

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, February 13, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

**TITLE: AWARD OF SINGLE SOURCE CONTRACT FOR WARD
BOUNDARY AND COUNCIL COMPOSITION REVIEW**

FROM:

Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager, Legal and Administrative Services & City Solicitor

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To receive Council approval for the award of a single source contract to Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., to undertake the 2024 Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review

Report Highlights

- The 2024 Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review will consider options for alterations to the electoral boundaries and composition of Vaughan Council as a lower-tier and a single-tier municipality.
- Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams and Dr. Zachary Spicer and John Miller of ICA Associates Inc., previously conducted the 2020 Ward Boundary Review for the City of Vaughan. With the limited time for this review to be conducted before the next municipal election and the specialized skills and expertise required, it is recommended that they be retained to complete this engagement.
- The City's current ward boundaries have remained unchanged since the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) established them on November 24, 2009.

Recommendations

1. That Council approve the award of a single source contract in the value of \$168,800.00 plus applicable taxes to Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. for

the provision of consultant services to conduct a ward boundary and council composition review;

2. That the Director of Procurement Services, or their delegate, be authorized to execute any required agreement resulting from this single source, in a form satisfactory to Legal Services; and
3. That the City Manager be authorized to approve any related change order to facilitate the work, should it be required, and subject to this change being within the approved budget.

Background

The City of Vaughan's present ward boundaries were established by order of the Ontario Municipal Board on November 24, 2009. The composition of Vaughan Council consists of a Mayor, elected at-large serving as head of council, four local and regional councillors elected at-large and serving on both local and regional councils, and five local councillors, each elected to represent one of the five wards. The last change to the composition of Vaughan Council took effect on November 15, 2022 following the decision of York Regional Council to grant an additional seat to the City of Vaughan.

Council at the meeting of May 27, 2020 directed staff to undertake a ward boundary review. This project was limited in scope, with direction only to review the boundaries of the existing five wards without consideration for changes to the number of wards or the composition of Vaughan Council. Staff issued RFP20-184 to retain expert consultants to conduct the ward boundary review, under the supervision of the Office of the City Clerk and received only one submission.

Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams and Dr. Zachary Spicer and John Miller of ICA Associates Inc., were contracted to conduct the 2020 Ward Boundary Review. The consultant team undertook the review between August 2020 and May 2021, including two rounds of public consultation and an online survey which garnered over 1,000 responses. Council received the final report of the consultant team at its meeting of June 22, 2021, and having reviewed the available options, decided not to approve any changes to ward boundaries and to consider a more expansive review at the next term of council.

At its meeting of September 26, 2023, Council approved the recommendation that City staff be directed to conduct a Ward Boundary Review and Council Composition analysis to present ward boundary and Council composition options for Vaughan as both a lower-tier municipality (existing governance arrangement) and as a single-tier municipality, and for there to be a report back at a future Committee of the Whole (Working Session).

Previous Reports/Authority

[2020 Ward Boundary Review Final Report](#), June 22, 2021

[Update: Ontario Government's Review of Regional Governance](#), September 26, 2023

Analysis and Options

The conduct of a ward boundary and council composition review is a highly specialized field of study, guided by the following principles established in law:

- **Representation by population:** Ensuring electors are comparatively represented on Council, giving an equal voice, which is understood to be within +/-25% maximum deviation for the average ward population in urban areas.
- **Consideration of current and future population trends:** Including changes in population from growth and development, aging communities, etc.
- **Consideration of physical and natural boundaries:** Including changes the way in which manmade and natural features such as highways, railways, river valleys, and farmland shape the community.
- **Consideration of communities of interest:** Including settlement patterns and existing historical communities in the context of the broader municipality.
- **Effective representation:** The overall objective of a ward boundary review, which seeks to establish fair and equitable representation based on the principles outlined above.

Due to the unique nature of a ward boundary and council composition and the need to adhere to established legal principles, it has been the practice of the city to engage expert consultants to conduct the work of engaging stakeholders, analyzing the data and presenting professional, expert and unbiased options for consideration by Council.

A Single Source Procurement is one where other suppliers are available, however there are valid and sufficient reasons for selecting one Supplier in particular. The City's Procurement Policy provides criteria which must be met in order to procure via Single Source Procurement. Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams and Dr. Zachary Spicer and John Miller of ICA Associates Inc. are leaders in this field of work. They bring considerable professional expertise and have previous knowledge and familiarity with the City of Vaughan through the conduct of the 2020 Ward Boundary Review. Having gathered and analyzed considerable population, growth and development data during the previous iteration of this project, the consultant team has a strong body of work on which to base the 2024 Ward Boundary Review and to update previous projections as part of the initial work on this project. In view of the need for the consultant team to provide their final report to Council for their consideration no later than June, 2025 in order to allow for sufficient time to resolve

appeals in advance of the statutory deadline of December 31, 2025, this advanced knowledge and familiarity with the City will allow the consultant team to meet this project within the necessary timeline. The consultant team has already been engaged by other municipalities to consider boundary and composition options for both single-tier and lower-tier governance arrangements and will be able to bring this experience to the City of Vaughan. Given the special knowledge, skills and expertise required, it is the Director of Procurement Services' determination that this justifies the use of Single Source Procurement in this case.

Given the anticipate amount of the award, Council must first approve proceeding via Single Source Procurement.

Financial Impact

The value of the contract awarded is \$168,000.00 and is funded from a Council approved capital budget of \$250,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2023.

Operational Impact

The Office of the City Clerk has consulted with Legal Services and Procurement Services on the decision to proceed with a single source award. The consultant team shall be assisted by City staff under the direction of the Office of the City Clerk.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The consultant team will include representatives of the four school boards whose boundaries include the City of Vaughan during the stakeholder engagement for this project.

As a result of the province's current review of regional government, any agreements will include appropriate flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

Conclusion

With Council's approval of the recommendation to award the contract, the consultant team will commence work in March with an initial round of stakeholder engagement to begin the development process for options for future consideration by Council. The final report including any decision of Council that alters the present boundaries and composition and any appeal period related to that decision must be completed no later than December 31, 2025 in order for any changes approved by Council to take effect at the 2026 Municipal Election.

For more information, please contact: Evan Read, Manager, Elections and Special Projects, evan.read@vaughan.ca

Attachments

N/A

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