



**Board  
Report No. 21-070**

**28 September 2021**

## **Electoral Zone Boundary Review Update**

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### **PURPOSE:**

1. To provide information on the progress and next steps in the comprehensive review of electoral zone boundaries in advance of the 2022 municipal election.

### **STRATEGIC LINKS:**

2. Conducting an electoral zone boundary review is consistent with the Culture of Social Responsibility objective of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan by modelling responsible and ethical leadership and accountability. Decisions related to the composition and area of jurisdiction are a part of the Board's legislative requirements. Through analysis and revision to the zone structure, the Board will support effective governance practices and decision making by ensuring effective representation for its school populations and communities.

### **CONTEXT:**

3. Trustee Determination and Distribution  
The rules governing the number and distribution of trustee positions are found in section 58.1 of the *Education Act*, and in *Ontario Regulation 412/00 – Elections to and Representation on District School Boards*. Before each general election, the Board must determine the number of trustee positions on the board and distribute those positions across its area of jurisdiction. This process is known as trustee determination and distribution.

By 31 March 2022 the Board must complete a report on the determination and distribution of its members and, by 3 April 2022, submit the report to:

- the Ministry of Education;
- the Clerk of the City of Ottawa; and
- the secretary of every other board that is wholly or partially within the board's area of jurisdiction.

4. City of Ottawa Ward Boundary Review

The City of Ottawa (the City) recently completed a comprehensive review of its ward boundary configuration and has adopted a new ward structure that will be used for the next three municipal elections. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) must adjust its trustee zone boundaries to align with the City’s 24 new wards.

A copy of the recommended boundaries final report is available on the City of Ottawa’s website.“ On 27 January 2021, Council enacted [By-law No. 2021-3](#), entitled, “A by-law of the City of Ottawa to establish ward boundaries and Council composition.”

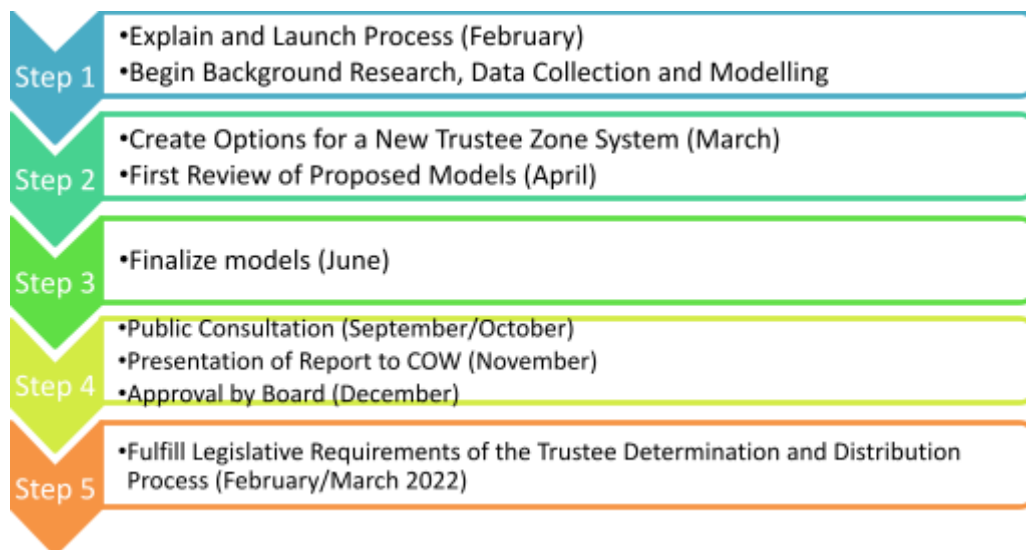
Following Council’s approval of By-law No. 2021-3, there was a 45-day statutory period in which notices of appeal could be filed with the City setting out the objections to the by-law and the reasons in support of the objections. The appeal period ended on 15 March 2021. The City received two notices of appeal during the appeal period.

During its meeting on 14 April 2021, City Council approved a motion directing its Legal Services team to seek specific boundary modifications from the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) related to By-law No. 2021-3, as a potential settlement to the two ward boundary appeals.

