Town of Lincoln
2024-25 Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review
Backgrounder

Discussion Paper A:
Lincoln's Electoral System

Background

The Town of Lincoln has retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and Dr Zachary Spicer, hereinafter referred to as the Consultant Team, to conduct a comprehensive and independent Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review.

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare Town Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing ward configuration and council size or to adopt an alternative. Matters that are integral to a comprehensive review include the following:

- Is it appropriate to consider dissolving the wards to elect all councillors at-large (in what the *Municipal Act* calls a "general vote" system)?
- Is it appropriate to consider changing the composition of council (its size and/or how council is elected) as part of the review?
- If councillors will continue to be elected in wards, what guiding principles will be observed in the design of the wards?

This Ward Boundary Review is premised on the legitimate democratic expectation that municipal representation in Lincoln on election day and throughout the term of Council will be effective, equitable, and an accurate reflection of the contemporary distribution of communities and people across the municipality.

Setting

The Town of Lincoln was created on January 1, 1970 after the amalgamation of the Town of Beamsville and the Township of Clinton and the annexation of approximately half of the Township of Louth. At the time of annexation, the Town adopted a four-ward system, with two councillors elected in each ward, and the Mayor elected at-large. The Mayor would also serve on Niagara Regional Council. Lincoln gained a second representative on Niagara Regional Council in 2006, with the addition of a dedicated Regional Councillor who was elected at-large.

Lincoln has kept the same electoral arrangement since its inception, with 8 councillors elected in each of the four wards – although the ward boundaries have undergone some alteration in the intervening years.

Topical Discussion Papers A to E

Discussion Papers will be available to residents, each addressing one of the topics to be considered in this review:

- *Discussion Paper A – Lincoln's Electoral System*
- Discussion Paper B – What is the Optimal Size for a Municipal Council?
- Discussion Paper C – The Component Parts of Lincoln's Council
- Discussion Paper D – Guiding Principles to Design Wards
- Discussion Paper E – Is a Ward Boundary and Council Composition Review Necessary?