE

3.01 City Council will:

- (a) Inform the Returning Officer of revisions that are desired to the Ward boundaries;
- (b) Direct the Returning Officer to conduct a formal review of the Ward boundaries and to prepare boundary proposals for the consideration of Council;
- (c) Provide input into the Ward boundary proposals prepared by the Returning Officer, and;
- (d) Decide on any changes to be made to the Ward boundaries and pass the required bylaw by October in the year prior to a municipal general election to provide sufficient implementation time.

3.02 Returning Officer will:

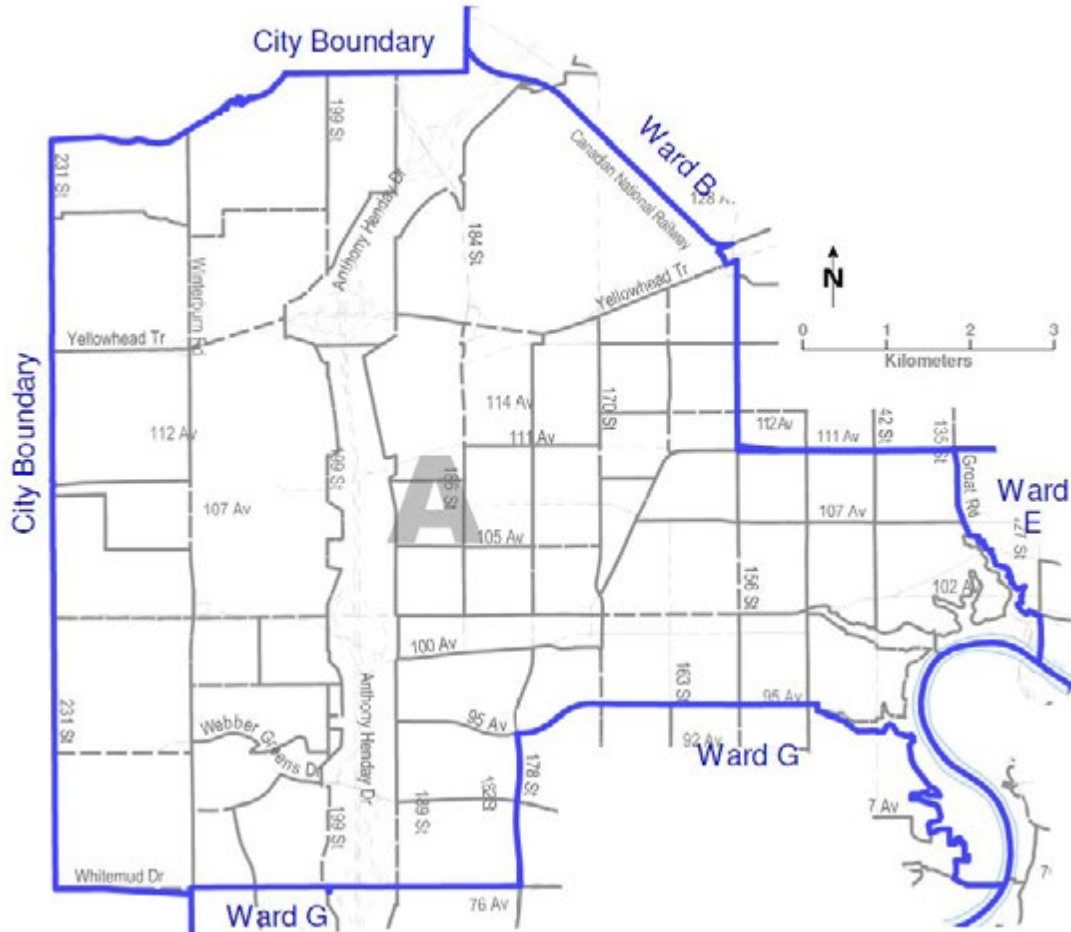
- (a) By September of the year following every municipal general election, send a summary to Council through the Executive Committee identifying
 - the current Population and number of Electors for each Ward,
 - the current "+/-" of Population and number of Electors of each Ward from the optimum Ward size, and
 - potential Ward boundary adjustments required before the next municipal general election;
- (b) When directed by City Council, develop Ward boundary proposals based on the criteria contained in this policy;
- (c) Arrange for input from the following stakeholders to determine the impact of any potential Ward boundary changes:
 - General Public (through a public hearing),
 - Edmonton Public School Board,
 - Edmonton Separate School Board,
 - Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, and
 - City Administration;
- (d) Prepare the bylaw to adopt the accepted Ward boundary changes, and;
- (e) Implement the approved changes to the Ward boundaries.

APPENDIX 3 BOUNDARY RECOMMENDATION RATIONALE SHEET

Rationale	Equal representation, as measured primarily by population of residents.	Maintaining as low a population variance as feasible.	Resilience of ward boundaries.	The Neighbourhood as the basic unit for building Wards.	Natural and human-made boundaries are important, but not impermeable.	Balancing Communities of Interest and diversity within Wards
Ward A	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: -8.52% 2030: -1.69% Although the ward population is below average in both scenarios, the positive trend of the ward population towards average in 2030 showcases the resilience of the ward boundaries moving into the future.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	The ward is bisected by Anthony Henday Drive, but has significant populations on both sides so that neighbourhoods are not isolated by this human-made boundary.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age. The Stony Plain Road and future Valley Line LRT corridor forms larger communities of interest in the ward.
Ward B	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: +9.08% 2030: 0.24% This ward is currently well above average, but due to greater growth in other areas of the city, is anticipated to be around average by 2030. This negative trend showcases resilience of this ward boundary into the future.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	Ward B has a single neighbourhood north of Anthony Henday Drive, Goodridge Corners. The Commission would not typically isolate a neighbourhood in this way, however the boundaries of the City make it unavoidable in this case.	This ward features many different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age and design. Major neighbourhood centres are also apparent such as Ingelwood, Griesbach, and Castledowns.
Ward C	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: +2.45% 2030: -10.36% Although the negative trends means the ward population moves away from the average ward population by 2030, the ward boundaries are still relatively resilient. The shape of this ward producing this trend was a compromise related to the appropriate extent of neighbouring wards that does not vary in an extreme way from other wards' population.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	No major natural and human-made boundaries are present. Anthony Henday Drive forms the northern edge of the ward, but no residential areas are separated from the rest of the ward.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age and design. Major neighbourhood centres are also apparent such as Londonderry and Castledowns.
Ward D	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: +4.88% 2030: -6.51% Relatively minor variation in population from 2019 to 2030 was achieved.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	This is one of two wards that treat the North Saskatchewan River as a permeable boundary. In this case the boundaries of the City make this unavoidable.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age and design. The Capital Line LRT corridor also forms a larger community of interest, with a major node in Clareview.
Ward E	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: -13.39% 2030: -7.47% This Ward is below optimal in both the current population as well as future projected population. The Commission has deemed this acceptable both because it is well within the acceptable range in both cases, as well as because of the unique considerations of a downtown ward, including the fact that the ward is host to significant populations of workers who live elsewhere in the cities, as well as populations who experience homelessness. During stakeholder engagement, the Commission heard feedback that the unique challenges of a downtown ward justified a smaller population.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	This ward boundary uses a natural boundary (the North Saskatchewan River) and a major human-made boundary (the Yellowhead Trail). Additionally, Groat Ravine and Groat Road form the western boundary.	This ward features major communities of interest, like the Downtown core, as well as developing communities of interest centred in Blatchford. The Jasper Avenue, 124 Street, and 107 Street corridors form larger communities of interest.
Ward F	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: +4.98% 2030: +1.2% Relatively minor variation in population from 2019 to 2030 was achieved. Positioning Ward G on both side of the river aided in providing greater population equity for wards that are north of the North Saskatchewan River and wards that are south of it.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	This is one of two wards that treat the North Saskatchewan as a permeable boundary. The Commission found this to be an acceptable proposal because it did not involve one or two isolated neighbourhoods on one side or the other, but rather includes significant populations both north and south of the river. Additionally, transportation corridors do not isolate the neighbourhoods on either side of the river from one another.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of geographic position (north and south of the river). Major neighbourhood centres are also apparent such as Bonnie Doon, Hardisty, and Abbottsfield. The 118 Avenue and future Valley Line LRT corridors forms larger communities of interest in the ward.
Ward G	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: +13.13% 2030: +1.69% Although the ward population is above average in both scenarios, the negative trend of the ward population towards normal in 2030 showcases the resilience of the ward boundaries moving into the future.	Does not split any neighbourhoods	The Commission regarded the river as an impermeable boundary in this area of the city, due to differences in development, community interests, and most importantly, transportation. During public engagement, the Concept 1 map had this ward crossing the river and the commission received negative feedback on this concept.	This ward features many different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age. Major neighbourhood centres are also apparent such as Callingwood, Meadowlark, as well as new neighbourhoods outside of the Anthony Henday ring road. The future Valley Line LRT corridor forms a larger community of interest in the ward.

