STAFF REPORT

City of Trail

DATE:	SEPTEMBER 8, 2026	FILE NUMBER: 6440-01
TO:	MAYOR AND COUNCIL	
FROM:	COLIN McCLURE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	
SUBJECT:	AMALGAMATION STUDY JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES APPROVAL	

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1. Report for Council's consideration of the approval of the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) and Operational Guidelines for the Joint Steering Committee as part of the Amalgamation Study with the Village of Warfield.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1. THAT Council approve the Terms of Reference and Operational Guidelines for the Joint Steering Committee as part of the Amalgamation Study between the City of Trail and the Village of Warfield as attached to this Report,

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1. In 2025, the Village of Warfield conducted a Sustainability Study to determine the ability for the Village to remain autonomous, completing a review of services, finances, capacity and challenges. Through the study and community engagement, a determination to seek further review of amalgamation with the City of Trail was sought.

3.2. Both municipalities agreed to proceed jointly and engaged Neilson Strategies Inc. to draft a ToR for a formal Amalgamation Study. The draft ToR was reviewed by Trail Council at the October 27, 2025 Council meeting.

3.3. Council provided feedback on the proposed Terms of Reference and subsequently, at the Regular Meeting on November 24, 2025, approved the document. In addition, Council approved the submission of a joint letter to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs submitting the approved document with a request for funding support.

3.4. On March 31, 2026, the Village received a grant approval letter from the Ministry, which approved the application for partial funding of an amalgamation study in the amount of $90,000.
3.5. On June 22, 2026, the City of Trail Council approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Amalgamation Study, which outlines the principles of cooperation between the two municipalities in undertaking the study. The MOU sets out the framework for project governance and administration, including cost-sharing arrangements, roles and responsibilities, information sharing, community engagement, communication protocols, and Ministry reporting requirements.
3.6. The study will be governed by a joint Steering Committee composed of Council and citizen representatives from both municipalities, supported by a Joint Municipal Project Team consisting of administrative staff. Independent consultants will conduct the technical work and public engagement.

4.0 ANALYSIS

4.1. The Terms of Reference (ToR) and Operational Guidelines establish the structure, governance, and reporting framework for a comprehensive and transparent assessment of the potential impacts of amalgamating
4.2. The Joint Steering Committee will provide objective oversight of the Study, including direction to the consultants, review of the information and methodology, and oversight of the community engagement process.
4.3. . Some key elements of the Steering Committee are outlined below:
  4.3.1. Two Council Members from each municipality.
  4.3.2. Four residents from each municipality to be appointed by the respective municipal councils based on a public call for candidates.
  4.3.3. Co-Chairs will be nominated and selected by the committee of the eight resident representatives, not council members.
  4.3.4. All meetings will be open to the public and there will be an opportunity for questions.
  4.3.5. Agendas and relevant meeting materials will be distributed to Committee members in advance of each meeting and made publicly available on the Amalgamation Study website.
  4.3.6. Minutes from the meetings will also be posted on the dedicated website.
  4.3.7. The Committee should anticipate a time commitment of approximately 10 months to complete the process.
4.4. If approved, the Steering Committee is expected to be in place and working starting in early December 2026 and conclude by late fall in 2027.

4.5. The Committee will make the final recommendation to both Councils on whether there is sufficient rationale and demonstrated community support to request that the Province proceed with an amalgamation vote.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1. Council could request further amendments to the ToR and Operational Guidelines.

6.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. The cost of the steering committee operations is included in the approved budget for the Amalgamation Study.

7.0 POLICY AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1. The governance structure of the ToR aligns with the *Community Charter* Section 142-Select Committees of Council. Members to the Committee are appointed through Council resolution with at least one member of the select committee being a council member.

7.2. The Committee will be governed by provisions outlined within both communities Procedure Bylaws, with further guidance on any issues provided by the Joint Municipal Project Team or, if necessary, reviewed by both community's Councils.

8.0 ATTACHMENT

8.1. Proposed Trail-Warfield Amalgamation Study Joint Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Operational Guidelines.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

September 2, 2026

Colin McClure, Chief Administrative Officer — Date

Trail-Warfield Amalgamation Study Joint Steering Committee
Terms of Reference and Operational Guidelines

Purpose and Scope of the Committee

The purpose of the Joint Steering Committee is to oversee and guide a locally focused process to study the impacts of amalgamating the City of Trail and the Village of Warfield. The Committee will serve as an objective fact-finding and oversight body, established to understand the information collected and analysed by the *Study*, and ensure that the *Study* presents the information in a neutral and balanced way. The Committee will review the approach and provide direction to the consultants retained to prepare the *Study*. The Committee will also be responsible for reviewing and approving the community engagement plan and will participate in community events related to the *Study*. Most importantly, the Committee will be in place to make a final recommendation to both Councils on whether there is sufficient rationale and community interest for the Councils to request Provincial approval to proceed with an amalgamation vote.

