Survey suggests residents want Regional Council reduced

By BEN DUMMETT The Herald

While councillors in Halton favor the 25 member Regional Council remain the same size, Halton residents appear to favor a reduction in the number of Regional councillors.

According to a Regional discussion paper on possible changes to political representation in Halton, results of a survey show 21 of the 54 councillors throughout the Region want Region Council's size to remain the same. However, only 14 of the 44 people from the general public who answered the survey supported the existing size.

Twenty-six people indicated support for a reduction in the number of councillors sitting on Halton Council. Comparatively, only 12 municipal politicians said they wanted a reduction in size. Of those surveyed, no one wants council's size to be increased.

The Regional Review Sub Committee sent out the survey to the public and councillors in each of Halton's municipalities - Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville and Burlington - earlier this year. The survey was part of the committee's mandate to consider various options . concerning what form political representation at the Regional level should take.

The discussion paper will be tabled for the first time this Friday during a special meeting on the future of Halton. The meeting is called the Regional Chairman's Workshop and will be held in Oakville.

Halton Regional Councillors Pam Johnston and Rick Bonnette, both of whom sat on the sub committee, said in an interview Monday, the public and councillor responses are similar, with the exception of the size of Regional council and how the Regional Chairman should be chosen.

Currently Regional Councillors choose the Chairman.

According to the survey, the majority of councillors prefer the existing method. The majority of the public, however, favor the Chairman be elected by the public at large.

Coun. Johnston said the public justified its method of selection saying the chairman, as chosen, is not accountable to Halton residents.

Indicating she prefers the current system, Coun. Johnston warned it would be unlikely a chairman would eve come from

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the North-Halton area if he or she was directly elected. Since most of Halton's population is located in the south, it's logical to assume the chairman would be elected from that area, she explained.

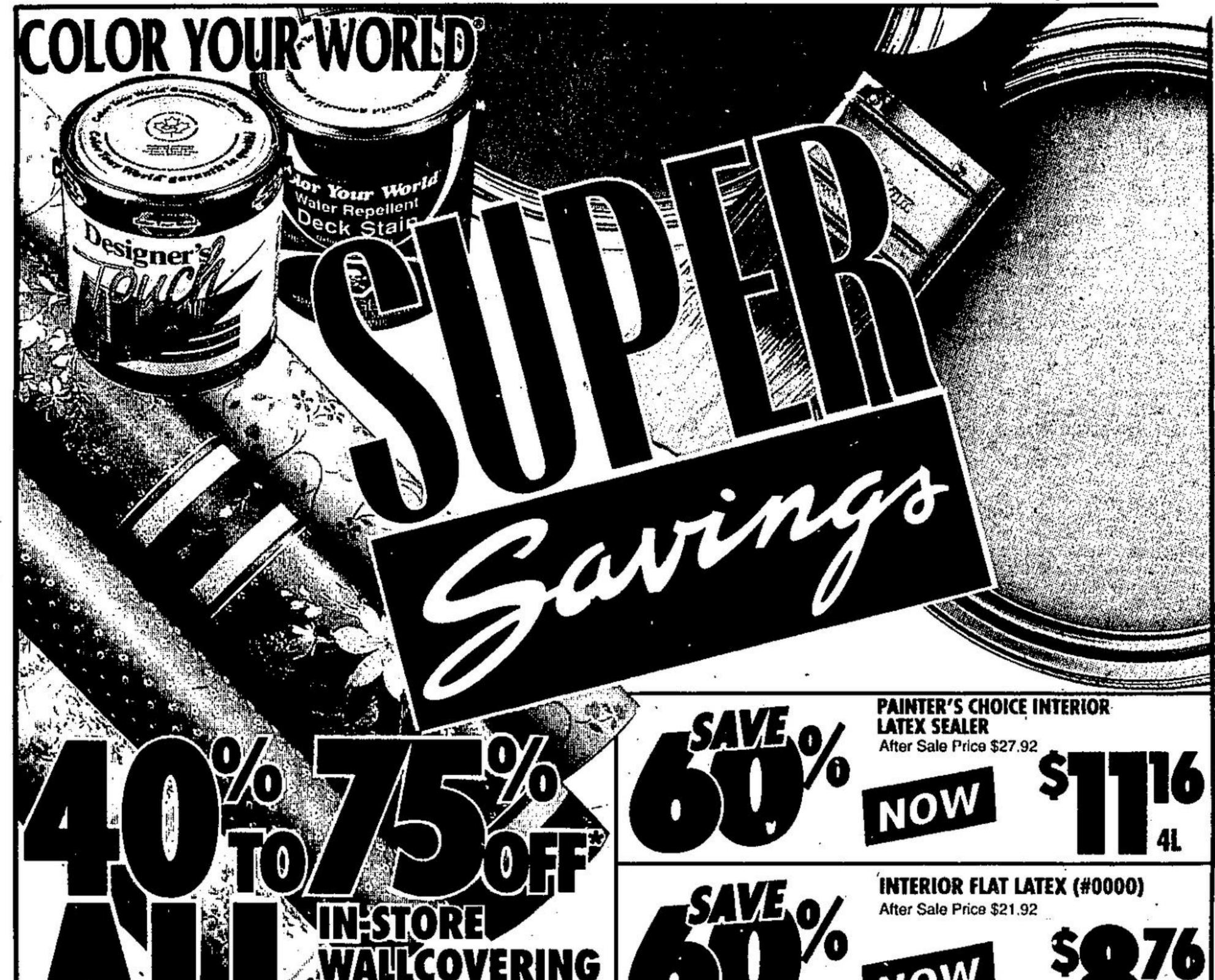
Current Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy is from Nor-

· The paper also indicates a majority of councillors and the public would like redistribution in the number of Regional Councillors from each municipality. Most of the responses indicate · councillors and the public prefer

the number of Halton Hills and Burlington Regional councillors be decreased from five to four and nine to eight respectively. That would mean Milton and Oakville would each receivé an extra councillor, giving Milton a total of four and Oakville eight.

This distribution was preferred because it better reflects the population of each municipality, the report states.

Coun. Bonnette opposes this distribution because "it would hurt Halton Hills in the long run," he said.



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