Rationale	Equal representation, as measured primarily by population of residents.	Maintaining as low a population variance as feasible.	Resilience of ward boundaries.	The Neighbourhood as the basic unit for building Wards.	Natural and human-made boundaries are important, but not impermeable.	Balancing Communities of Interest and diversity within Wards
Ward H	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: -8.41% 2030: -13.25% This ward is below optimal in both the current population as well as the projected population. The commission has deemed this acceptable because of the unique considerations associated with the ward, including a major university and a significant student population. Additionally, the ward would not be able to take on neighbourhoods from other sides of natural/human-made boundaries. This is due to the concern regarding an unbalanced distribution of neighbourhoods on either side of a natural/human-made boundary (as is the case with Ward E, F, K, and I). Additionally, trying to shift neighbourhoods from abutting wards would further decrease the population of other smaller wards (as is the Case with Ward J).	Does not split any neighbourhoods	This ward is bisected by the Whitemud Drive, but has significant populations on both sides so that neighbourhoods are not isolated by this human-made boundary.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age and design. Major centres are also apparent such as Southgate and Strathcona. The Whyte Avenue and Capital Line LRT corridors form larger communities of interest in the ward.
Ward I	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: -5.42% 2030: +12.77% This ward is below the optimal ward population currently, but is projected to be significantly above the optimal population in 2030 due to population growth. Wards I, K, J, and L are structured in a north-south orientation to balance the population stability of more central neighbourhoods with the anticipated growth of southern neighbourhoods.	Wards I and J split the Edmonton South West neighbourhood, a sizeable area with a relatively low population that was recently annexed. It is anticipated that with development, this area will comprise several smaller neighbourhoods.	This ward is bisected by Anthony Henday Drive, but has significant populations on both sides so that neighbourhoods are not isolated by this human-made boundary. The neighbourhood of Brookside is bounded by the Whitemud Creek Ravine on the east and Whitemud Drive on the west. The Commission determined that inclusion with Ward I was more appropriate.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age. Major centres are also apparent such as Terwilliger and Windermere.
Ward J	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: -6.12% 2030: 10.84% This ward is below the optimal ward population currently, but is projected to be significantly above the optimal population in 2030 due to population growth. Wards I, K, J, and L are structured in a north-south orientation to balance the population stability of more central neighbourhoods with the anticipated growth of southern neighbourhoods.	Wards I and J split the Edmonton South West neighbourhood, a sizeable area with a relatively low population. It is anticipated that with development, this area will comprise several smaller neighbourhoods.	This ward is bisected by Anthony Henday Drive, but has significant populations on both sides so that neighbourhoods are not isolated by this human-made boundary.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age. Major centres are also apparent such as Century Park as well as Heritage Valley.
Ward K	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: +9.09% 2030: +14.70% This ward is above the optimal ward population for both 2019 and 2030. The large amount of anticipated growth occurring in this area of the city limits how resilient the ward boundaries can be. However, even with these limitations this ward is only project to exceed the average population by less than 15% by 2030. This configuration provides the best approach to limiting the variance for both 2019 and 2030 by balancing developing neighbourhoods in the south part of the ward with established neighbourhoods in the north of the ward.	Wards K and L split the Edmonton South East neighbourhood, a sizeable area with a relatively low population that was recently annexed. It is anticipated that with development, this area will comprise several smaller neighbourhoods. The principle of maintaining neighbourhood units in creating ward boundaries creates a unique shape to wards K and L due to the orientation of the Charlesworth neighbourhood across 50th Street, which forms the boundary between wards J and L.	This ward is bisected by Anthony Henday Drive, but has significant populations on both sides so that neighbourhoods are not isolated by this human-made boundary.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age. Major centres are also apparent such as Summerside, Orchards, Walker and Mill Woods Town Centre. The future Valley Line LRT corridor forms a larger community of interest in the ward.
Ward L	All boundary determinations were made on the basis of population of residents.	All wards maintain a population variance of less than 15% in both current population as well as 2030 population projections.	2019: -2.14% 2030: +1.20% This ward is below the optimal ward population currently, but is projected to be significantly above the optimal population in 2030 due to population growth. Wards I, K, J, and L are structured in a north-south orientation to balance the population stability of more central neighbourhoods with the anticipated growth of southern neighbourhoods.	Wards K and L split the Edmonton South East neighbourhood, a sizeable area with a relatively low population that was recently annexed. It is anticipated that with development, this area will comprise several smaller neighbourhoods. The principle of maintaining neighbourhood units in creating ward boundaries creates a unique shape to wards K and L due to the orientation of the Charlesworth neighbourhood across 50th Street, which forms the boundary between wards J and L.	This ward is bisected by Anthony Henday Drive, but has significant populations on both sides so that neighbourhoods are not isolated by this human-made boundary.	This ward features several different communities of interest, especially in terms of neighbourhood age. Major centres are also apparent such as Tamarack and Laurel.

APPENDIX 4 BOUNDARY RECOMMENDATION | WARD MAPS



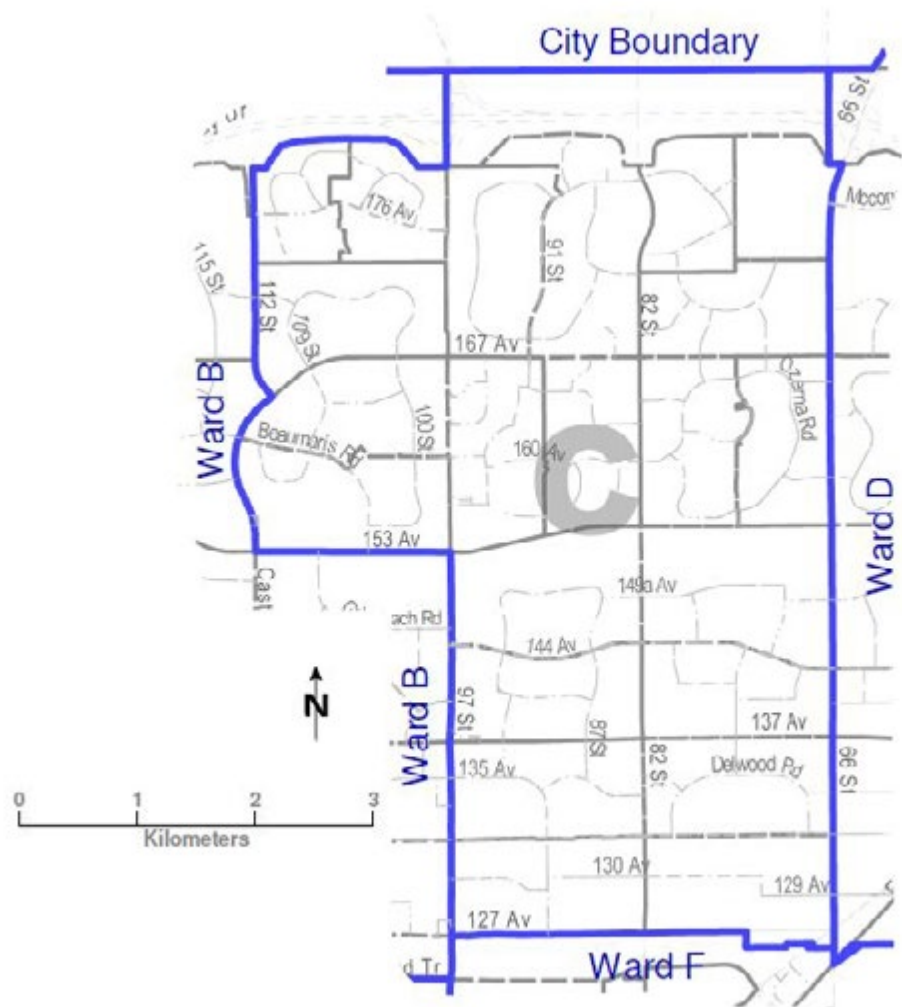
WARD A

Ward “A” begins at the intersection of Whitemud Drive and 231 Street NW. It continues north along the City of Edmonton boundary to the south shore of Big Lake where it follows east to 137 Avenue NW. Continue east along 137 Avenue NW, turn north along 184 Street NW. Continue east on 137 Avenue NW and follow to the CNR Rail crossing south of 137 Avenue. Follow the railway southeast to the intersection with Yellowhead Trail. Continue south on 156 Street NW, turn east on 111 Avenue NW. Continue east and turn south down Groat Road until the centerline of the North Saskatchewan River (NSR). Follow the NSR west to Buena Vista Road. Continue northwest along Buena Vista Road, following the west boundary of Buena Vista Park and the south boundary of Mackenzie Ravine. Continue from the northwest edge of Mackenzie Ravine to north on 148 Street NW. Turn west and continue on 95 Avenue NW, turn south onto 178 Street NW, west on Whitemud Road. Follow Whitemud Road west to the beginning point of Ward “A”.



