



**WARD & COUNCILLOR (ELECTED MEMBERS)
REPRESENTATION**

**DISCUSSION PAPER
2020**

**Document endorsed by Council at its meeting on 26th March 2020 for the
purpose of proceeding to public comment**

**Written submissions are invited from members of the public – the
closing date for receipt of submissions is 20th May 2020**

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1. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Every local government is required to conduct a review of its ward boundaries and system of representation every eight years pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1995. The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes last conducted a review in 2014/15 where a decision was made to retain the number of elected members as 9 and make minor changes to the boundaries of the North and South Wards in order to have a consistent ratio of electors to elected members in both wards.

Ordinarily Council wouldn't be required to carry out another review of its ward boundaries until 2022/23 however Council at its ordinary meeting held on 28 November 2019 resolved (Resolution C.02/1119):

That the CEO report back to Council on conducting a review of our ward boundaries, including an option of having no wards.

The purpose of the review is to assess the arrangements in place for the ward boundaries and representation that is most appropriate and best suits the characteristics of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes and its electors and residents. As a result of the Review, Council may propose any of the following:

- Creating new wards;
- Changing ward boundaries;
- Abolishing any or all wards;
- Changing the name of a district or a ward;
- Changing the number of Councillors; and/or
- Specifying or changing the number of offices of Councillor for a ward.

Clause 7 of Schedule 2.2 of the Local Government Act 1995 states that before carrying out a review of ward boundaries and number of offices of councillor (elected member) a local government is to give public notice advising that the review is to be carried out and that submissions may be made to the local government for a period of six weeks from the date of the public notice.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to provide sufficient information to the community to enable it to consider this important issue and provide feedback to the Council in the form of written submissions.

Council has not selected a preferred scenario. It has simply endorsed the Discussion Paper to enable it to be released for public review. Upon receipt of public submissions the Council will determine its position by resolution and will forward its decision to the Local Government Advisory Board for their consideration. Any decision will be scheduled for implementation at the October 2021 ordinary local government elections.

Council is to have regard to the following factors when determining its position:

- Community of interests;
- Physical and topographic features;
- Demographic trends;
- Economic factors; and
- The ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards.

The Local Government Advisory Board advises that the last factor, the ratio of councillors to electors, is always significant in the consideration of proposed changes. It further advises that it is expected that each local government will have similar ratios across its wards. The Minister for Local Government has indicated he will not consider changes to ward boundaries and councillor representation that result in representation where any ratio in a ward is greater than plus or minus 10% of the average councillor/elector ratio for that local government.

The Local Government Advisory Board views the other four factors as having less relevance to the particular situation of the local government so that it is for each local government to assess the relevance and weight of the other four factors in its consideration of the options.

On completing a review, the local government is to make a report in writing to the Local Government Advisory Board (LGAB) and may propose (requires Council resolution via Absolute Majority) to the LGAB the making of an order for the change of councillor numbers, change to ward boundaries and/or change to ward or district names. The LGAB reports to the Minister for Local Government.

More detail about the LGAB, its roles and processes is available at <https://www.dlgs.wa.gov.au/AboutUs/Pages/LGAB.aspx>.

The Local Government Advisory Board has provided explanatory comments with respect to the other four factors. These are set out in italics followed by further information specific to the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes.

Community of Interests

The term 'community of interests' has a number of elements. These include a sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in the economic activities. It can also include dependence on the shared facilities in an area as reflected in catchment areas of local schools and sporting teams, or the circulation areas of local newspapers. Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging.

The district does contain distinct segments of the community, ranging from traditional farmers, hobby farmers, rural-residential landowners and urban dwellers. "Lifestyle" is a major attraction for new arrivals and it is estimated that over half of the Shire's population has lived in the community for less than 25 years.

Bridgetown is the commercial centre of the Shire and provides the major commercial, cultural and civic services to the whole of the Shire population. Historically Greenbushes supported a separate commercial centre however over the last 25 years the number of commercial businesses in that town have declined significantly. There is little linkage from the easternmost parts of the North Ward (i.e. Catterick and Winnejup) to the Greenbushes town centre.

There are four schools located in the Shire, three primary schools and one junior high school. Rural (State) primary schools in the south west have “no local in-take area” as opposed to schools in the metropolitan area. Therefore parents can choose which school to send their children to. With regards Greenbushes Primary, students typically reside in Greenbushes, North Greenbushes, Maranup Ford and Catterick. However a reasonably equal number of parents in the Catterick area send their children to Bridgetown Primary School or the private St Brigid’s Primary School in Bridgetown.

Until January 1970, Greenbushes had its own Shire. However the boundaries of the former Shire are significantly different to the boundaries of the existing North Ward, therefore any changes to the North Ward boundaries in this review would not interfere with historical boundaries.

Within the North Ward there is a strong community of interest between the localities of Greenbushes and North Greenbushes and if wards are retained it is preferable these two localities should remain in the same ward.

Physical and Topographic Features

These may be natural or man-made features that will vary from area to area. Water features such as rivers and catchment boundaries may be relevant considerations. Coastal plain and foothill regions, parks and reserves may be relevant as may other man-made features such as railway lines and highways.

The most significant physical feature of the district is the Blackwood River. It flows through the district roughly separating the north and south portions. The majority of the town of Bridgetown is on the north banks of the river.

