

Town of Georgina Council Composition and Electoral Review

**Presentation of Findings and
Recommendations**

February 15, 2017

Introduction

- Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams, was retained by the Town of Georgina to conduct a Council Composition and Electoral Structure Review
- The Review explored the following questions:
 - Does the present ward structure provide effective representation?
 - Would an alternative system provide better representation?

Study Objectives

- ❑ Develop a clear understanding of the present ward system
- ❑ Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the present ward system on the basis of the identified principles
- ❑ Identify plausible modifications to the present ward structure
- ❑ Conduct a consultation process to ensure community support for the Review and its outcome

Study Process

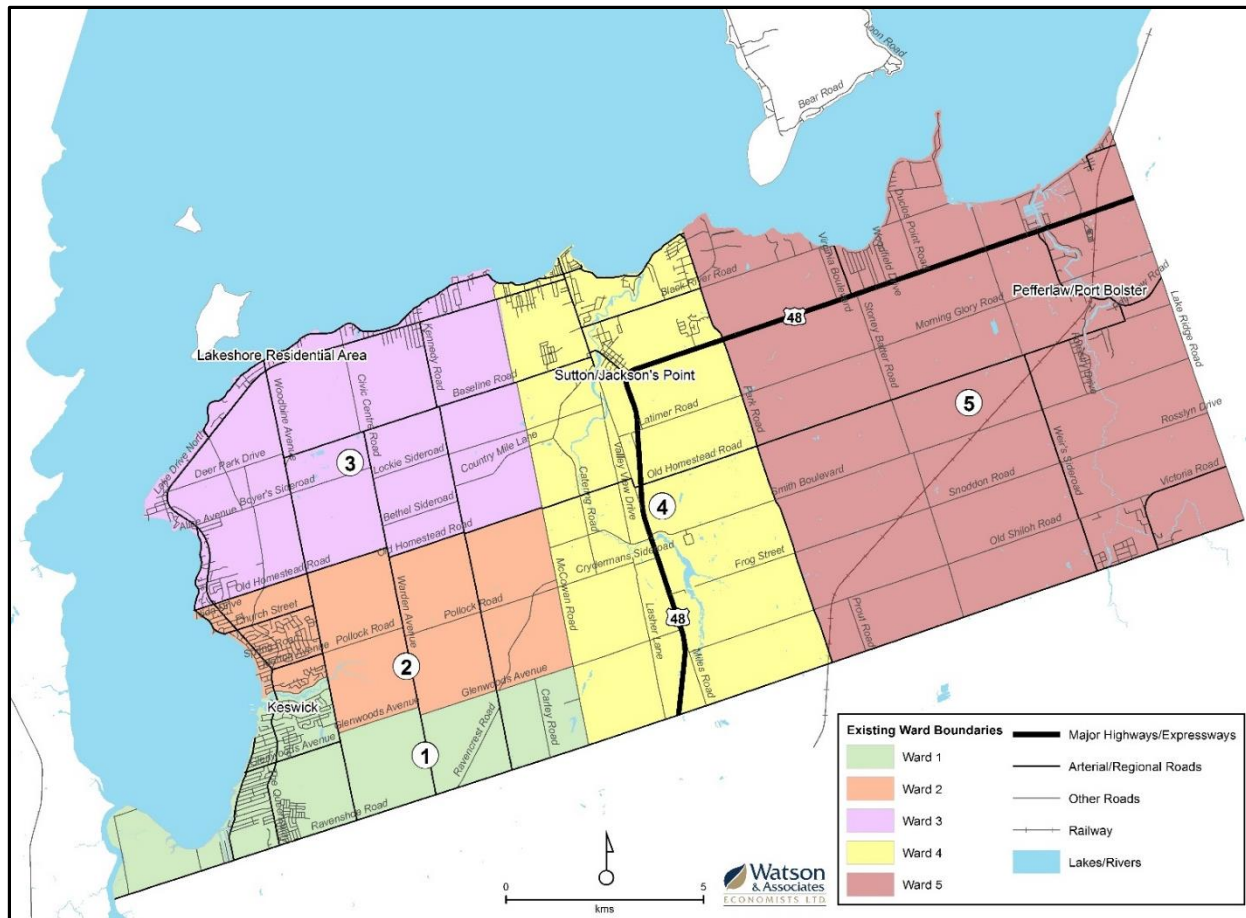
- Multi-phase assignment which has included:
 - Research and data compilation
 - Interviews with Councillors and the Mayor
 - Population and growth forecasting and data modelling to 2022
 - Development of four preliminary ward boundary alternatives
 - Preparation of an Interim Report, released to the public on September 7, 2016
 - Public consultation on preliminary alternatives
 - Development of final Options and recommendations, and preparation of a Final Report

