



2024 Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review

Haldimand County

Preliminary Options Report

October 1, 2024

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.
info@watsonecon.ca

In association with:
Dr. Robert J. Williams



Table of Contents

	Page
1. Background.....	1
2. Study Objective	1
3. Project Structure and Timeline.....	2
4. Existing Electoral Structure.....	3
5. Existing Population and Forecast Growth in the Haldimand County	4
5.1 Existing Population and Structure.....	5
5.2 Forecast Population Growth, 2021 to 2031.....	5
6. Public Consultation.....	7
7. What We Heard	8
8. Evaluation of Existing Ward Structure	9
8.1 Representation by Population.....	11
8.2 Consideration of Communities of Interest.....	13
8.3 Consideration of Population and Electoral Trends.....	15
8.4 Physical Features as Natural Boundaries.....	16
8.5 Effective Representation.....	17
9. Alternative Ward Boundary Options.....	18
9.1 Preliminary Option 1	19
9.2 Preliminary Option 2	23
9.3 Preliminary Option 3	27
9.4 Preliminary Option 4	31
9.5 Evaluation Summary.....	35
9.6 Further Considerations	37
Appendix A	A-1
Appendix B	B-1



1. Background

The Haldimand County has retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and Dr. Robert J. Williams, hereinafter referred to as the Consultant Team, to conduct a comprehensive and independent Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review (C.C.W.B.R.).

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare Haldimand County Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing electoral structure or to adopt an alternative. This report provides a set of alternative council composition and ward boundary designs that have been created based upon preliminary research and the first round of public consultation with the residents of Haldimand County.

This review is premised on the democratic expectation that municipal representation in Haldimand County would be effective, equitable, and an accurate reflection of the contemporary distribution of communities and people across the municipality.

2. Study Objective

The project has several key objectives:

- Develop a clear understanding of the present electoral system, including its origins and operations as a system of representation;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the present electoral system on the basis of guiding principles adopted for the study;
- Develop and conduct an appropriate consultation process in accordance with Haldimand County's public engagement practices to ensure community support for the review and its outcome;
- Prepare population projections for the development and evaluation of alternative electoral structures over a two-election cycle (2026 and 2030) and beyond; and
- Deliver a report that will set out recommended alternative council ward boundaries and related council structures (size) to ensure effective and equitable electoral arrangements for Haldimand County, based on the principles identified.

In June 2024, the Consultant Team prepared the Discussion Papers that set out:

- The parameters and purpose for the review;



- The basic electoral arrangements in Haldimand County;
- Council's legislative authority to modify electoral arrangements in Haldimand County; and
- An initial assessment of Haldimand County's current ward boundary system.

The Discussion Papers also provided a set of guiding principles that will inform the study and the work of the Consultant Team, as follows:

- Representation by population;
- Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends;
- Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries; and
- Protection of Communities of interest.

Taken together, these principles will contribute to achieving the over-arching principle of effective representation.

Each principle is described in detail in Discussion Paper D and can be found on Haldimand County's web page.^[1]

The purpose of this Preliminary Options Report is to provide:

- A summary of the work completed to date;
- A summary of the information received from the public engagement sessions and tools, such as the survey and website; and
- A series of preliminary ward boundary options for consideration.

3. Project Structure and Timeline

In view of the continued recognition of the need to review ward boundaries, Council included a Ward Boundary Review as one of its priorities for the 2022-2026 term of Council. Council adopted the terms of reference for the C.C.W.B.R. in August 2023.

Work completed to date includes:

- Research and data compilation;
- Interviews with councillors, the mayor and municipal staff; and

[1] <https://www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview>



- Public consultation on the existing council composition and ward structure.

Interviews with staff and Council, and meetings with the Clerk’s office and other staff concerning this study, were conducted both virtually/in person over the summer of 2024. The Consultant Team also conducted the initial round of public consultation (three sessions) both in-person (two session) and one virtual session held in June 2024.

4. Existing Electoral Structure

The Haldimand County municipal council is comprised of seven (7) members, including the mayor (elected at-large) and six councillors, elected in six wards. Two of six wards currently capture Dunnville and the surrounding area, Caledonia is contained within one ward, with future growth expected to fall outside of the current Caledonia Ward (Ward 3) and Ward 4 includes Hagersville and several other rural communities. The lakefront community is distributed across three wards (Wards 1, 2 and 5) which also includes Townsend, Jarvis, Cayuga and surrounding Dunnville communities.

According to a report to Council in August 2023, “There have been minor adjustments made to the wards related to urban boundary changes, but on the whole, the current ward boundaries are similar to what was established in 2001.”^[2]

Few municipalities in Ontario have experienced the kinds of structural change that culminated in the present-day Haldimand County. A summary of those reforms is helpful to understand the origins of the electoral arrangements to be examined in this review and to clarify the names associated with geographic areas in the County and are outlined in Discussion Paper A.^[3]

A necessary step in a ward boundary and council composition review is to assess the extent to which the existing wards meet the guiding principles for a ward system that achieves the goal of effective representation. The current electoral system has therefore been subject to the same “tests” as any alternative designs; that is, does the present system meet the principles associated with representation by population (population parity), protection of communities of interest, present and future population trends, and

^[2] Report CLE-10-2023 Ward Boundary Review Project – Scope and Budget (August 29, 2023).

^[3] www.haldimandcounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/HC-Backgrounder-Paper-A-Electoral-System.pdf



physical and natural boundaries? This initial assessment was presented in Discussion Paper E and discusses the Consultant Team’s assessment on the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and presented in Section 8 of this report.

It is the responsibility of the Consultant Team to help move this review process forward. To address these questions thoroughly and systematically, it is helpful to understand what is open to change and what is not.

The *Municipal Act, 2001*, establishes that the council of a “local municipality” must consist of “a minimum of five members, one of whom shall be the head of council” (s. 217 (1) 1) and that the head of council (the Mayor) “shall be elected by general vote (s. 217 (1) 3). Furthermore, the “members, other than the head of council, shall be elected by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards” (s. 217 (1) 4).

From that starting point, it is possible to design several different alternatives to determine appropriate size of Haldimand County Council and ward configurations for effective representation in Haldimand County.

5. Existing Population and Forecast Growth in the Haldimand County

As previously discussed, a basic premise of representative democracy in Canada is the notion that the geographic areas used to elect a representative should be reasonably balanced with one another in terms of population. Accordingly, a detailed population estimate for the Haldimand County, including its constituent wards and communities, was prepared to allow evaluation of the existing ward structure and subsequent alternatives in terms of representation by population in the current year (2024).

The Haldimand County is forecast to experience significant population growth over the next decade and beyond. For this reason, it is important that this study assess representation by population for both existing and future year populations. In accordance with the study terms of reference, the analysis considered representation of population over the next two municipal elections and beyond through to 2034. A population and housing forecast for Haldimand for the 2024 to 2034 period, consistent with Haldimand County’s 2024 Population, Household & Employment Forecast Update (August 27, 2024) was determined, and the results of this analysis are discussed below.



5.1 Existing Population and Structure

As mentioned, this study needs to look at the existing as well as future population distribution. A mid-2024 population estimate was derived by utilizing the 2021 Census and a review of building permit activity from 2021 through 2023, with an assumed six-month lag from issuance to occupancy provided by municipal staff. Haldimand County's estimated 2024 population is 53,900 and includes the net Census undercount.^[4] Haldimand County's 2021 total population is presented by existing ward structure in Table 5-1. As shown, Ward 3, which covers Caledonia, has the highest population of all the wards at 13,966, while Ward 5 covering the eastern lakefront community and surrounding Dunnville community, has the smallest population at 6,040, for a difference of almost 8,000 between the smallest and largest wards.

