Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

Electoral System - Community Engagement Strategy

Final Report
April 30, 2024

Community Engagement Strategy –
Ward-based or At-Large Electoral System

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Community Engagement Strategy –
Ward-based or At-Large Electoral System

Project Overview & Objectives

Project Overview

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie retained Clerks On Call to undertake a broad community engagement strategy to enable the Council to make decisions about whether it should make changes to the current electoral representation structure - essentially whether to maintain the current ward structure or to adopt an alternative at-large arrangement.

There are positive and negative implications that can be considered in deciding whether to keep a ward system in Arran-Elderslie or to elect all members of Council by general vote (at-large).

Clerks on Call developed and conducted a public consultation process, in accordance with the Municipality's existing public engagement practices, to obtain meaningful input from stakeholders. The community was provided with the appropriate information needed to evaluate both the ward-based and at-large electoral systems. The consultation process allowed the public to provide their individual perspectives on the present ward system as well as offer their thoughts on the alternative at-large system.

This final report provides context for the community's 'preferred' electoral system for the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

Project Objectives

The primary objective of this project is to engage the Arran-Elderslie community in determining their 'preferred' electoral structure – ward-based or at-large.

The key question that was asked throughout the engagement process was: -- Should future municipal elections in Arran-Elderslie be conducted using a ward-based or at-large system?

We want to note that undertaking this type of community engagement process provides support for Council's final decision; as well as ensuring that the decision to either change, or retain the current representation structure, does align with the community's views and values.

This consultation process promotes transparency and will help to build trust in the future representation structure.

Project Timelines

There were several key milestones for this community engagement strategy.
Clerks on Call kicked off this project with a Council Briefing on January 27, 2025. This was followed by interviews with each member of Council to better understand their individual perspectives on this issue.

A public survey, both online and paper versions, were launched on February 1, 2025 and ran through to March 22, 2025.

Three separate community open houses were facilitated by Clerks on Call. The first one was held at the Paisley Community Centre from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm on March 4, 2025, followed by one at the Tara Community Centre from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm on March 5, 2025, and one at the Arran-Elderslie Municipal Office in Chesley from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on March 5, 2025.

During April, 2025, once all of the input from the community had been received, Clerk on Call compiled and analyzed the results and prepared this final report, which was delivered to Council to enable them to consider the results of this community engagement process and determine whether or not they wish to make any changes to Arran-Elderslie's current electoral system.

Guiding Principles

In considering this project, Clerks on Call adopted several community consultation guiding principles. They are considered to be the foundational guidelines that ensure consultation processes are fair, inclusive, transparent, and effective.

These principles help build trust between stakeholders and foster meaningful participation from the community.

Inclusivity/Accessibility

Ensuring consultation processes are easy to access for everyone, regardless of physical, economic, or social barriers; and that all voices are heard.

> This was achieved by providing multiple ways to participate, such as online surveys, community open houses, and personal interviews. Also, hosting events in accessible venues and offering the option to submit comments directly to Clerks on Call for those who cannot attend in person.

Transparency/Clarity of Purpose

Clearly define the objectives of the consultation and ensure participants understand what is being asked of them.

> This was achieved by sharing timelines, decision-making processes, and feedback summaries with Council and the public.

Respect

Value all contributions and create a safe environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

> This was achieved by establishing ground rules for respectful dialogue during personal interviews and community open houses.

Accountability

Demonstrate how community input has been considered and incorporated into the final report.

> This was achieved by publishing the final report summarizing feedback and detailing the community's 'preferred' electoral system for the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

<u>*Collaboration*</u>

Working together with the community to co-create solutions.

This was achieved by gathering public input to determine whether the community wishes future municipal elections in Arran-Elderslie to be conducted using a ward-based or an at-large system.

By adhering to these principles, Clerks on Call believes that the community consultation process fosters greater trust, improves results, and ensures that the final outcomes truly reflect the needs and desires of the people they serve.

Community Engagement

What is it?

Community engagement is the process of involving individuals, organizations, and groups from a specific community in dialogue, or decision-making, or action to address shared challenges, goals, or interests.

It is a collaborative approach aimed at building relationships, understanding community needs, and ensuring that people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. Obtaining feedback from your community is vital to understand what the community needs and wants.

Community engagement is fundamental to creating inclusive and effective strategies and it helps ensure that initiatives are tailored to the needs and wants of the people they serve.

Benefits of Community Engagement

Community engagement is a critical aspect of decision-making processes, particularly in governance, policy development, and community planning.

Community engagement builds trust and strengthens relationships between stakeholders. When stakeholders are involved in the process, it fosters enhanced trust in municipalities and its decision-makers.

Community engagement encourages informed decision-making by incorporating diverse perspectives. Engaging the community ensures that decisions are informed by the real needs, preferences, and insights of those directly affected.

Community engagement increases the relevance and effectiveness of policies, programs, and projects. Engagement helps to highlight the importance of the matter being considered, which in turn assists with an effective solution.

Community engagement fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility within the community. When people contribute to decisions, they are more likely to support and take ownership of the outcomes, fostering active participation in implementation.

Community engagement promotes sustainable and long-lasting outcomes. Programs and policies that are developed with community input are more likely to be effective.

Community engagement is not just a process - it's a principle that underscores the importance of participatory democracy, equity, and shared responsibility in shaping a better future.

Stakeholder Identification

In order to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were involved, Clerks on Call identified the following to target during the engagement process:

- Residents from all areas of the municipality
- Community organizations
- Any advocacy groups that may exist
- Business leaders
- Members of Council.

Using this targeted and tailored outreach allowed Clerks on Call to hear from a wide range of individuals and groups and ensure that their diverse perspectives were able to be obtained.

Existing Council Structure

In considering whether to make changes to its electoral structure, it is necessary to understand the existing Council structure.

Arran-Elderslie Current Council Structure

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie was created on January 1st, 1999 with the amalgamation of the Townships of Arran and Elderslie, the Town of Chesley, and the Villages of Paisley and Tara.

The existing Council structure was established at amalgamation and is comprised of 7 members; including a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, as well as 5 individual Ward Councillors.

Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected at-large. The Mayor serves on both the local Arran-Elderslie's Council as well as Bruce County's upper tier council. The five ward councillors are each elected by the voters in their respective wards.
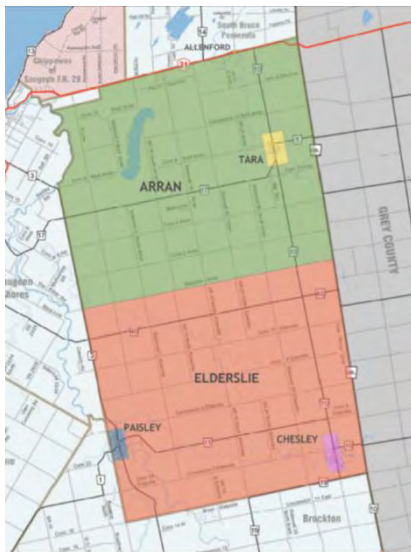
This map shows the municipality's existing 5 ward configuration which is primarily based on the historical boundaries of the pre-amalgamation municipalities.

The following table depicts the voter population of each ward as per the Voter's List for the 2022 Municipal Election.

Ward	Voter Population
Arran	1,196
Chesley	1,416
Elderslie	854
Paisley	836
Tara	909
Total	5,211

Council Structure of Other Area Municipalities

When deciding whether to retain a ward-based representation system or an at-large representation system, it is important to consider the municipal council structures of other nearby or comparable municipalities and regional best practices associated with them.

Reviewing how other municipalities structure their councils can provide insights into the benefits and challenges of each model. It helps identify trends, efficiencies, and potential pitfalls based on real-world applications.

Understanding how similar communities ensure fair and effective representation can help a municipality assess whether a ward-based or at-large system would best reflect its local demographics, interests, and governance needs. For example, if nearby municipalities with similar populations and geographic spread use wards, this may indicate that a ward system would work well.

Residents and stakeholders may compare their governance model with others in the region and question why their structure differs. If most neighboring municipalities use a ward system, adopting an at-large model could be met with resistance or vice versa.

Observing how other area municipalities of similar size and growth patterns structure their councils can help determine the best system for current and future needs. And finally, different structures impact voter turnout, election dynamics, and representation of diverse voices. Learning from other municipalities' experiences can help predict the impact on candidate accessibility, voter engagement, and future election costs.

Clerks on Call conducted a general review of the local municipalities within both Bruce County and Grey County. The charts below provide a quick summary of council structures for these municipalities using data obtained from the municipal websites.

