



Municipality of Port Hope 2025 Ward Boundary & Council Composition Review Background

Discussion Paper G: What is a Ward Boundary Review? And what is it not?

In 2001, the Ontario government merged two municipalities of Hope Township and the Town of Port Hope into one new municipality called Port Hope. As part of this change, a new council was created with two wards (geographic areas for voting), each based on the former municipalities. Ward One received four council seats, and Ward Two received two seats. Councillors from Ward Two were given a special “double vote” on certain issues.

In Ontario, a ward is like a voting district. It helps decide who represents people in local government. The Municipal Act, 2001 allows a municipal council to change ward boundaries by passing a by-law. This helps ensure fair representation for residents.

A **Ward Boundary Review (W.B.R.)** is a process that looks at how these voting areas are set up. Port Hope is conducting a W.B.R. to see if the current ward system, created in 2001, still gives all residents fair and effective representation during elections and throughout the council’s term.

Over time, municipalities grow and change due to new housing, population shifts, and development. That’s why it’s important to review how elections are organized. It wouldn’t make sense to ignore such a key part of local democracy for 25 years, but that’s what has happened in Port Hope.

Even though Port Hope has been one municipality since 2001, it still uses the old boundaries between Hope Township and the Town of Port Hope to deliver certain services and divide costs. This is based on the original merger agreement. However, Ontario law sees wards only as part of the election system, not as a way to manage services.



The current W.B.R. is focused only on how council members are elected. It will not look at how services are delivered or paid for.

This review may lead council to decide that the current ward boundaries no longer reflect where people live and how communities are spread out. If so, new boundaries may be needed. While changing boundaries could affect how the municipality operates, that issue would be handled separately by council.

On the other hand, council might decide the current boundaries still work well. But until the system is properly reviewed using clear principles, assuming the current setup is best is just guesswork.

Topical Discussion Papers A to G

Port Hope will release several Discussion Papers on its website to help residents understand the different topics being considered in this review:

- **Discussion Paper A:** Understanding The Current System
- **Discussion Paper B:** How Big Should Council Be?
- **Discussion Paper C:** The Component Parts of the Port Hope Council
- **Discussion Paper D:** The Method of Election for Councillors
- **Discussion Paper E:** Guiding Principles to Design Wards
- **Discussion Paper F:** Why a Ward Boundary Review?
- **Discussion Paper G:** *What is a Ward Boundary Review? And what is it not?*

Your input is essential. These papers are here to inform and invite your feedback. Help shape the future of Port Hope's local government.