

Community Leader's

Taskforce

Final Report

Presented July 9, 2001

The Task Force has now received the results of the Research Study that was completed recently by our Research Consultants, PMG Consulting Inc., of Waterloo. The results show that our recommendation of a new, Management Board structure for good municipal government in the regional area of Waterloo, is an acceptable alternative to a majority of the people who participated in the study.

This report is intended to be an additional report to the Interim Report and Recommendation presented to council on May 28, 2001.

We instructed PMG to undertake the study in accordance with the Terms of Reference as laid down by Cambridge City Council, to try to determine the level of acceptance of our preferred alternative. There were a number of directives, some of which are as follows:

1. To determine if respondents had seen or read some or all of the report that had been issued by our Task Force
2. To determine the level of approval or disapproval of the specific recommendations in the report
3. To determine the level of approval for the budgeting, funding, and assessment process.
4. To determine the attitudes towards the impact of accountability, accessibility and simplicity for the preferred alternative.
5. To determine the level of acceptance of the alternative of complete amalgamation of the three cities and the four townships of the Region of Waterloo.

6. To determine the perceived impact on a sense of community if full amalgamation was implemented.
7. To determine the attitude towards maintaining the current governance model
8. To measure the impact of potential higher or lower property taxes on the attitudes towards full amalgamation.

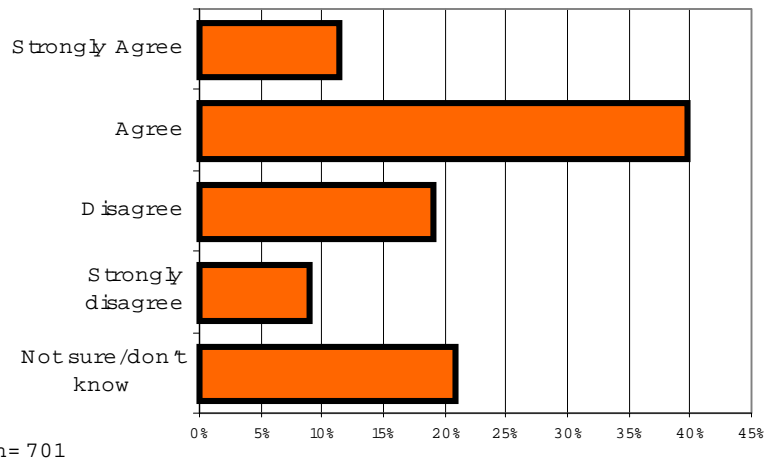
As can be seen, this was a lengthy process, with the shortest interviews being completed in about 7 minutes, and the longer interviews taking up to 20 minutes. There were 701 residents of Cambridge surveyed, with the objective of speaking directly with the main owner or renter of the residence. This sample size gives the research study a margin of error of +/- 3.8% at a 95% confidence level. The sample was a random sample, with selection done by computer selecting the sample from the current Canadian telephone database.

Although most Cambridge residents surveyed had not read the report from the Cambridge Task Force, the interviewer read a brief synopsis of the report to the person being surveyed. A list of predetermined questions was then asked, which quite often involved discussion with the person doing the interviewing.

Results of the Research Study:

The results of this research study are very positive and gratifying to the Task Force. Slightly over one half of the sample agreed with the Task Force's recommendation of replacing the current regional government with a Management Board. There were 11% of respondents who were "strongly" in favour of the recommendation, and 40%

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the recommendation of replacing the current regional government with a management board



were "somewhat" in favour of the recommendation for a total of 51% in favour of the recommendation. When those that indicated they were "not sure" or "didn't know" are eliminated from the results, 65% of those that had opinions about the preferred alternative "strongly" agreed or "somewhat" agreed with the recommendation. Given that the Preferred Alternative was publicized for only 2 weeks prior to the start of the Study, and that it is a new concept that has not been discussed prior to this time, these results are quite positive

When questioned about amalgamation, the results clearly show that by a considerable margin, the residents of Cambridge do not want amalgamation and those that do, do so in the event that amalgamation will not cost them money. In fact, the majority of those opposed to amalgamation would not

change their mind even if it saved them money on their property tax bill. In total, only 8% of respondents indicated that they were “strongly” in favour of amalgamation and a further 19% were “somewhat” in favour. The major indication was from 49% of the respondents who indicated that they “strongly” opposed amalgamation, while a further 17% were “somewhat” opposed to amalgamation. This result is after years of discussion and debate and publicity about this alternative to municipal government restructuring.

With respect to the question about responsibility to the citizens of Cambridge, about 45% of those with opinions on this subject felt that the Management Board approach would lead to greater responsibility to the citizens by the local government.

Respondents were asked what impact amalgamation would have on the “sense of community”. Over half (59%) of the respondents believe that “sense of community” would decrease with amalgamation. Only 15% felt there would be an increase in “sense of community” and 20% believed there would be no change.