Table 5-1: 2024 Population by Ward

Ward	Area (sq. km)	2024 Total Population ^[1]	Population variance
Ward 1	311.2	8,111	0.90
Ward 2	252.7	7,041	0.78
Ward 3	41.1	13,966	1.55
Ward 4	354.5	11,071	1.23
Ward 5	210.3	6,040	0.67
Ward 6	100.5	7,699	0.86
Total/Average	1,270.3	53,927	8,988

^[1] Population includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%.

Note: Numbers may not add precisely due to rounding.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

5.2 Forecast Population Growth, 2021 to 2031

Haldimand County is in the southwest of one of the fastest-growing Regions in North America, known as the G.G.H. This region comprises the municipalities that make up the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (G.T.H.A.), as well as the surrounding

^[4] The net Census undercount is an adjustment to the population to account for the net number of persons who are missed (i.e. over-coverage less under-coverage) during enumeration and is estimated at approximately 4.0%.



Regions/Counties within Central Ontario, known as the G.G.H. “Outer Ring,” which extends from Haldimand County and Niagara Region in the southeast to Simcoe County in the north. The strength of the broader regional G.G.H. economy presents a key opportunity for the County’s economy and its residents within commuting distance to many of the growing regional employment markets within this region, particularly within the west G.G.H.

It is anticipated that a large share of residents migrating into Haldimand County will be younger working-age residents, given local economic growth opportunities across a range of export- and service-based sectors, as well as the potential for out-commuting within the County’s commuter shed. Driven by the relative affordability of housing in Haldimand County, as well as anticipated regional economic growth, the County is anticipated to attract increased net migration relative to historical trends associated with working-age adults and their families. Growing opportunities across a range of jobs within the County and its surrounding commuter-shed areas represent a key driver of population growth for the region.

In accordance with Haldimand County’s Population, Household and Employment Forecast Update, Haldimand County’s population is expected to increase to 68,100 by 2036. The Consultant Team has prepared population growth metrics for the 2024 to 2034 period, guided by county and provincial growth targets and policy objectives, along with a comprehensive review of opportunities to accommodate future residential growth through plans of subdivision (registered unbuilt, draft approved and proposed), site plan applications, and intensification potential. Anticipated population growth over the 2024 to 2034 period was identified on a sub-geographic unit (S.G.U.) level.

At the community level, as of 2021, Caledonia accounted for approximately 27% of the population, Dunnville approximately at 13%, Hagersville at approximately 6% while the remaining rural area accounts for over 40% of the 2021 population distribution across the municipality. Future growth is expected to develop in a similar way, with Caledonia expecting to be a growth hub over the next decade, accounting for approximately 60% of the future growth between 2024-2034, while Hagersville expected to account for over 20% of the future growth between the 2024-2034 period.



Table 5-2: 2021 Population by Community

Location	2021 Census Population	Population Share
Caledonia	13,300	27%
Cayuga	1,900	4%
Dunnville	6,200	13%
Hagersville	3,100	6%
Jarvis	1,900	4%
Townsend	1,200	2%
Remaining Rural	21,600	44%
Total	49,200	100%

Note: Numbers may not add precisely due to rounding.
Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

6. Public Consultation

The first phase of the C.C.W.B.R. incorporated a public engagement component that was delivered virtually and designed to:

- Inform residents of Haldimand County about the reasons for the C.C.W.B.R. and the key factors that were considered in the review; and
- Engage the residents in a manner that provides valuable input to the evaluation of the existing ward structure and development of alternative ward boundaries.

Two in-person consultation sessions were conducted on June 25, 2024, and one virtual public consultation session was conducted on June 27, 2024. The Consultant Team's presentation and other information about the review, including the presentations and records, are available on Haldimand County's website (also see Appendix B):

www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview.

Through the public consultation sessions, a survey, and the project website's online comment/feedback form, participants were invited to provide their input/opinions with respect to the following:

- Existing ward structure – What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current ward structure?



- Guiding principles – Which guiding principles should be given the greatest priority in the development of ward boundaries?

The feedback and comments collected through the public consultation process are reflected in the analysis presented below and have helped inform the preliminary set of alternative ward configurations. While public input from consultation provides valuable insight into the review, it is not relied on exclusively. The Consultant Team utilized the public input in conjunction with its professional expertise and experience in C.C.W.B.R.s, along with best practices, to develop the preliminary options presented herein.

7. What We Heard

To promote public engagement in the C.C.W.B.R., the Haldimand County created a project web page for all documents necessary to give residents an informed voice (www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview). All subsequent communications could then direct people to that page, through social media and other forms of outreach. Members of the public were able to visit the site, read up on context, download a series of background reports and, most importantly, they were urged to complete a survey and participate in the engagement sessions. A short whiteboard-style explainer video was also prepared describing the overall process of the C.C.W.B.R.

The public survey was a key tool for collecting input from as many residents as possible and gave some of the best high-level insight into the views and perspectives of Haldimand County's residents. The level of participation in the survey was fairly high, with 177 people responding to some or all questions; the detailed summary of these results can be found in Appendix A. The survey results tended to confirm what earlier research had begun to indicate:

- About half the survey respondents (55%) thought having six local councillors, with one elected from each ward, was adequate to their needs. Of those who felt that the size of council is inappropriate, approximately 35% felt it was too small and only 9% indicated they would prefer a smaller council.
- Opinions were split evenly on whether the current ward system adequately represents the residents of Haldimand County with 51% believing that it does.
- Most importantly for the next phase of the project, people prioritized communities of interest as their most important guiding principle (36%). A significant



percentage of respondents, however, thought that representation by population should be the top priority (33%). Population and growth trends were the third most prioritized principle (18%), and the geographic representation principle was prioritized by the fewest number of people (13%). When looking at the two guiding principles focused on population and population growth together, they accounted for more than 50% of the responses.

The survey also included several questions that were not multiple choice and, instead, were open-ended, giving respondents the opportunity to submit longer, written responses about issues they considered important. In total, 72 respondents gave their views on what they regard as the strengths of the existing ward system, and 91 respondents shared views on its weaknesses. There were two major recurrent themes that arose in these responses. First, many of respondents gave further support to the prioritization of communities of interest over the other guiding principles, commenting on the balance of urban and rural populations in each ward. Second, many respondents voiced concerns over population disparity across the wards highlighting the vast difference in the Caledonia ward population (Ward 3) and others.