Bruce County – Council Representation

Municipality	Population (2021 Census)	Mayor	Deputy	Number of Councillors	Wards or At-Large	Other
Arran-Elderslie	**6,913**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**5**	**Wards**	**1 Councillor for each of the 5 Wards**
Brockton	9,784	Yes	Yes	5	At Large	
Huron-Kinloss	7,723	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	

Municipality	Population (2021 Census)	Mayor	Deputy	Number of Councillors	Wards or At-Large	Other
Kincardine	12,268	Yes	Yes	7	At-Large & Wards	3 At-Large Councillors & 4 Ward Councillors
North Bruce Peninsula	4,404	Yes	Yes	3	At-Large	
Saugeen Shores	15,908	Yes	Yes	6	Wards	2 Councillors for each of the 3 wards Also Vice Deputy Mayor position
South Bruce Peninsula	9,137	Yes	Yes	6	At-Large & Wards	2 At-Large Councillors & 2 Councillors for each of the 2 Wards

Grey County – Council Representation

Municipality	Population (2021 Census)	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Number of Councillors	Wards or At-Large	Other
Owen Sound	21,612	Yes	Yes	7	At-Large	
West Grey	13,131	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	
Meaford	11,485	Yes	Yes	7	At-Large	
Georgian Bluffs	11,100	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	
Grey Highlands	10,424	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	
Hanover	7,967	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	
Southgate	8,715	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	

Municipality	Population (2021 Census)	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Number of Councillors	Wards or At-Large	Other
Chatsworth	7,080	Yes	Yes	3	At Large	
Town of Blue Mountains	9,390	Yes	Yes	5	At-Large	

In analyzing the above data regarding municipal council structures of other area municipalities, Clerks on Call has determined the following:

- All 8 local municipalities in Grey County have adopted an at-large representation system
- There is mix of both at-large and ward-based structures being adopted by local municipalities in Bruce County -– 2 entirely ward-based, 3 entirely at-large, and 2 that are a combination of ward-based and at-large
- With the exception of Arran-Elderslie, all other comparably sized municipalities (population ~7,000) within both Bruce County and Grey County have adopted an at-large electoral structure.

While the preliminary analysis may not be definitive, Clerks on Call would surmise that the prevalence of the at-large representation system throughout both Bruce County and Grey County suggests that such electoral structure works well for nearby municipalities with similar populations and geographic spread.

Legislative Framework

In considering whether to change Arran-Elderslie's electoral representation system,
it is important to understand the legislative framework that applies.

Municipal elections in Ontario are governed by two key pieces of legislation –
the Municipal Elections Act (which addresses the way an election is conducted)
and the *Municipal Act, 2001* (which addresses the electoral system itself).

Section 217(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* authorizes a local municipality
"to change the composition of its council" subject to five primary rules. The most relevant
one relates to defining the size of the Council. It states that "There shall be a minimum of
five members, one of whom shall be the head of council."
As we noted above, the current council structure of 7 members meets this requirement.

Section 217 of the *Municipal Act* also allows municipalities to determine how Council will
be elected. It states that: members of a municipal council (other than the Mayor) "shall be
elected by general vote, or wards, or by any combination of general vote and wards.
The term 'general vote' simply means at-large voting.

Section 222(1) of the *Municipal Act* permits a municipal council to pass a by-law
"to divide or re-divide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards".
This section the Municipal Act provides Council with important guidance and is the focus
of this community engagement process – does Arran-Elderslie keep its current ward
structure or dissolve the wards and move to an at-large system.

However, while the Municipal Act provides some direction, there are no standard practices,
terms of reference, or criteria either in provincial legislation or in regulation
that can be used to evaluate a municipality's electoral system.

Each municipality must set its own terms, parameters, and guiding principles, to establish
an electoral system that is appropriate for their community.

Any changes to the municipality's electoral system must be made before the end of this
year in order to be in effect for the 2026 municipal election.

Representation Models

There are positive and negative implications that can be considered in deciding whether to keep a ward system in Arran-Elderslie or to elect all members of Council by general vote (at-large).

When considering a Ward-based system and an At-Large system of voting in municipal elections, it is important to understand the unique benefits and challenges of each system. This can influence governance, representation, and how effectively the electoral system meets the needs of the community.

Clerks on Call shared the following information throughout the consultation process to ensure that residents and elected officials could appropriately evaluate both the ward-based and at-large representation systems.

Ward-based Representation

The following definition of Ward-based Representation was used:

Council members are elected to specific geographic districts (referred to as wards) representing the interests of the people in that ward.
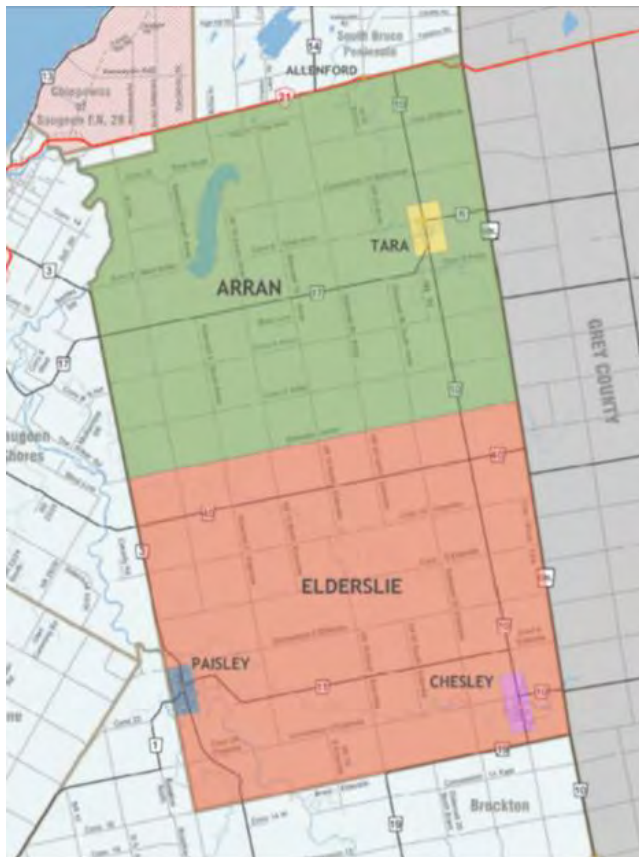
This map shows the municipality's existing 5 ward configuration which is primarily based on the historical boundaries of the pre-amalgamation municipalities.

Benefits of a Ward-Based Representation Structure

1. Local Representation
   - It may ensure that each community or geographical area has a voice in decision-making. (Note: candidates outside of the Ward may run for the ward position)
   - Representatives may have a better understanding and advocate for local issues and priorities.

2. Accountability
   - Elected representatives are directly accountable to their ward residents, promoting transparency and responsiveness.
   - It may foster closer relationships and communication between residents and ward representative as there is a direct point of contact.

3. Inclusivity & Fair Distribution
   - Helps prevent the domination of decision-making by larger or more affluent areas.
   - Helps to ensure that diverse communities have representation.

4. Encourages Political Participation
   - Residents may feel more involved in governance since they elect someone from their own area.

Challenges of a Ward-Based Representation Structure

1. Unequal Resource Distribution
   - Some wards may be wealthier or more influential which may lead to disparities in development and service delivery.
   - Limited budgets may lead to competition among wards.

2. Risk of Parochialism
   - Representatives may focus only on their wards rather than the broader interests of the entire municipality or organization.
   - Can lead to conflicts between wards rather than fostering collaboration.

3. Quality of Leadership
   - Small wards may struggle to attract qualified candidates which could lead to ineffective leadership.

4. Administrative Complexity
   - Managing multiple representatives and balancing competing local interests can slow down decision-making.

At-Large Representation

The following definition of At-Large Representation was used:

Council members are elected by all voters in the municipality, representing the community as a whole.

This map shows the configuration of an at-large representation system – there would be no wards. All voters would vote for all municipal council positions.

Benefits of an At-Large Representation Structure

1. Broader Representation
   o Representatives serve the entire community rather than a single ward, which may promote a more holistic approach to decision-making.
   o Encourages Council members to consider the needs of all residents rather than just those of a specific district.
2. Reduces Parochialism
   o Minimizes the risk of representatives prioritizing only their districts, leading to more balanced policymaking.
   o Encourages unity and cooperation rather than competition among different areas.

3. Encourages Stronger Candidates
    o Elections are typically more competitive, leading to the selection of highly qualified and experienced candidates.
    o Any qualified individual from the community can run for office, expanding the candidate pool.
4. Equal Voting Power
    o Every voter has an equal say in electing all representatives rather than being limited to voting for a single local representative.

Challenges of an At-Large Representation Structure

1. Underrepresentation of Local Interests
    o Specific communities or neighborhoods may struggle to have their unique concerns addressed.
    o Representatives may be disconnected from local, neighborhood-specific issues.
2. Disproportionate Influence of Majority Groups
    o Can disadvantage rural or less populated areas if urban areas have more voting power.
3. Higher Campaign Costs
    o Running a campaign across an entire municipality requires more resources, favoring candidates with greater financial backing or name recognition.
4. Less Accountability
    o With multiple representatives elected by the entire jurisdiction, voters may find it harder to hold individuals accountable for decisions.
    o No single representative is directly responsible for addressing specific community concerns.