Context

- ❑ Town of Georgina was created in 1971 through the amalgamation of the Townships of North Gwillimbury and Georgina and the Village of Sutton
- ❑ Initially Council was comprised of a Mayor and one Regional Councillor elected at-large, plus seven Town Councillors elected in wards based on those pre-amalgamation municipalities
- ❑ In 1996, Council was reduced to five Town Councillors elected in wards

Context (Cont'd)

Town of Georgina Existing Ward Structure



Context (Cont'd)

- ❑ Since 1996, permanent population has increased by 33%; also moderate growth in seasonal population
- ❑ Growth concentrated in shoreline communities, particularly in Keswick
- ❑ Significant inequalities at present in population of wards

Context (Cont'd)

- ❑ Georgina's 2016 population base is 53,665 – largely permanent, but there is a notable seasonal component
- ❑ Over the 2016 to 2022 period, Georgina's population is expected to increase 7% (to 57,325), with much of the growth concentrated in Keswick
- ❑ Future growth patterns are expected to exacerbate the population imbalance in the existing wards

Context (Cont'd)

□ **Municipal Act**

- Section 217 authorizes Council to establish the number of councillors and to determine whether they “shall be elected by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards.”
- Section 222 (1) authorizes a municipality “to divide or redivide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards.”

Guiding Principles

- Review “will have regard for” six principles adopted by Council:
(Report DAS - 2016 – 0005, February 3, 2016)
 - 1) representation by population
 - 2) representation of communities of interest
 - 3) recognition of future growth
 - 4) representation of physical features as natural boundaries
 - 5) overriding principle of effective representation
 - 6) electorate distribution

Guiding Principles (Cont'd)

- 1) representation by population
 - seek relatively equal population totals (parity) with a degree of variation acceptable

- 2) representation of communities of interest
 - advisable to avoid breaking up traditional neighbourhoods and communities of interest within the Town

Guiding Principles (Cont'd)

- 3) recognition of future growth
 - wards should remain in balance over the next two elections (2018 and 2022)

- 4) representation of physical features as natural boundaries
 - rely on recognizable, permanent, easily remembered “markers”

Guiding Principles (Cont'd)

- 5) overriding principle of effective representation
 - specific principles subject to the principle of “effective representation” (Carter case 1991)

- 6) electorate distribution
 - equal representation by eligible electors → “non-resident electors” and “resident electors” are to be treated equally in the design of wards

Guiding Principles (Cont'd)

- Representation of communities of interest: “It is desirable that differing property characteristic types (such as lakefront, commercial, and industrial) be presented in as many wards as possible.”
- Councillors elected since 1971 in wards that each, by design, include some lakefront and rural territory plus settlement areas of varying sizes and complexity
- Wards in Georgina are expected to be diverse rather than coherent units of representation

Evaluating the Existing Ward Structure

Principle	Does Existing Ward Structure Meet Requirements of Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	No	Only two wards are near optimal size; three are at or outside the acceptable range of variation.
Representation of Communities of Interest	Yes (as defined)	All wards intentionally include diverse communities of interest since residential clusters are combined with low-density territory and shoreline. Keswick, however, is divided into three parts, and rural and seasonal representation is fragmented.
Recognition of Future Growth	No	One ward exceeds the acceptable range of variation and two are below the acceptable range of variation.
Representation of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Arterial roadways primarily used with one exception (the Maskinonge River); all are easily understood.
Effective Representation	Partially successful	Wards consisting of differing property characteristic types may contribute to better decision-making but are arguably less successful in representing those designated communities of interest.
Electorate Distribution	Yes	Seasonal residents are included in the population figures for all wards but are numerically small in the present Wards 1 and 2, and insufficient to bring the present Wards 3 and 5 up to the optimal range.

