

Establishment of Municipal Ward Boundaries

Effective October 26, 2016

Municipal Wards Commission

Presented to Saskatoon City Council – February 29, 2016

February 29, 2016

Your Worship and Members of City Council:

The Municipal Wards Commission is pleased to file this report with City Council concerning its review of ward boundaries for the ten wards in the City of Saskatoon. A map detailing the revised ward boundaries is attached. The revised ward boundaries will be effective October 26, 2016.

Background

The Municipal Wards Commission is comprised of Mr. Richard Danyliuk, Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench as Chair; Professor Joseph Garcea, Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan and Ms. Joanne Sproule, City Clerk.

The current wards were established by the Municipal Wards Commission in 2012, and were effective October 24, 2012. In accordance with Section 59 of *The Cities Act* each ward of the city must have, as nearly as is reasonably practicable, the same population. The *Act* states that the Municipal Wards Commission shall establish a quotient for each ward by dividing the total population of the city by the number of wards into which the city is divided, and that the population of each ward must not vary by more than 10% from this quotient.

Section 60 of *The Cities Act* provides that the Municipal Wards Commission, at the request of City Council or on its own initiative, may review the boundaries of the wards at any time and for any reason but, in any event, such review must occur at least once every three election cycles or when the population of a ward exceeds the acceptable 10% variation limit. The Wards Commission must complete its work 180 days prior to the municipal election.

In September of 2015, a review of ward populations showed that the population of Wards Four and Seven exceeded the 10% variation limit and that the population of Ward Nine fell slightly below the variation limit. The Municipal Wards Commission utilized 2014 Saskatchewan Health population information to conduct its review.

The Municipal Wards Commission has now reviewed the ward boundaries and submits revised ward boundaries that will take effect on October 26, 2016, the date of the next municipal election.

Mandate

The Cities Act details the responsibilities of the Commission as:

“61(1) In determining the area to be included in any ward and in establishing the boundaries of any ward, the municipal wards commission shall:

- (a) hold public hearings and consultations; and
 - (b) take into consideration:
 - (i) current and prospective geographic conditions, including density and relative rate of growth of population;
 - (ii) any special diversity or community of interest of the inhabitants; and
 - (iii) the boundaries of the polling areas established by the council pursuant to section 25 of *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*.
- (2) On completion of its duties:
- (a) the municipal wards commission shall file its report with the city; and
 - (b) the areas within the boundaries established by the municipal wards commission constitute the wards of the city.
- (3) On receipt of the report of the municipal wards commission pursuant to clause (2)(a), the clerk shall give public notice that the report is available for public inspection in the city office during normal business hours.”

Population

The population of the City as of December 2014, according to figures obtained from professional staff in the City’s Planning and Development Branch, utilizing 2014 Saskatchewan Health information, is 252,538. Applying the statutory formula to this population, each ward is required to have a population of 25,254 with a variance of plus or minus ten percent. Thus the permissible population range is 22,729 – 27,779. The following is a listing of the ward populations as of December 31, 2014:

Ward 1	25,980	Ward 6	24,639
Ward 2	24,670	Ward 7	30,263 too large
Ward 3	24,779	Ward 8	22,769
Ward 4	28,241 too large	Ward 9	22,717 too small
Ward 5	23,149	Ward 10	25,331

Process

The Commission engaged in a public consultation process which consisted of two public meetings, held in Committee Room E, City Hall, on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 and Thursday, February 4, 2016. Public notification of these meetings was given by PSA, newspaper, the City's website, social media and dissemination at City Hall. Citizens were also invited to submit written comments by e-mail or comment sheet.

The first consultation meeting, on December 16, 2015, was attended by three people. In addition, three written submissions were received. The Commission reviewed the issues and, since there were no ward boundary options available at that time, heard comments of a general nature only.

Three ward boundary options were prepared by the City Clerk in January, 2016. During the week of January 25th, the options were posted on the City's website and displayed in the lobby of City Hall, in order that the Commission could obtain feedback on the specific proposals. Notification of the availability of the three options was provided by newspaper advertisements, Public Service Announcements and social media, as well as notice on the City's website.

Five written submissions were received regarding the ward boundary options. In addition, verbal submissions were made by three individuals at the public meeting held on February 4, 2016, which was attended by approximately nine people.

Input

The submissions to the Commission were varied, but the following themes emerged:

- Changes should be kept to a minimum and minimally intrusive.
- The principle that wards should not cross the river should not have the same degree of primacy or centrality that it has had historically until the past decade.
- Eastview is more closely connected to neighbourhoods in Ward 7 and thus should not be removed from Ward 7.
- Westmount shares a community of interest with neighbourhoods in Ward 2 such as Caswell Hill and therefore moving Westmount to Ward 2 will reduce the population of Ward 4 without compromising the sense of community in either of those two wards.
- A preference by some to not split community associations between two councillors (where more than one neighbourhood shares a community association) is not necessarily a problem.

Deliberation

The Commission considered the following principles in making its decision:

- The ward populations must meet legislated variance requirement of plus/minus ten per cent.
- The integrity of neighbourhood boundaries must be respected; i.e. a ward boundary should not divide a neighbourhood.
- Relationships between neighbourhoods should be respected as much as possible.
- There should be a minimum of change to existing ward boundaries so as to minimize confusion to electors.
- The ward boundaries are used for electing Public School Board Trustees.

After having carefully reviewed all of the submissions and presentations, and in accordance with the above principles, the Municipal Wards Commission has established the ward boundaries as outlined on the attached map. The new ward boundaries incorporate the following changes from the existing ward boundaries:

- Westmount moves from Ward 4 to Ward 2
- Nutana SC moves from Ward 7 to Ward 9

The option chosen has the least amount of change – only those wards which do not meet the 10% variation limit are affected.

The populations of the wards as a result of the recommended boundary changes are as follows:

Ward 1	25,980
Ward 2	27,472
Ward 3	24,779
Ward 4	25,438
Ward 5	23,149
Ward 6	24,639
Ward 7	27,217
Ward 8	22,769
Ward 9	25,764
Ward 10	25,331

Additional Comments

1. Wards 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 are projected to grow in population over the next few years. With so many wards growing, and with the 10% variation limit, it is virtually impossible to allow sufficient room for growth in all of these wards and consequently it is very likely that further ward modifications will be required prior to the 2020 municipal election.
2. During the public meetings it was suggested that ward boundaries should be reviewed and confirmed at least one year prior to the upcoming municipal election. The Commission endeavours to complete its work as quickly as possible so as to provide clarity and certainty to prospective candidates regarding the boundaries of municipal wards for the upcoming election. In order to have the most up-to-date and accurate population figures, the Commission typically relies on the most current population by utilizing Saskatchewan Health Information. The City Clerk receives updated population figures approximately one year in advance and determines whether they meet the requirements of *The Cities Act*. If data other than the latest census data is used, the City Clerk must undertake to firstly receive the approval of the Minister before the Wards Commission can begin its review.
3. The Commission wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the contributions made by staff in the Planning and Development Branch for the development of background information, providing population data and estimates, and preparation of the final ward map options; staff of the IT Business Solutions Section for their assistance in the development of options; staff of the Communications Branch for their assistance in communicating the options and public consultations; and to staff in the City Clerk's Office for posting and maintaining ward boundary options on the City's website and providing for logistical arrangements for the public consultations.

Respectfully submitted,

SASKATOON MUNICIPAL WARDS COMMISSION

Justice Richard Danyliuk, Chair

Joseph Garcea

Joanne Sproule

Attachment

- New Ward Boundary Map (effective October 26, 2016)