



---

To: **Governance Committee**

Agenda Section: Matters for Consideration  
Division: Warden, CAO, Clerks and Archives  
Department: CAO's Office

Item Number: GOV - 2020-085

Meeting Date: February 13, 2020

Subject: County Council Structure and Composition

---

## **Recommendation**

**That County Council provide direction on the options contained in Item GOV 2020-085, dated February 13, 2020, regarding County Council structure and Composition.**

## **Executive Summary**

On January 15, 2019, the Province of Ontario announced a review of regional governance models and services, including the County of Simcoe. Simcoe County's current governance structure has remained similar for almost 50 years even through various municipal amalgamations, service rationalizations, and restructuring in the region. The stated objective of the review was said to ensure that regional governments are working efficiently and effectively; with some special consultation occurring broadly over a number of months and then providing recommendations to improve governance, decision-making and service delivery.

It was suggested that in light of those developments, County Council may want to themselves review the more recent historical considerations and discussions relating to County governance and service delivery rationalization. Some concepts were put forth to the Province as part of the consultations by County Council. The Province of Ontario has since stepped back from a top down approach on the Regional Review process in favour of local solutions being developed on governance and service rationalization. Both the County Governance Committee and Service Review task force have re-activated and have provided some recommendations. This specific item outlines a proposed Governance structure as outlined by County Council for further consideration and direction. As noted, when considering County Council composition, it's important to commence deliberations early enough in a council term to provide sufficient time to undertake any required processes. Further, when reducing the size of County Council, it may also be an opportune time for the lower tiers to review their own governance structures, and how they relate to County Council.

On December 4, 2020, Council ratified Governance Committee recommendations directing staff to report on modifying council composition and the creation of directly elected sub-regional County

Councillors under a conceptual structure. This item provides some further considerations to this endeavour, and is seeking some further directions of Council.

### **Background/Analysis/Options**

There are a number of Council composition models which have been discussed at the various touch points since 2004, and on December 4, 2019, Council approved the following Governance recommendations:

#### **Local Municipal Representation County Councillors:**

##### **Recommendation GOV-27-19**

Moved by: Councillor Don Allen

Seconded by: Councillor Harry Hughes

That staff report further on a governance structure option of County Council, with the following being given consideration: That County Council be comprised of the Lower Tier Municipal (LTM) Mayor(s) sitting for 4 years, and where a Mayor chooses not to serve on County Council, that the LTM Council determine a Lower Tier Municipal (LTM) duly elected designate for the four year term.

**Table I**

<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Composition 16 Mayors</b>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayors from 16 area municipalities for 4 years.</li> <li>• Mayor may decline to sit at County Council, at which point the LTM Council (not the Mayor) appoints a permanent appointee on County Council from amongst themselves for the term of Council; this is not the same as the "alternate member".</li> </ul>

#### **Directly elected Sub-regional County Councillors**

##### **Recommendation GOV-28-19**

Moved by: Councillor Anita Dubeau

Seconded by: Councillor Lynn Dollin

That staff report further on a governance structure option of County Council with various options for geographical and population representation for both 5 and 7 directly elected sub-regional County Councillors.

Attached as schedules to the subject Item are maps depicting three specific options for sub-regional representation; there are other potential options Council may wish to put forward, however based on the Council desire of finding reasonable sub-regions based on a balance of population and geography, staff have put forth the following for consideration: Schedule 1 – 5 regional Ward Option A; Schedule 2 – 5 regional Ward Option B; Schedule 3 – 7 regional Ward Option.

**Table II – 5 Ward Option A**

<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Composition</b> <b>16 Mayors, plus 5 Sub-Regional County Councillors</b>
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayors from 16 area municipalities for 4 years.</li> <li>• Mayor may decline to sit at County Council, at which point the LTM Council (not the Mayor) appoints a permanent replacement on County Council from amongst themselves; this is not the same as the “alternate member”.</li> <li>• Five sub-regional County Councillors <u>directly elected</u> once every four years during regular municipal elections per 5 Ward Option A</li> </ul>