Implications of Representation Models

Understanding the Ward-based and At-Large systems' pros and cons helps in making informed decisions about electoral system reform. When considering reforms, examining how each system affects representation, equity, and governance is crucial.

Choosing between the At-Large and Ward systems for municipal council representation depends on several factors, including community characteristics, governance goals, and local demographics.

Here are some considerations to help evaluate which system might be better:

1. Community Needs and Composition:
    o If a municipality has distinct, diverse areas, the Ward System can ensure those areas are fairly represented.

- o In more uniform municipalities, the At-Large system might be more effective as it may foster unity and comprehensive policy-making.

2. Avoiding Gerrymandering:
   - o Wards need regular review and adjustments to avoid disparities. In contrast, At-Large systems eliminate issues of gerrymandering altogether.

3. Engagement and Accessibility:
   - o Wards typically provide a more accessible political structure for residents to engage directly with their elected representatives.

4. Potential for Group Dominance:
   - o At-Large systems might risk the dominance of majority groups, whereas the Ward System protects minority and smaller communities' interests.

Deciding on the best form of representation requires a balanced understanding of local demographics, community needs, historical voting patterns, and the current level of civic engagement.

Community Consultation

Goals

Clerks on Call's goals throughout the consultation process were to:
- Educate the public about the differences between ward and at-large systems.
- Collect data to understand public preferences through surveys, open houses, and discussions.
- Ensure equitable participation from all community segments
- Build consensus on the most suitable 'or preferred' electoral structure.

Methods of Engagement

Clerks on Call utilized a number of different methods to conduct this outreach and engage the community.

There were interviews conducted with the Mayor and other Members of Council to obtain their individual perspectives on potential electoral system reform.

For the other community stakeholders, there was a multi-pronged approach to engagement.

A public survey was prepared that could be completed either online through the municipality's website or members of the community could fill out a paper copy of the same survey.

Paper copies were inserted and mailed to all property owners with the Interim Tax Bills.

Paper copies of the survey were also made available at several municipal and facilities, including the Chesley Community Centre, the Paisley Community Centre, the Tara Community Centre and the Arran-Elderslie Municipal Office. As well, paper copies of the survey were made available to the public at the Chelsey, Paisley and Tara Library Branches.

Drop boxes where completed surveys could be deposited were located at the Chesley Community Centre, the Paisley Community Centre, the Tara Community Centre and the Arran-Elderslie Municipal Office.

Clerks on Call hosted three community open houses, one in each of the Paisley and Tara Community Centres and one in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Office. These open houses provided the public with a more interactive forum and allowed for more in-depth questions and discussions regarding the ward-based and at-large representation models.

A request for the public to participate in the community engagement process along with relevant background information was shared with the community via the Municipality's website and social media channels. This included the following:

- a promotional flyer (included as Appendix A to this report)
- access to the online survey
- a listing of locations where the paper survey could be acquired and completed surveys dropped off
- an information video prepared by Clerks on Call
- Clerks on Call's Council Briefing presentation video and slide deck
- existing ward structure/map.

Clerks on Call also utilized the Members of Council and Municipal Staff to assist with sharing information and encouraging public participation by utilizing their existing networks and contacts to ensure that residents, community groups, local businesses, and other stakeholders were aware of the community engagement process and took action to have their say.

Public Engagement/Feedback

As already stated, there were several opportunities for public engagement and feedback, including:

- Information about the community engagement strategy was posted on the Municipality's website.
- A Council Briefing was delivered by Clerks on Call on January 27, 2025 during an open Council meeting that provided an overview of the community engagement strategy.
- 3 facilitated Open Houses were held on March 3rd and March 4th. Advance public notice was provided via the normal communications channels of the Municipality; and
- A public engagement survey was posted on the Municipality's website from Feb 1st to March 22nd, 2025.

While individual results of this community engagement strategy demonstrate varied opinions, the overall results are conclusive.

Councillor Interviews

Clerks on Call conducted one-on one interviews with each member of Council. Council members were asked to comment on the following:

- *Current Electoral Structure*:
  Your perspectives on the current ward-based system

- *Community Representation*:
  How well do you believe the current system ensures equitable representation for all residents across the community?

- *Accountability*:
  In your view, which system—wards or at-large—ensures greater accountability of elected officials to their constituents, and why?

- *Governance Efficiency*:
  From a governance perspective, do you think the ward system or at-large representation leads to more efficient decision-making?

- *Potential Challenges*:
  What do you see as the main challenges or drawbacks of the ward system and the at-large system in addressing the needs of our community?

Arran-Elderslie Council – What We Heard....

Based on the responses/feedback of Council Members, Clerks on Call determined that the Council is divided on which representation structure (ward-based or at-large) would be best for the community.

In further examining the comments of the Council Members, several key themes have emerged.

1. Perspective on the Current Ward-Based System:
    o Advantages:
        ▪ Adequate demographic representation, especially for older and farming communities.
        ▪ Helps address specific local issues due to councillor familiarity with wards.
        ▪ Successful historical instances of targeted community interventions (e.g., drain repairs, local park improvements, community Christmas lights).
    o Disadvantages:
        ▪ Low voter engagement, especially in certain demographics (e.g., Mennonites) and geographic areas.
        ▪ Inefficiency in costs associated with conducting elections per ward.
        ▪ Challenges with attracting high-quality candidates and issues of multiple acclamations in elections.
        ▪ Perceived separations rather than an amalgamated community after 25 years of existence.
        ▪ Some areas like Chesley are viewed as being under-represented despite being busier or more populous.

2. Equitable Representation:
    o Ward System Shortcomings:
        ▪ Could be improved; not ensuring equitable representation across community.
        ▪ Political engagement remains low, with acclamations highlighting a disinterest or contentment.
        ▪ Discussions on potential revisions or adjustments to boundaries for a better balance.
    o Working Well:
        ▪ Some feel the current system works well when the council collaborates effectively.
        ▪ Provides strong representation in rural areas and farming communities.

3. Accountability to Constituents:
   - Ward-Based System:
     - Promotes direct accountability and responsiveness due to smaller, localized constituencies.
     - Ensures representation of diverse community needs, such as rural versus urban interests.
     - Concerns exist about the potential unequal focus when dealing with infrastructure projects and fiscal responsibility.
   - At-Large Perception:
     - Concerns that voting could concentrate around larger towns, marginalizing rural representation.
     - Belief that an at-large system could lead to more holistic governance and reduced factionalism.

4. Governance Efficiency:
   - Ward System:
     - Decision-making is perceived by some as biased due to historical rivalries and local priorities.
     - Diverse interests ensure that decisions consider localized needs, but this might prolong or complicate processes.
   - At-Large Perception:
     - Efficiency potentially increased as representatives are accountable for entire municipality.
     - Risk that councillors may not focus on local issues, but instead larger municipal concerns.

5. Challenges and Drawbacks:
   - Ward System:
     - Entrenches historical boundaries and the "them vs. us" mentality.
     - Perceived as simpler but may not effectively encourage diverse candidate participation.
   - At-Large System:
     - Campaigning perceived as difficult and more costly due to wider constituency coverage needed.
     - Fear of same geographic area dominance and concerns about representation.

6. General Comments:
   - The current Arran-Elderslie Council works well as a team.
   - Communication and voter engagement opportunities could be improved.
   - Council acknowledges that there is a challenge in attracting election candidates (ie. many acclamations).
   - There may be an opportunity to achieve better representation for the voters (ie. having the 'best' candidates run for council).

- o Council recognizes that there appears to be a general lack of interest in local politics.
- o Council is aware that the current ward-based system may not be as efficient but does allow for each community to be represented.
- o Council is aware that wards based on historical municipal boundaries may precipitate continued separations – amalgamation in name but not fully embraced by some.

Understanding these themes helps clarify the council's and community's perspectives on the merits and challenges of each system. To address diverse needs, public engagement and evidence-based decision-making processes remain critical for reaching a consensus that aligns with the goals of representation, efficiency, and community cohesion.

Facilitated Open Houses

Clerks on Call hosted three community open houses, one in each of the Paisley and Tara Community Centres and one in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Office. The purpose of the open houses was to share information and encourage the public to participate and engage in the community consultation process. They provided the public with a more interactive forum for in-depth questions and discussions regarding the ward-based and at-large representation models.

Open houses provide residents with a platform to express their concerns, ask questions, and offer feedback. They allow for participation from a broad demographic, including those who may not regularly speak to Council members or attend council meetings. Having face-to-face interactions helps dispel misinformation, clarify complex issues, and allows for meaningful dialogue, improving mutual understanding for both the consultants and the public.

While the open houses themselves were not well attended with only about 30 residents in attendance, the quality of the dialogue was good, and several members of the public indicated that the forum did allow them to have their questions answered and enabled them to also vocalize their own thoughts and opinions regarding their preferred representation model. Feedback also confirmed that several members of the public better understood the different models following their attendance at the open houses allowing them to then more confidently complete the public survey.

