

Municipal Wards Commission

Establishment of Municipal Ward Boundaries

Effective November 9, 2020

Presented to City Council
10-28-2019

October 28, 2019

Your Worship and Members of City Council:

The Municipal Wards Commission is pleased to file this report with City Council concerning the Commission's review of ward boundaries for the ten wards in the City of Saskatoon. A map detailing the revised ward boundaries is attached. Revised ward boundaries will be effective November 9, 2020.

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 2016, and were effective October 26, 2016. 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 Commission must complete its work 180 days prior to the municipal election.

In early 2019, a review of ward populations showed that the population of wards 7 and 10 exceeded the 10% variation limit and that the population of wards 5 and 8 fell below. The Commission utilized 2018 Saskatchewan Health population information to conduct its review.

The Municipal Wards Commission has reviewed the ward boundaries and submits revised ward boundaries that will take effect November 9, 2020, the date of the next municipal election.

Mandate

The Cities Act details 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 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 2018, according to figures obtained from professional staff in the City's Planning and Development division (2018 Saskatchewan Health information) is 270,790. Applying the statutory formula to this population, each ward is required to have a population of 27,079 with a variance of plus or minus ten percent. Thus, the permissible population range is 24,372 - 29,787. The following is a listing of ward populations as of December 31, 2018:

ward 1	26,311		ward 6	24,466	
ward 2	25,941		ward 7	32,669	too large
ward 3	27,214		ward 8	23,387	too small
ward 4	27,326		ward 9	29,255	
ward 5	22,097	too small	ward 10	32,125	too large

Process

The Commission engaged citizens in a public consultation process which consisted of two public meetings held in Committee Room E, City Hall, on Wednesday, June 19, 2019 and Wednesday, September 25, 2019. Public notification of these meetings was given by PSA, newspaper, the City's website, social media, and dissemination at City Hall.

Citizens were invited to submit written comments by entering a submission in a comment box in City Hall lobby, submitting feedback online through the City's ward boundaries engagement page, or emailing the City Clerk's Office.

The first consultation meeting, on June 19, 2019, was attended by one person. In addition, one written submission was received and 29 submissions were received through the City's engagement page. The Commission reviewed the issues and, since there were no ward boundary options available at that time, considered comments of a general nature only. Three ward boundary options were prepared by City staff in August 2019. During the week of August 26, the options were posted on the City's voting and elections webpage (saskatoon.ca/wardboundaries) and displayed in the lobby of City Hall, in order that the Commission could obtain citizen feedback on the specific proposals. Notification of the availability of the three options was provided by newspaper advertisements, a PSA, and social media, as well as notice on the City's website.

A total of 138 submissions were received regarding the ward boundary options, the majority received through the City's engagement page. In addition, verbal submissions were made by six individuals attending the September 25, 2019 public meeting.

Key Principles and Points Raised by Participants in Community Consultations

Submissions to the Commission were varied and contradictory but the following themes emerged:

- Wards should not contain what were perceived as communities with different socio-economic demographics as they are seen as having different interests, which might cause conflicting representation by a councillor

- Wards should not split communities that are closely associated (whether officially through Community Associations or shared community activities, or unofficially through commonly shared commercial or recreational spaces)
- Minimize the number of neighbourhoods that will be changing
- Option 1 was least favourite overall due to too many changes resulting in confusion
- Least disruption for school board is preferred, as ward changes impacts them
- Nutana Suburban Centre has moved in previous ward reviews; therefore moving that neighbourhood again would result in continued confusion

Deliberation

The Commission considered the following principles in making its decision:

- Population numbers for each ward must meet legislated variance requirement of plus/minus ten per cent. Other considerations must yield to this legislated numerical requirement.
- The integrity of neighbourhood boundaries should be respected as much as possible (i.e. a ward boundary should not divide a neighbourhood)
- Community connections and interactions between neighbourhoods should be respected as much as possible.
- Changes to existing ward boundaries in conjunction with each review and over time in successive reviews should be minimized as much as possible for the purpose of minimizing confusion among electors regarding boundaries
- The boundary review process should be mindful that ward boundaries are used for electing Public School Board Trustees.

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

- Silverspring, University Heights Development Area and U of S Lands – North Management Area move from ward 10 to ward 5
- Wildwood moves from ward 9 to ward 8
- Eastview moves from ward 7 to ward 9
- Brevoort Park moves from ward 8 to ward 6

The option chosen has the least amount of change.

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

Ward 1	26,311
Ward 2	25,941
Ward 3	27,214
Ward 4	27,326
Ward 5	27,365
Ward 6	28,511
Ward 7	28,769
Ward 8	27,253
Ward 9	25,244
Ward 10	26,857

(Reminder: permissible population range is 24,372 - 29,787)

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. Consequently it is very likely that further ward modifications will be required prior to the 2024 municipal election.
2. The Commission wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the contributions made by staff in the Planning and Development division for the development of background information, providing population data and estimates, and preparation of final ward map options; staff in IT's GIS Services team for their assistance in the development of options based on the statutorily mandated quotient; staff in the Communications & Public Engagement division for their assistance in communicating 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
Professor Joseph Garcea
City Clerk Joanne Sproule

Attachment(s):

Attachment 1: Ward boundary map for the 2020 local government elections



2020 Local Government Election Ward Map