Respondents were asked to rank various factors as to their importance when considering reorganizing municipal government. Level of service and responsibility to

taxpayers were

both most

important at

slightly over 50%,

level of taxation

ranked third at

about 45%,

accessibility to

services ranked

fourth at 38%, and

sense of

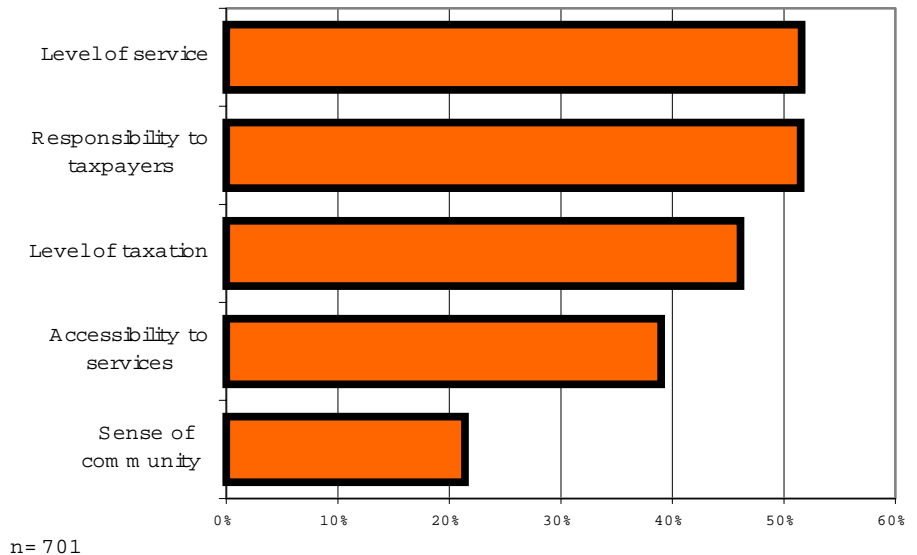
community fifth at 22%. It is important to note that the numbers do not

indicate that accessibility to services and a sense of community are not

important, it's just that they are not as important as the other factors

measured.

Rank the following in order of importance to you when considering changes to the structure of municipal government



When asked which of the three governance options they would prefer if required to make a decision today, no one option gained a majority. The current system

led with 43% of

popular vote, 30% preferred

the

Management

Board option,

and 15% said

that they would

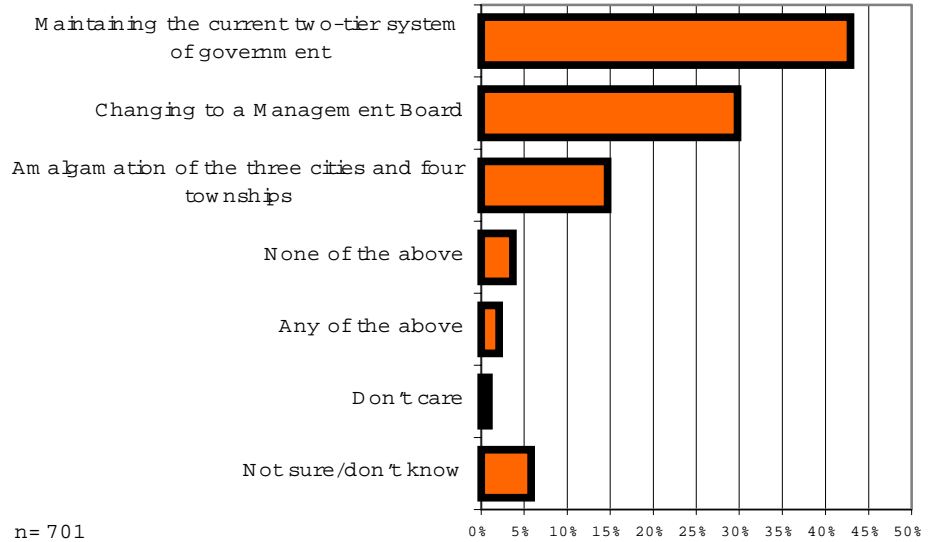
choose the

amalgamation

option. The

balance of the respondents weren't sure or didn't care (1%). In other words, 85% of the citizens of Cambridge do not want any form of amalgamation.

Which of the following options for municipal reform do you prefer?



Conclusions:

1. The Cambridge Community Leaders Task Force strongly feels that the results of the Research Study are very positive and supportive of our recommendation of the Preferred Alternative.
2. Considering the amount of time for discussion and debate, and taking into account all of the negative press received for the Preferred Alternative, the majority of the citizens of Cambridge still endorse the Preferred Alternative as a method of reshaping municipal government in the Waterloo region.

3. Any restructure initiative, including a Management Board configuration of government, must be perceived as being cost effective.
4. Further public discussion and debate needs to be undertaken, once city staff have studied the details of how the Management Board style of government would work. Some changes to the proposal may be required due to fine tuning in some parts of the recommendation in the implementation phase.
5. 85% of citizens of Cambridge are opposed or strongly opposed to any form of amalgamation of the three cities and the four townships.
6. The creeping moves toward amalgamation by the current Regional Government must stop immediately, and must be resisted by Cambridge Council.