Approximately 45% of the Shire district is crown land, mostly State Forest, and is mainly located in the East and West Wards.

Neither the Blackwood River or South Western Highway (nor other terrain) represents significant impediments to the conduct of local government within the Shire. Physical and topographic features are not seen as influencing social infrastructure and hence bear no relationship to council or representation within the Shire.

Economic Factors

Economic factors can be broadly interpreted to include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area. This may include the industries that occur in a local government area (or the release of

land for these) and the distribution of community assets and infrastructure such as road networks.

The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes has only a small local economy with its principal industry sectors being agriculture (predominantly beef, sheep & wool production), mining, forestry (plantation and native forest), tourism, local service industry, commerce and building/construction.

Although a relatively diverse economy, it has proved to be vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity prices and to ongoing structural changes.

It is not considered that any economic factors within the Shire would have a bearing on ward boundaries or distribution of elected member representation.

Demographic Trends

Several measurements of the characteristics of human populations, such as population size and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information. Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

The table below shows the changes to population in the Shire between the 2011 and 2016 Census'.

Year	2011	2016
Shire Population	4,188	4,660

Statistics from the 2016 Census showed the following age breakdown of the Shire's population:

Age Bracket	No. of Persons	% of Population	Australia %
0-4	207	4.4%	6.3%
5-9	291	6.3%	6.4%
10-14	318	6.8%	6.0%
15-19	262	5.6%	6.1%
20-24	125	2.7%	6.7%
25-29	134	2.9%	7.1%
30-34	166	3.6%	7.3%
35-39	227	4.9%	6.7%
40-44	282	6.1%	6.8%
45-49	325	7.0%	6.8%
50-54	369	7.9%	6.5%
55-59	391	8.4%	6.2%
60-64	437	9.4%	5.6%
65-69	437	9.4%	5.1%
70-74	298	6.4%	3.8%
75-79	196	4.2%	2.8%
80-84	98	2.1%	2.0%
85+	90	1.9%	2.1%

Western Australian Planning Commission population projections estimate a stable level of population growth in the Shire for the next 10 years. It is assumed most of this population growth will occur in and around Bridgetown. If population growth occurs in Bridgetown and other areas of the existing South Ward at a greater extent to Greenbushes and the North Ward the need to regularly review ward boundaries and representation will arise as the ratio deviation between wards will increase.

2. PREVIOUS REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS (ELECTED MEMBERS) REPRESENTATION AND WARD BOUNDARIES

The last review of wards & councillor (elected member) representation for the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes occurred in 2015 and resulted in Council recommending the retention of the number of elected members as 9 and the making of minor changes to the boundaries of the North and South Wards in order to have a consistent ratio of electors to elected members in both wards.

These recommendations were accepted by the Local Government Advisory Board and the Minister for Local Government.

The councillors to elector ratios after the 2015 redistribution were:

Ward	No. of Councillors	No. of Electors	Ratio of Electors per Councillor	% Deviation
North	2	703	1:352	+0.99
South	7	2492	1:356	-0.28
Total	9	3195	1:355	

3. CURRENT WARD & REPRESENTATIONAL STRUCTURE

Since the last review of wards & councillor (elected member) representation in 2015 the total number of electors in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes has increased by 306 (3,195 to 3,501). The changes in ward electors have been:

- North Ward – decrease of 6 electors
- South Ward – increase of 312 electors

The electoral roll for the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes used for the 2019 local government elections confirms a total of 3,501 electors with 2,804 electors in the South Ward and 697 electors in the North Ward.

The current councillors to elector ratios are:

Ward	No. of Councillors	No. of Electors	Ratio of Electors per Councillor	% Deviation
North	2	697	1:349	+10.41
South	7	2804	1:401	- 2.97
Total	9	3501	1:389	

Refer Appendix 1 – Plan Showing Existing Ward Boundaries

The Minister for Local Government has indicated he will not consider changes to ward boundaries and councillor representation that result in representation that result in ratios that are greater than plus or minus 10% of the average

councillor/elector ratio for that local government. The average ratio of councillors to electors is calculated by dividing the number of electors for the Shire by the number of councillors. This figure is then compared with the actual ratio for each ward and the percentage deviation from the average can then be calculated. The Local Government Advisory Board provides local governments with a calculator tool to determine ratios for prospective ward boundary changes/options.

The transfer of only 4 electors from the South Ward to the North Ward would bring the ratio of elected members to electors to within 10% of the average for both wards combined. However, as it is known that the majority of future population growth will be in the South Ward it is recommended that if the boundaries of the North Ward are to be changed this should seek to achieve a lesser deviation so as to avoid the need for short-term reviews of the ward and councillor representational structure.

In order to facilitate this review of wards and councillor representation current electoral roll information was obtained from the Western Australian Electoral Commission with electoral information broken down into localities and road names. This level of detail allows areas within the South Ward to be identified for transfer to the North Ward in order to achieve the necessary ratios.

The 697 electors in the North Ward currently reside in the following localities:

Locality	Number of Electors
Greenbushes	254
Winnejup	127
Catterick	111
North Greenbushes	93
Hester	54
Hester Brook	36
Maranup	22

Note:

The above table includes 4 electors with silent addresses listed in the electoral roll.

An assumption of where these 4 silent address electors reside had to be made when assessing options.