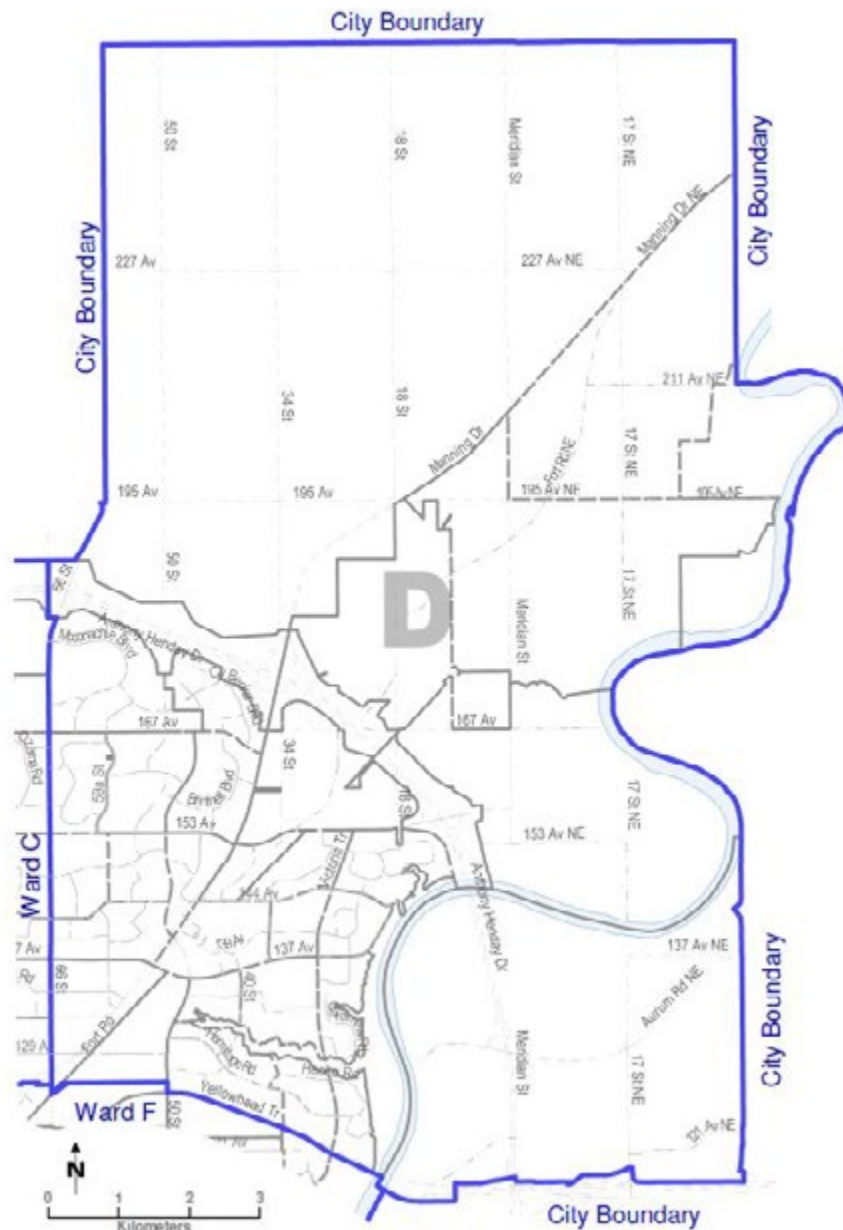
WARD B

Ward “B” begins at the intersection of the City of Edmonton boundary and the CNR Rail crossing south of 137 Avenue NW. Continue along the City of Edmonton boundary north, northeast, north, east to 97 Street NW. Continue south to the south boundary of the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC). Follow west to 112 Street NW, continue south along 112 Street NW to 153 Avenue NW. Follow east to 97 Street NW and then west along Yellowhead Trail to the intersection with 121 Street NW. Continue south to 111 Avenue NW. Continue west to 156 Street NW, proceed north to Yellowhead Trail. Continue north along the CNR to the beginning point of Ward “B”.



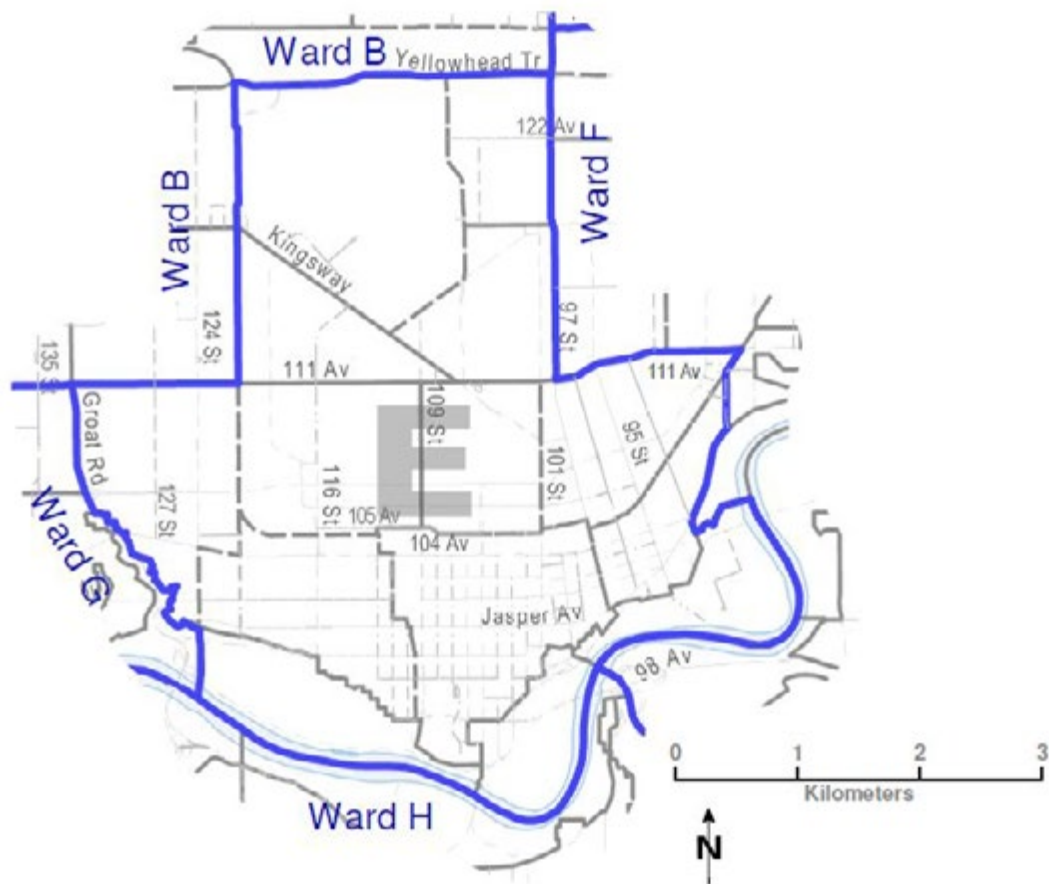
WARD C

Ward "C" begins at the intersection of 97 Street NW and the City of Edmonton north boundary. Proceeds east along the City of Edmonton boundary to 66 Street NW. Follow 66 Street NW south to 127 Avenue NW. Continue west along 127 Avenue NW to the intersection with 97 Street NW. Follow north, then west along 153 Avenue NW. Follow to the intersection with Castledowns Road, follow north and north again along 112 Street NW. At the intersection with the south boundary of the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC), follow east to 97 Street NW. Continue north on 97 Street NW to the beginning point of Ward "C".



WARD D

Ward “D” begins at the intersection of 66 Street NW and the City of Edmonton’s north boundary. Follow the City of Edmonton boundary east, northeast, south, east, south to the boundary of the North Saskatchewan River (NSR). Cross the NSR at 211 Avenue NE and follow the southeast boundary of the NSR along the City of Edmonton boundary south to Yellowhead Trail. Follow west to 50 Street NW, north along 50 Street NW, then west, southwest along the CNR rail line to Fort Road to 66 Street NW. Follow 66 Street NW north to the beginning point of Ward “D”.



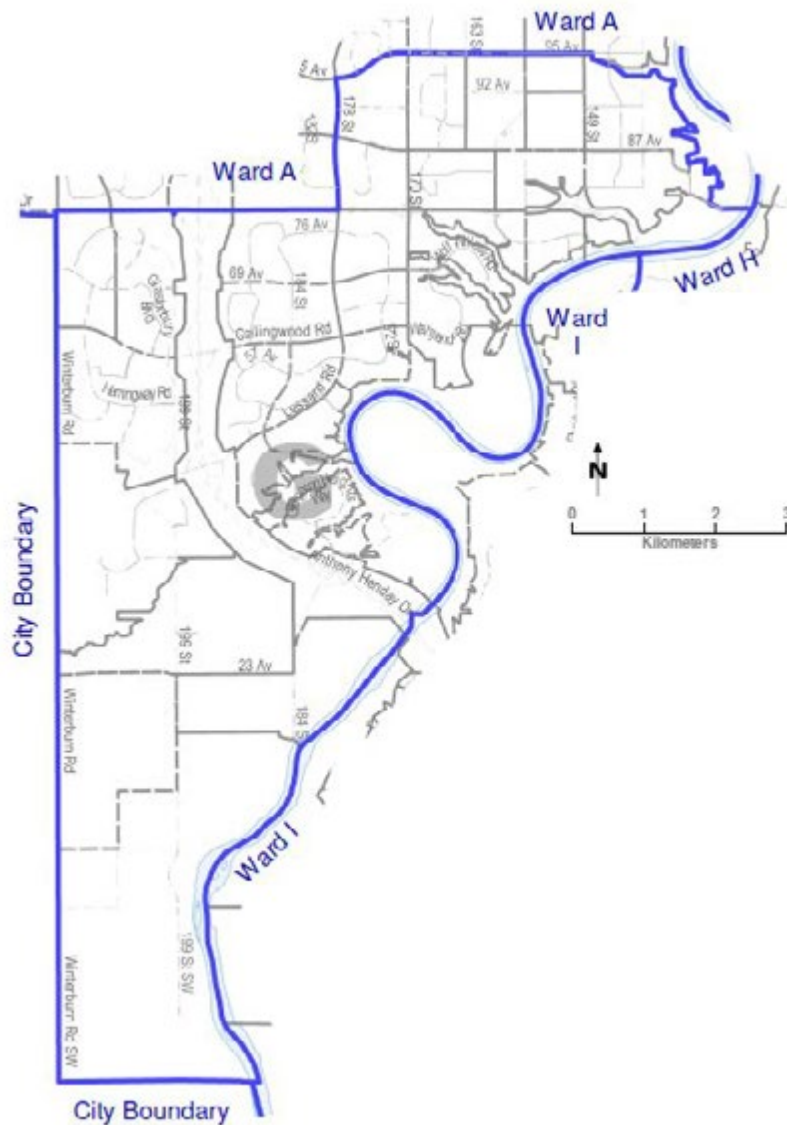
WARD E

Ward “E” begins at the intersection of 121 Street NW and Yellowhead Trail and follows Yellowhead Trail east to 97 Street NW. Continue south along 97 Street NW to 111 Avenue NW. Follow 111 Street NW as it turns into 112 Avenue NW and continue east to the CNR rail line. Follow the CNR rail line south west to 84 Street NW and follow south to the intersection with Jasper Avenue. Follow south to 92 Street NW, south to Rowland Road. Continue northeast along Rowland Road to the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) centreline. Continue along the NSR centreline south, west, south, west to Groat Road. Continue north along Groat Road to 111 Avenue NW and follow east to 121 Street. Follow 121 Street NW to the beginning point of Ward “E”.