Public Survey

Clerks on Call developed a public survey in order to obtain input from a broad range of Arran-Elderslie's stakeholders. A written survey offers many advantages to gauge the views of the public including:
- Large numbers of people can give their input

- Low cost
- People can respond at their convenience
- Avoids interviewer bias
- Provides a written record
- Easy to list or tabulate responses
- Wide range of respondents.

The survey questions were developed to gather views on whether the council should use a ward-based representation system or an at-large representation system. In addition to demographic information, the survey consisted of questions to determine the respondents awareness of the two representation models, their opinions on both models and whether they had a preference for either one. The survey also sought to determine whether respondents were satisfied with the current ward-based model used in the municipality as well as whether they are satisfied that the current council represents their interests. A copy of the complete survey is included in Appendix B to this Report.

The public survey was made available on-line via the Municipal website which provided a convenient mechanism for residents to get involved by providing their opinions and feedback. Physical copies of the survey were also made available at several municipal and County facilities. Drop boxes were also placed at the same locations to allow the public submit their completed survey document.

In addition to leaving copies of the survey at various community facilities, where people pick up at their will, a paper copy was also mailed to all Arran-Elderslie property owners with the Interim Tax Bills. Mailed questionnaires are a very useful tool in information gathering, as the respondent can fill out the survey at his or her convenience -- it can be filled out whenever the respondent has time. They are anonymous, which is much more comfortable for some respondents.

A total of 484 participants completed the survey. Those responses provided both quantitative results gathered from answers to the survey questions as well as qualitative insights into the opinions of some participants, which were very helpful in the preparation of this Final Report.

However, it is important to note that this Public Survey is not to be mistaken for a Scientific Opinion Poll. A public engagement survey is a survey of self-selected willing participants. As a result, where we have reported on the numerical outcomes of the survey, it should be taken as a report on the opinions of those who participated but NOT as statistically representative of broader public opinion. Further, there are some challenges with written surveys -- the return rate is generally low, some respondents may leave answers blank, you can't control when respondents will send the survey back, and the results may not truly represent the views of the entire electorate.

The entire results of the public survey are included as Appendix C to this report. The following summarizes the feedback received from the public survey:

Demographic Information

- More than 74% of respondents were between the ages of 46 and 75
- Respondents were fairly equally spread amongst all wards and most having resided in the municipality for more than 10 years
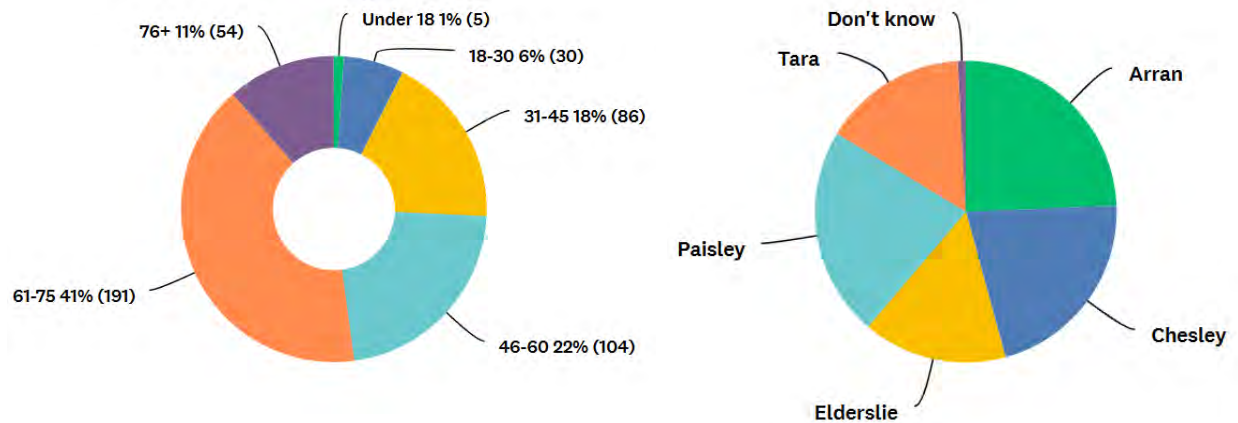

Opinions on Ward-based Representation

- 82% of respondents believed that ward councillors were better at addressing local issues and felt more connected to them
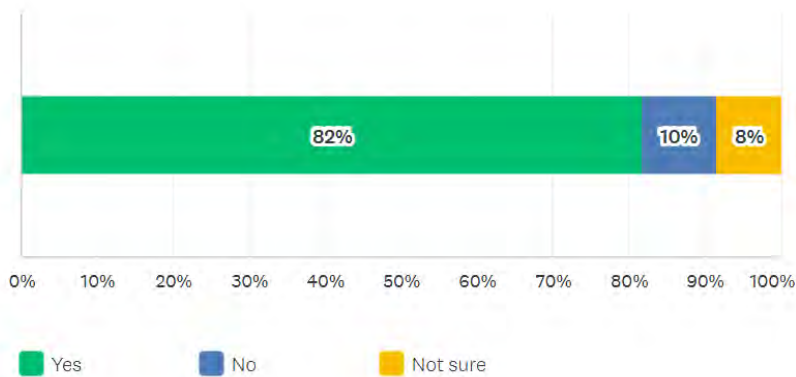
- 88% felt that having a ward-based representation model ensures that local issues are addressed
- More than 70% believe that ward-based representation provides more focused representation and fosters closer relationships between residents and the ward representative

Opinions on At-Large Representation

- The majority of respondents did not believe (45%) or were unsure (20%) whether council members elected at-large would be more likely to prioritize the interests of the entire municipality over local interests.
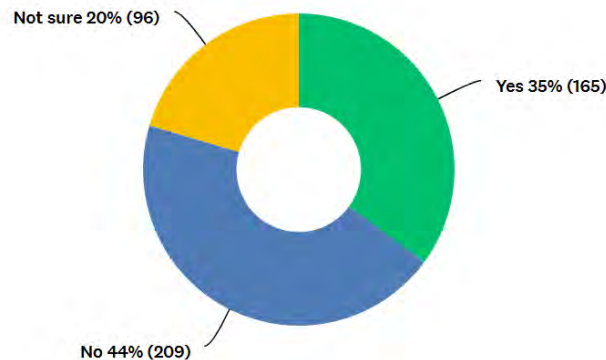
- More than 80% of respondents did not believe that at-large representation would promote equality across different parts of the municipality or would provide sufficient attention to issues affecting specific wards.
- Of those respondents that indicated that there were benefits to the at-large representation model, the most cited reasons were that any qualified individual from the community can run for office, expanding the candidate pool (50%); and every voter has a say in electing all Council members, promoting a unified community voice (45%).

Current Representation Preferences

- 64% of respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the current ward-based representation model used in Arran-Elderslie.
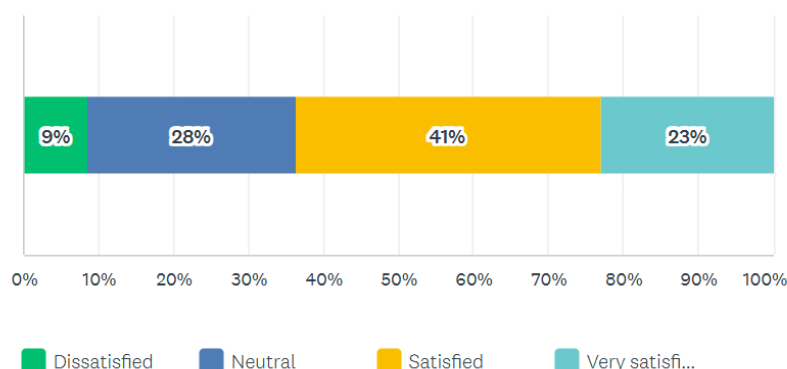
- However, only 56% responded that they were either satisfied or very satisfied that the current Council represents their interests.

<u>Preferred Representation Model</u>

- 77% of respondents preferred the ward-based model, while 15% preferred the at-large model. 8% of respondents indicated that they did not have a preference.
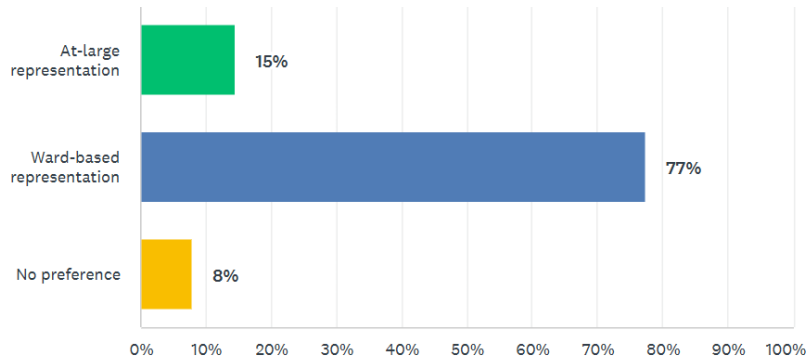
- The most frequently cited reason for preferring the ward-based model was that it ensures fair representation for their ward.
- The most frequently cited reason for preferring the at-large model was that it promotes the interests of the entire community.