The Ontario Land Tribunal considered the Ottawa ward boundary By-law in July 2021 and in a statement made on 2 September 2021 approved the changes modifying the By-law to include the specific ward boundary modifications approved by Council on 14 April 2021. The changes are minimal in terms of the impact on the data used in the preparation of the four models outlined in this report and currently available online. The changes would only be perceptible within the individual trustee maps. The shape files will be updated prior to the final report to the Committee of the Whole.

5. Electoral Zone Boundary Review

At the Special Committee of the Whole meeting on 2 February 2021, the Board discussed Report 21-016, Electoral Zone Boundary Review. The report outlined the plan for the comprehensive review of electoral zone boundaries to align with the City of Ottawa’s revised ward boundaries and provided a timeline for the work required leading up to the trustee determination and distribution process that must occur in early 2022.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

### 6. Current Zone Boundaries

Currently, the OCDSB has 12 electoral zones. There are some large variations in electoral population and there are some geographic configurations which could be better aligned. The current zone boundaries do not align with the new ward boundaries and therefore need to be adjusted. The review presents an opportunity to address some of the traditional large variations in electoral population and some geographic issues which create variances in electoral representation by population. These are issues that may be remedied through this review.

The OCDSB has some flexibility in determining its zone boundaries in three areas: the weight it gives to elector parity; the capacity to represent (workload); and, important aspects of the education system, such as the number of schools and communities of interest.

Another element that must be considered with this work is longevity. The City anticipates the revised ward structure will be used for at least three municipal elections (2022, 2026 and 2030) and, perhaps, a fourth in 2034. The Board should also plan for the long term use of any revised model.

### 7. Number of Elected Trustees

The OCDSB has 12 elected trustees. The number of trustees is established by a formula outlined in *the Education Act* (section 58.1) and Ontario Regulation (O.Reg) 412/00. Based on the data currently available, the OCDSB cannot increase the number of trustees above 12. The Board may reduce the number of elected trustees below the number provided for in *the Education Act* and O. Reg. 412/00, but not below the minimum number of five members. This can be done only by a resolution of the Board. If a school board chooses to exercise this option, the resolution must be passed before 31 March of an election year.

### 8. Preliminary Models

After considering many possible variations, staff developed four electoral zone models, attached as Appendix A for discussion. These can be described as follows:

#### Model 1 – Modified Status Quo

This model reflects the existing electoral zone boundaries with minor modifications to meet the City's new ward structure. This option maintains 12 zones which closely resemble the current configuration. This option has several wide variances in both the electoral quotient (EQ) (from 1.31 to 0.63) and the number of schools per zone (16 to 7).

Issues to consider with the modified status quo include:

- Significant growth is projected in modified Zone 3, particularly in approved ward (AW) 9 due to the development in the Half Moon Bay and Barrhaven West areas, which will further increase the total EQ by the 2034 election;

- The population projections for modified Zones 4 and 5 are relatively stable with no planned growth; and
- The population of Modified Zone 10 will also increase significantly due to the anticipated infill condominium and public housing developments planned for Hintonburg, Lebreton and Kitchissippi.

### Model 2 – Urban Core

This model builds on the status quo with some changes to further reduce the variances in the EQ. This model presents the most balanced approach of the four and maintains some of the current ward pairings. Notable elements include:

- Bay ward remains independent with no major growth planned;
- Somerset-Kitchissippi continue to be paired but will see significant population increases by the 2034 election owing to the anticipated infill condominium and public housing developments planned for Hintonburg, Lebreton and Kitchissippi;
- Combines Orleans and Cumberland and accommodates the future growth planned for the Orleans area; and
- Combines College/Knoxdale/Merivale.