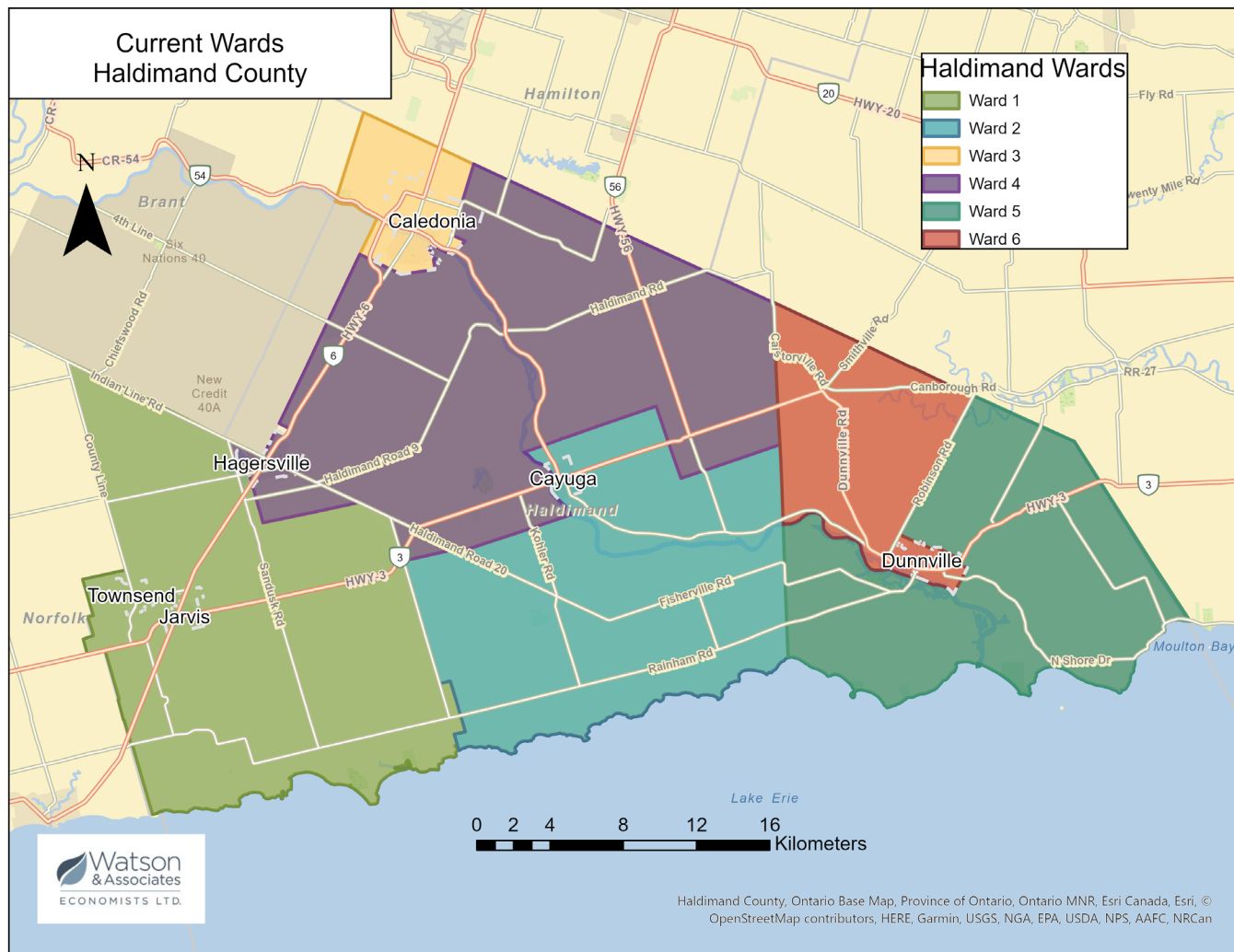
8. Evaluation of Existing Ward Structure

The survey conducted as part of the initial phase of public consultation also asked respondents to assess the current wards in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. These responses can be used to add depth to the preliminary evaluation of the existing ward structure included in the Discussion Paper that addressed the wards in terms of the guiding principles. For reference, the current wards are presented in Figure 8-1.

The Discussion Papers are available on the Haldimand County's website. Within, they detailed a preliminary evaluation of the current ward structure. This section revisits that evaluation, integrating information received during consultation.



Figure 8-1:
Current Ward Structure





8.1 Representation by Population

One of the basic premises of representative democracy in Canada is the belief that the geographic areas used to elect a representative should be reasonably balanced with one another in terms of population. This is the concept of representation by population (“rep by pop”) or “one person, one vote” – where the vote of any one person carries roughly the same weight as that of any other person. In some places (such as parts of the United States) this principle of voter parity is enforced rigorously – almost to the exclusion of any other factor – so that there is no noticeable variation in the population of electoral units within a particular jurisdiction.

In the Carter decision,^[5] however, the majority of the Supreme Court understood that Canadian electoral law has never been driven by the need to achieve “full parity” in the population of electoral divisions. The Court concluded that some degree of variation from parity (“relative parity”) may be justified and, at times, even necessary “on the grounds of practical impossibility or the provision of more effective representation.”

Since there are variations in the densities and character of communities and neighbourhoods across Haldimand County, the guiding principles make clear that some flexibility in applying the principle of representation by population is acceptable. That is, the concept of “equitable” (that is, fair) representation – not necessarily “equal” representation – is legitimate, although the closer the population of the wards is to parity, the more the entire design can be assessed as successful.

As a working premise, a range of variation of 25% above or below the optimal ward population will be considered acceptable. This is a rather generous range of tolerance from parity, but in the absence of any guidance in the *Municipal Act, 2001* or provincial regulations, it is based on long-standing parameters for the federal redistribution process. The goal in any case will be to reduce the range of variation among the wards as much as possible.

Moreover, in the Consultant Team’s opinion, developing wards within a narrower range of population variation would make the successful achievement of the other recognized guiding principles difficult.

[5] Reference re: Provincial Electoral Boundaries (Saskatchewan) [1991] 2 S.C.R.



The degree of parity in each ward will be determined through the calculation of what will be called an “optimal” ward population in Haldimand County, a figure computed by dividing the population by the number of wards in the municipality. The population of a ward will be considered “optimal” when it falls within 5% above or below that number (noted in green). A ward population would be considered within the acceptable population range if it is between 5% and 25% of the “optimum” population (noted in pink). Populations that are above or below 25% of the “optimal” population are considered outside the acceptable range (noted in red). It is important to remember that as the overall population changes, the “optimal” population size of a ward will also change.

An example of these ranges is provided for Haldimand County’s six-ward system for the 2024 and 2034 populations and shown below in Table 8-1.

Table 8-1: Optimal Range for a Six-Ward System

Symbol	Description	Variance	2024 Population Range	2034 Population Range
OR+	Outside Range - High	25% and above	>11,235	>13,882
O+	Above Optimal but Acceptable	5% to 25%	9,437 - 11,235	11,661 - 13,882
O	Optimal Population Range	+/- 5%	8,538 - 9,437	10,550 - 11,661
O-	Below Optimal but Acceptable	-5% to -25%	6,741 - 8,538	8,329 - 10,550
OR-	Outside Range - Low	-25% and below	<6,741	<8,329

Based upon the figure calculated for Haldimand County’s total 2024 population (53,927) and a six-ward system, the optimal population would be 8,988. In 2034, Haldimand County’s forecast population is 66,634 and the optimal ward population would be 11,106.



Table 8-2: 2024 Estimated Population by Existing Ward

Ward	2024 Total Population	2024 Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,111	0.90	O-
Ward 2	7,041	0.78	O-
Ward 3	13,966	1.55	OR+
Ward 4	11,071	1.23	O+
Ward 5	6,040	0.67	OR-
Ward 6	7,699	0.86	O-
Total/Average	53,927	8,988	

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

Population data suggests that two of the present wards are outside the acceptable range of variance, one above (Ward 3) and one below (Ward 5). Ward 3 is well above the range with its population approximately 55% above the average and Ward 4, while within the acceptable range of variance is still 23% higher than the average ward population. No wards are currently within 5% optimal population range (8,988) but ward 1 is within the 10% variance range and ward 6 within 15%. Based upon this empirical evidence, the present wards do not adhere to the representation by population principle.