For the existing North Ward this assumption is that 2 reside in the Greenbushes locality, 1 in the Winnejup locality and 1 in the Catterick Locality.

In the event of these assumptions being incorrect it is not believed that they are statistically relevant in changing the proposals put forward in this Discussion Paper.

The 2,804 electors in the South Ward currently reside in the following localities:

Locality	Number of Electors
Bridgetown	2,176
Kangaroo Gully	321
Glenlynn	86
Yornup	55
Sunnyside	49
Hester Brook	43
Wandillup	43
Maranup	19
Kingston	10
Hester	2

Note:

The above table includes 35 electors with silent addresses listed in the electoral roll.

An assumption of where these 35 silent address electors reside had to be made when assessing options.

For the existing South Ward this assumption is that 25 reside in the Bridgetown locality, 4 in the Kangaroo Gully locality, 2 in the Glenlynn locality and 1 each in the Yornup, Sunnyside, Hester Brook and Wandillup localities.

In the event of these assumptions being incorrect it is not believed that they are statistically relevant in changing the proposals put forward in this Discussion Paper.

4. OPTIONS – CHANGES TO COUNCILLOR (ELECTED MEMBER) NUMBERS AND WARD BOUNDARIES

Council does not have an established position on this topic, and the following points are provided to aid discussion only. There are a wide number of options that could be considered. Changes could include:

- Creating new wards;
- Combining wards;
- Changing the boundaries of a ward;
- Having no wards;
- Changing the name of a ward;
- Changing the number of Councillors; and/or
- Specifying or changing the number of Councillors for a ward.

For the purpose of this Discussion Paper an assumption has been made that the current number of councillors (9) will be retained and this is reflected in the options provided. However if members of the public wish to propose a change to the number of councillors (either increase or decrease) this can be conveyed in a submission.

If wards are to be retained it is considered desirable that the localities of Greenbushes and North Greenbushes be in the same ward due to the strong community of interest and interrelationships between the two areas. Other than this, the boundaries between existing wards are considered fluid and can easily be changed to achieve the necessary ratios with a 9 member Council.

All options contained in this Discussion Paper (showing possible changes to ward boundaries) have been based on the premise that 'whole of localities' will be within a single ward and there won't continue to be localities that are divided into more than one ward (note: Maranup, Hester Brook and Hester Wards are currently divided into the North and South Wards). It is recognised that only considering the transferring of whole localities from an existing ward to another ward or a new ward does limit the options for consideration as the 'ratios of councillors to electors' factor needs to be complied with.

The following options have been put forward for consideration in this Discussion Paper:

- Option A – Retain existing 2 ward structure (North Ward 2 councillors and South Ward 7 councillors) with extension of North Ward to include sections of Maranup locality south of Blackwood River.
- Option B - Retain existing 2 ward structure (North Ward 2 councillors and South Ward 7 councillors) with extension of North Ward to include sections of Maranup locality south of Blackwood River and section of Hester Brook locality currently within the South Ward.

- Option C – Create new 2 ward structure with North Ward limited to localities of Greenbushes, North Greenbushes and Maranup (representation of 1 councillor) with Catterick, Hester, Hester Brook and Winnejup localities amalgamating into existing South Ward with representation of 8 councillors.
- Option D – Create new 3 ward structure with North Ward as per Option C (representation of 1 councillor), new Central Ward consisting of localities of Bridgetown, Kangaroo Gully, Hester and Glenlynn (representation of 7 councillors) and a new Rural Ward consisting of localities of Catterick, Yornup, Sunnyside, Kingston, Wandillup and Winnejup (representation of 1 councillor).
- Option E - Removal of wards altogether with all nine councillors representing the whole of the Shire area.

These options are discussed below:

4.1 Option A

This Option proposes to transfer the following land from the South Ward to the North Ward:

- Portion of Maranup locality, being the land south of Blackwood River (19 electors). This would result in the whole of the Maranup locality being in the North Ward as currently portions of that locality are in both existing wards.

The ratio variables associated with this Option are shown in the following table:

Ward	No. of Councillors	No. of Electors	Ratio of Electors per Councillor	% Deviation
North	2	716	1:358	+7.97
South	7	2785	1:398	-2.28
Total	9	3501	1:389	

4.2 Option B

This Option proposes to transfer the following land from the South Ward to the North Ward:

- Portion of Maranup locality, being the land south of Blackwood River (19 electors). This would result in the whole of the Maranup locality being in the North Ward as currently portions of that locality are in both existing wards.

- Portion of Hester Brook locality meaning that the whole of this locality would be within the same ward – North Ward.

The ratio variables associated with this Option are shown in the following table:

Ward	No. of Councillors	No. of Electors	Ratio of Electors per Councillor	% Deviation
North	2	759	1:380	+2.44
South	7	2742	1:392	-0.70
Total	9	3501	1:389	

4.3 Option C

This option proposes the retention of two wards (North and South) with a large amount of land being transferred from the existing North Ward to the South Ward, slightly offset by a small transfer of land from the existing South Ward to the North Ward.

This option proposes to transfer the following land from the North Ward to the South Ward:

- All of the Catterick, Hester, Hester Brook and Winnejup localities. This would limit the North Ward to the localities of Greenbushes, North Greenbushes and Maranup only.

