



Subject: Economic Development Advisory Committee Recommendation – Representation on Oxford County Council

Report Number: EDM 24-007

Committee Name: Economic Development Advisory Committee

Submitted by: Laura Pickersgill, Executive Assistant

Meeting Type: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT report titled “Economic Development Advisory Committee Recommendation – Representation on Oxford County Council ” be received as information; and
- B. THAT Council approve the recommendation of the Economic Development Advisory Committee as follows:

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee recommends to Council that a letter be sent to MPP Hardeman, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Premier in regards to having equitable representation, for the amount of people the Town is representing, at the County governance level.

BACKGROUND

At the October 8, 2024 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting the following resolution was passed:

Moved By: Mark Renaud

Seconded By: Randy Thornton

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee recommends to Council that a letter be sent to MPP Hardeman, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Premier in regards to having equitable representation, for the amount of people the Town is representing, at the County governance level.

Carried

DISCUSSION

Oxford County Council is the upper-tier municipality that consists of elected officials from Oxford County’s eight lower-tier municipalities: Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Ingersoll, Norwich, South-West Oxford, Tillsonburg, Woodstock and Zorra.

Each lower-tier municipality elects a representative to serve on Oxford County Council. The head of County Council is the Warden who is elected every four years by a vote of Council.

The current structure includes the following:

Municipality	Number of Representatives on County Council
Blandford-Blenheim	1 (Mayor)
South-West Oxford	1 (Mayor)
East-Zorra Tavistock	1 (Mayor)
Township of Zorra	1 (Mayor)
Township of Norwich	1 (Mayor)
Ingersoll	1 (Mayor)
Tillsonburg	1 (Mayor)
Woodstock	3 (Mayor + 2 Councillors)

According to the 2021 Stats Canada Census the population of the Oxford County Municipalities were as follows:

Municipality	2021 Population
Blandford-Blenheim	7,565
South-West Oxford	7,583
East-Zorra Tavistock	7,841
Township of Zorra	8,628
Township of Norwich	11,151
Ingersoll	13,693
Tillsonburg	18,615
Woodstock	46,705

As you can see the Town of Tillsonburg is the second most populated municipality in Oxford County. The population in the Town of Tillsonburg has continued to grow rapidly in recent years. The Municipal Act also states that a key principle of fair representation is ensuring that local representation at the regional level keeps up with changing demographics over time. Given that, it is suggested that the Town be permitted to appoint an additional representative on Oxford County Council to allow for more equitable representation at the County governance level.

In a 2020, report to County Council the following table presented the population in each Area Municipality that was represented by council using the population from the year of the current term's election compared to the population representation for councillor complement using the 2022 forecasted population figures.

Municipality	No. of Council Reps	County Councillor Representation per Resident (2018)	County Councillor Representation per Resident (2022) ¹	% Change
Township of Blandford-Blenheim	1	7,750	8,060	4.0%
Township of East Zorra-Tavistock	1	7,570	8,060	6.5%
Township of Norwich	1	11,530	11,960	3.7%
Township of South-West Oxford	1	7,980	8,190	2.6%
Township of Zorra	1	8,510	8,820	3.6%
Town of Ingersoll	1	13,560	14,470	6.7%
Town of Tillsonburg	1	16,740	17,590	5.1%
City of Woodstock	3	14,623	15,847	8.4%
Total Oxford County	10			

Note 1 – based on status quo council composition for next election year

The Town of Tillsonburg has far surpassed projections and continues to grow.

Location	Population ¹			
	2016	2018 ²	2021	2022 ²
Oxford County	113,940	117,520	122,890	124,680
Woodstock	42,040	43,870	46,620	47,540
Ingersoll	13,110	13,560	14,240	14,470
Tillsonburg	16,310	16,740	17,380	17,590
Blandford-Blenheim	7,600	7,750	7,980	8,060
East Zorra-Tavistock	7,330	7,570	7,940	8,060
Norwich	11,310	11,530	11,850	11,960
South-West Oxford	7,880	7,980	8,140	8,190
Zorra	8,360	8,510	8,740	8,820

Source: 2019 growth forecasts (Hemson)

1. Forecasted population includes a net Census undercount of approximately 2.8%.
2. Annualized forecast estimates for 2018 and 2022 were derived from the Hemson five year interval forecasts, assuming straight line growth between intervals.
3. Numbers are rounded.

The County of Oxford Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C. 42 does not prescribe how many voting members each municipality is permitted to have.

The Economic Development Advisory Committee has passed a resolution in support of this notion and is seeking Council's support.

CONSULTATION

Economic Development Advisory Committee

FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

N/A

CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

Goal – The Town of Tillsonburg will strive for excellence and accountability in government, providing effective and efficient services, information, and opportunities to shape municipal initiatives.

Strategic Direction – Advocate for community needs with other levels of government.

Priority Project – N/A