



Corporate *NO: R208*

Report *COUNCIL DATE: October 21, 2002*

REGULAR COUNCIL			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	October 17, 2002
FROM:	General Manager, Planning & Development	FILE:	0430-01
SUBJECT:	Proposed Federal Electoral District Boundary Adjustments		

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Endorse the British Columbia Electoral Boundaries Commission (the "Commission") proposal with respect to electoral district boundaries involving areas within the City of Surrey and further advise the Commission that Surrey Council would also find acceptable the boundaries as illustrated on Figure 4 and documented on Table 4 of this report; and
2. Authorize the Mayor or his designate to appear before the Commission at the public hearing that it has scheduled in Surrey on November 14, 2002, to present Council's recommendations along with appropriate background information.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide information to Council about the current federal electoral boundaries review process and provide recommendations for Council's consideration regarding the proposed adjustment of federal electoral district boundaries in relation to electoral districts (ridings) that are within the City of Surrey.

BACKGROUND

By proclamation dated April 16, 2002, a Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission was established for the Province of British Columbia. The task of the Commission is to propose adjustments to the boundaries of federal electoral ridings in British Columbia, based on the 2001 census.

The 2001 census established the population of the Province of British Columbia at 3,907,738, an increase of 625,677 between 1991 and 2001. On the basis of this census count, British Columbia's representation in the House of Commons is to be increased to 36 seats from 34 seats. Therefore, the federal ridings in the Province

must be re-divided from 34 into 36 electoral districts.

The *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* empowers the Commission to propose a re-division of electoral districts as they determine to be appropriate and then publish them for public review. On July 20, 2002, the Commission released their boundary readjustment proposal for the entire Province. In drawing the boundaries, the Commission gives due weight to considerations such as history, geography and community of interest and must make every effort to ensure that, except in circumstances viewed by the Commission as being extraordinary, the population of each electoral district in the Province remains within 25% of the electoral quota. The electoral quota is established by dividing the 2001 population of the Province, 3,907,738, by 36. This calculation results in an electoral quota of 108,548.

After the Commission publishes its electoral district boundary proposals, it is required to conduct public hearings to provide an opportunity for interested parties to express their views to the Commission about the proposed electoral district boundaries. The Commission is holding several public hearings throughout the Province. One of the public hearings is being held in the City of Surrey at the following place and time:

Sheraton Guildford Hotel, Tynehead #2
15269 – 104th Avenue, Surrey, B.C.
Thursday, November 14, 2002 at 2 p.m.

Persons making written submissions to the Commission need not necessarily appear at a public hearing before the Commission.

Following the public consultation process, the Commission will prepare a final report for submission to a Committee of the House of Commons. Based on information contained within the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission website, the Commission's final report is expected to be submitted to the Committee of the House of Commons in March 2003.

DISCUSSION

There are presently three federal electoral districts located within, or traversing, the City of Surrey (See Figure 1). The Surrey North and Surrey Central ridings are located entirely within Surrey's boundaries. The South Surrey-White Rock-Langley riding is located primarily in South Surrey, but also includes the City of White Rock, Langley City and a small portion of Langley Township. Table 1 documents the 2001 census populations within the current federal electoral districts within Surrey. It is evident from this table that the boundaries within Surrey need to be adjusted in relation to the electoral quota.

Table 1 - Existing Federal Electoral Districts

District	Population 2001	Difference from 2001 Quota (108,548)	Surrey Portion of Riding
Surrey North	114,500	5,952 (+5.5%)	114,500 (100%)
Surrey Central	178,600	70,052 (+64%)	178,600 (100%)
South Surrey-White Rock- Langley	101,800	-6,748 (-6.2%)	54,100 (53%)

The British Columbia Electoral Commission's Proposal

The Commission has a mandate to create two additional electoral districts in British Columbia. In adding the new districts, the Commission's proposal significantly alters the federal electoral boundaries in the City of Surrey area. In response to Surrey's relatively high population growth, the Commission's proposal increases, from three to five, the number of electoral districts located within, or partially within, the City of Surrey. These proposed electoral districts are illustrated on Figure 2, appended to this report. As illustrated on Figure 2, only one of the five proposed electoral districts is entirely contained within the City of Surrey. However, Surrey has a significant share of the population within all five of the proposed electoral districts.