This Option also proposes to transfer the following land from the South Ward to the North Ward:

- Portion of Maranup locality being the land south of Blackwood River (19 electors)

This option results in the reduction of one councillor in the North Ward and the addition of one councillor in the South Ward.

The ratio variables associated with this Option are shown in the following table:

Ward	No. of Councillors	No. of Electors	Ratio of Electors per Councillor	% Deviation
North	1	388	1:388	+0.26
South	8	3113	1:389	-0.03
Total	9	3501	1:389	

4.4 Option D

This option proposes the replacement of the existing 2 ward structure with a new 3 ward structure.

The new wards would be:

- North Ward as per Option C, being the localities of Greenbushes, North Greenbushes and Maranup (representation of 1 councillor);
- Central Ward consisting of localities of Bridgetown, Kangaroo Gully, Hester, Hester Brook and Glenlynn (representation of 7 councillors) and;
- Rural Ward consisting of localities of Catterick, Yornup, Sunnyside, Kingston, Wandillup and Winnejup.

The ratio variables associated with this Option are shown in the following table:

Ward	No. of Councillors	No. of Electors	Ratio of Electors per Councillor	% Deviation
North	1	388	1:388	+0.26
Central	7	2718	1:388	+0.18
Rural	1	395	1:395	-1.54
Total	9	3501	1:389	

4.5 Discussion – Options A, B, C & D

- I. Each option ensures that councillor/elector ratios for each ward stay well within the permissible deviation range of + or – 10%.
- II. Option A maintains the two ward structure and only involves minor excisions of land from the South Ward to the North Ward
- III. Option B also maintains the two ward structure but involves the transfer of land closer to Bridgetown (portions of Hester Brook locality) into the North Ward. This achieves a more even ratio of electors to councillors than Option A noting however there is limited community of interest between the locality of Hester Brook and the balance of this extended North Ward.
- IV. All options retain the localities of Greenbushes, North Greenbushes and Maranup in the same ward with Options C and D restricting the ward to those localities only. Options A and B simply extend the size of the existing North Ward by the excising of land from the South Ward.
- V. Option D is the only option that proposes the creation of a 3rd Ward. Whilst the ratio of electors to councillors works for this option it is questionable whether the ‘community of interest’ factor works as the

linkage of the existing Glenlynn locality to the rest of this proposed ward (principally the Bridgetown locality) is no greater than the linkages from any of the other rural localities to Bridgetown.

- VI. Although Councillors are elected from a particular ward the statutory role of a councillor is to represent the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents from the whole district.

4.6 Eliminating Wards (Option E)

Option D would be to have no wards with 9 councillors.

A complete spill of councillor positions is not required under this Option.

Under this Option all councillors serving a term expiring in 2023 would remain as councillors representing the whole of the district (Shire Area).

There are distinct advantages and disadvantages of a no-ward structure, including:-

Advantages

- Councillors are elected by all electors not just a portion of electors. Councillors are required by legislation to represent all electors, ratepayers and residents in the district, not just those in a specific ward.
- Members of the community who wish to speak to a councillor will feel able to speak to any councillor not just one from their ward.
- The election process is easier.
- For this Shire “communities of interest” spread across existing ward boundaries and are unlikely to be contained within any proposed boundaries.
- There is balanced representation with each councillor representing the whole community.
- It avoids councillors getting too focussed on a specific ward.
- It avoids unhealthy competition between wards for expenditure of funds and provision of services.

Disadvantages

- Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they don't have a ward councillor.
- Councillors living in the ward they represent may have a greater affinity with the issues concerning that area.

- Councillors may feel overwhelmed by having to represent all electors and notwithstanding the population and size of this Shire is reasonably small, they may not have the time or opportunity to understand and represent all the issues for the district.
- A large number of candidates at elections may be confusing to electors.

5. WARD NAMES

The current existing ward names of “North” and “South” are slightly redundant as portions of the North Ward within the Winnejup locality are actually further south than some parts of the South Ward.

This review may be an opportunity to review ward names with one option being to change the existing “geographical” descriptions (North, South) to ones that reflect the district’s history. Examples could be “Stinton”, “Allnutt” and “Blechynden”.

This issue is particularly relevant to Option D of this Discussion Paper as having a “Rural” named ward that doesn’t contain all the rural land within the district may be seen as inappropriate.

Any submissions on this issue are encouraged.