Individual members of the Committee are expected to participate in good faith and remain impartial and act as stewards of the process, ensuring that it is thorough and carried out in an open and transparent manner. Members should not present personal views as positions of the Committee or either municipality, including on social media platforms. Members must not detract from the Committee's ability to function as a transparent, neutral conduit for information about the *Study* to the public. The Steering Committee is not intended to deliberate and conclude whether it supports amalgamation, but rather to ensure the information is thorough, clear and unbiased, to provide the community with sufficient opportunities to learn about, ask questions and engage with the information, and to listen to the community.

The Steering Committee will be supported throughout the *Study* by an independent local government consulting team with experience in service, financial, governance and restructure studies, as well as in community engagement. The consultants will undertake and present the findings of the technical analysis to the Committee and will develop and execute a robust engagement strategy to present all findings to, and to seek to understand the perspectives of, the Trail and Warfield communities.

Steering Committee Operational Guidelines

I. Committee Membership and Roles

The *Study* will be led by a joint Steering Committee established by each municipality as a select Committee of Council under Section 142 of the *Community Charter*. The Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- two (2) Council members from each of the City of Trail and Village of Warfield
- four (4) residents from each jurisdiction, appointed by the respective Councils based on a jointly

issued public call for candidates, with an effort to include a diverse range of demographics, interests and circumstances, including long-time residents and relative newcomers to the area

Membership is voluntary and there will be no remuneration for participation. Appointments will be made following the local government election.

Co-Chairs

Two (2) Co-Chairs will be nominated and selected by the Committee from the eight (8) resident representatives (i.e., not Council members). The role of the two Co-Chairs is to ensure that order is maintained throughout Committee meetings, that all items on a meeting agenda are addressed, and that the *Study* process as a whole transpires in a timely and orderly manner. The Co-Chairs will work with the consultants directly in delivering clear and consistent messaging as the designated spokespeople for any updates from the Committee, including media inquiries, and sign Committee correspondence where authorized by the Committee and coordinated with the consulting team and municipal staff. The Co-Chair roles will therefore require a slightly greater time commitment and responsibilities but will be supported by the consulting team. While the Co-Chairs are the recognized spokespeople, Committee members may answer basic process questions, consistent with public materials but should refer media inquiries or substantive questions to the Co-Chairs, consultant team or project website.

Council members

Two representatives of each municipal Council will be voting members of the Committee. Council representatives serve as Committee members and liaisons, but they do not bind their respective Councils. These Committee members will provide an important link between the Committee and the respective Councils, and will be responsible for providing progress reports to their respective Councils.

Subcommittees

The Committee may wish to create a subcommittee to handle such tasks as reviewing and approving engagement materials. The Committee as a Whole will appoint members to any subcommittee. If created, Subcommittees will perform an advisory function only; decisions must be made by the Committee as a Whole.

Decision-making

Generally, Committee members should view themselves as process managers, not decision-makers and therefore favour consensus where possible as the method of moving the *Study* process forward. Where consensus is not possible, votes may be used in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee. Each appointed Committee member present may vote, unless disqualified by conflict of interest or other applicable rule. The Committee has no financial or contractual authority.

II. Committee Meetings

Meetings will be conducted using Trail and Warfield policies

The Committee will operate under procedures approved by both Councils. Applicable provisions of each municipality's procedure bylaw will apply, and where procedural conflict or uncertainty arises, the matter will be reviewed by the Joint Municipal Project Team or if necessary, referred to both Councils for direction. Each Committee member needs to know and understand the Trail Code of Conduct and Warfield Workplace Conduct Policy, as well as associated workplace policies, such as the Trail Respectful Workplace Policy, which applies not only to employees and elected officials, but also to volunteers. Persons appointed to the Steering Committee will be asked to sign a Member Statement agreeing to adhere to the conduct policies, and to carefully review the relevant policies and workplace expectations and consider them during Committee meetings and in any interactions with the public and municipal staff.

Electronic or hybrid participation may be permitted where authorized by the appliable procedure bylaw and where public access can be met.

