

# Hamilton-Wentworth plan will happen under O'Brien

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Mississauga City Manager Dave O'Brien — a veteran leader of both regional and local governments — has been chosen to recommend to the Ontario government how the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth should be restructured.

On Friday, Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Gilchrist announced that O'Brien has been selected as the special advisor to the government to examine the possible merger of governments in Hamilton-Wentworth.

O'Brien will spend the next 60 days consulting with local ratepayers and businesses, reviewing proposals for restructuring of local government and then submitting his recommendations to the Province.

Both those who want to see a single tier government for Hamilton-Wentworth, and several small communities which want to merge to create a separate Town of Wentworth in more rural areas, will be trying to convince O'Brien of the worthiness of their cases.

"Having served in municipal government for more than 25 years, many of which were spent in two of the municipalities targeted for review (Sudbury and Hamilton-Wentworth), Dave O'Brien will bring a wealth of expertise and knowledge to the table," says Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion.

Regional Chairman Terry Cooke, who won two elections supporting a one-tier platform, knows O'Brien well and calls the appointment a good one.

Cooke said, "He is credible and experienced. I suspect he'll be able to separate the wheat from the chaff when dealing with proposals. There is no question he has sufficient grounding in municipal administration to be able to do a credible job."

Glanbrook Mayor Glen Etherington is encouraged by the fact O'Brien's political boss is the outspoken, feisty Hazel McCallion.

Said Etherington: "Let's hope he's as good as she is. We're

looking forward to meeting him — you can tell when you meet someone what kind of temperament he is. I want to think he'll be workable."

Glanbrook and Stoney Creek are cautiously exploring a merger, while Hamilton city council favors one-tier government for the Region.

With files from the Torstar Network