

# Ward Boundary Variance Jurisdictional Review - Update

## ISSUE

The Saskatchewan Cities Act contains provisions setting out acceptable population variances in municipal wards for those cities that choose to utilize them. As ward boundary reviews are a large undertaking and changes to boundaries can introduce confusion into the electoral process there was an expressed desire by City Council to determine if Saskatchewan's provisions are consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

## BACKGROUND

At its December 12, 2022 meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting considered a [report](#) (see Appendix 3) by the City Clerk regarding ward boundary variances from different jurisdictions across Canada. GPC directed that a letter be provided to the Minister of Government Relations proposing amendments to The Cities Act to change ward boundary variances within The Cities Act to a higher threshold variance of +/- 15-25%.

1. *That the Mayor provide a letter along with a copy of the December 12, 2022 information report of the City Clerk to the City of Prince Albert and City of Regina, Big City Mayors' Caucus, and Ministry of Government Relations; and*
2. *That the Mayor write a letter to the Minister of Government Relations proposing amendments to The Cities Act to change the ward boundary variances to a higher threshold variance of +/- 15-25%.*

## CURRENT STATUS

Correspondence (see Appendix 1) was provided through the Mayor's Office to the Minister of Government Relations, Don McMorris. A response letter (see Appendix 2) has been received and is provided for information purposes.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The received letter indicates that this issue will be analyzed in more detail during the next review of The Cities Act. There is no indication as to when the next review may occur, however with the current ward boundary review process set to occur in 2023, the issue is not likely to arise again until prior to the 2028 election.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should a larger variance be incorporated into a future iteration of The Cities Act there is a likely positive financial impact if there are resulting fewer boundary reviews.

## **NEXT STEPS**

At such time that The Cities Act may be reviewed there is traditionally consultation with municipalities, and at this time Administration will reiterate the direction of Council to request a larger allowable ward boundary variance.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Letter to Minister Don McMorris, Minister of Government Relations from Mayor Clark, dated January 11, 2023
2. Response Letter to Mayor Charlie Clark from Minister Don McMorris, Minister of Government Relations, February 2, 2023
3. Administrative Report - Ward Boundary Variance Jurisdictional Review, dated December 12, 2022

Report Approval

Written and approved by: Adam Titemore, City Clerk

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