Public Consultation

- Review included a comprehensive public consultation component
- Topics explored:
 - i. Composition of Council: remain at 7?
 - ii. Keep wards?
 - iii. Use two-member wards?
 - iv. Retain diversity paradigm in ward designs?
 - v. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the present ward system?
 - vi. Preliminary options for a future electoral system in Georgina
- Feedback/comments reflected in final report analysis and recommendations

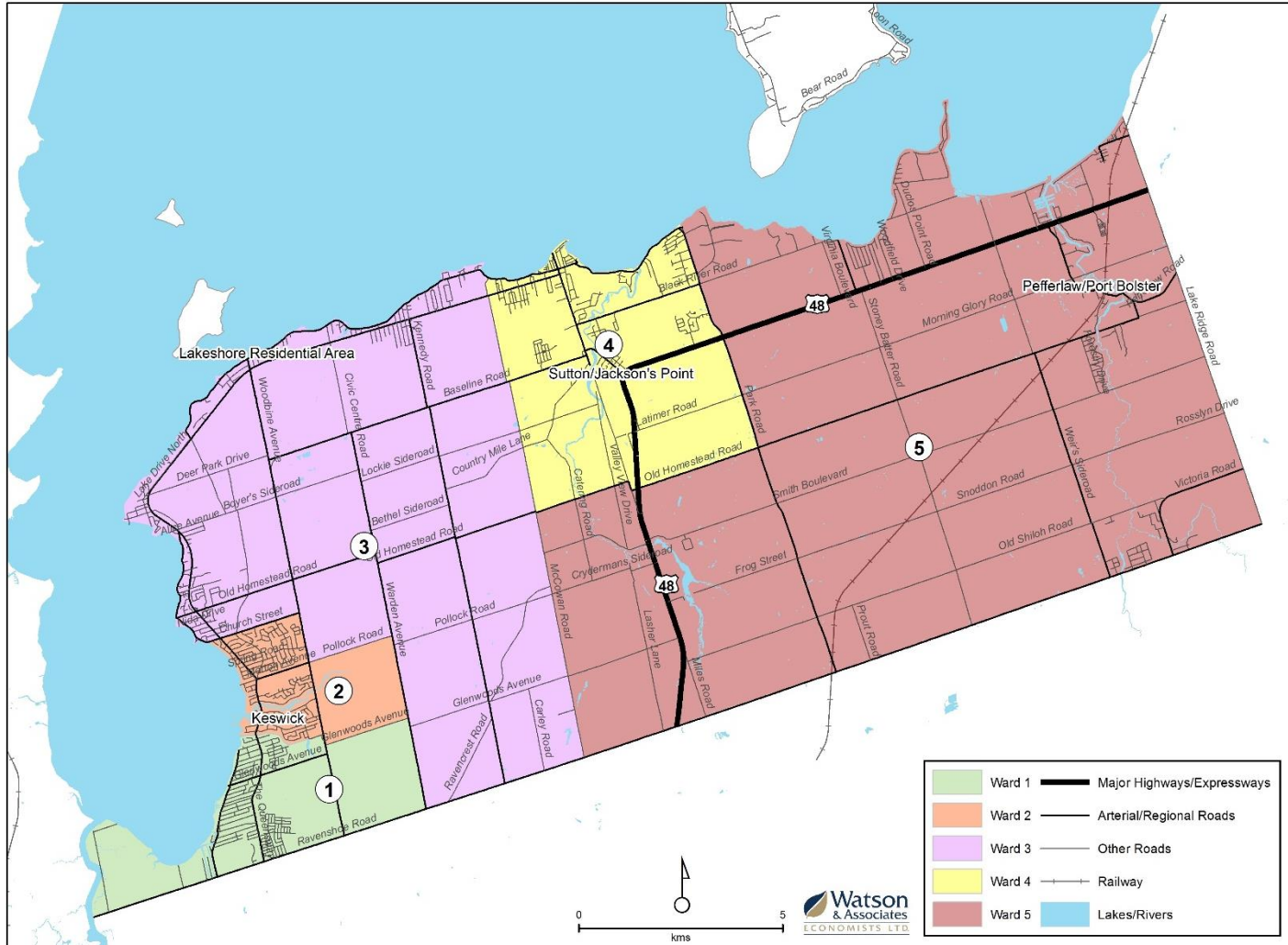