Surrey's population of 350,000 justifies 3.2 electoral districts/Members of Parliament ("MPs") for the City. The current proposal, involving five electoral districts contained wholly or partially within the City, includes one riding completely contained within the City and four that include parts of Surrey and parts of other municipalities. As such, under the Commission's proposal, Surrey would be represented by five MPs with a significant interest in maintaining the favour of the citizens of Surrey. By comparison, the City of Vancouver, with a population of 545,000, has five electoral districts wholly contained within its boundaries and, therefore, would be represented at the federal government level by five MPs. Table 2 documents the population in each of the Commission's proposed districts and the Surrey share of the population in each district.

Table 2 – British Columbia Electoral Commission's Proposed Electoral Districts

Electoral District	2001 Population	Surrey's Current Population Within District
New Westminster – Surrey North	114,211	46,800 (41%)
Guildford – Green Timbers	113,851	113,851 (100%)
Surrey – Langley	110,507	55,400 (50%)
Surrey – Newton	105,836	79,600 (75%)
Surrey – Langley-White Rock	108,762	53,400 (49%)

With the most recent federal election having been held in November 2000, the next federal election must occur before November 2005. The new boundaries will come into effect no sooner than July 2004 and will probably remain in effect until well after the 2011 census information is available (i.e., will be in place for at least two federal elections). Over this period, Surrey's population growth will gradually increase Surrey's share of the total population and voters within each of the proposed electoral districts to the point where Surrey will have a clear majority of the population in each of the five proposed districts. Surrey's population is projected to increase to 460,000 by the year 2011. Therefore, the Commission's proposal of five electoral districts traversing the City will provide Surrey with a healthy ratio of MPs to population over the next 10 years, in comparison to other municipalities in the Province.

Township of Langley Proposed Electoral District Boundaries

The Township of Langley has suggested two alternative proposals for electoral boundaries in relation to ridings that involve areas of the Township of Langley. These alternatives are illustrated in Figures 3 and 5 attached to this report. The Township of Langley and the City of Langley are concerned that the current Commission proposal breaks Langley into three traversing electoral districts, none of which provide a significant Langley presence.

Table 3 provides an estimate of the population in each of the electoral districts illustrated in Figure 3 as proposed by Langley Township. Table 3 also provides an estimate of the population of Surrey citizens that would be located in each electoral district based on the Figure 3 boundaries.

Table 3 – Township of Langley Proposed Electoral Districts

Langley Proposed Districts	Population 2001	Surrey Portion
New Westminster – Surrey	114,211	46,800 (41%)
Surrey – Newton	109,945	82,838 (75.3%)
Guildford – Green Timbers	108,389	108,389 (100%)
White Rock – Surrey	111,580	93,330 (83.6%)
Langley	108,122	16,389 (15%)

This Langley alternative maintains five districts traversing Surrey, but significantly reduces Surrey's population percentage to 15% in a new "Langley" electoral district. Further, the new Langley district may not serve Surrey's interests, as it would place the eastern portion of Surrey, including East Cloverdale, Port Kells and Campbell Heights, into the "Langley" riding.

Langley Township's second alternative, as illustrated in Figure 5, combines the two Langleys into one electoral district. This is similar to the alternative described and evaluated in the following section of this report named the "Alternative City of Surrey Proposed Electoral District Boundaries".

Alternative City of Surrey Proposed Electoral District Boundaries

While acknowledging that any boundary change in Surrey would lead to a chain reaction of adjustments to the boundaries of other electoral districts within the Greater Vancouver region, in consideration of only the populations/communities that are within and adjacent to Surrey, staff have attempted to create a more cohesive and complementary set of districts for Surrey and the adjacent municipalities (See Figure 4). This proposal assumes that the Langleys would comprise one separate electoral district (in accordance with one of Langley Township's preferred alternative boundary arrangements) and that the City of New Westminster may not be appropriate to include in the South Fraser electoral districts. Table 4 documents the population in each of proposed electoral districts and Surrey's share of the population.

Table 4 - Alternative Surrey Electoral Districts - Option A

Surrey Option	Population 2001	Surrey Portion
Surrey North	107,800	107,800 (100%)
Newton-North Delta	109,800	57,700 (53%)
Fleetwood-Port Kells	101,150	101,150 (100%)
South Surrey-White Rock	100,000	81,100 (81%)
Langley	110,800	0

Although the 2001 population in several of the proposed districts is marginally under the electoral quota, all of the electoral districts are well within the +/-25% population range that is one of the decision criteria of the Commission. Surrey's rapidly growing population (110,000 people will be added to Surrey's population over the next 10 years) would quickly alleviate the shortfall and would maintain a reasonable population growth/electoral district ratio over the 10 year period until the next expected electoral boundary review.