8.2 Consideration of Communities of Interest

Care should be taken to ensure communities of interest remain intact during the design of ward boundaries. Such communities represent social and economic groups that may have deep historical roots, but they can also be social, economic, or religious in nature, depending on the history and composition of the municipality in question.

This principle addresses two perspectives: what is divided by ward boundaries and what is joined together? The first priority is that communities ought not to be divided internally; as a rule, lines are drawn around communities, not through them. Secondly, as far as possible wards should be cohesive units composed of areas with common interests related to representation, not just contrived arithmetical divisions of the municipality.



Wards should have a “natural” feel to those that live within them, meaning that they should have established internal communication and transportation linkages and boundaries should be drawn taking existing connections into consideration. This is done to avoid creating wards that combine communities with dissimilar interests and no obvious patterns of interaction.

- Haldimand County includes distinctive communities of interest. It is one of the reasons why a ward system continues to make sense.^[6] The previous sections demonstrate that the existing wards fall short of meeting the population principles, but do they constitute an acceptable system of representation if the communities of interest are used instead as the primary measure of success?

The initial generalization is that in terms of communities of interest in Haldimand County there is only one ward that unequivocally meets this principle. Ward 3 is based primarily on the former separate Town of Caledonia and a small rural area between the urban neighbourhoods and the municipal boundaries with Hamilton, Brant, and Six Nations. Although historically the former Town of Dunnville served as the focal point for the southeast corner of the County of Haldimand, that area is now divided into two wards, so that the former Town is included in Ward 6 with a portion of the closely connected rural population surrounding it, which is itself divided into two wards. The former Villages of Jarvis, Hagersville, and Cayuga are distinctive, compact settlement areas but are included in large geographic wards dominated by predominantly rural economic and social communities of interest.

Wards 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 are largely defined by the historic Townships that existed in the County of Haldimand from the mid-nineteenth century up to the 1970s. The main exception is the inclusion of the Cayuga settlement and a small area to the east with the former South Cayuga Township rather than with the former North Cayuga Township. Having said that, our research suggests that the importance of the historic Townships lies mostly in the way some of the boundaries have persisted rather than as contemporary communities of interest.

In those same wards, rural residents constitute a significant proportion of the population but only Ward 5 could be considered a “rural ward” since the settlement areas are very

^[6] See Discussion Paper C on the case for retaining wards in Haldimand County.



small and, even then, the lakeshore hamlets and cottages add another community of interest to that ward.

In four of the six wards, the rural population is combined with urban settlements meaning that a rural voice is segmented and unlikely to be as influential as it might be in a different configuration. As well, if the ward boundaries remain unchanged, the forecast for population growth around Caledonia (combined with forecast growth in Hagersville) suggests that the present Ward 4 will be a much less coherent entity than it is today.

Overall, the present configuration of wards, built on the foundations of the pre-regional government municipalities, are only partially successful at meeting this principle.

8.3 Consideration of Population and Electoral Trends

As noted in section 5.2, population growth over the next decade within Haldimand County will be substantial – but concentrated in Caledonia (60%) and Hagersville (20%) communities. Both will have the effect of reducing the proportion of Haldimand County’s population residing in the smaller communities and large rural territory.

This principle is directed towards maintaining a balance through subsequent municipal elections. It is generally not practical to change electoral boundaries for every election; hence, the wards designed in 2024 will seek to accommodate anticipated changes in the size and distribution of the population and electors over the next two elections in 2026, and 2030.

As in the previous population principle, the goal is to design a system that will comprise wards that are generally in equilibrium to one another as growth takes place. Given the limitations on expanding municipal services over the next decade, the current ward configuration will not grow into parity but further away from it, as the forecast population increase is concentrated in the most populous existing ward (presented in Table 8-3). As a result, if left unchanged, the present ward configuration will not achieve population parity over time and will fall short of meeting this principle as well.



Table 8-3: 2024 and 2034 Population Distribution (Current Ward System)

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2034 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,111	0.90	O-	8,353	0.75	O-
Ward 2	7,041	0.78	O-	7,723	0.70	OR-
Ward 3	13,966	1.55	OR+	19,737	1.78	OR+
Ward 4	11,071	1.23	O+	15,700	1.41	OR+
Ward 5	6,040	0.67	OR-	6,437	0.58	OR-
Ward 6	7,699	0.86	O-	8,683	0.78	O-
Total	53,927	8,988		66,634	11,106	

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

These forecasts show that the pattern of population imbalance present in 2024 is further from parity in 2034. The population in Ward 3 is forecast to be close to double the average ward population and Ward 4 will be more than 40% above the population average. Because of this concentrated growth, some wards will fall well below the average population. Ward 5 will be close to half of the average population and the remaining wards will all have populations 20% or more below the ward average. Based upon the empirical evidence, the present wards are unlikely to ensure that the representation by population principle can be sustained over the next decade.

8.4 Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

Ward boundaries should be easily recognizable and take advantage of natural and built geographic features such as arterial roads, waterways, and railway lines. Often these features already tend to separate communities within the municipality, which usually explains their historical use as boundary lines between existing wards.

The boundaries of the present wards in Haldimand County are, for the most part, clean and clear-cut since they follow the boundaries of what can be called the historic municipalities along numbered roadways. A few exceptions can be found in the Ward 3 boundary around the Caledonia urban area and the Ward 1/Ward 4 boundary south and west of Hagersville.



In future, a significant natural feature that now actually inhibits travel within four of the wards, the Grand River, could be used to re-imagine representation in Haldimand County, subject to the application of the guiding principles.

Overall, the wards are largely successful in meeting this principle.

8.5 Effective Representation

As stated in the Discussion Papers, the guiding principles are subject to the overarching principle of “effective representation,” meaning that, to the extent possible, each resident should have comparable access to an elected representative and each councillor should speak on behalf of an equal number of residents. Deviations from population parity can be justified if they contribute to more effective representation.

Effective representation is not based on the performance of incumbent councillors. It is, rather, a concept that is premised on serving the on-going relationship between residents and elected officials – not just on the way the resident is “counted” on election day, although that is an important component of a fair system of representation. The expectation should be that the wards support the capacity of councillors to represent their constituents, rather than hinder councillors performing those responsibilities. Are the individual wards plausible and coherent units of representation? Are they drawn in such a way that representatives can readily play the role expected of them? Do they provide equitable (that is, fair) access to councillors for all residents of the municipality?

In Haldimand County, there are different relationships between constituents and councillors in terms of present and future population distributions and community groupings that hinder the achievement of effective representation. Specifically, one councillor has twice as many constituents to serve (and represent) as another. The present configuration embeds a dilution of the votes cast by certain electors compared to others and weakens the democratic expectation that when the six councillors decide on a matter before them, should each vote be cast on behalf of a relatively equal number of residents.

As outlined through the discussion papers, the present ward boundaries fall short of meeting this over-arching principle. They do not, in our assessment, ensure effective voter representation. The Consultant Team has since taken the feedback received



through the various engagement activities and again, for the most part, members of the public have confirmed many of the initial perceptions.