### Model 3 – Suburban Hubs

This model reflects the growth in different parts of the City and features changes to several traditional alignments, in particular:

- Kanata North is combined with West Carleton and can accommodate the planned future growth of the Kanata North ward;
- Kanata South is combined with the new Stittsville ward and can accommodate the planned future growth of Stittsville ward;
- There is a large rural ward at the south, combining Rideau-Goulbourn and Osgoode which has a lower electoral quotient, but long term growth potential;
- Bay ward is combined with Kitchissippi;
- Somerset is combined with Capital;
- College and Knoxdale Merivale are combined; and
- Riverside South/Findlay Creek is independent and relatively small, but significant growth is planned for this area.

### Model 4 – Rural Hub

This model changes several traditional alignments and creates a large rural hub by combining Rideau-Goulbourn, Osgoode and Cumberland. Other notable pairings include:

- Kanata South is combined with the new Stittsville ward;
- Bay ward is combined with Kitchissippi;
- Somerset is combined with Capital; and
- College and Knoxdale/Merivale are combined.

Each of the models and the related background details provided in Appendix A, help to illustrate the complexities associated with the trustee distribution and determination process.

All of the preliminary models are based on 12 trustees. Staff did develop a zone model with 11 trustees, however, in the absence of any discussion by the Board about a

reduction in the number of trustees, staff did not feel it was appropriate to include that in the posting for public consultation in June.

The Board has the authority to reduce the number of trustees and this could help to address some of the challenges with the EQ, there are a number of additional factors that would need to be examined should the Board wish to explore this approach. These include amendments to the OCDSB Bylaws and Standing Rules, voting, quorum, increases to trustee workload, and trustee honoraria.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

9. The cost of conducting the review will be managed within existing departmental budgets.

## **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:**

10. In accordance with the timelines established in February 2021, staff shared the preliminary zone models with trustees and posted the models on the [consultation page](#) of the Board's website in July 2021 with an accompanying [District News story](#) to promote awareness. The materials were developed in a toolkit style to ensure that interested individuals would have access to the legislative requirements, the decision-making process, the criteria considered in developing zone boundaries, electoral population data and maps of the current and preliminary zone models. In addition, information was included in the first school council newsletter issued on 17 September 2021. The public has been invited to share their comments via email to [electoralzoneboundary@ocdsb.ca](mailto:electoralzoneboundary@ocdsb.ca). At the time of writing, staff has received feedback from one trustee.
11. Following the Board discussion on the preliminary models, staff will make any necessary modifications and proceed with additional opportunities for public feedback. These include:
  - **Printed Maps and Explanatory Webtext**  
Building on the information contained in the Electoral Zone Boundary Toolkit, a small number of printed toolkits, including maps will be generated and made available to individuals on request.
  - **Narrated Video Presentation of Preliminary Zone Models**  
The Toolkit will be enhanced to include a narrated video presentation about the process, the requirements and the maps. This model has been used with success by the Planning department in several of its recent reviews and allows for a presentation which can be observed on more than one occasion and at the user's preferred time and date. This will be added to the District Website and promoted in social media and in stakeholder communications.

- **Direct Invitation for Feedback to Key Stakeholders**

To create awareness and invite feedback, key stakeholders including OCDSB advisory committees, OCASC, school councils, the Federations and community groups/members who are registered for updates on District communications will receive an email explaining the process, providing links to the Toolkit and the narrated video, and information about how to share feedback or get responses to questions. Staff will respond to individual questions and prepare a frequently asked questions (FAQs) area on the web page with responses to common questions received.

- **Virtual Town Hall Meeting**

A virtual town hall meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, 2 November 2021. Any interested persons or groups will be able to watch the video and ask questions of staff. The town hall will use the narrated video presentation and toolkit resources for background. Participants can register in advance and/or ask questions via the chat or voice.

12. Next Steps

This method of feedback offers an extended period for input, increased opportunities for engagement and allows staff to consider input and ideas as we move through the process. A summary of the feedback will be developed for trustees and will inform any recommendations in the final report which will be presented to the Committee of the Whole in December 2021.

## **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. Is there a preferred model which best balances electoral representation and geography?
2. Are there variations or modifications to these models which might enhance representation?
3. Is there sufficient interest on the Board to warrant examining models with a reduced number of trustee positions?

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Preliminary Electoral Zone Models