All meetings will be open to the public

As a general principle, the open meeting rules of local governments apply. All Committee meetings will be open to the public, except where a portion of the meeting is lawfully closed in accordance with applicable legislation; all materials produced by the Committee will be available for public review. The intent is for the Committee's work to be conducted openly transparently and to be an inclusive *Study* process. An open process ensures that the community can focus on the results of the *Study* rather than on the *Study* process.

The Committee should ensure that the public are notified about the time and location of meetings, in accordance with the respective procedure bylaws. At a minimum, the Committee should announce the date and place of the next meeting at the end of each meeting. Developing a regular meeting schedule at specific days and times can also facilitate public involvement in the process.

Opportunity for public involvement and questions

The primary purpose of the Committee meetings is to address Committee business. That said, at its initial meeting, the Committee may provide a time-limited opportunity for public questions and comments at the end of meetings subject to meeting procedures and the direction of the Co-Chairs.

Agendas

Committee agendas will be prepared by the consultants in discussion with the Co-Chairs and distributed along with relevant documentation to each Committee member prior to each meeting. The agendas will also be posted and available online.

The Co-Chairs should introduce the agenda at the beginning of each meeting and communicate clearly to the members of the community who are in attendance the time when there will be opportunities for questions and feedback.

Minutes

Chief Administrative Officers of the Village and the City will identify municipal staff to provide administrative support to the Committee and the consultants. Local government staff will take minutes at each meeting, in accordance with the respective Council Procedure bylaws, to record the general topics of discussion and any specific items agreed upon. Committee meeting minutes will be posted on the project website and hard copies will be available at the municipal government offices for examination by interested members of the public as part of the *Study's* transparency.

Develop "Basic Rules"

The Committee, with input and advice from the consultants, should develop basic rules that will govern the manner in which the Committee operates and functions. Basic rules will address such things as respectful conduct, use of approved information, social media expectations, treatment of draft materials, conflict of interest, and referral of media inquiries. These rules would be consistent with, and will complement the procedure bylaws, code of conduct and policy requirements referenced previously. Basic rules include letting each member speak fully and finish their statements, respecting all members of the Committee and the members of the public who are in attendance; and understanding that the Committee is not the forum for taking positions about the outcome of the *Study* process.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

Members are expected to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Draft reports, working materials, personal information, and information received before public release must be treated appropriately and not circulated outside the Committee process unless authorized.

III. Open and Inclusive Communications

The business of the *Study* Committee should be conducted in an open and inclusive manner between Committee members, between the Committee and the public, and with the local governments. The Committee will be involved with creating and approving a communications and engagement strategy early in the process that will guide how members of the community will be informed about the *Study*. Public access to agendas and agenda items, websites, newsletters and public information meetings are all tools that will help the community stay up to date on the status of the *Study*.

Information should be made available to all members of the Committee, or a sub-Committee, concurrently, whether it is provided by the consultant, a sub-Committee, or the Ministry. Concurrently generally means being forwarded by email, unless otherwise arranged and agreed to by the Committee or sub-Committee members.

Minutes, agendas and agenda items will be available online, but hard copies should also be available within each municipal office for community members to review.

IV. Time Commitments

The *Amalgamation Study* is anticipated to take approximately 10 months to complete. A tentative meeting schedule for the Steering Committee is identified below, including potential dates and timing (subject to approval and/or adjustment by the Committee). Note that Steering Committee meetings are anticipated to take up to 3 hours. Membership on the Steering Committee will end at the completion of the *Study*, when the final *Study* report and Steering Committee recommendation is received by the Trail and Warfield Councils.

Meeting Topic	Estimated Timing
Orientation meeting	December 8, 2026 (tentatively scheduled)
Service and Governance Impacts of Amalgamation and Preliminary Engagement Plan	December 9, 2026 (tentatively scheduled)
Service and Governance Impacts of Amalgamation (Part 2) and Final Engagement Plan	Late January, 2027
Financial Impacts (budget and tax) of Amalgamation	April, 2027
Review of draft engagement materials	Late April or early May, 2027
Engagement events	To be determined, May through July 2027

September – community update meetings to share summary of engagement, address any outstanding questions in advance of final Committee meeting	Mid to late September, 2027
September – final Committee meeting to discuss engagement summary and make recommendation to municipal Councils on whether to proceed with an amalgamation vote	Mid to late September, 2027
September or October – presentation to municipal Councils (attendance by Co-Chairs)	Late September or October 2027