Conclusion

Preferred Electoral Structure for Arran-Elderslie

Clerks on Call undertook a broad community engagement strategy at arms-length from the Municipality in order to provide an unbiased analysis of the public's feedback. Such analysis considered both quantitative results received from the online and paper surveys and the qualitative results gathered from comments received during the councillor interviews and community open houses.

The primary objective of this community consultation was to engage the Arran-Elderslie community in determining their 'preferred' electoral structure -- wards or at-large. The key question that was asked throughout the engagement process was: -- Should future municipal elections in Arran-Elderslie be conducted using a ward-based or at-large system?

We want to note that this community consultation process promotes transparency and will help to build trust in any future representation structure. It offers support for Council's final decision; as well as ensuring that the decision to either change, or retain the current representation structure, does align with the community's views and values.

Overall, based on the results of the community engagement process undertaken, Clerks on Call can confidently conclude that the majority (77%) of the Arran-Elderslie community that participated in the community consultation do prefer that the existing ward-based electoral system be maintained.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Promotional Flyer

Appendix B - Public Survey

Municipality of Arran-Elderslie
Community Representation Feedback Survey

Have Your Say......

Thank you for participating in this survey. We are seeking your opinion on how our municipal council should represent the community in the future. This survey aims to gather your views on whether the council should use a ward-based representation system or an at-large representation system.

Ward-based representation: Council members are elected to specific geographic districts (referred to as wards) to represent the interests of the people in that ward.

At-large representation: Council members are elected by all voters in the municipality, representing the community as a whole.

Regardless of the representation system, electoral candidates can reside or own property anywhere within the municipality. Your feedback will help shape future decisions regarding our municipal governance.

Forms can be submitted at the Municipal Office, 1925 Bruce Rd 10 in Chesley through the 24-hour mail slot. Drop boxes and forms are available at the Community Centres of Chesley, Paisley and Tara.
You are welcome to fill in this survey online www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZZXLS38

All forms must be completed and returned by February 28, 2025.
Further details available on our website www.arran-elderslie.ca

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Section 1: Demographic Information (Optional)
Questions 1- 3 are optional but help us understand the context of your responses.

1. What is your age?
   ☐ Under 18   ☐ 18-30   ☐ 31-45   ☐ 46-60   ☐ 61-75   ☐ 76+

2. Which ward do you currently live or own property in?
   ☐ Arran   ☐ Elderslie   ☐ Chesley   ☐ Paisley   ☐ Tara   ☐ Don't know

3. How long have you lived or owned property in the municipality?
   ☐ Less than 1 year   ☐ 1 – 5 years   ☐ 6 - 10 years   ☐ More than 10 years

Section 2: Awareness of Representation Models

4. Are you familiar with the difference between at-large representation and ward-based representation in a municipal council?**
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No (If not, brief explanations above)

Section 3: Your Opinion on Ward–Based Representation

5. Do you think council members representing specific wards would better address local issues in that ward?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not sure

6. Would you feel more or less connected to a council member who is elected to specifically represent your ward?
   ☐ More connected   ☐ Less connected   ☐ No difference

7. What do you think are the benefits of having a ward-based representation model?
   (select all that apply)
   ☐ Ensures local issues are addressed
   ☐ Provides more focused representation
   ☐ Encourages representation of diverse neighborhoods/interests
   ☐ Fosters closer relationships and communication between residents and ward representative
   ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Section 4: Your Opinion on At-Large Representation

8. Do you believe council members elected at-large are more likely to prioritize the interests of the entire municipality over local interests?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not sure

9. Do you believe at-large representation promotes equality across different parts of the municipality?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not sure

10. Do you feel that at-large representation would provide sufficient attention to issues affecting specific wards?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not sure

11. What do you think are the benefits of having an at-large representation model? (select all that apply)
    ☐ Every voter has a say in electing all Council members, promoting a unified community voice
    ☐ Encourages Council members to consider the needs of the entire municipality rather than focusing on specific areas
    ☐ Council members are less likely to be divided by geographic interests, potentially fostering collaboration
    ☐ Any qualified individual from the community can run for office, expanding the candidate pool
    ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Section 5: Current Representation Preferences

12. How satisfied are you with the current ward-based representation model used in our municipality?
    ☐ Dissatisfied   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Satisfied   ☐ Very satisfied

13. How satisfied are you that the current council represents your interests?
    ☐ Dissatisfied   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Satisfied   ☐ Very satisfied

    Comment: _____

Section 6: Your Preferred Representation Model

14. Which representation model do you prefer for our municipal council?
    ☐ At-large representation   ☐ Ward-based representation   ☐ No preference

15. What are the main reasons for your preference? (Select all that apply)
    ☐ Ensures fair representation for my ward
    ☐ Promotes the interests of the entire community
    ☐ Prevents geographic divisions in the community
    ☐ Makes council members more accountable
    ☐ Provides better diversity of perspectives
    ☐ I feel more connected to a representative focused on my local area
    ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Section 7: Final Thoughts

16. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the future representation model for our municipal council?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No
    If Yes, Please Specify _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

**Thank you for your feedback!**
Your responses will help Council to consider and discuss whether to maintain the existing ward-based representation system or pursue an at-large alternative. We appreciate your time and input.

Appendix C - Survey Results

Municipality of Arran-Elderslie Community Representation Feedback Survey
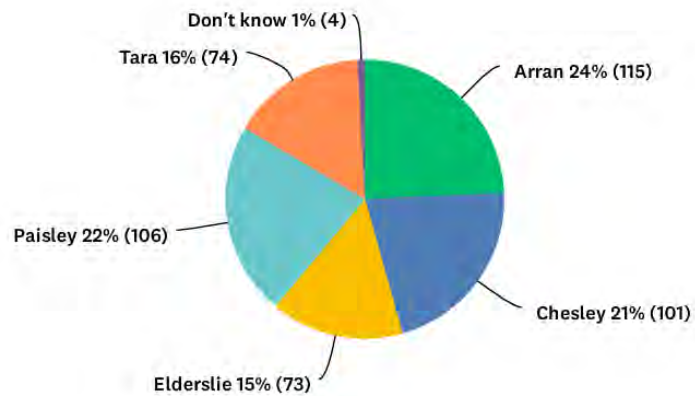
Q1 What is your age?

Answered: 470   Skipped: 14
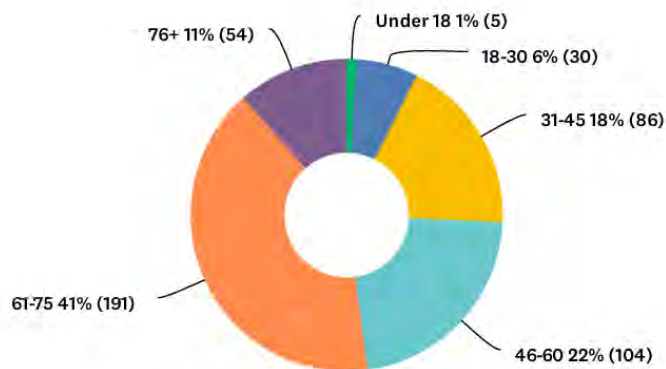
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	1%	5
18-30	6%	30
31-45	18%	86
46-60	22%	104
61-75	41%	191
76+	11%	54
TOTAL		470

Q2 Which ward do you currently live or own property in?

Answered: 473   Skipped: 11

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Arran	24%	115
Chesley	21%	101
Elderslie	15%	73
Paisley	22%	106
Tara	16%	74
Don't know	1%	4
TOTAL		473

Q3 How long have you lived or owned property in the municipality?