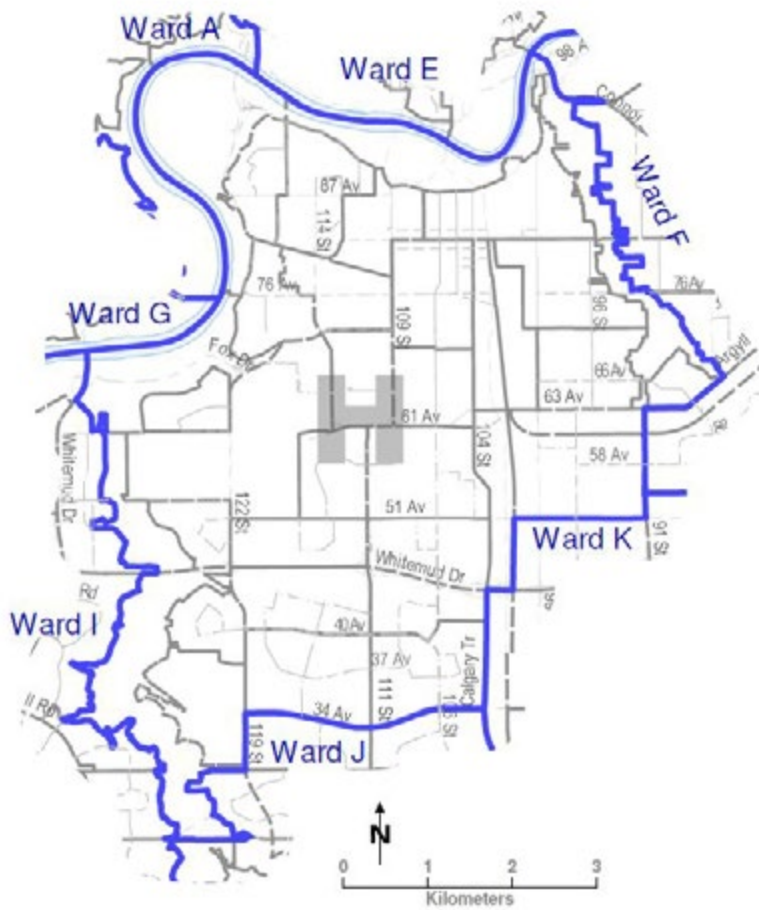
WARD F

Ward “F” begins at the intersection of 127 Avenue NW and 97 Street NW. follow 127 Street NW east to 50 Street NW and continue along Yellowhead Trail east to the centreline of the North Saskatchewan River (NSR). Cross the NSR to the river’s south boundary and continue along the City of Edmonton boundary to Sherwood Park Freeway. Continue south along 34 Street NW to where it intersects with the CNR rail line and follow the rail line southwest to 91 Street NW. Follow 91 Street NW north to 63 Avenue NW and follow east, northeast to 83 Street NW. Follow the northeast boundary of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Ravine past Argyll Park, Rutherford Park, Mill Creek Ravine Park to the intersection with Connors Road. Follow Connors Road north to the centreline of NSR. Continue northeast along the NSR centreline to Rowland Road. Follow west, then north along Jasper Avenue to the intersection with 84 Street NW. Follow north along 84 Street NW until intersecting with the CNR rail line. Continue along the rail line north est to 112 Avenue NW. Follow 112 Avenue NW west to 97 Street NW. Follow north along 97 Street NW to the beginning point of Ward “F”.



WARD G

Ward "G" begins at the intersection of Winterburn Road (City of Edmonton boundary) and Whitemud Drive. Follow Whitemud Drive east to 178 Street NW. North along 178 Street NW to 95 Avenue NW. Follow 95 Avenue NW east to the most west point of Mackenzie Ravine. Follow the southwest boundary of Mackenzie Ravine, continue along the west boundary of Buena Vista Park to Buena Vista Road. Follow east to the centreline of North Saskatchewan River (NSR) and continue south along NSR centreline to the City of Edmonton boundary where at the southeast corner of Riverview Area neighbourhood. Follow the City of Edmonton boundary west to Winterburn Road, north along Winterburn Road, to the beginning point of Ward "G".



WARD H

Ward “H” begins at the intersection of Connors Road and the centreline of the North Saskatchewan River (NSR). Follow Connors Road southeast along the northeast boundary of North Saskatchewan River Valley Ravine past Mill Creek Ravine Park, Rutherford Park, Argyll Park to where 83 Street NW intersects with Argyll Road. Continue along 63 Avenue NW to 91 Street NW. Follow 91 Street NW to Calgary Trail. Continue south along Calgary Trail, Gateway Boulevard to the intersection with 34 Avenue NW and continue west on 34 Avenue NW. At 119 Street NW continue south to the intersection with Westbrook Drive. Continue west to the east boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine South. Follow Whitemud Creek Ravine South south to 23 Avenue NW. Follow 23 Avenue NW to the west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine South. Follow the west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine South north. Continue north along the west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine South and west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine North to the intersection with Whitemud Drive. Follow Whitemud Drive northeast to the centreline of NSR. Follow NSR east to the beginning point of Ward “H”.



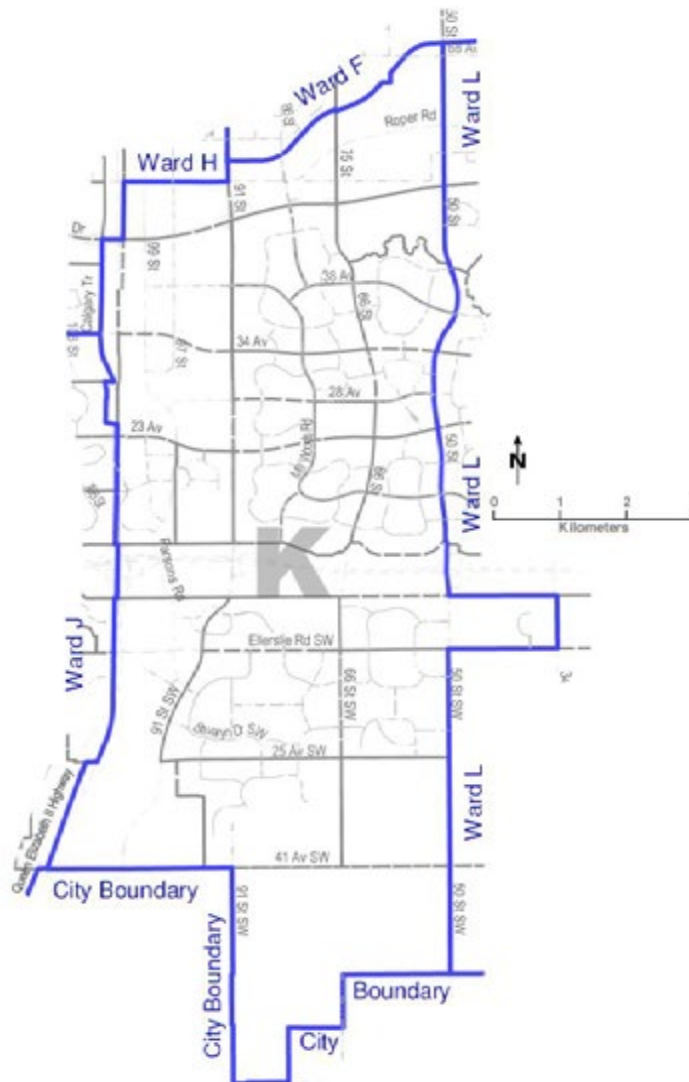
WARD I

Ward “I” begins at the intersection of 167 Street SW and Highway 19 (City of Edmonton boundary) and follows Highway 19 west along the City of Edmonton boundary, then north, to 41 Avenue SW, along the southeast boundary of the North Saskatchewan River (NSR). Continue along NSR north to the intersection with Whitemud Drive. Continue south along Whitemud Drive to the intersection with the west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine North. Follow south along the west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine North neighbourhood, west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine South neighbourhood, and west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine Twin Brooks neighbourhood to where it intersects with the north boundary of the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC). Continue directly south to Ellerslie Road SW and follow west along the north boundary of Hays Ridge Area neighbourhood to 156 Street SW. Follow south along the west boundary of Hays Ridge Area neighbourhood to the southwest point of the neighbourhood where it intersects with Chappelle Area neighbourhood. Follow the boundary of Chappelle Area neighbourhood west, south, west, south to 41 Avenue SW. Follow 41 Avenue SW west to 170 Street SW, south along 170 Street SW, east along 73 Avenue Sw, south along 167 Street SW to the beginning point of Ward “I”.



WARD J

Ward “J” begins at the intersection of Highway 19 (City of Edmonton boundary) and 167 Street SW. Follow 167 Street SW north to 73 Avenue SW and continue west to 170 Street SW. Follow 170 Street SW to 41 Avenue SW. Continue east along 41 Avenue SW to where it intersects with the Chappelle Area neighbourhood. Follow the boundary of Chappelle Area neighbourhood north, east, north, east to the most southwest point of Hays Ridge Area neighbourhood. Continue along the west boundary of Hays Ridge Area neighbourhood to where it intersects with 156 Street SW. continue north along 156 Street SW and follow east along the north boundary of Hays Ridge Area neighbourhood to Ellerslie Road SW. Continue east along Ellerslie Road SW to 141 Street SW and proceed directly north across to the north boundary of the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC) where it connects with the west boundary of the Whitemud Creek Ravine Twin Brooks neighbourhood. Follow north along the west boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine Twin Brooks to 23 Avenue. Continue east along 23 Avenue to the southeast corner of Whitemud Creek Ravine South. Follow the east boundary of Whitemud Creek Ravine South neighbourhood to the most southwest point of Sweet Grass neighbourhood. Continue east to 119 Street NW, north to 34 Avenue NW. Follow 34 Avenue NW to Calgary Trail. Follow Calgary Trail south to Gateway Boulevard and continue south to 41 Avenue SW. Follow west on 41 Avenue SW to Queen Elizabeth II Highway. Continue south along the City of Edmonton boundary to intersection with Highway 19. Follow Highway 19 west to the beginning point of Ward “J”.



