

# NEWS BRIEF



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## PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARIES FOR THE CITY OF TORONTO

On March 5, 1969, City Council voted in favour of dividing the City into 11 wards instead of 9, requiring that new ward boundaries be established. A careful decision on these boundaries is important since (a) wards tend to remain substantially unchanged for long periods (except for the 1966 realignment made necessary by the inclusion of Forest Hill and Swansea as of January 1, 1967, the last major ward boundary change occurred in 1931), and (b) where the lines are drawn essentially determines who gets elected.

Three guidelines for legislative apportionment generally govern municipal ward boundary decisions: (1) "one man, one vote" requiring the same population for all wards, (2) "sense of community," where the residents of a ward have a common base of interest, and (3) "compact and contiguous," referring to the shape of the ward that minimizes the infamous "gerrymander."<sup>1</sup> Ideally, the ward system should provide effective and equitable representation for the various groups and interests in the City. The extent to which these three guidelines are the criteria for ward determination will affect the distribution of political power in the community.

By April 21, four proposals had been set forth, an original proposal and three alternate plans A, B, and C. The original proposal and plans A and B primarily utilize a strip-ward design of thin corridors running north-south -- a pattern in existence at least as early as 1893. Strip-wards are based on the idea that each ward should represent a cross-section of the community, thus Rosedale and Cabbagetown are placed in the same ward. The purpose of a ward system is to insure representation on a council of various groups in the City, so that the total make-up of the council will reflect a cross section of the community. With the mixed character of the proposed strip-wards, there is room to question the need for them at all since an at-large election would certainly do a better job of placing varied interest groups into a single electorate.

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<sup>1</sup>Referring to the practice of drawing district lines to insure a voting majority of one group while dissolving the effective votes of another by dividing them among several districts.

All four proposals have substantially similar boundaries for the two east-end wards and the ward in the far west of the City. Each of these three wards closely resembles the delineation of communities laid out by the City of Toronto Planning Board as planning areas. The original proposal and plans A and B, utilizing long, thin strips for the other 8 wards, have apparently paid little attention to two of the three guidelines -- a sense of community among the residents, and a compact shape. The guideline of compactness has been used with a high degree of consistency throughout plan C. The proposed boundaries also conform favourably to the boundaries of the several communities of the City, following the pattern begun in the one west-end and two east-end wards. Plan C is also the only proposal to make extensive use of the two central axes of the City: Bloor and Yonge Streets.

The average population for each ward, derived by dividing the total population by the number of wards, is 65,669. Each plan deviates from this level, though the extent of deviation differs. As shown in the table, Plan C holds closest to the desired population level for each ward.

EXTENT OF DEVIATION FROM OPTIMUM WARD POPULATION

Plan	Largest Ward Population	Amount over Average	Smallest Ward Population	Amount Under Average	Difference bet. largest & smallest Ward	No. of Deviations beyond 2%
Original	72,463	6,794	62,099	3,570	10,364	7
Alternate A	72,463	6,794	61,023	4,646	11,440	9
B	72,463	6,794	61,023	4,646	11,440	8
C	68,651	2,952	60,341	5,328	8,310	4