6. CONCLUSION

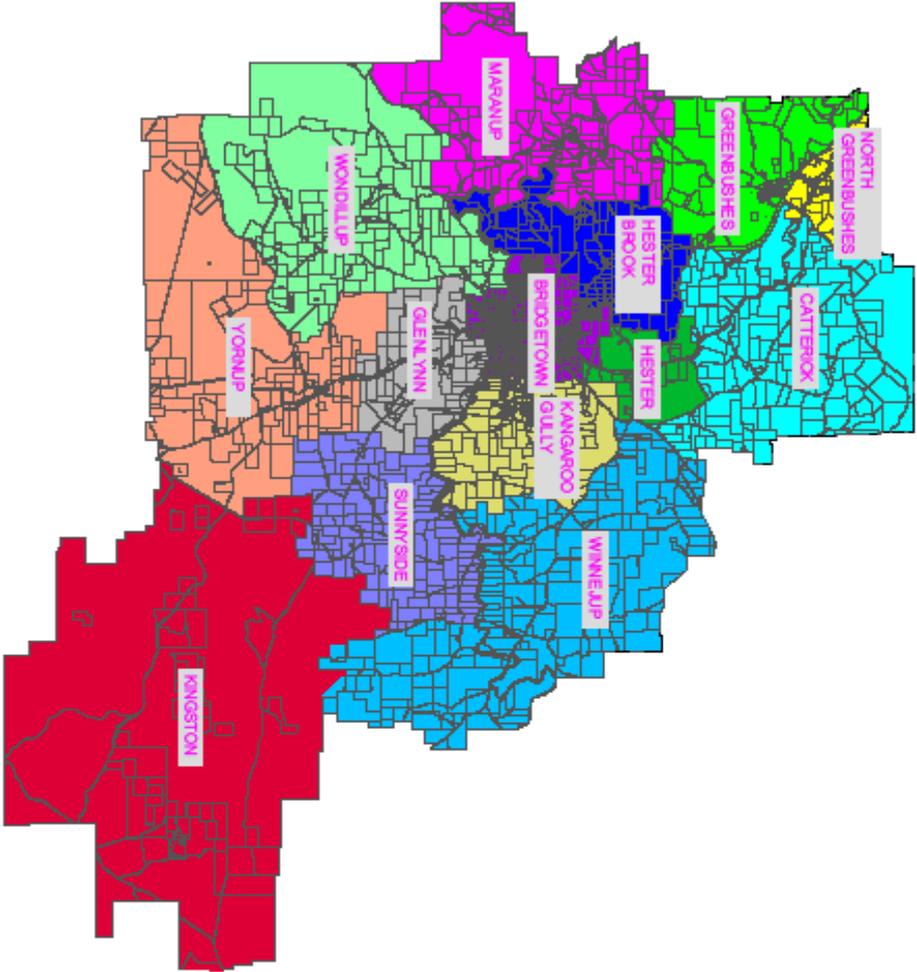
The Local Government Act requires Council in making decisions about its system of representation considers the contents of this Discussion Paper. The Local Government Act also requires Council to consult with its community on this issue. Any public submissions received in the community consultation must be considered by Council when determining its final position on the issue.

Council has not selected a preferred scenario in the Discussion Paper. It has simply endorsed the Discussion Paper to enable it to be released for public review. Upon receipt of public submissions the Council will determine its position on the issues of councillor numbers and ward boundaries.

The Discussion Paper contains various options. If a person reading the Discussion Paper wishes to propose an option not covered it is able to do so via a written submission.