**Table III – 5 Ward Option B**

<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Composition</b> <b>16 Mayors, plus 5 Sub-Regional County Councillors</b>
21	<p>Same as Table II, except the geographic sub-regional boundaries are altered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayors from 16 area municipalities for 4 years.</li> <li>• Mayor may decline to sit at County Council, at which point the LTM Council (not the Mayor) appoints a permanent replacement on County Council from amongst themselves; this is not the same as the “alternate member”.</li> <li>• Five sub-regional County Councillors <u>directly elected</u> once every four years during regular municipal elections per 5 Ward Option B</li> </ul>

**Table IV – 7 Ward Option**

<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Composition</b> <b>16 Mayors, plus 7 Sub-Regional County Councillors</b>
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayors from 16 area municipalities for 4 years.</li> <li>• Mayor may decline to sit at County Council, at which point the LTM Council (not the Mayor) appoints a permanent replacement on County Council from amongst themselves; this is not the same as the “alternate member”.</li> <li>• Seven sub-regional County Councillors <u>directly elected</u> once every four years during regular municipal elections per 7 Ward Option</li> </ul>

**Warden elected from Sub-Regional County Councillors****Recommendation GOV-29-19**

Moved by: Councillor Anita Dubeau  
 Seconded by: Councillor Richard Norcross

That staff report further on a governance structure option of County Council, with the following being given consideration: That the Warden be elected from among the sub-regional County Councillors.

Under the current governance structure, the Warden is appointed by County Council via an election by ballot; currently all 32 county councillors may put their name forward as a nominee for the office of Warden. The recommendation suggests that only the directly elected sub-regional County Councillors can declare their candidacy for the office of Warden, and can be appointed by ballots cast by County Council, based on the governance structures cited in tables 1-4 above.

### **Deputy Warden elected from Sub-Regional County Councillors**

#### **Recommendation GOV-30-19**

Moved by: Councillor Harry Hughes  
Seconded by: Councillor Don Allen

That staff report further on a governance structure option of County Council, with the following being given consideration: That the Deputy Warden be elected from among the sub-regional County Councillors.

Under the current governance structure, the Deputy Warden is appointed by County Council via an election by ballot; currently all 32 county councillors may put their name forward as a nominee for the office of Warden. The recommendation suggests that only the directly elected sub-regional County Councillors can declare their candidacy for the office of Deputy Warden, and be appointed by ballots cast by County Council, based on the governance structures cited in tables 1-4 above.

Staff are suggesting, given the years of considerations and the current contemplations and directions of County Council, that the 5 Ward Option A option be considered and recommended, providing a County Council of 21 members with the methods of election as outlined above for Councillors, the Warden and Deputy Warden. This structure is also more consistent in numbers and composition with some of our regional counterparts in the Province of Ontario.

### **Local Municipal Governance Considerations:**

County Councillors were cautious not to want to be seen as directing the local municipalities on what to do with their own governance models and structures, even though they will be looking for input and approval on their own potential changes in governance. That said, some consistency in approach at the local level focused on the Provincial desire of governance efficiency and effectiveness would likely be prudent.

As a guideline, local municipalities are encouraged to contemplate their own governance structures and models. Consideration of Council sizes of 5 or 7 Councillors would be encouraged. The Mayor would be directly elected, the Deputy Mayor could be either directly elected or appointed by the incoming Council from among themselves. It is suggested that the Deputy Mayor, in addition to filling in for the Mayor as required, could also be the Alternate Member on County Council for the full four year term, to provide some consistency and stability at County Council.

**Other Considerations:**

There are a number of other matters that staff can report on once a new structure and composition is recommended and approved through the required processes. These include such things as triple majority requirement, weighted voting, Council Chamber layout, and Procedural By-law amendment.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this informational report. Any consideration by County Council on a change to structure would result in potential financial or resource changes. Further, the sub-regional County Councillors would be directly elected via the municipal election. Additional considerations are required to address any costs incurred by the lower tiers, and mechanisms required during a vacant seat, such as by-elections.

**Relationship to Corporate Strategic Plan**

Responsive and Effective Governance: Address the structural and procedural challenges of a County spanning a divergent group of 16 municipalities.

**Reference Documents**

None

**Attachments**

- Schedule 1 – 5 Ward Option A
- Schedule 2 – 5 Ward Option B
- Schedule 3 – 7 Ward Option

**Prepared By**

Mark Aitken, CAO

John Daly, County Clerk, and Director of Statutory Services

**Approvals**

Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer

**Date**

January 31, 2019