Figure 8-2: Present Haldimand County Ward Configuration Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	No	Two of the six wards exceed the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Protection of Communities of Interest	Partially Successful	Only two of the six wards include coherent communities of interest.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	No	Population growth will not overcome the existing population imbalance but will actually further put wards out of parity.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are regular and/or visible lines. A significant natural boundary (Grand River) is not largely used.
Effective Representation	No	The relationships between constituents and councillors hinder the achievement of effective voter representation.

^[1] The degree to which each guiding principle is satisfied is ranked as “Yes” (fully satisfied), “Largely Successful,” “Partially Successful,” or “No” (not satisfied).

9. Alternative Ward Boundary Options

The evaluation of the current ward system in Haldimand County suggests that there are identifiable shortcomings when evaluated against the guiding principles for this review. Council could still choose to retain the status quo by turning down all recommended options for an alternative ward configuration. That decision, however, could result in a petition submitted under section 223 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The analysis presented herein suggests that it could be difficult for Haldimand County to defend the



existing ward system before the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), especially in addressing future growth.

If Council decides to change the ward boundary system, what would alternatives look like? The Consultant Team has prepared preliminary options for consideration at this stage of the C.C.W.B.R. Keeping the identifiable communities of interest intact, creating wards with roughly equal populations, and providing for effective representation throughout Haldimand County poses a challenge, given the large geography and uneven population distribution across the municipality as outlined in Table 8-2.

All preliminary options presented in the following sections retained the 6-ward system. The Consultant Team have reviewed a number of different configurations and determined at this phase a six-ward configuration, with adjustments to the boundaries, provide significant improvements from the status quo and would provide effective representation.

9.1 Preliminary Option 1

The first preliminary option retains a six-ward configuration, while addressing the need to distribute the populations within Caledonia across two wards (proposed Wards 5 and 6) utilizing the Grand River as the dividing line between the two. The remaining four wards then captured the remainder of Haldimand, keeping communities of interest to those we have heard have similarities and social connections.

Ward 1 contains the lakefront communities to the west of the Grand River within one ward, extending from the river on the east to the municipal boundary to the west. Ward 2 captures the Hagersville community along with Jarvis and Townsend communities within the same ward unlike what is currently in place where these communities are divided between Ward 1 and Ward 4.

Cayuga is the main community within Ward 3, extending east to Robinson Rd, capturing the central rural communities within. Dunnville, as presented in the status quo configuration is captured within two wards, while with the proposed Preliminary Option 1, Dunnville and the surrounding area is captured entirely within Ward 4.

Preliminary Option 1 provides three wards within the optimal population range ($\pm 5\%$) for 2024. The remaining three wards all fall within the acceptable $\pm 25\%$ range, falling



within $\pm 15\%$ of the optimal range. Looking out to 2034, however, the two Caledonia wards move further away from parity with Ward 6 falling outside the 25% acceptable range as significant future development is expected to continue in the northeast area of Caledonia. As presented in Table 9-1, the population parity across each ward meets the guiding principle of representation by population in 2024.

Table 9-1: Preliminary Option 1 –Ward Population Distribution, 2024 to 2034

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2033 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,892	0.99	O	9,284	0.84	O-
Ward 2	8,986	1.00	O	11,935	1.07	O+
Ward 3	7,818	0.87	O-	8,499	0.77	O-
Ward 4	10,557	1.17	O+	11,531	1.04	O
Ward 5	8,466	0.94	O-	10,154	0.91	O-
Ward 6	9,209	1.02	O	15,231	1.37	OR+
Total	53,927	-	-	66,634	-	-
Average	8,988	-	-	11,106	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

This option provides strong community ties, while addressing some of the issues raised in the evaluation. Population distribution is adequate but not perfect, with future population imbalances somewhat hindering the achievement of complete effective representation. An evaluation of Preliminary Option 1 against the guiding principles can be found in Figure 9-3.