WARD K

Ward “K” begins at the intersection of 41 Avenue SW (City of Edmonton boundary) and Queen Elizabeth II Highway. Follow north along Gateway Boulevard, Calgary Trail to Whitemud Drive. Follow east along Gateway Boulevard to 51 Avenue NW and continue east to 91 Street NW. Continue north on 51 Avenue NW to the intersection with the CNR rail line. Follow railing east, northeast to 50 Street NW. Continue south along 50 Street NW to the intersection with the north boundary of Charlesworth neighbourhood. Follow the north boundary of the Charlesworth neighbourhood east, south, east to 50 Street NW. Continue along 50 Street NW to the south boundary of the City of Edmonton, south boundary, east of Caves Lake. Continue west along the City of Edmonton boundary, south, west, south, west to intersect with 91 Street SW. Follow north along 91 Street NW, west 41 Avenue SW, to the beginning point of Ward “K”.



WARD L

Ward “L” begins at the intersection of 50 Street SW and the City of Edmonton’s south boundary. Follow 50 Street SW to where it intersects with the south boundary of Charlesworth neighbourhood. Follow the Charlesworth neighbourhood boundary east, north, west to 50 Street NW. Continue along 50 Street NW to the intersection with the CNR rail line. Continue east along the CNR rail line to where it intersects with 34 Street NW. Follow north to Sherwood Park Freeway. Follow east to the City of Edmonton boundary at Highway 216. Follow the City of Edmonton boundary south to 73 Avenue SW then west, north, west to the beginning point of Ward “L”.

What We Heard & What We Did Report: Ward Boundary Review

March 2020

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Project Overview	3
2. What We Did	5
3. What We Heard	8
Current Ward Boundaries	8
Ward Boundary Map Concepts	9
Ward Boundary Design Criteria	11
Stakeholder Groups	13
Communities of Interest	13
4. What's Next	14



What We Heard & What We Did Report: Ward Boundary Review Public Engagement

Project Overview

Wards are an essential part of Edmonton's municipal government system, which strives to ensure that Edmontonians are effectively represented by City Council. Since the last ward boundary review in 2009 and the 2017 Municipal Election, Edmonton has experienced a number of significant changes:

- + the annexation of land from Leduc County and the City of Beaumont has increased Edmonton's geographic footprint;
- + the population of some wards has increased dramatically; and
- + extensive residential development has taken place in some areas of the City.

As a result, the population of wards is no longer balanced. Council has determined that a comprehensive city-wide review of the ward boundary structure is needed.

How does it work?

City Council appointed a Ward Boundary Commission to conduct the review of current ward boundaries, the Ward Boundary Design Policy (C469A) and the process to determine future ward boundary changes.

The Ward Boundary Commission is made up of seven Edmontonians representing different perspectives and experiences within the fields of public policy, political science, and urban planning. The work of the Commission is directed by Bylaw 18893 Ward Boundary Commission and Council Policy C468A Ward Boundary Design.

The Commission is responsible for providing recommendations to City Council on new ward boundaries (without increasing or decreasing the number of wards) and the design criteria and procedures for future ward boundary reviews.

To develop their recommendations, the Commission is considering many things:

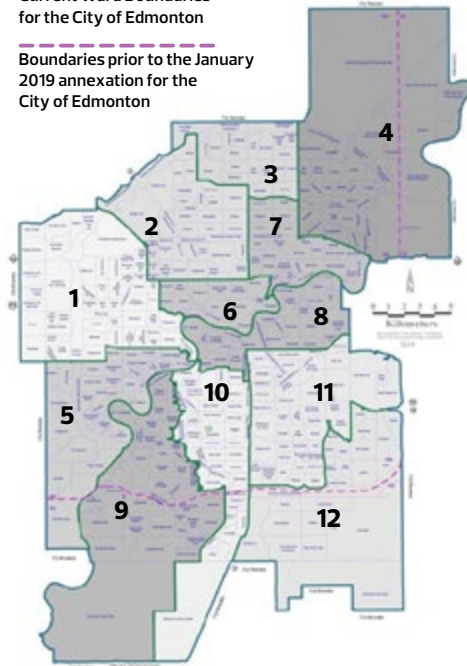
- + trends and best practices in ward boundary design;
- + statistical information;
- + growth projections;
- + future development;
- + zoning;
- + current Ward Boundary Design Criteria identified through the City's Policy (C469A); and
- + broad public and targeted stakeholder engagement.

The Commission understands that there are unique aspects to the neighbourhoods that make up the City's electoral ward system. The members want to ensure that their recommendations consider these characteristics.

They also want to ensure that the process for future ward boundary reviews considers the values and perspectives of Edmontonians. This report shares the results of the Commission's public engagement efforts.

Current Ward Boundaries for the City of Edmonton

Boundaries prior to the January 2019 annexation for the City of Edmonton



Population variances:

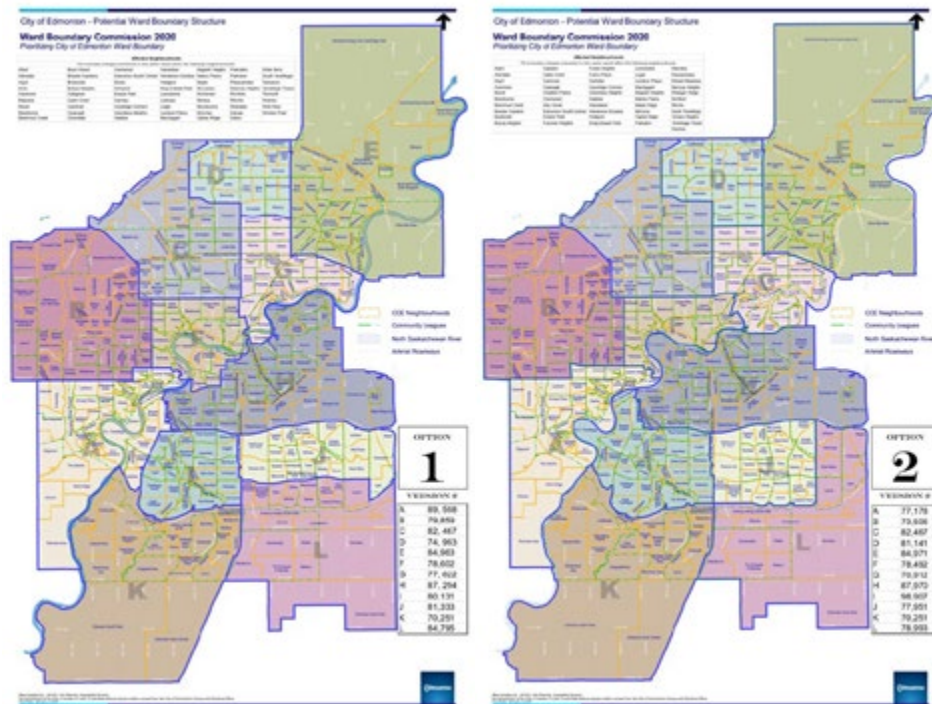
CURRENT WARD STRUCTURE

Ward	Population	Variance (%)
1	79,179	-2.27
2	80,786	-0.29
3	76,674	-5.36
4	84,971	4.88
5	77,478	-4.37
6	72,819	-10.12
7	63,255	-21.93
8	63,357	-21.80
9	106,724	31.73
10	83,752	3.37
11	71,678	-11.53
12	111,550	37.69
Total	972,223	
Optimum population per Ward	81,019	

WHAT WE DID

Stakeholder Engagement

From October to December 2019, the Commission met with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton Catholic School Boards, and City Councillors. Participants were asked to ADVISE on the strengths, weaknesses, issues, and opportunities related to current ward boundaries and Design Policy C469A. This input helped the Commission develop two new ward boundary map concepts, which were then shared with the public.



Note: An invitation to participate was sent to Greater North Central Francophone – Conseil Solaire Centre-Nord with no response received.

Public Engagement

In January 2020, Edmontonians were invited to attend one of five identical drop-in sessions:

Drop-in Location	Date
Millwoods Senior and Multicultural Centre	Jan 7, 2020
Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre	Jan 8, 2020
Orange Hub	Jan 9, 2020
Abbotsfield Recreation Centre	Jan 14, 2020
City Hall	Jan 15, 2020

People who preferred not to attend in-person could participate in a public online survey through Engaged Edmonton. The online survey was also made available through the Edmonton Insight Community.

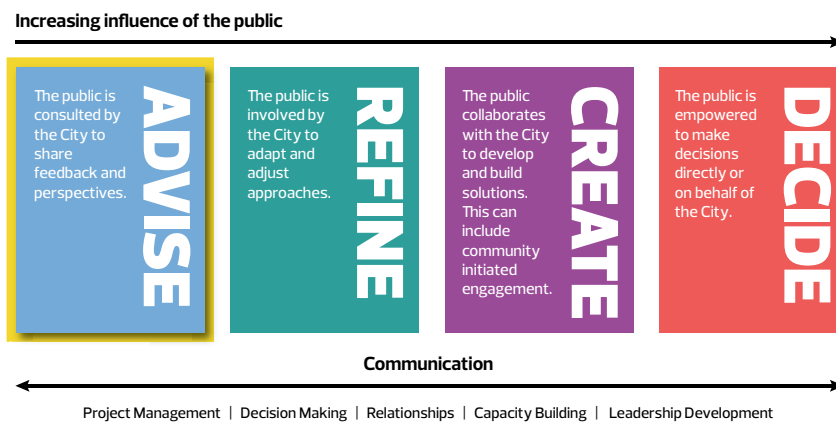
Participants were asked to **ADVISE** about:

- + two ward boundary map concepts developed by the Commission; and
- + the current design criteria and stakeholders listed in the City's Ward Boundary Design Policy (C469A).