Answered: 472   Skipped: 12
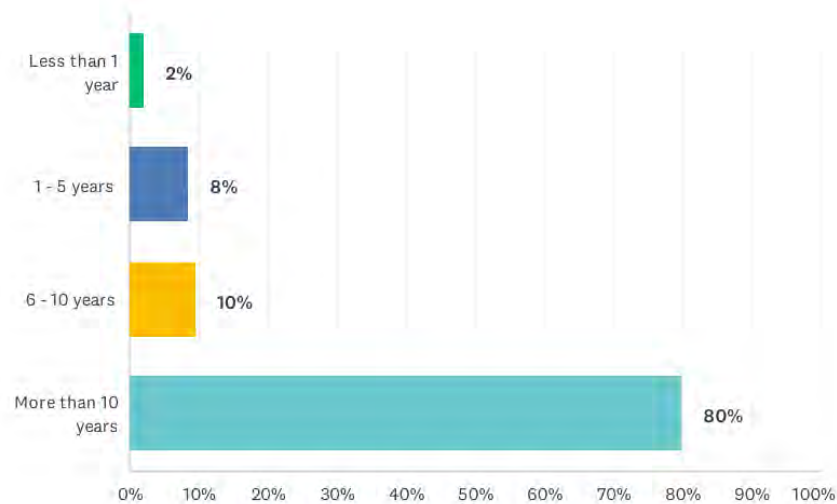
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	2%	10
1 - 5 years	8%	40
6 - 10 years	10%	45
More than 10 years	80%	377
TOTAL		472

Q4 Are you familiar with the difference between at-large representation and ward-based representation in a municipal council?**

Answered: 484   Skipped: 0
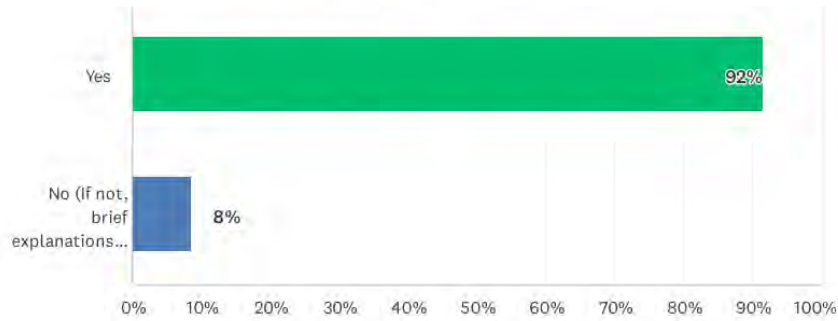
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92%	443
No (If not, brief explanations below)	8%	41
TOTAL		484

Q5 Do you think council members representing specific wards would better address local issues in that ward?

Answered: 473   Skipped: 11

| 82% | 10% | 8% |

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

🟩 Yes   🟦 No   🟨 Not sure
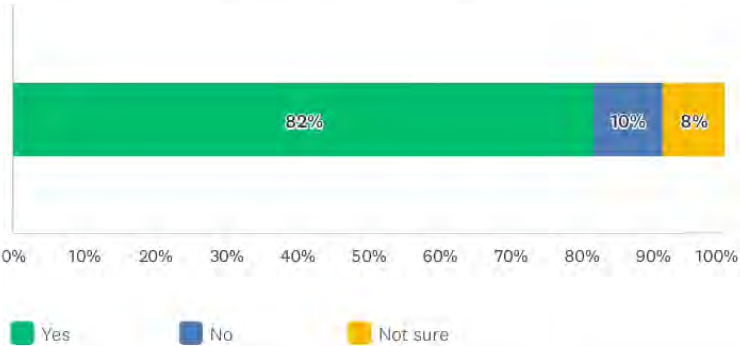
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	82%	387
No	10%	46
Not sure	8%	40
TOTAL		473

Q6 Would you feel more or less connected to a council member who is elected to specifically represent your ward?

Answered: 473   Skipped: 11
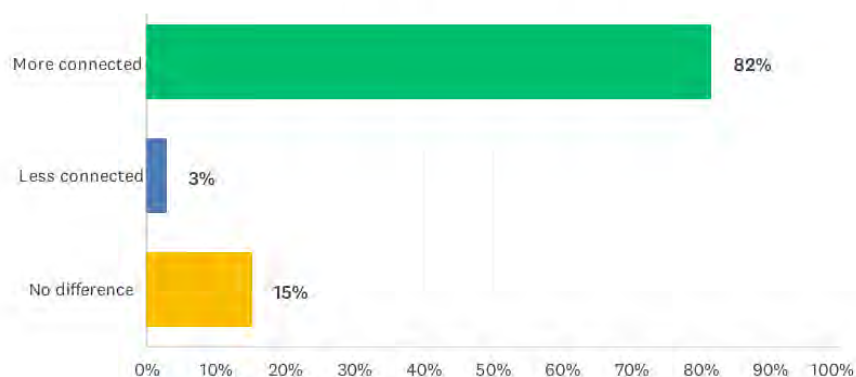
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More connected	82%	386
Less connected	3%	14
No difference	15%	73
TOTAL		473

Q7 What do you think are the benefits of having a ward-based representation model? (select all that apply)

Answered: 446   Skipped: 38
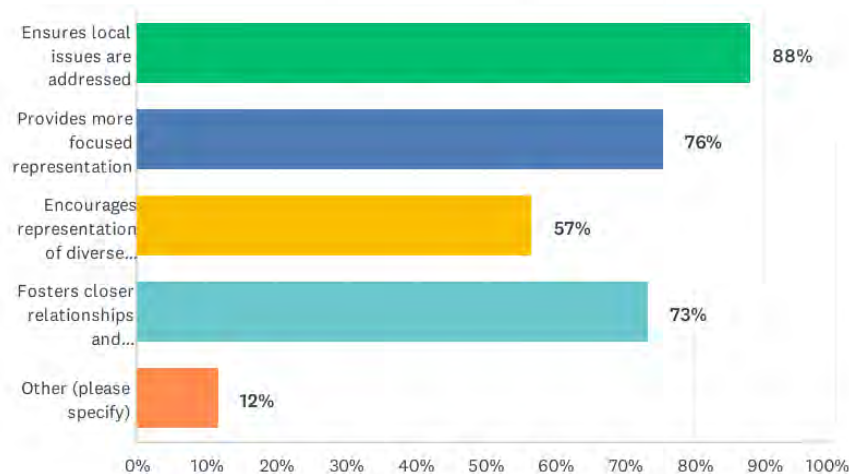
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ensures local issues are addressed	88%	393
Provides more focused representation	76%	337
Encourages representation of diverse neighborhoods/interests	57%	253
Fosters closer relationships and communication between residents and ward representative	73%	327
Other (please specify)	12%	52
Total Respondents: 446		

Municipality of Arran-Elderslie Community Representation Feedback Survey

Q8 Do you believe council members elected at-large are more likely to prioritize the interests of the entire municipality over local interests?

Answered: 470   Skipped: 14

Not sure 20% (96)
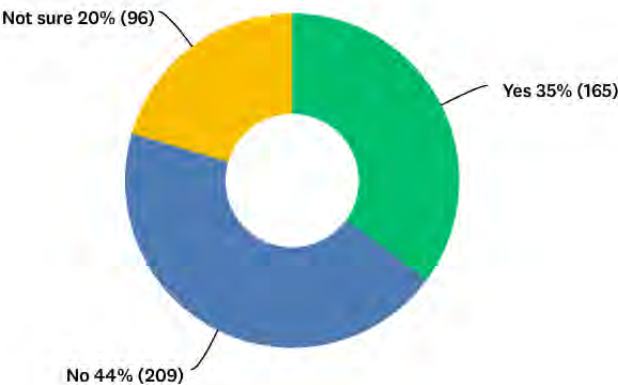
Yes 35% (165)

No 44% (209)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	35%	165
No	44%	209
Not sure	20%	96
TOTAL		470

Q9 Do you believe at-large representation promotes equality across different parts of the municipality?

Answered: 470   Skipped: 14

Not sure 19% (91)
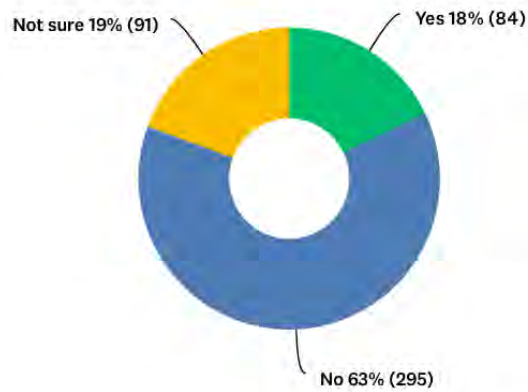
Yes 18% (84)

No 63% (295)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18%	84
No	63%	295
Not sure	19%	91
TOTAL		470

Q10 Do you feel that at-large representation would provide sufficient attention to issues affecting specific wards?