Figure 9-1: Preliminary Option 1

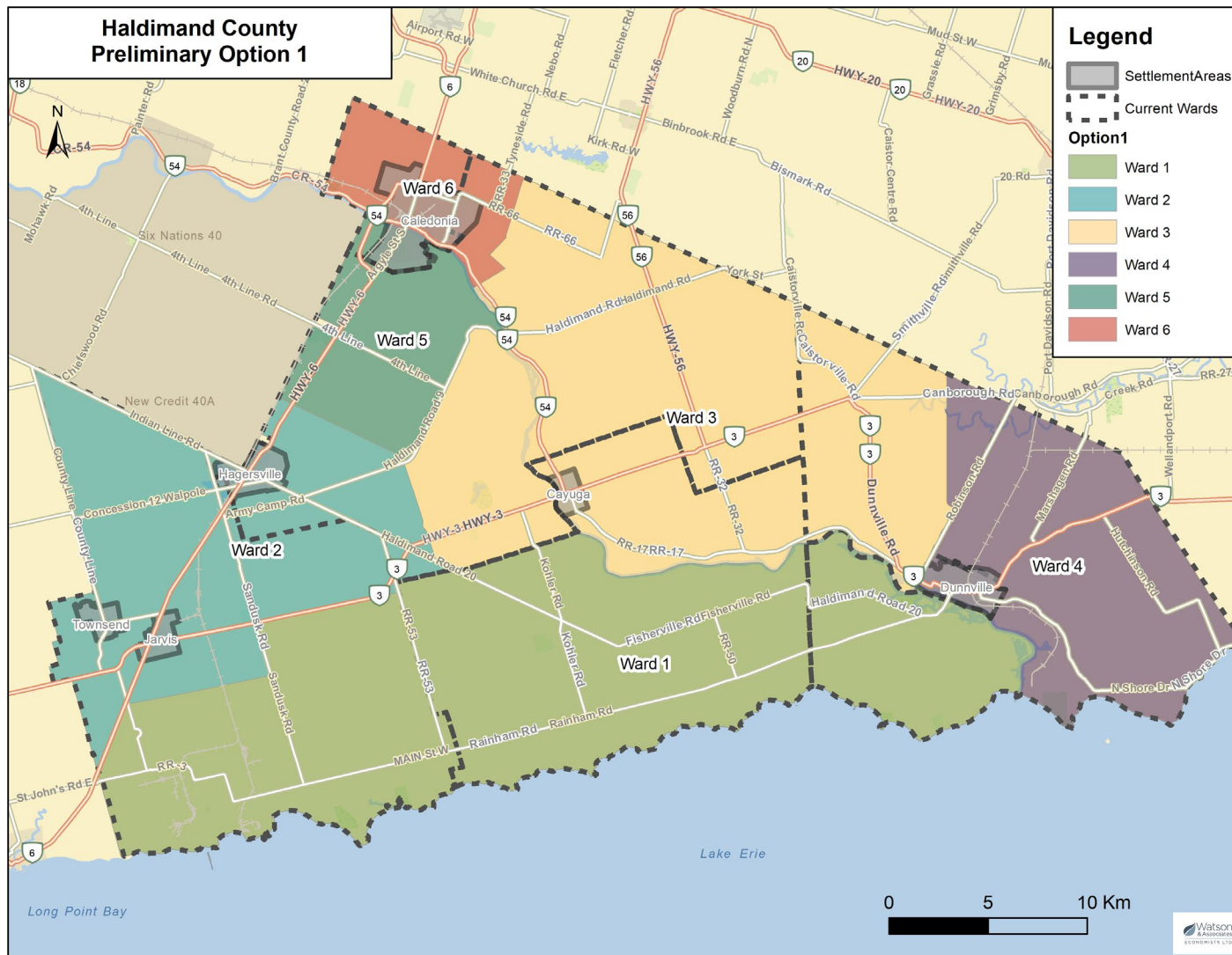




Figure 9-2: Preliminary Option 1 - Caledonia

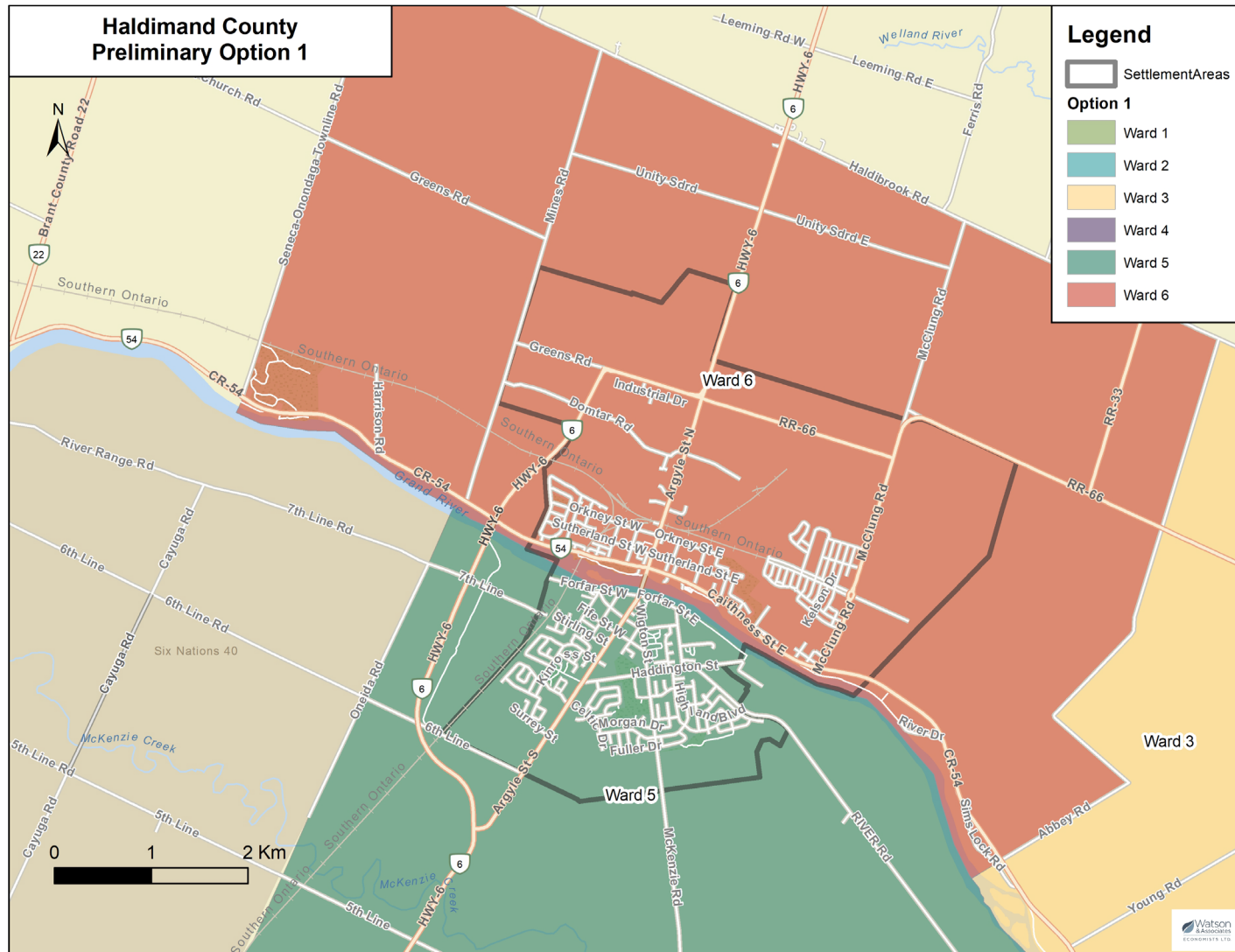




Figure 9-3: Preliminary Option 1
Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with three wards within the optional range ($\pm 5\%$).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Yes	All six wards include coherent communities of interest with Caledonia being represented by two wards, divided north and south of the river.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	Partially Successful	Five of the six wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation while growth in Caledonia result in Ward 6 falling above the 25% variance.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Yes	Most boundaries are regular and/or visible lines.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Future population imbalances hinder the achievement of complete effective representation.

^[1] The degree to which each guiding principle is satisfied is ranked as “**Yes**” (fully satisfied), “**Largely Successful**,” “**Partially Successful**”, or “**No**” (not satisfied).

9.2 Preliminary Option 2

Preliminary Option 2 has a very similar configuration as Preliminary Option 1 with one main difference. Preliminary Option 2 looks to achieve better future population parity, moving the dividing line between the two Caledonia wards (Ward 5 and Ward 6) away from the Grand River, with ward 5 extending north across the river to Domtar Rd, between Highway 6 and Argyle St. N. This small adjustment corrects the long-term



population parity, bringing Ward 6 within the 25% acceptable range while also maintaining the two Caledonia ward configuration as seen in Preliminary Option 1.

This option provides strong community ties, while addressing a main concern presented in Preliminary Option 1. This model meets all the guiding principles and accounts for existing and future population parity as presented in Table 9-2. An evaluation of Preliminary Option 2 against the guiding principles can be found in Figure 9-6.

Table 9-2: Preliminary Option 2 –Ward Population Distribution, 2024 to 2034

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2034 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,892	0.99	O	9,284	0.84	O-
Ward 2	8,986	1.00	O	11,935	1.07	O+
Ward 3	7,818	0.87	O-	8,499	0.77	O-
Ward 4	10,557	1.17	O+	11,531	1.04	O
Ward 5	10,078	1.12	O+	11,787	1.06	O+
Ward 6	7,597	0.85	O-	13,598	1.22	O+
Total	53,927	-	-	66,634	-	-
Average	8,988	-	-	11,106	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.