Preliminary Options

- Four preliminary ward designs presented:
 - 2 retained five wards (A and B)
 - 1 included six wards
 - 1 included seven wards

Final Options

- A ward system continues to be the appropriate electoral model because of the presence of distinctive communities of interest within the Town of Georgina
- Final Options:
 - Option 1 (Five-Ward Option)
 - Option 2 (Six-Ward Option)

Option 1 (Five-Ward Option)



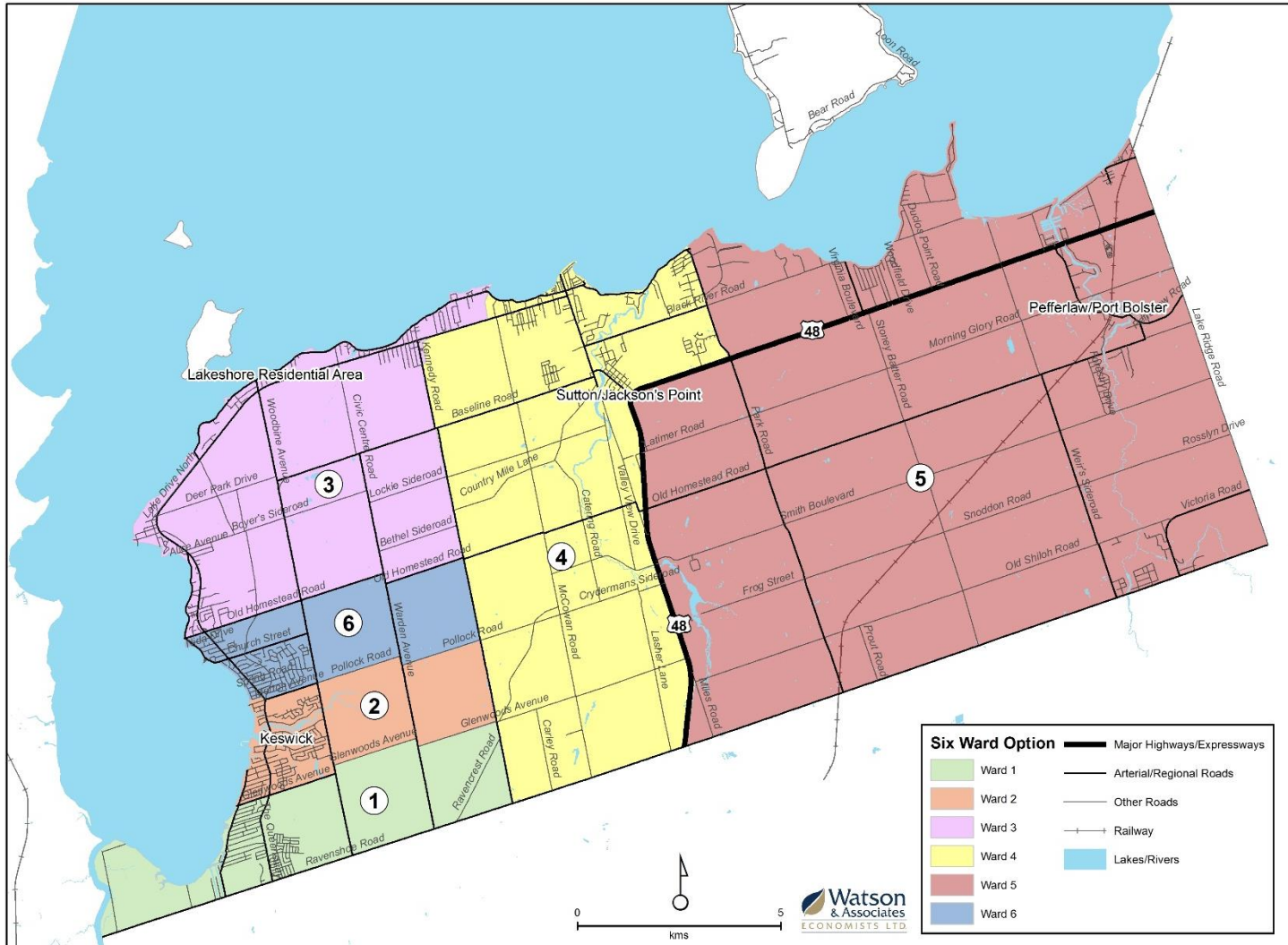
Option 1 (Cont'd)