Answered: 470   Skipped: 14

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	14%	67
No	65%	306
Not sure	21%	97
TOTAL		470

Q11 What do you think are the benefits of having an at-large representation model? (select all that apply)

Answered: 345   Skipped: 139
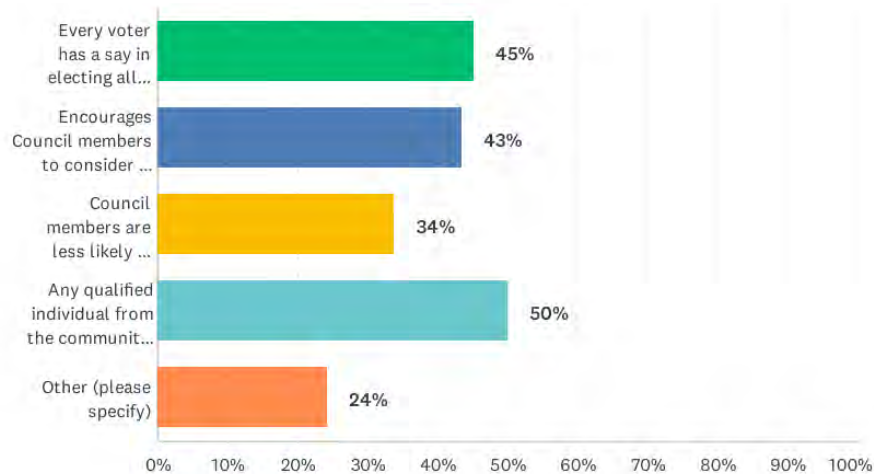
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Every voter has a say in electing all Council members, promoting a unified community voice	45%	156
Encourages Council members to consider the needs of the entire municipality rather than focusing on specific areas	43%	150
Council members are less likely to be divided by geographic interests, potentially fostering collaboration	34%	117
Any qualified individual from the community can run for office, expanding the candidate pool	50%	173
Other (please specify)	24%	84
Total Respondents: 345		

Q12 How satisfied are you with the current ward-based representation model used in our municipality?

Answered: 469   Skipped: 15
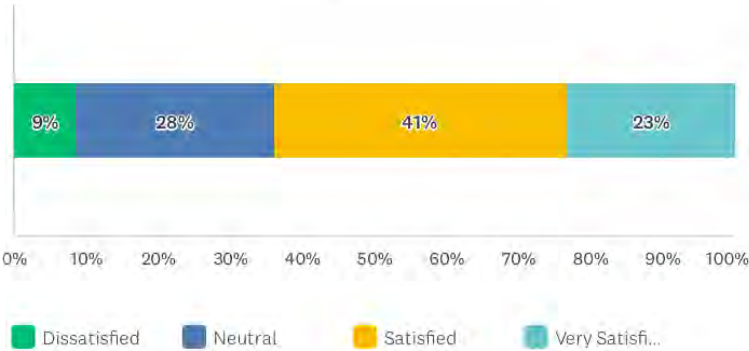
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Dissatisfied	9%	40
Neutral	28%	130
Satisfied	41%	191
Very Satisfied	23%	108
TOTAL		469

Q13 How satisfied are you that the current council represents your interests?

Answered: 469   Skipped: 15
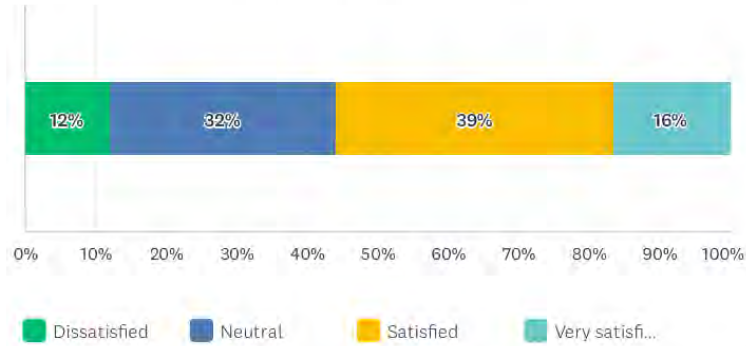
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Dissatisfied	12%	57
Neutral	32%	150
Satisfied	39%	185
Very satisfied	16%	77
TOTAL		469

Q14 Which representation model do you prefer for our municipal council?

Answered: 467   Skipped: 17
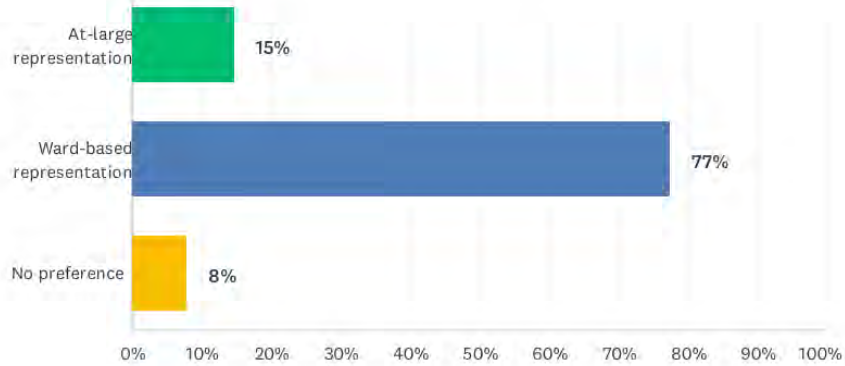
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
At-large representation	15%	69
Ward-based representation	77%	361
No preference	8%	37
TOTAL		467

Q15 What are the main reasons for your preference? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 467   Skipped: 17
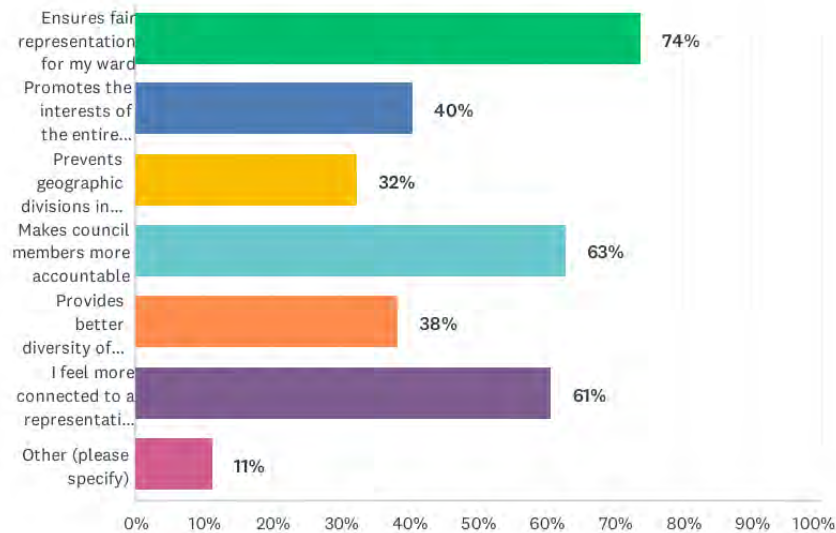
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ensures fair representation for my ward	74%	345
Promotes the interests of the entire community	40%	189
Prevents geographic divisions in the community	32%	151
Makes council members more accountable	63%	294
Provides better diversity of perspectives	38%	179
I feel more connected to a representative focused on my local area	61%	284
Other (please specify)	11%	53
Total Respondents: 467		

Appendix D – Summary of Participant Feedback

In addition to answering the defined survey questions, many respondents provided additional comments/suggestions.

Benefits of Having a Ward-based Model
• *Brings accountability to the representatives when they are a part of the community.*
• *A ward-based system would be more efficient for the large land size of the municipality (reduces travel time for any in-person meetings).*
• *A stronger voice for the ward I live in.*
• *We need individualistic representation for each "ward". What works for one may not work for another, It would not be reasonable or responsible to do so otherwise.*
• *Ensures that the needs of some wards with smaller population are not being pushed aside/ignored because of decisions made by a ward that has more population and can hold more representation at municipal.*
• *It is huge municipality and difficult for any council member to fully understand the situation or being aware of the situation in another ward.*
• *Wards become territorial we must come together.*
• *Keep from Towns having all of the representation.*
• *More detailed knowledge of the community and its people.*
• *If a representative lives in the ward then they understand ward issues and are impacted by them personally.*
• *One community cannot dominate municipal representation.*
• *Ensures equality across the district.*
• *Foster's an environment for more local based legislation relevant to the specific community. For example, we are in the same riding as Owen Sound, yet the issues we deal with here in Paisley are VASTLY different from those faced in a more populated community like Owen Sound.*
• *Smaller areas get equal representation.*
• *Truly knows a sense of the local community and what issues need addressing.*
• *Better knowledge of local needs.*

Benefits of Having a Ward-based Model
• *At-large will prevent someone not running because their friend is running ie. I wont run against you.*
• *Perhaps a more efficient government and fewer tax dollars are wasted.*
• *Potentially fewer elected people could make sense depending on population.*
• *Our council would contain the most qualified councillors, not just stuck with someone who decides to represent their ward because no one wants the job.*
• *It likely has economic benefits.*
• *Want to be able to vote for whom I think are the best representatives.*
• *The larger community will have more of the say.*
• *Need more diverse and qualified representatives.*
• *Nobody will be elected simply because only one person ran in that ward. Will help to keep unqualified out of council.*