Figure 9-5: Preliminary Option 2 - Caledonia

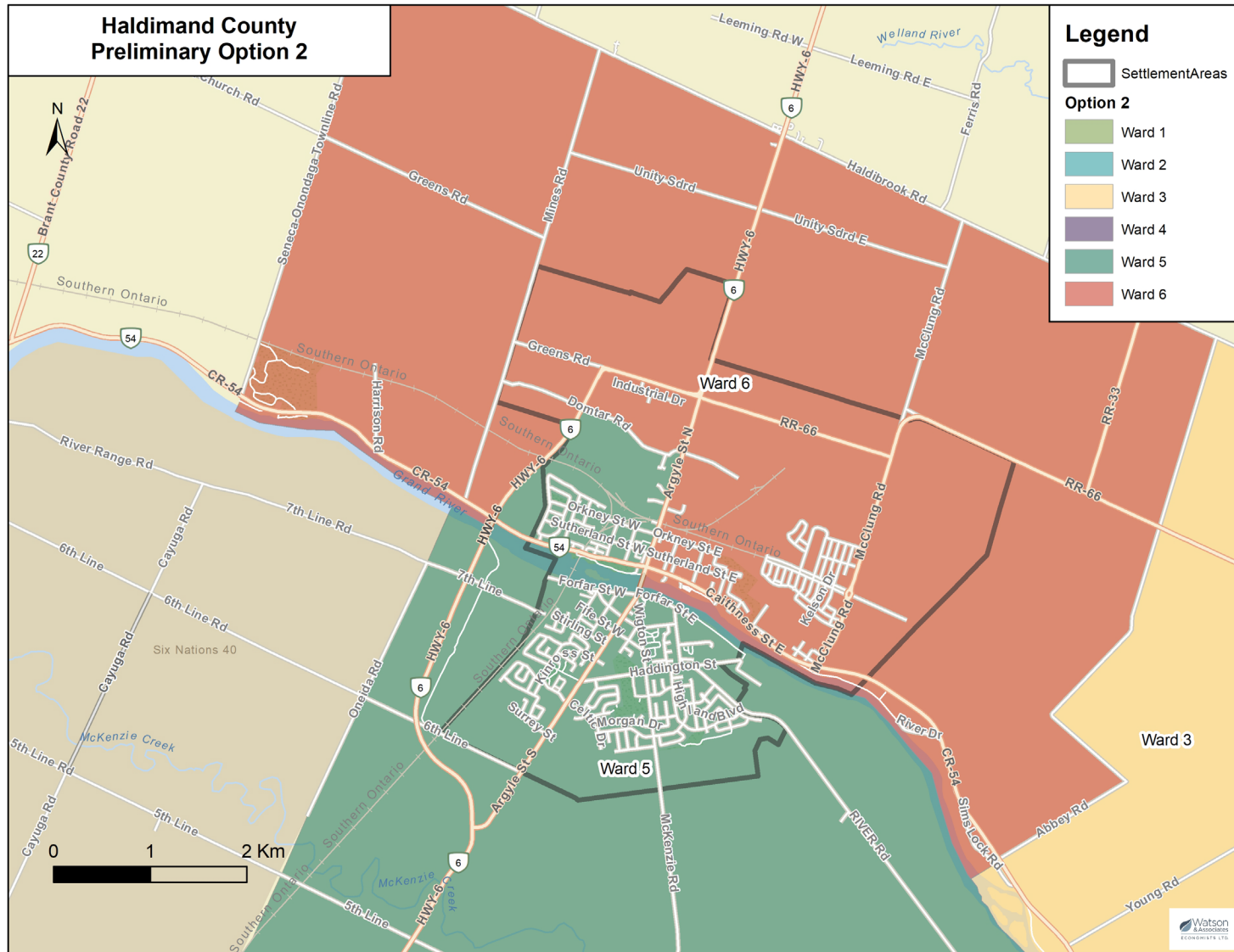




Figure 9-6: Preliminary Option 2
Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with two wards within the optional range ($\pm 5\%$).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Yes	All six wards include coherent communities of interest with Caledonia being represented by two wards. This configuration does not divide Caledonia north and south of the river.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	Largely Successful	All six wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation while growth in Caledonia result in Ward 6 approaching $+25\%$ variance.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Yes	Most boundaries are regular and/or visible lines.
Effective Representation	Yes	This model meets all the guiding principles and accounts for existing and future population parity while maintaining communities of interest.

^[1] The degree to which each guiding principle is satisfied is ranked as “**Yes**” (fully satisfied), “**Largely Successful**,” “**Partially Successful**,” or “**No**” (not satisfied).

9.3 Preliminary Option 3

Unlike Preliminary Options 1 and 2, Preliminary Option 3 provides a different configuration for Haldimand outside of Caledonia while still maintaining two wards across Caledonia.



Preliminary Option 3 divides the lakefront community across three wards, with the Ward 1 configuration very similar to that of the current Ward 1, capturing both Jarvis and Townsend along with the western lakefront community. Ward 2, also similar to the current Ward 2, captures Cayuga along with the central lakefront communities, extending all the way east to the Grand River.

Ward 3 captures the Dunnville community with the lakefront communities located to the east of the Grand River and extends west to Dunnville Rd. Ward 4 extends from Hagersville in the west across Haldimand all the way to the eastern municipal boundary, with one river crossing.

A similar divide of Caledonia as presented in Preliminary Option 2, however in Preliminary Option 3, Ward 6 is extended south to Stoney Creek Rd. As a result of extending Ward 6 south, future population growth puts Ward 6 outside the 25% acceptable range (but only slightly) while the remaining five wards remain within the acceptable range, with Ward 5 falling within the optimal 5% range as presented in Table 9-3.

An evaluation of Preliminary Option 3 against the guiding principles can be found in Figure 9-9.

Table 9-3: Preliminary Option 3 –Ward Population Distribution, 2024 to 2034

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2034 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,420	0.94	O-	8,661	0.78	O-
Ward 2	9,323	1.04	O	10,414	0.94	O-
Ward 3	10,986	1.22	O+	11,960	1.08	O+
Ward 4	7,519	0.84	O-	10,210	0.92	O-
Ward 5	9,719	1.08	O+	11,429	1.03	O
Ward 6	7,960	0.89	O-	13,960	1.26	OR+
Total	53,927	-	-	66,634	-	-
Average	8,988	-	-	11,106	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.