The Edmonton Insight Community is an online citizen panel made up of diverse Edmontonians who voluntarily participate in discussion forums and surveys. They received the Ward Boundary Review survey as part of their regular communications related to the panel.

When the City of Edmonton asks people to ADVISE, they are asking members of the public to share feedback and perspectives that can be considered for policies, programs, projects, or services.



Participation

A total of 1,140 people provided input, with all 12 wards represented.

Opportunities to Participate	Number of Participants
Attended Drop-in Session	57
Engaged Edmonton Survey	286
Insight Community Survey	793
Input via Email	4

We received approximately 5,430 comments.

Communication

Edmontonians were invited to participate in the drop-in sessions and online surveys via:

- + City of Edmonton social media posts
- + City of Edmonton website
- + Signs along roads
- + Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Examiner advertisements

Media coverage of the project was also available through [630 CHED radio](#), [CBC online](#) and [Global TV](#).

WHAT WE HEARD

Current Ward Boundaries

As part of the online surveys, participants were asked if they had any concerns with current ward boundaries.

Approximately half of Engaged Edmonton and 60 per cent of Edmonton Insight Community participants had no concerns regarding the current ward boundaries.

Those who did have concerns commented that:

- + ward populations are unbalanced;
- + wards 7-12 are too big geographically;
- + wards 9 and 10 have grown considerably;
- + neighbourhoods with similar interests are not grouped together; and
- + grouping urban and suburban communities and/or mature and newer neighbourhoods in the same wards creates challenges for effective representation.



Ward Boundary Map Concepts

As part of the drop-in sessions and online surveys, participants were asked to advise on two ward boundary map options.

Participants were asked to share their level of comfort and what they believe to be the positive effects and challenges associated with each option.

OPTION #1 FEEDBACK

When asked to indicate their level of comfort on a scale from 1 (*Not at all Comfortable*) to 5 (*Very Comfortable*), the majority of participants reported feeling somewhere between 3 (*Neutral*) and 5 (*Very Comfortable*) about Option #1.

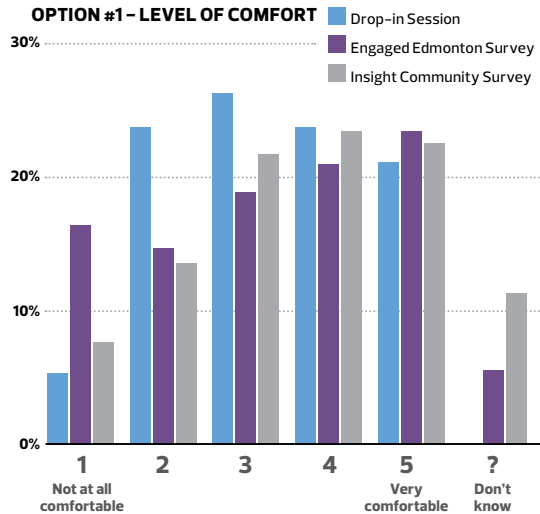
Around 30 per cent of drop-in and Engaged Edmonton and 20 per cent of Insight Community participants rated their comfort lower than 3 (*Neutral*).

Positive Effects

When asked about positive effects of Option #1, participants commented that:

- + it provides better population distribution and balance than the current ward boundaries, which would help create more equitable representation on City Council;
- + the structure of the southern wards allows for future growth and would provide better representation for these neighbourhoods; and
- + the neighbourhoods grouped in proposed wards H and G share similar interests.

OPTION #1 – LEVEL OF COMFORT



Challenges

When asked about the challenges that could arise from Option #1, participants shared that:

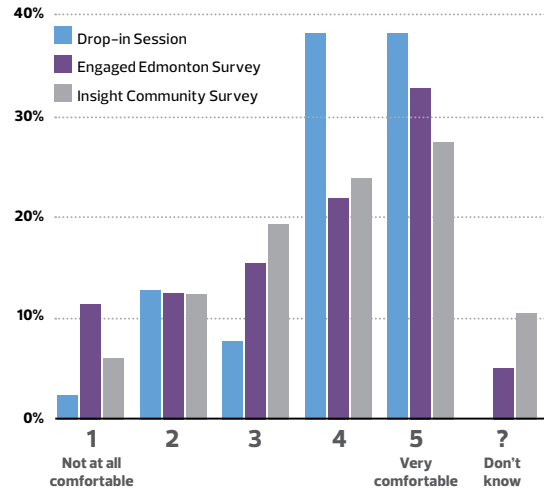
- + the population distribution, particularly in proposed wards E and H, may not accommodate future growth;
- + the large geographic area of proposed ward K could result in an unequal population distribution and affect representation;
- + larger populations in wards A, E, and L could result in the residents in these areas being underrepresented on City Council;
- + the river was not used as a natural boundary; and
- + proposed ward changes for Boyle, McCauley, the University area, Garneau, Terwillegar and Millwoods separated them from neighbourhoods with similar interests which could impact effective representation.

OPTION #2 FEEDBACK

When asked to indicate their level of comfort on a scale from 1 (*Not at all Comfortable*) to 5 (*Very Comfortable*), the majority of participants reported feeling somewhere between 4 and 5 (*Very Comfortable*) with Option #2.

Approximately 15 per cent of drop-in participants, 25 per cent of Engaged Edmonton participants, and 20 per cent of Insight Community participants rated their comfort lower than 3 (Neutral).

OPTION #2 – LEVEL OF COMFORT



Positive Effects

When asked about positive effects of Option #2, participants shared that this model:

- + is better balanced with more even population distribution than the current boundaries;
- + makes better use of natural boundaries, specifically the river;
- + groups neighbourhoods such as McCauley, McDougall, Strathcona, Millwoods, Northmount, Kildare, Evansdale and Kilkenny with other neighbourhoods that share similar interests; and
- + does a good job of respecting transit and transportation corridors in the south.

Challenges

When asked about the challenges that could arise from Option #2, participants shared:

- + all of the proposed wards have a large population difference that would create problems with unequal representation;
- + already large populations in wards E, H, I, K, and L might not accommodate future growth and possibly lead to unequal representation;
- + the geographical size of proposed wards H and I could be a problem;
- + ward G crosses the natural boundary of the river;
- + wards F and G both separate neighbourhoods with similar interests;
- + representing a large geographic area could make it more difficult for Councillors to be responsive; and
- + wards with diverse needs and concerns would be more challenging for a single Councillor to represent.

Additional Feedback

When asked if they had any other comments or ideas for the Commission to consider as they develop their recommendations for a ward boundary model, participants focused on:

- + having wards as evenly balanced as possible in terms of population while accounting for future growth;
- + respecting physical boundaries such as the river and major roadways;
- + grouping neighbourhoods with similar interests together;
- + supporting diversity within wards; and
- + reconsidering the number of wards and number of councillors.

Ward Boundary Design Criteria

Participants were asked to advise on the current design criteria used to create ward boundary options #1 and #2.

The table below reflects which design criteria participants ranked as either one, two or three:

DROP-IN SESSION (16 respondents out of 57 participants)	ENGAGED EDMONTON SURVEY (286 participants)	INSIGHT COMMUNITY SURVEY (793 participants)	Current Design Criteria:
Population vs. Number of Electors 81.3%	Respect Community League Boundaries 60.1%	Population vs. Number of Electors 66.8%	+ Population vs Number of Electors
Communities of Interest/ Diversity within Wards 62.5%	Population vs. Number of Electors 57.7%	Respect Community League Boundaries 57.0%	+ Future Growth
Respect Community League Boundaries 56.3%	Communities of Interest/ Diversity within Wards 57.3%	Easily Identifiable Boundaries 51.3%	+ Respect Community League Boundaries
			+ Communities of Interest/Diversity Within Wards
			+ Easily Identifiable Boundaries
			+ Least Number of Changes
			+ Block-Shaped Wards

Note: · 16 out of 57 drop-in session participants chose to respond to this question.
· The percentages represented in the table reflect the design criteria that was selected by participants as either number 1, 2 or 3.

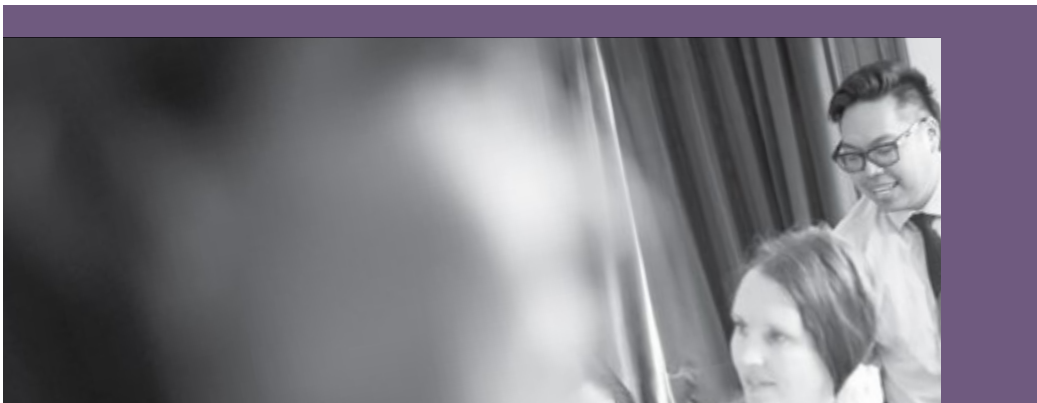
When asked to advise on the design criteria used to develop new ward boundaries, approximately 70 per cent of online participants and 40 per cent of the drop-in participants who responded to this question indicated that no criteria were missing.