- A hybrid of Preliminary Options 1 and 2
 - two wards in Keswick south of Church Street
 - Ward 3: large rural area west of McCowan Road;
Ward 5: large rural area east of McCowan Road
 - ward based on Sutton/Jackson's Point
 - acceptable population range across all five wards in 2016 and 2022
 - all five wards include a shoreline component, settlement areas and a rural area

Option 1 (Cont'd)

Option 1 (Five-Ward Option)		
Principle	Does Proposed Ward Structure Meet Requirements of Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards within the acceptable range of variation.
Representation of Communities of Interest	Yes (as defined)	All wards intentionally include mixed communities of interest since residential clusters are combined with some rural area and shoreline. Keswick is divided into three parts, and rural and seasonal representation is fragmented.
Recognition of Future Growth	Yes	All wards within the acceptable range of variation.
Representation of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Arterial roadways primarily used with one exception; all are easily understood.
Effective Representation	Yes	Population balance contributes to equitable and effective representation across the wards.
Electorate Distribution	Yes	Seasonal residents are included in the population figures for all wards but are proportionately relatively small in the proposed Wards 1 and 2.

Option 2 (Six-ward Option)



Option 2 (Cont'd)

- Keswick population proportionately about one-half the Town → re-configure the Town into six wards
 - three wards in Keswick south of Old Homestead Road
 - Ward 3: north of Old Homestead Road to Filey Beach
 - Ward 4: Sutton/Jackson's Point settlement area & rural areas between Highway 48 and Kennedy Road
 - Ward 5: eastern part of Georgina
 - acceptable population range across all six wards in 2016 and 2022
 - all six wards include a shoreline component, settlement areas and rural area

Option 2 (Cont'd)

Option 2 (Six-Ward Option)		
Principle	Does Proposed Ward Structure Meet Requirements of Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards within the acceptable range of variation.
Representation of Communities of Interest	Yes (as defined)	All wards intentionally include mixed communities of interest since residential clusters are combined with some low-density territory and shoreline. Keswick is divided into three parts, and rural and seasonal representation is fragmented.
Recognition of Future Growth	Yes	All wards within the acceptable range of variation although one ward is approaching the upper limit of variance.
Representation of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Arterial roadways primarily used; all lines are easily understood.
Effective Representation	Yes	Population balance contributes to equitable and effective representation across the wards.
Electorate Distribution	Yes	Seasonal residents are included in the population figures for all wards but are numerically small in the proposed Wards 1, 2 and 6.

Recommendations

- ❑ Existing ward boundary configuration does not meet the expectations of the guiding principles established for this Review – the Town would be better served by an alternative ward configuration
- ❑ Increase to six Town Councillors is a significant contribution to better representation because it is premised on a more equitable distribution of the Town's overall population

Recommendations (Cont'd)

- The two final Options successfully address shortcomings identified in the present system: better balanced in population now and over the next two elections and offer more effective representation