

The Urban League of London advises its position on the Governance Structure for London is as follows:

- We do not support the notion of full time positions for our elected officials, save and except the position of Mayor.
- We do not support keeping Board of Control.
- We support 14 Wards with an Executive Committee to be elected by council for one year term.

The issue before us is governance. The challenge is what structure would attract the best and the brightest to run and what structure would make decision making as good as possible. We viewed governance structure in the context of a well functioning governance system which:

- ensures the City has the ability to respond to increased governmental responsibilities and complexities especially as it relates to fiscal issues
- establishes the appropriate roles and responsibilities of government
- supports the efficient implementation of public projects that meets the needs of its citizens
- effectively balances micro (ward) and macro (city wide) interests
- is responsive to local needs
- encourages quality and diversity of candidates to provide a balanced council
- is accessible to citizens and encourages debate of issues and policy
- acknowledges the complex intergovernmental networks
- provides political leadership, political responsiveness and strong CAO

We did not view governance structure in the context of:

- saving dollars. Effective governance structure should be determined with a view to provide effective political leadership, timely political responsiveness and efficient administration of policy.

Our research indicated there is no clearly defined example of effective governance structure. What was clear that the governance structure falls from a City's long term goals and accommodates the nuances that make each city unique.

With respect to structure itself and its influence on outcome, while 'structure' itself doesn't make decisions (people make decisions), structure may favour one type of candidate over another. This is the key, and this is why structure is important.

The information provided to Council to determine structure was lacking in a couple of these critical components of information such as long term goals or our nuances. Further, the information provided to council as to various structures throughout the province did not attempt to provide commentary as to whether citizens perceived that the structure was, in fact, effective.

For instance, Hamilton has full time councillors. But at our provincial umbrella AGM, the Hamilton rep was hard pressed to name an elected official who also did not have other employment. To say this is not sitting well with the taxpayers is an understatement.

London's Board of Control – the only structure of its kind in the province - appears on paper appears to be a strong governance structure especially as it relates to complexity of issues, responsibilities and fiscal effectiveness. However, it has not translated into strong governance – or certainly, not stronger governance than other municipalities.

Londoners clearly are involved in their community on several levels, including the political level. More wards with a reasonable workload should improve access to councillors, more effective responsiveness and level the playing field to attract quality candidates. It will clearly establish who are strong ward councillors and who has the ear of their constituents.

As for Board of Control being a training ground for Mayor, strong leadership skills are readily identifiable in most forums. Those who have vision and are self-regulating in their approach to politics - which engenders trust, reduces infighting, increases production and enhances integrity (a personal virtue and organizational strength) - will stand out.

The current system of a B of C elected city-wide means that candidates have to run city-wide, and that is expensive. The money has to be raised from somewhere. The 'somewhere' is typically from the bank accounts of the developers, lawyers, accountants, consultants etc who have an interest in the sort of issues that come before council.

Smaller wards means money is a less important determinant of outcome than, say, community involvement and community knowledge. It should translate into better representation.

We are responding to options placed in front of us. There is however, favourable options not in front of us, including even smaller is better. After all, most of the work is done in committees of five (Board of Control) or six (standing committees). Council is seen as a place to ratify committee decisions. A smaller council without committees would avoid rehashing and be more efficient.

We concur with Prof. Sancton who concluded, "... so much time and effort have been devoted to reorganizing municipal structures that smart people in municipal government, politicians and senior staff, have been unable to focus on what it is that municipal governments *can* do to enhance the quality of life in cities: provide an interesting and diverse built environment, the services for which are reliable for are reliable and efficient."

We encourage Council to improve efforts for meaningful dialogue, effective representation, accountability and transparency. While it's critical citizens involve and educate themselves as to responsible representation and who does it, it is incumbent upon politicians to act in a manner which engages community. Until we see a commitment to this, discussions about governance structure are meaningless.

Options Politiques: article by Andrew Sancton - [Beyond the Municipal: Governance for Canadian Cities](#); Feb 2004.

Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity: James Milway, Institute for Competiveness & Prosperity and Jan Nelles, University of Toronto – [Opportunities for Improving Municipal Governance in Ontario](#) – Discussion Paper, May 2003.

Canadian Journal of Regional Science: Igor Vojnovic, Dept, of Geography, Texas A&M University and Dale Poel, School of Public Administration, Dalhousie University, Halifax - [Provincial and Municipal Restructuring in Canada: Assessing Expectations and Outcomes](#) – Springtime, 2000.

Toronto Star: article by Royson James – [Making Toronto Great](#) – May 7, 2005.