

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: June 9, 2025

Subject: CLKS.2025.21 – Ward vs At-Large Electoral System

Report from: Christine Fraser-McDonald, Clerk

Attachments:

Recommendation

Be It Resolved that Council receives Report CLKS.2025.21 – Ward vs At-Large Electoral System AND _____ the Electoral System for the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

Background

At the September 25, 2024 Council meeting, Council directed staff to proceed with seeking input from the community on their support for electing Councillors in a ward-based system or through an at-large system and that a public survey be created seeking community input.

In October 2024, 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.

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 and members of Council.

The community was provided with 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.

Analysis

On May 12, 2025, Clerks on Call made a [presentation](#) and provided a [final report](#) on the engagement strategy and survey results.

The community engagement strategy included several key components:

1. ****Public Survey****: A total of 484 participants completed the survey, providing both quantitative results and qualitative insights.
2. ****Facilitated Open Houses****: Three community open houses were held, providing an interactive forum for in-depth questions and discussions.
3. ****Councillor Interviews****: One-on-one interviews with each member of Council to understand their perspectives on the electoral system.
4. ****Community Feedback****: The majority (77%) of the Arran-Elderslie community that participated in the consultation preferred to maintain the existing ward-based electoral system.

The analysis of the feedback indicates strong community support for the ward-based system, which is seen as ensuring fair representation for each ward and addressing local issues effectively.

Staff seek Council direction on maintaining the current ward-based system or direction to move to at-large system for the upcoming election.

Link to Strategic/Master Plan

6.5 Engaging People and Partnerships

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding/Link to Procurement Policy

Engagement Strategy in the amount of \$5,850.00 plus HST, mileage and disbursement costs incurred to be funded from Account 01-1020-4300 – Contracted Services. (2024)

Advertisement costs will be funded from Account 01-1010-4354 – Election.(2025)

Approved by: Emily Dance, Chief Administrative Officer