Summary of Evaluation of Options

Current Commission-Proposed Electoral Districts (Figure 2)

Pros:

- Creates five ridings that are located wholly or in part within Surrey and, as such, Surrey would be represented by five MPs in the federal government (Surrey's current population of 350,000 represents a sufficient population for a minimum of three ridings).
- The population in each of the proposed ridings is currently, or will over the next few years be in majority, Surrey citizens. This would suggest that the MP representing each riding would be motivated to ensure that Surrey's interests are properly represented in federal government decisions.

Cons:

- Since four of the five ridings involve areas outside of the City of Surrey, under some circumstances the MP representing a "split" riding may be caught in a circumstance that requires a trade off between mutually exclusive interests of the parts of the two municipalities contained within the riding. If such a trade off is necessary, there is no certainty that Surrey's interests would prevail, particularly if the MP representing the riding hails from the other municipality.

Township of Langley Proposed Electoral District Boundaries (Figure 3)

Pros:

- Creates five ridings that are located wholly or in part within Surrey and, as such, Surrey would be represented by five MPs in the federal government (Surrey's current population of 350,000 represents a sufficient population for a minimum of three ridings).

Cons:

- Since four of the five ridings involve areas outside of the City of Surrey, under some circumstances the MP representing a "split" riding may be caught in a circumstance that requires a trade off between mutually exclusive interests of the parts of the two municipalities contained within the riding. If such a trade off is necessary, there is no certainty that Surrey's interests would prevail, particularly if the MP representing the riding hails from the other municipality. This concern is particularly strong in the case of the proposed "Langley" riding since the population of this proposed riding is in majority made up of Langley citizens with Surrey citizens comprising only 15% of the population. There is a significant potential that the interests of Surrey's residents within this riding would be subordinate to the interests of the Langleys.

Alternative City of Surrey Proposed Electoral District Boundaries (Figure 4)

Pros:

- Creates four ridings that are located wholly, or in part, within Surrey and, as such, Surrey would be represented by four MPs in the federal government (Surrey's current population of 350,000 represents a sufficient population for a minimum of three ridings).
- The population in each of the proposed ridings that involves part of Surrey has a clear majority of Surrey citizens within it, which would suggest that the MP representing each riding would be motivated to ensure that Surrey's best interests are properly represented in the federal government.
- The electoral district boundaries more closely align with natural "communities of interest".
- Consistent with one of the alternatives preferred by the Township of Langley (combines the Township and City of Langley into one riding) and, therefore, would probably be acceptable to the Township of Langley.

Cons:

- In comparison to the other two alternatives, Surrey would be represented by one less seat in the federal government (i.e., four MPs in comparison to five MPs).

CONCLUSION

The Commission has a mandate to increase the number of British Columbia federal electoral districts from 34 to 36. The Commission has published a proposal for electoral district boundaries that fundamentally redraws the electoral district map for Surrey and the surrounding area, with the result that the number of electoral districts located within or intersecting the City of Surrey increases from three to five. Although only the Guildford-Green Timbers district is located completely within

the City of Surrey, Surrey has 75% of the population in the Surrey-Newton district, approximately 50% of the population in two of the remaining three districts and 41% of the population in the proposed New Westminster-Surrey electoral district. Over the next few years, based on growth projections, Surrey's population will make up the majority in each of the proposed districts. Based on the above evaluation of alternative electoral district boundaries, it is recommended that Council endorse the Commission's proposed electoral boundaries and further advise the Commission that boundaries for the electoral districts, as illustrated in Figure 4, would also be considered acceptable to Surrey Council. It is further recommended, in relation to the Commission's proposed electoral district boundaries, that the proposed name for the electoral district involving South Surrey, Langley and White Rock be revised to "South Surrey- Langley-White Rock" since South Surrey represents at least 50% of the population in this proposed district and, over time, the percentage of the riding population residing in Surrey will increase in relation to the areas of the other municipalities represented in the riding.

It is also recommended that Council authorize the Mayor, or his designate, to appear before the Commission at the public hearing that is scheduled to be held in Surrey on November 14, 2002 to present Council's recommendations, along with appropriate background information.

Murray Dinwoodie
General Manager
Planning and Development

TH/kms/saw

v:\wp-docs\admin\02data\10101256.th.doc

SAW 10/23/02 11:32

Attachments

Figure 1 – Existing Electoral Boundaries

Figure 2 – Electoral Boundaries commission Proposal

Figure 3 – Langley Proposal A

Figure 4 – Surrey Option

Figure 5 – Langley Proposal B