Participants who thought additional criteria should be added shared that:

- + there is a need to consider the balance of urban and suburban neighbourhoods and industrial versus residential zoning in the context of ward boundaries;
- + there should be some assessment of the amenities available within neighbourhoods, like transit and recreation options;
- + the population range of +/-25 per cent (the current standard) is unreasonably high;
- + there should be a clear requirement for demographic and economic diversity within wards; and
- + the number of wards should be considered, with some participants indicating that the current number is too high while others shared there should be more.

Approximately 65 per cent of online survey participants and 30 per cent of the drop-in participants who responded to this question said none of the current criteria should be removed. Participants who thought criteria should be removed shared that:

- + population versus number of electors should be removed because it does not help to consider the characteristics of a ward;
- + future growth should be removed because it is difficult to predict;
- + least number of changes should be removed because it limits boundary options;
- + block-shaped wards should be removed in favor of following neighbourhood and natural boundaries;
- + easily Identifiable Boundaries should be removed because this criteria does not support aligning neighbourhoods with similar interests;
- + communities of Interest should be removed because it could create wards that are too much alike, discouraging diversity; and
- + respecting Community League boundaries should be removed as they may not accurately represent neighbourhood interests.



Current Ward Boundary Design Stakeholder Groups

- + *School Boards*
- + *City Councillors*
- + *Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues*

Stakeholder Groups

When asked whether any stakeholders were missing from the current Design Policy and whether any should be removed, approximately 70 per cent of online survey participants and 45 per cent of the drop-in participants who responded to this question said no stakeholders were missing. Participants who thought additional stakeholder groups should be added suggested including:

- + individual community leagues along with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues so that the process accounts for the insights of individual communities;
- + organizations representing agricultural, business, and industrial interests because their concerns are different from residential concerns;
- + former councillors because they could share perspective on the City as a whole;
- + provincial and federal representatives because of their knowledge and perspective;
- + urban planners because of their subject matter expertise;
- + health and emergency response services because of possible service implications with ward changes;
- + recreation and sport associations because they serve populations that cross ward

boundaries;

- + agencies representing social services and/or non-profits because they could advocate for the needs of vulnerable or underrepresented populations; and
- + cultural, minority, and newcomer organizations to help promote inclusion and encourage election participation.

Approximately 80 per cent of online survey participants and 65 per cent of the drop-in participants who responded to this question said none of the current stakeholder groups should be removed. Participants who shared that some stakeholders should be removed from the Design Policy suggested:

- + community leagues because they may only represent a small portion of the neighbourhood and could be seen as more of a special interest group;
- + City Councillors because they have a potential for bias; and
- + school boards because they set their boundaries independently.

Communities of Interest

When participants were asked to advise on what the term 'communities of interest' means to them, the input was varied with most indicating that it means groups with similar issues, concerns and interests. Participants also suggested amenities such as transit service, recreation and culture facilities and activities, physical attributes, unique characteristics (e.g., Whyte Avenue, 124 Street), aging infrastructure, geographic location and land use designation could be used to identify communities of interest.

What's Next

The Commission will closely consider the advice received through public engagement relative to the project's other considerations including:

- + the City's Ward Boundary Design Policy C469A;
- + trends and best practices in municipal ward boundary creation;
- + statistical information on population;
- + growth projections;
- + future development; and
- + zoning.

The Commission will make recommendations on a ward boundary model and possible revisions to Ward Boundary Design Policy C469A. The report containing these recommendations will be shared with City Council.

Citizens can continue to access information about the Ward Boundary Review project by visiting: engaged.edmonton.ca/wardreview.

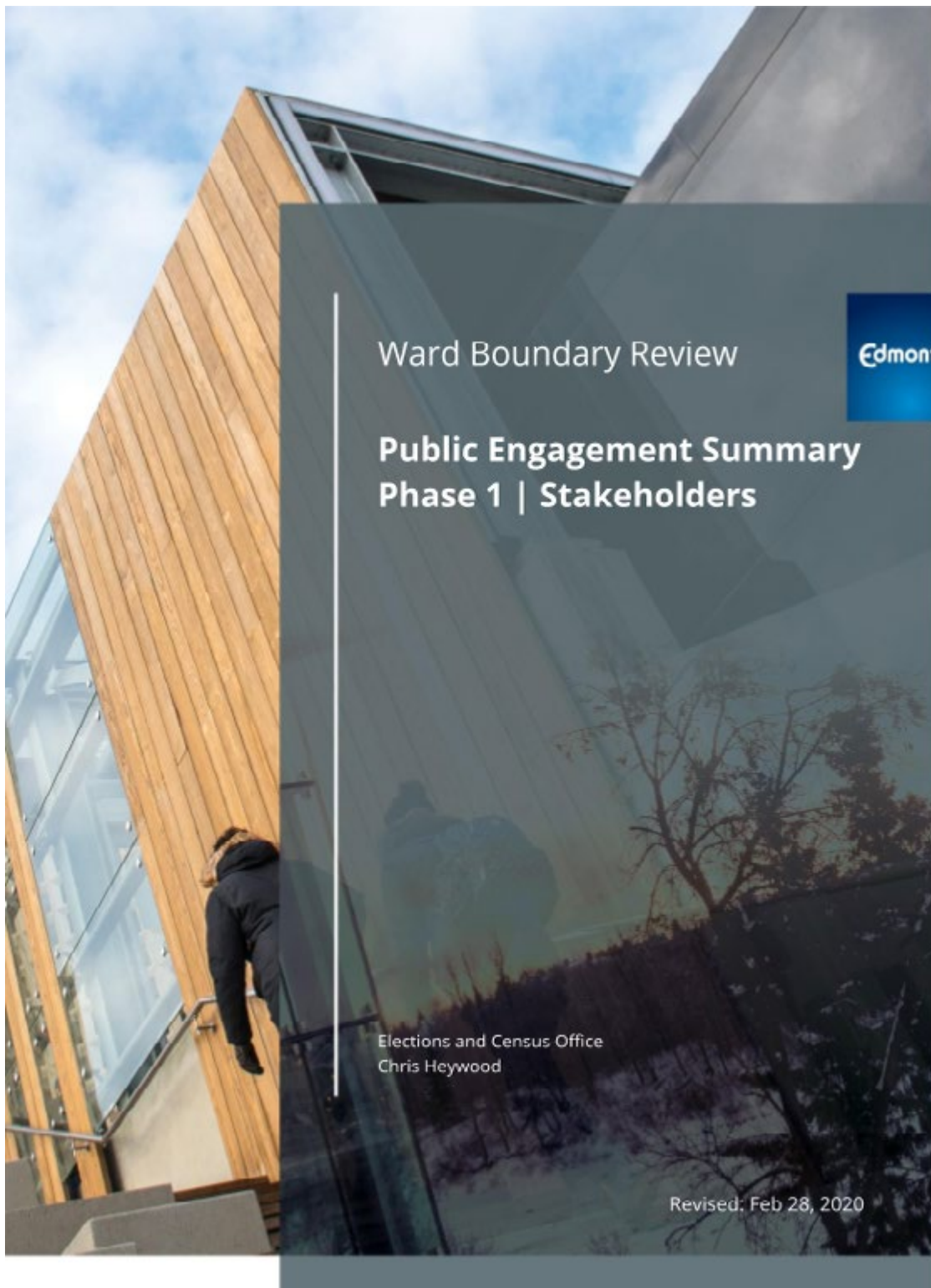


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APPENDIX **6** STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT | SUMMARY REPORT



Ward Boundary Review

Edmonton

**Public Engagement Summary
Phase 1 | Stakeholders**

Elections and Census Office
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose	pg 2
2. Participation	pg 2
3. Interview Framework	pg 3
4. Input Summary	pg 4
5. Other emergent themes	pg 10

Purpose

In 2019, Edmonton's City Council appointed a Ward Boundary Commission to conduct a review of Edmonton's existing ward boundary structure and the associated Ward Boundary Design Policy.

As per the bylaw that governs particular elements of the review process (*Bylaw 18893 - Ward Boundary Commission*), consultation opportunities were extended to specific stakeholder groups so that their unique perspectives could be considered during the development of the Commission's recommendations.

Participation

Invitations were circulated to each stakeholder named in the *Ward Boundary Commission* bylaw, offering an opportunity to share feedback and perspectives regarding Edmonton's existing ward boundary structure, review process, and specific elements of the Ward Boundary Design Policy. Three means to participate were made available to stakeholders: in-person interview, via telephone interview, and online survey.

Interviews were conducted by members of the Ward Boundary Commission (WBC) and Administration with the following stakeholders:

- Ten members of City Council;
- The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL);
 - EFCL Executive Director
 - Members of EFCL Administration
- The Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB);
 - Chair of the Board of Trustees
 - Members of EPSB Administration
- The Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD)
 - Chair of the Board of Trustees
 - Members of EPSB Administration

As per the *Ward Boundary Commission* bylaw, an invitation was extended to the Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord. A response was not received.

The *Ward Boundary Commission* bylaw directs the Commission to extend consultation opportunities to 'each school board operating in the City.' Due to the change to Edmonton's municipal boundary following the annexation of land from the City of Beaumont and Leduc County, some Edmonton residents attend schools currently operated by the Black Gold School Division (BGSD). BGSD, EPSB and ECSD are in the process of aligning their District and Ward boundaries with the amended Municipal boundary. Since BGSD will not operate

schools in Edmonton following those adjustments, a consultation invitation was not extended.