APPENDIX 1

PLAN OF EXISTING LOCALITY
BOUNDARIES



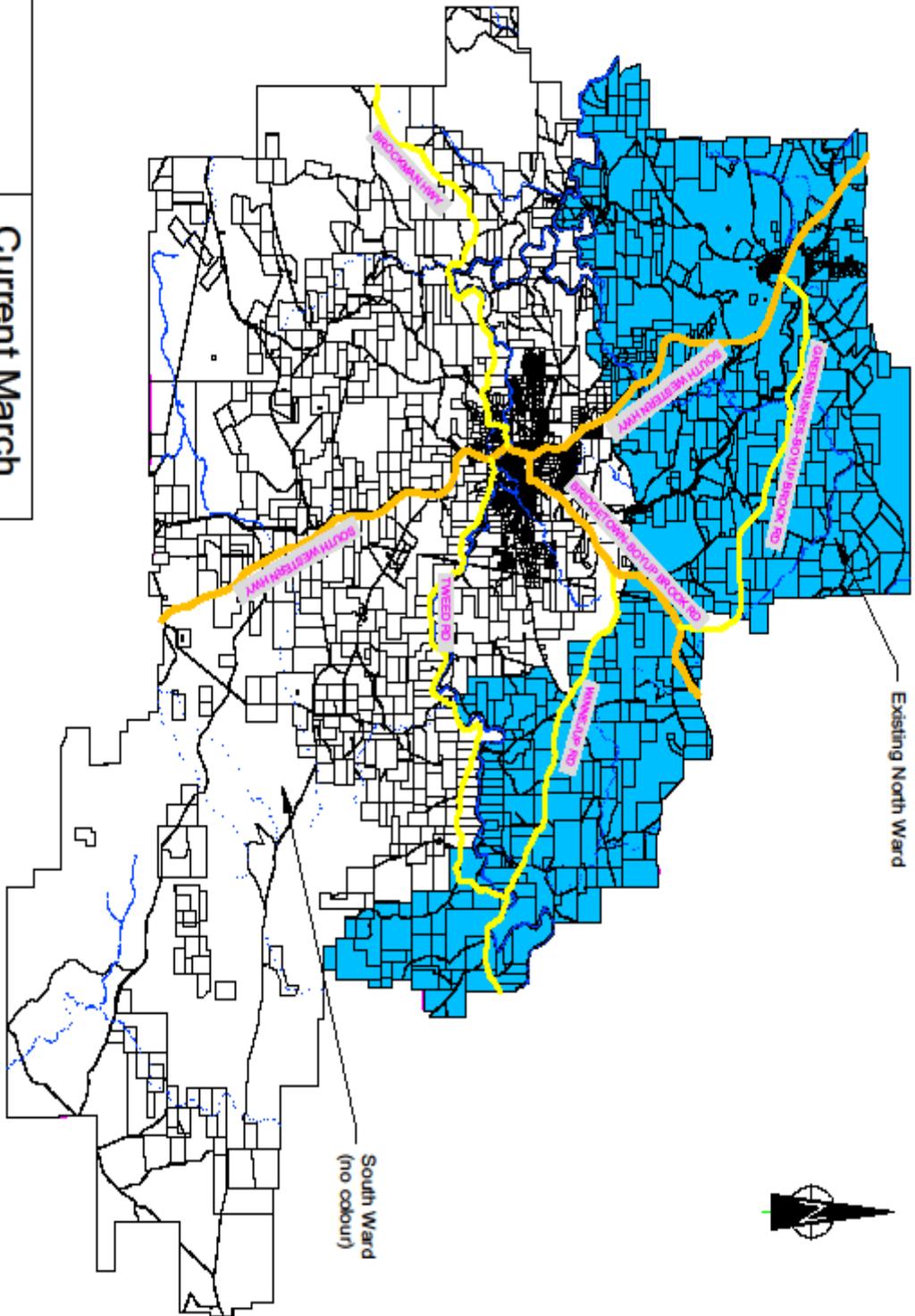
Locality Map

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APPENDIX 2

OPTION "A"

PLAN OF EXISTING WARD BOUNDARIES



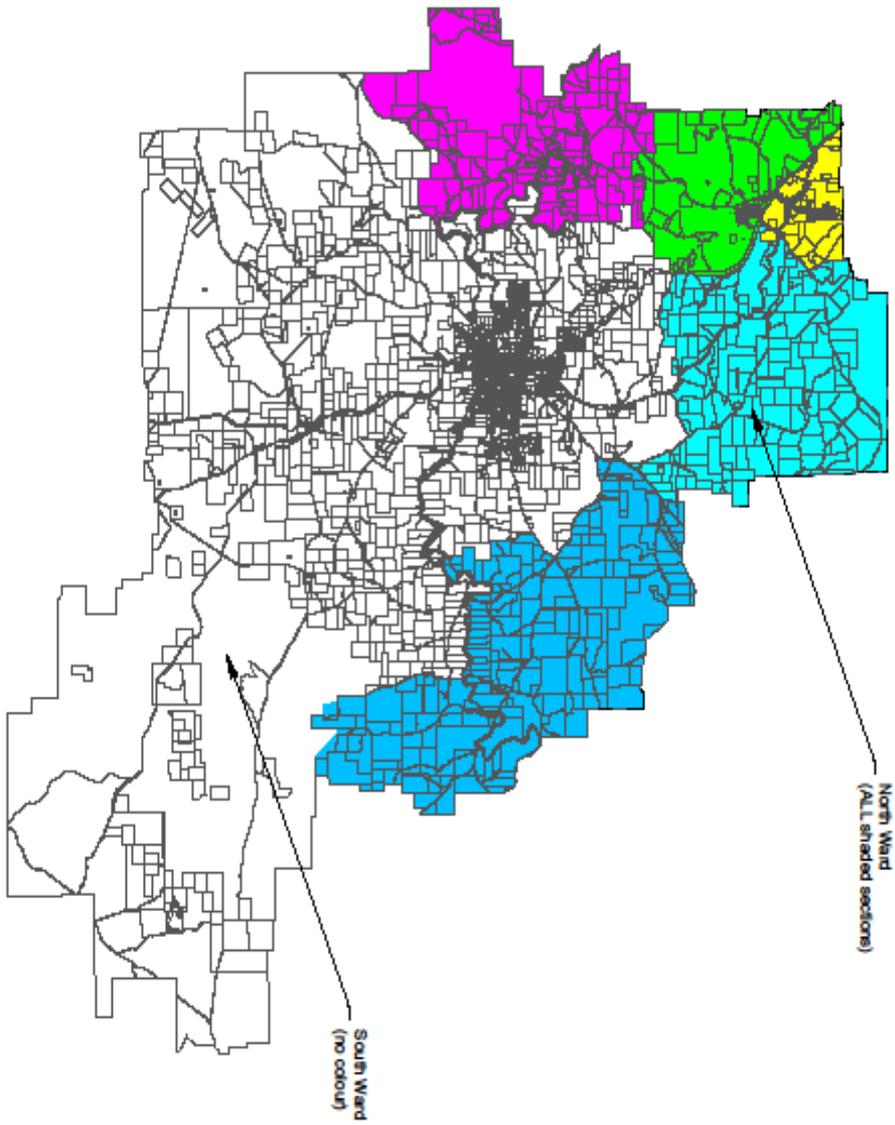
APPENDIX 3

OPTION "A"

