



Council Composition and Head of Council **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

What is By-law 7119-25?

By-law No. 7119-25 was passed by the Council of the Corporation of the County of Simcoe on April 22, 2025. The By-law introduces changes to the composition of County Council by reducing the number of members by half and creating a dedicated Head of Council position that will serve exclusively on County Council for a four-year term.

What changes does By-law 7119-25 introduce to the composition of the County Council?

The By-law will reduce the size of County Council from the current 32 members to a total of 17. Currently, the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of the County's 16 lower-tier municipalities all serve on County Council. Under By-law 7119-25, the Deputy Mayors will no longer sit on County Council. Therefore, County Council will be entirely comprised of the Mayors of the lower-tier municipalities in addition to a Warden as the Head of Council who will serve exclusively on County Council. These changes do not impact the positions of Alternate Councillors who may be appointed by lower-tier Councils to serve on County Council in the absence of their Mayor.

What are the conditions for the By-law to come into force?

Although County Council has recently passed By-law 7119-25, the changes that it makes will not be valid and come into force until it achieves a process set out in the *Municipal Act, 2001* referred to as 'triple majority'. To achieve triple majority, the following conditions must be met:

- A majority of all votes on the County Council are cast in favor of the By-law;
- A majority of the Councils of all lower-tier municipalities forming part of the County of Simcoe pass resolutions consenting to the By-law; and
- The total number of electors in the consenting lower-tier municipalities forms a majority of all electors in the County of Simcoe.

The first condition has been met by County Council passing By-law 7119-25. Currently, the By-law has been circulated to the County's lower-tier municipalities for consideration of consent. If the conditions are not met by January 1, 2026, the By-law will not be valid and the current structure of County Council will remain in place. If the conditions are met by January 1, 2026, the changes in the By-law will come into force for the next term of Council following the 2026 municipal election.



How will the Warden's position change?

In the past, the position of Warden, who serves as the Head of Council, has been appointed from among the members of County Council. This means that the individual selected serves both on County Council and on a lower-tier municipal Council. The changes proposed through By-law 7119-25 will create a Warden position that serves exclusively on County Council. To ensure this is achieved, the By-law requires that if a member of County Council were to become Warden, they would be required to resign their role on their lower-tier Council.

The Warden is currently appointed for a two-year term. At the beginning and mid-point of Council's four-year term, nominations and elections are held for the position of Warden. The By-law proposes creating a four-year term for the Head of Council consistent with the term of Council.

What are the benefits of having a full-time dedicated Head of Council?

Over time the position of Warden, being the Head of Council, has become more demanding given the fast-paced growth of the County of Simcoe. As a result, Council has previously expressed the need for a dedicated Warden without lower-tier responsibilities.

A 'full-time' dedicated Head of Council can more easily prioritize County business without the responsibilities and duties associated with serving as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of a lower-tier Council, itself being a very demanding position. This allows the Warden to provide focused leadership to emphasize County-wide priorities.

How is the Warden selected under the new By-law?

Currently, members of Council appoint from among themselves a Head of Council at an inaugural meeting held in December in the first and third years of every term of Council. As the By-law proposes to create a four-year term for the Head of Council, nominations and elections would only occur at the start of the term going forward.

The position of Warden would be appointed by the members of County Council from among eligible electors who put their name forward. Eligibility would be consistent with the rules set out within the *Municipal Act, 2001* and *Municipal Elections Act*. Only those with sufficient support from Council would be considered for election. County Council is expected to consider and approve selection procedures for the position of Warden should the By-law achieve triple majority. This new selection process will be set out within the County's Procedure By-law.



How will the weighted voting system be adjusted with the new Council composition?

The County's current system of weighted voting has been in place for approximately 30 years, first designed and implemented by the Province through legislation. Currently, each municipality is entitled to a minimum of three votes plus one vote for each additional 2000 electors above 5000. The number of votes for each municipality is then split between the Mayor and Deputy Mayor with the Mayor being provided an extra vote in the case of odd numbers.

The weighted voting formula will remain the same under By-law 7119-25. With the Deputy Mayors no longer sitting on County Council, the total number of votes for a municipality will be provided solely to each Mayor representative. The Warden position will receive a weighted vote equal to that of the County Council member with the lowest.

Will changes from the By-law impact workload for members of County Council?

In advance of the next term of Council, the County's Procedure By-law will be reviewed. This provides the opportunity to review the number of Committees which members of Council participate on to ensure the workload is appropriately balanced. This review may include a reduction in the number of Committees, use of citizen representatives and Alternate Councillors or increasing the number of electronic hybrid meetings.

Was the public given the opportunity to provide input?

Prior to passing a By-law to change the composition of an upper-tier Council, the *Municipal Act, 2001* requires that notice must be provided and a public meeting to consider the matter must be held. On February 6, 2024, the County issued public notice of its intention to enact a By-law to change Council Composition and a public meeting was held on March 11, 2025. Members of the public provided input at the meeting and written comments from the public were included with the agenda for the public meeting.

How can lower-tier municipalities provide consent to the By-law?

A notice letter advising of the passing of By-law 7119-25 was circulated to the Clerks of each of the lower-tier municipalities within the County. The notice letter may be placed on upcoming agendas for each of the municipalities over the next several months for their respective Councils to consider the matter. Should the Councils wish to consent to the By-law, a resolution must be passed. The notice which was circulated to each of the Clerks includes wording for a motion which can be used to consent to the By-law.



When will we know if the By-law has achieved triple majority?

To fulfill the remaining steps in the triple majority process, the Council of each lower-tier member municipality is being requested to consider passing a resolution to consent to County By-law 7119-25. A response from each Council is requested by June 30, 2025. Reporting to County Council on the results of the process will occur following this date.

Where can additional background information and reports be found?

Additional background information and reports on this subject can be found at www.simcoe.ca/notices.

What happens if triple majority is not achieved?

By-law 7119-25 includes a section to ensure it is repealed if the requirements for triple majority are not achieved by January 1, 2026. This ensures that the decisions regarding this matter do not extend beyond this term of Council, ending November 2026.