In-person meetings were held with ten members of City Council, EPSB, ECSD and EFCL. One City Councillor participated through a telephone interview.

Interview Framework

In order to glean comparable feedback from stakeholders, the Commission approved a single set of questions to be used to structure each interview.

How do Ward Boundaries influence your organization's work and the people you work with and support?

In your experience, what is working well with the current ward boundary structure?

Is there anything within the current ward boundary structure that requires attention? Why would addressing these things be important?

Council's Ward Boundary Design Policy (C469A) lists a number of criteria that the Commission will use to make recommendations on the ward boundaries. Looking at the list, which three criteria do you consider the most important? Why are these particular criteria more influential than others?

The Design Policy criteria require ward boundaries to 'ensure communities with common interests or sharing a common roadway access are kept within the same Ward.' Municipalities have different interpretations of 'Communities of Interest', including such things as the age of neighbourhoods, the ratio between residential and commercial development, and/or the community's socio-economic level. How would you define 'Communities of Interest'?

Although the approved framework was used by interviewers, the nature of each conversation fluctuated significantly during the consultation process, which typically reflected the priorities and interest of the stakeholder. There was insufficient time for stakeholders to provide thorough responses to each question, in some instances.

A number of interviews were scheduled following the release of the Commission's mapping concepts and, on occasion, respondents focused their attention on offering their feedback on particular aspects of each. The fluid nature of a conversational format made it challenging to attribute some comments to a particular question.

Input Summary

How do Ward Boundaries influence your organization's work and the people you work with and support?

EFCL, EPSB and ECSD

EFCL, EPSB and ECSD all indicate that a close alignment between municipal wards and their own boundaries is beneficial as it allows for the development of effective working relationships.

EPSB indicates that *"citizen advocacy is more effective when multiple neighbourhoods with shared concerns are represented by the same school trustees and city councillor."*

While all suggest that working with a single elected official is preferable, each stakeholder group notes that the current composition of boundaries is not unduly burdensome.

Each stakeholder group acknowledges that although the number of wards and districts remain varied between orders of government and their organization, absolute alignment is not achievable

Members of City Council

Multiple Councillors indicate that the boundary of the ward they represent, which determines the composition of neighbourhoods within the ward, strongly influences the type of work they are required to undertake on a daily basis.

A number of Councillors indicate that the boundary construct does not, and should not, interfere with their oath to act in the best interests of the City as a whole. One Councillor suggested that a change to a ward boundary would *'simply add or subtract constituents'*.

In your experience, what is working well with the current ward boundary structure?

EFCL, EPSB and ECSD

Each Stakeholder group indicates that there are no significant challenges associated with the current composition of municipal ward boundaries in terms of their functionality, from a stakeholder perspective.

EPSB reports that the criteria they use to determine their ward composition mirrors those of Council's Design Policy, to some extent. This has created an advantageous alignment in some areas of the city.

EPSB indicates that continuing to protect the integrity of neighbourhood boundaries is a critical component of ward boundary design.

Members of City Council

Members of City Council suggest that the current boundary structure works reasonably well, notwithstanding some significant imbalances in population and the relatively large geographical size of some wards.

One Councillor indicates that the comparably small size of the 'downtown' ward is advantageous given the unique composition of socioeconomic demographics and social need.

One Councillor suggests that the use of the river as a ward boundary reflects that way that many residents compartmentalize the city.

Is there anything within the current ward boundary structure that requires attention? Why would addressing these things be important?

EFCL, EPSB and ECSD

Each Stakeholder group indicates that there are no significant challenges associated with the current composition of municipal ward boundaries in terms of their functionality from a stakeholder perspective.

ECSD did express concern regarding the potential population disparity that could occur in the current variance thresholds allowed by the Ward Boundary Design Policy.

EFCL report that some Area Councils indicate that they can find it challenging to engage with multiple councillors in cases where boundaries do not align.

Members of City Council

A number of Councillors indicate that the significant population disparity that exists between wards should be addressed in the Review.

Councillors also indicate that the Commission should consider addressing:

- the large geographical area of some wards;
- the lack of diversity of land use in some wards;
- whether the river should serve as a default boundary

A number of Councillors suggest that some of the challenges associated with the ward boundary structure would be more effectively mitigated by an increase in the staffing budget allocated to members of Council.

Council's Ward Boundary Design Policy (C469A) lists a number of criteria that the Commission will use to make recommendations on the ward boundaries. Looking at the list, which three criteria do you consider the most important? Why are these particular criteria more influential than others?

EFCL, EPSB and ECSD

EPSB was the only stakeholder to be asked this question directly. They indicate that striving to keep the population of each ward substantially equal; ensuring a resilience to future growth; preserving Community League boundaries, should be prioritized by the Commission.

EPSB notes that Community Leagues work closely with Board Trustees in many areas. In some cases, schools and community leagues are co-located. EPSB suggests that fragmenting Community League areas with municipal ward boundaries would add a layer of unwanted complexity to their working relationships.

Members of City Council

Most Councillors were not asked this question directly, although many offered their perspectives on how the criteria should be prioritized.

Four Councillors suggest that achieving a relative population balance between wards should be the primary goal of a ward boundary review as it mitigates the risk of over or underrepresentation.

Three Councillors indicate that visible boundaries are an asset to residents and should be considered accordingly.

The Design Policy criteria require ward boundaries to 'ensure communities with common interests or sharing a common roadway access are kept within the same Ward.' Municipalities have different interpretations of 'Communities of Interest', including such things as the age of neighbourhoods, the ratio between residential and commercial development, and/or the community's socio-economic level. How would you define 'Communities of Interest'?

EFCL, EPSB and ECSD

Stakeholder groups hold varying and divergent options on how to define 'Communities of Interest' and how they should influence the composition of ward boundaries.

EPSB's primary Community of Interest is families with children, although school catchment areas influence boundary composition in a more pragmatic manner. EPSB indicates that a 'hub and spoke' boundary concept is desirable as it would create a boundary structure *'where the issues and demographics of each ward (are) relatively consistent'*.

EFCL encourages the Commission not to feel compelled to group neighbourhoods with shared interests together as it creates the risk that *"Council debate would become about advocacy"* for a particular perspective.

ECSD suggests that defining Communities of Interest geographically is a challenge. They indicate that community hubs - churches, daycares and schools - serve as focal points for residents and may draw from a number of neighbourhoods. They note that many parents choose their schools based on a variety of priorities - religion, language, other specialization - creating very engaged Communities of Interest that are not tied together by their proximity to one another.

ECSD suggests that representing districts made up of neighbourhoods with shared concerns is more manageable for Trustees, particularly when having to work with multiple elected officials across each order of government.. However, one Trustee points to a *'responsibility to learn and serve the community, not to contrive boundaries that prioritize that it is more straightforward to represent single communities of interest.'*

Members of City Council

Members of Council note that 'Communities of Interest' can be defined in numerous ways. Many suggest that creating a consensus definition that could be applied pragmatically and results in a boundary structure that the majority of stakeholders would find palatable is likely impossible.

Two Councillors encourage the Commission not to interpret 'Communities of Interest' in a manner that may be perceived as prioritising the interests of a particular socio-economic demographic.

There is consensus among the members of Councillors that representing a Ward in which residents have similar perspectives and priorities would be more straightforward than a ward with an abundance of diverse concerns. However, Councillors also note that residents would likely not all be represented effectively in this scenario. They identify a risk of dominant voices occurring within each Ward, which could lead to Councillors advocating for the interests of a particular cross-section of residents at the expense of collective decision making.

Councillors offer a number of ways in which 'Communities of Interest' could be defined;

- Shared neighbourhood maturity and design
- Comparable socio-economic demographics
- Shared local improvement concerns
- Neighbourhoods with longstanding mutual engagement

Many Councillors note the often divergent interests of 'suburban' and 'urban' neighbourhoods. Of the six Councillors who commented in this regard, five suggest that a ward boundary construct that creates 'urban' and 'suburban' wards would be detrimental to effective representation.

Other Emergent Themes

Consultation with Councillors tended to be more fluid than the interviews with stakeholder groups, which typically followed the prescribed structure more closely. However, in spite of the more conversational format, a number of themes emerged.

Topic	Concern
Neighbourhood diversity	<p>A Ward composed of neighbourhoods with diverse socio-economic demographics and maturity levels is identified as an asset by Councillors.</p> <p><i>"The composition of the Ward is an asset for me. It encompasses old and new communities and everything in between. That kind of mixed levels of maturity and demographics allows me to understand more about the City's population. I don't get trapped in a bubble"</i></p>
The 'Core' Ward	<p>Councillors suggest that the population of the 'Core' Ward should remain relatively low, given its unique composition of demographics and the prevalence of diverse social need.</p> <p><i>"A Ward with a relatively high population is manageable for Councillors when the area is comprised of neighbourhoods that are well established. (There is) some weight to the argument for keeping downtown small given the divergent demographics."</i></p>
Variance thresholds	<p>Councillors suggest that the population variance thresholds allowed by the current Policy are too large.</p> <p>Some indicate that reducing these thresholds could necessitate more frequent boundary reviews.</p> <p><i>"The population variance threshold is much too broad. Effective representation -one person, one vote - is incredibly diluted with a variance that large."</i></p> <p><i>"25% variance allows boundaries to have greater longevity. I would review the boundaries every one or two election cycles to keep population equity more consistently applied."</i></p>
The scale of change	<p>Councillors are mindful of the policy criteria that stipulates the scale of change.</p> <p><i>"Wholesale, dramatic change is probably not beneficial at this point. Change should be minimal within the parameters of what's necessary."</i></p>