PLAN OF PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Option A

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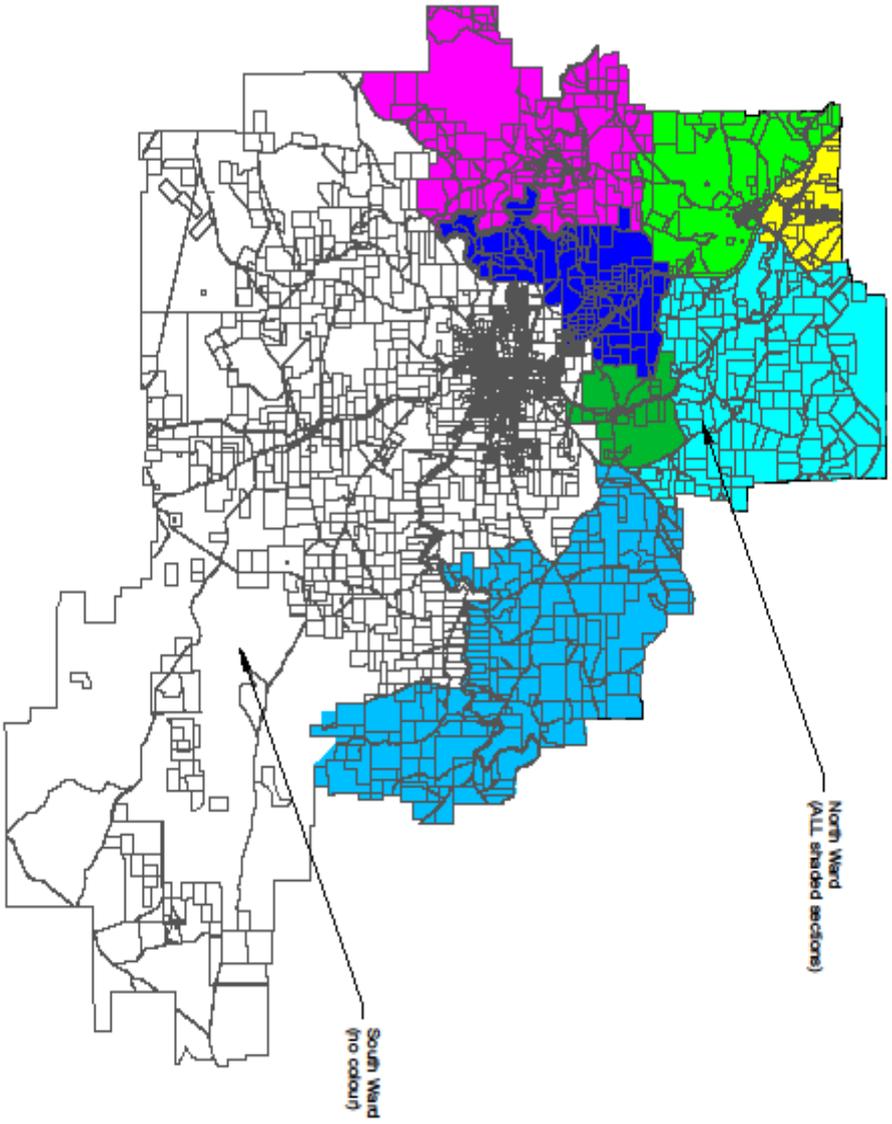
APPENDIX 4

OPTION "B"

PLAN OF PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Option B

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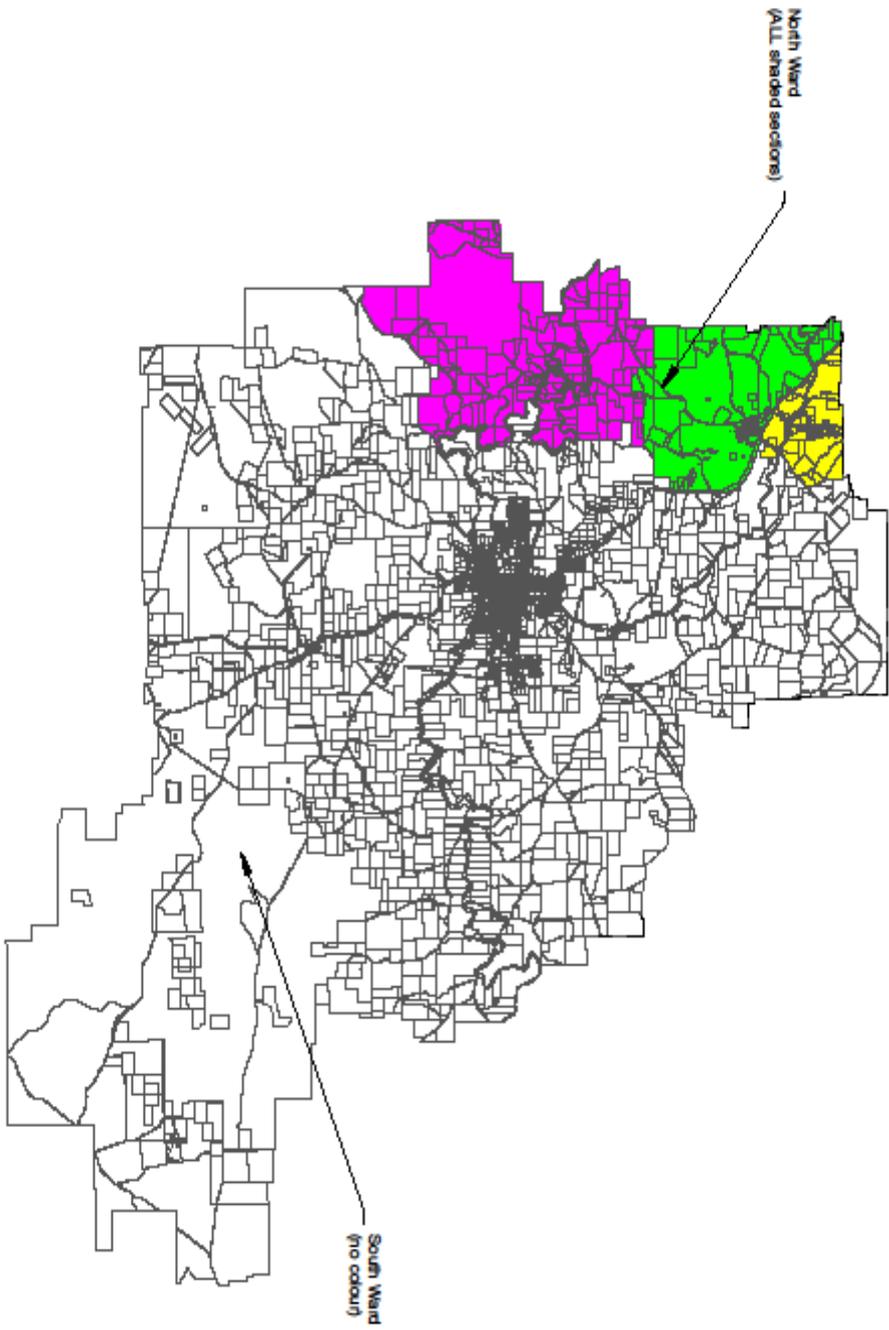
APPENDIX 5