Reasons for Preference for Ward-Based Representation
• *Both urban and rural are equally represented.*
• *With at-large representation, there is a risk of a concentration of representatives from a specific area, thereby losing the voice of other communities.*
• *As a municipal government worker myself, I am not a fan of the at-large system for rural municipalities in general. In my experience, it often causes real or perceived bias toward certain communities.*
• *Let's each have our own identity.*
• *Fairness for rural members.*
• *At-large has the danger of having many members of council accidentally being voted in from one specific area.*
• *The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have people on Council with far more knowledge of issues and perhaps better solutions for specific areas when there are representatives from each Ward.*
• *Councillor knows the issues in that community.*

Reasons for Preference for At-Large Representation

- *Balances natural population differences.*
- *Fewer positions acclaimed and more of the roles filled by most qualified candidate regardless of geography.*
- *I would rather have a good person to talk to from ?? than a dud from my ward.*
- *More council members that you can talk to re: your concerns.*
- *Makes the municipality one, not 3 towns.*
- *My neighbors might want to run.*
- *Want who I feel are the best representative.*
- *Ensures that I get to elect everyone that is making a decision.*
- *Nobody would become a member of council simply because they were the only candidate in their ward.*
- *Best candidates are elected by at large system.*

Other Comments/Suggestions

- *We believe that a "ward representer" should live/reside in the ward that they represent.*
- *I have no problem if Council at-large but would want to see council members across the municipality not just some from 1 "old ward".*
- *The quality of the candidates is most important. someone with an axe to grind is a 'no no'.*
- *My opinion is ward system is out of date for our municipality. The at-large is the only way to go, it eliminates acclamations, every one has the right to vote. At large is the only reasonable way to go.*
- *Ward rep holds each concillor to ensure there area needs are meant not just 3 large urban areas, every taxpayers voice is better heard.*
- *Wards are antiquated. need at large to have better representation and no acclamations.*
- *I think a nuanced approach would be ideal - if we are to go with ward based, I would hope to see collaborative approaches rather than competitive drives for individual communities.*
- *Any consideration of a possibly a hybrid model, where a number are voted in at large and some based on the wards?*
- *Timing of meetings needs to be considered if you want to encourage participation of working age demographic. Current mid-day meetings limits the pool to those who are self-employed and retirees.*

- *It's time our municipal council made a commitment of STRONG leadership. I would prefer a ward representative from our town, with integrity to make wise choices for all the residents. Truth, transparency, affirmative action.*

- *If a majority of elected councillors in the at-large system are from a particular part of the municipality, that part may be favoured in decision making. It all depends on the mindset of the individuals involved. It is also more difficult to find candidates who would be willing to campaign in the whole municipality.*

- *It is the vision, dedication and innovation of our elected reps. That will move our municipality forward. At the end of the day, the process is a secondary factor.*

- *I think the councilor should be from the ward he represents not from any where in the entire municipality.*

- *Keep the current model and don't mess with success! Other municipalities that have gone at large have already shown how they are bad! (ie. Meaford & South Bruce Pennisula).*

- *Ideal candidate should have some agriculture, business, common sense, building, infrastructure, and municipal planning knowledge. Future council members are going to be faced with a lot of high costs issues and shrinking budget.*

- *At-large could work if the individual was able to look an issue holistically and not with a skew towards their home riding. Need to be completely impartial. Unfortunately, most people (regardless of their mandate) are unable to look at the issue at hand. I also think a ward representative should be required to live in the area they are representing; roots in the community.*

- *If an at large system was adopted it would be necessary to give stipends to councillors to travel regularly to different areas in the municipality - otherwise they will be overburdened and work less diligently.*

- *Centralization does not work. Each ward is different. Trying to blend them will not work.*

- *I think it is imperative that a representative be living in the community- there is little time and possibly insufficient interest in a non resident to familiarize themselves adequately with another ward in order to make informed decisions on council.*

- *Our municipality is very small and with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor technically at large, there is a good balance.*

- *If a ward has 2 good candidates and another has a poor candidate one of the good ones is eliminated under the present system and you are stuck with a less than perfect council. At large will bring an end to all the acclaimed council votes we have.*

- *At-large representation is the way to go but not at this time. Maybe in 10 years will be the time once all of us older people are gone. There is still hard feelings against amalgamation.*

- *We amalgamated to better the whole community not just each ward. We must come together as a community and let the old rivalry die. This is a great area to live and we must better everyone at the same time. please hold elections at large.*

- *Councillors should make a greater effort to connect with residents.*

- *The municipality is very big and diverse- relationship between urban and rural areas is not as tight as it was when the towns were founded- people's economic base might be quite removed from the locality which does not help having an at large system - geographic closeness is one binding element.*

- *I do realize politics is more often than not a matter of compromise, and as the governing mechanism grows, perspective must shift towards efficiency over meeting individual needs. However, this is the small scale, local government purely of the local community, and it already feels like the voices of the people in that community are often being drowned out. I cannot help but feel that at this scale, over-centralization can only hurt the ability to govern.*

- *Going to a total "Community Representation" model could, and likely would, create far more political battles, benefitting those with issues in a particular geographic location, depending upon the elected representatives and where they are located…. or at least the priorities of said Council. This would likely lead to some areas in greater need of things needing tending to. Having the Mayor and Deputy Mayor being essentially at-large keeps a good balance in the electoral process with having all others being ward-based.*

- *I fear that the at large system has more potential for NO representation for my ward.*

- *The possibility of one ward having multiple candidates splitting the votes in that particular ward vs if another ward only has one candidate …. Assuming a candidate from a particular area would retain local votes. Change should always be considered but are there issues currently? I have not seen or heard of issues if they exist. If there are, perhaps better awareness/communication is a greater issue for consideration.*

- *Ward based representation provides coverage of each specific area, especially rural versus town. Our representation is only as good as the person involved. In our 50 years here we have seen shenanigans in local activities as well as some reasonably good representation.*

- *We are already practicing a some-what at large representation within our current ward-based council with only having 1 councillor per ward regardless of the population in each that is being represented. Chesley is more populated than Tara-but still only has 1 councillor.*

- *It is difficult to balance the needs of the rural and urban constituents. The council should not be uniform because that probably indicates that certain needs will be dismissed outright. Downloading has resulted in the municipality having to pick up load that was previously provincial.*

- *Because the number of residents that live in a rural ward are so much less than what live in a town or village, without specific representation of a rural ward, the issues affecting them will not have enough voting power to be impactful.*

- *The council as a whole should be working for the better of the whole municipality. Our tax dollars cover the whole municipality and should be spread around the area equally. We do understand that there are certain issues that need to be addressed at any given time and will use more in one area than another but consideration should be given to equal it out over time.*

- *I like the ward system, I know my representative and know he holds my and my neighbors interests.*

- *We need to continue the ward system. We need to have counsellors with specific interest in areas to ensure needs are represented. A member at large system is a terrible idea for anyone living outside Chelsey and Tara.*

- *More women and gender diverse representatives to reflect the community.*

- *I feel that everyone deserves the right to vote for all positions on council!! If a position is acclaimed in ward system people in that ward do not get a vote. Acclamation needs to be done away with!!!!*

- *Municipalities face a variety of issues - some general & others highly localized. While I would hope that the interests of the whole municipality would always be kept in mind & cooperation encouraged, I believe that ward rep promotes a variety of views - much like a family where there are distinct interests and needs must be considered while still working on behalf of the good of the whole.*

- *I feel an at large council may not have an agricultural background. The farm voice needs to be heard.*

- *It's well past time for Arran-Elderslie to come together as a unified community. There is still a noticeable divide, particularly between the three towns, with an ongoing "us vs. them" mentality. Perhaps a council selected by all of us will help, with a more community wide perspective for making decisions.*

- *At large is by far the fairest.*

- *While I understand some of the voters frustrations who live in the urban areas feeling there concerns aren't being, in there opinion, properly addressed, I do think overall that having a representative from each ward has worked well and should continue to work well into the future.*

- *The entire council spends tax payer money. We should be able to vote for all of them.*

- *If all members of council can vote on things happening in my backyard, I should have the right to vote for all members who are making decisions , not just the just the 1 from my ward. We are not that big of a municipality that if you have any interest at all in whats happening in your neighborhood, you will find out who the people are who are running in the elections.*

- *I trust the people elected by Arran-Elderslie voters will fairly represent the best interests of the municipality as a whole regardless of our electoral system. The current system is likely more manageable for the councillors elected though I am sure they hear from and respond to inquiries from out of ward residents anyway.*

- *Leaving the Ward system is a regressive step for our municipality. The "at large" system could potentially divide its citizens rather than unify them. The geographic areas with smaller and less diversified businesses could find themselves without a voice in municipal affairs. Our present wards are quite diversified between agricultural areas and urban/commercial regions. Our councils have been very diligent in keeping these differences in mind as they work for our entire municipality.*

- *Really hope at large goes through. The current system prevents the true best 5 candidates from being elected to council.*

- *Multiple studies show at large promotes better governance outcomes, reduces log rolling, and in rural areas opens the candidate pools. Please use at large.*

- *I feel that ward system is the best, with at large all council members could come from one area.*

Clerkson Call

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