OPTION "C"

PLAN OF PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Option C

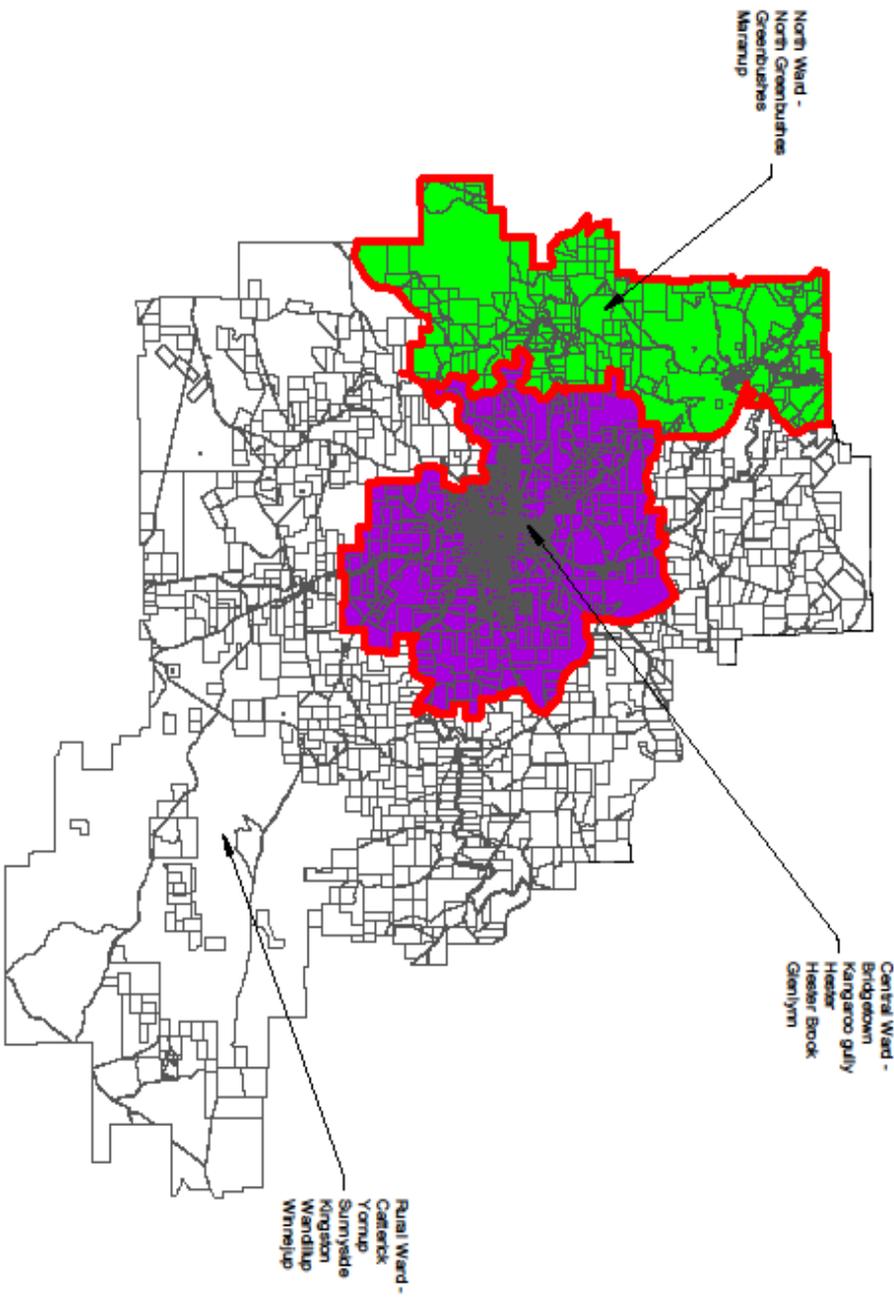
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APPENDIX 6

OPTION "D"

PLAN OF PROPOSED BOUNDARIES



Option D