Figure 9-7: Preliminary Option 3

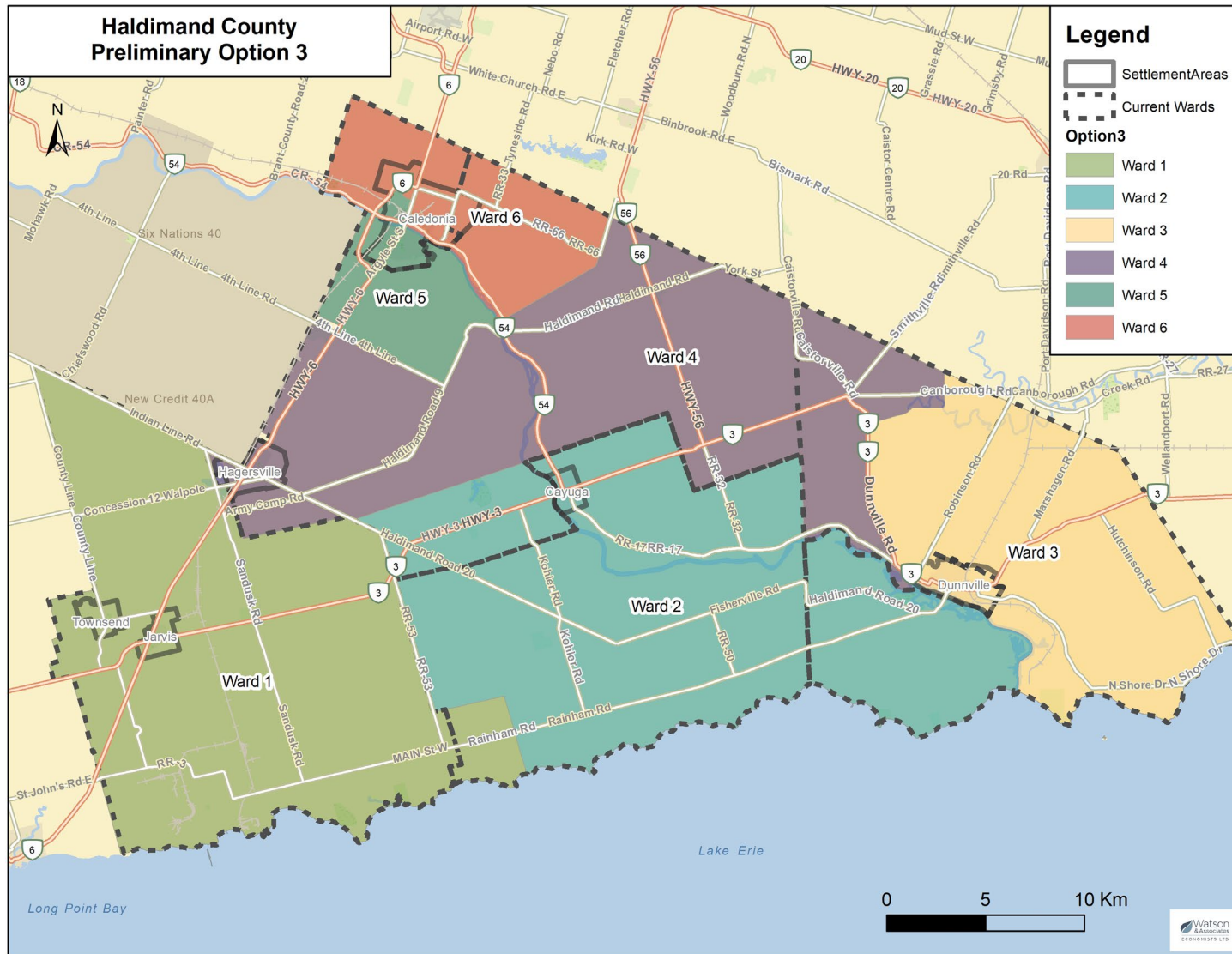




Figure 9-8: Preliminary Option 3 – Caledonia

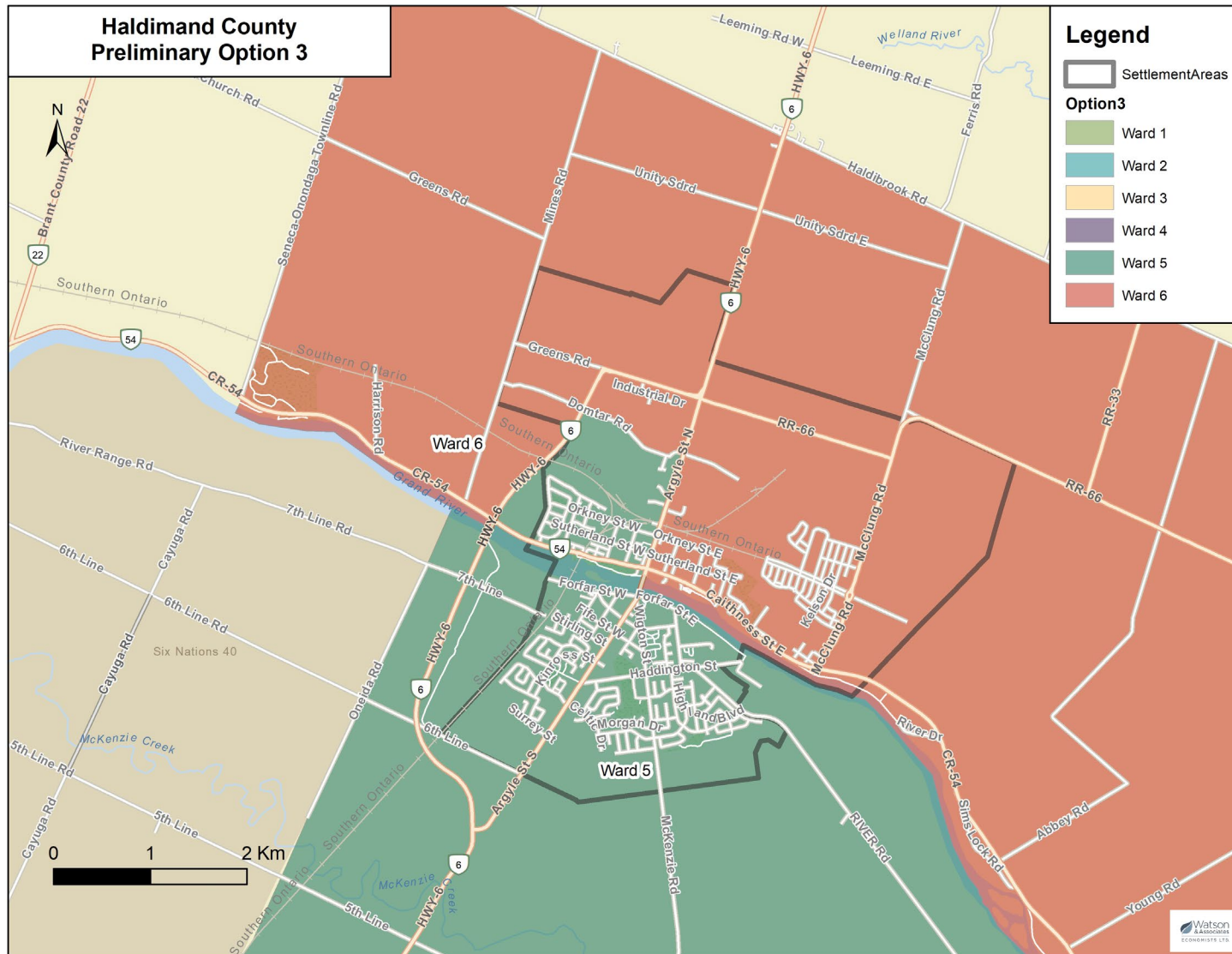




Figure 9-9: Preliminary Option 3
Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with one ward within the optional range ($\pm 5\%$).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Largely Successful	All six wards include coherent communities of interest with Caledonia being represented by two wards. Rural configuration is different than presented in Preliminary Options 1, 2 and 4.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	Largely Successful	Five of the six wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation while growth in Caledonia result in Ward 6 falling above the 25% variance.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are regular and/or visible lines.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Future population imbalances hinder the achievement of complete effective representation.

^[1] The degree to which each guiding principle is satisfied is ranked as “**Yes**” (fully satisfied), “**Largely Successful**,” “**Partially Successful**,” or “**No**” (not satisfied).

9.4 Preliminary Option 4

Preliminary Option 4 reverts to a similar configuration of Wards 1-4 as presented in Preliminary Option 1 and 2 with an additional adjustment to the division between Wards 5 and 6 within Caledonia. This proposed alternative looks to strive for stronger population parity for both 2024 and 2034 but does not utilize the Grand River as a divide in any fashion within Caledonia. In 2024, two wards fall within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$)



and the remaining four wards within 20% of the optimal population, with 2 wards within 10%. As future growth develops, it is anticipated that all wards would remain within the 25% acceptable range, with Ward 4 falling within the optimal population range and 5 of the 6 remaining wards within 17% of the average ward population, as presented in Table 9-4.

An evaluation of Preliminary Option 4 against the guiding principles can be found in Figure 9-12.

Table 9-4: Preliminary Option 4 –Ward Population Distribution, 2024 to 2034

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2034 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,892	0.99	O	9,284	0.84	O-
Ward 2	8,986	1.00	O	11,935	1.07	O+
Ward 3	7,818	0.87	O-	8,499	0.77	O-
Ward 4	10,557	1.17	O+	11,531	1.04	O
Ward 5	9,561	1.06	O+	12,420	1.12	O+
Ward 6	8,114	0.90	O-	12,965	1.17	O+
Total	53,927	-	-	66,634	-	-
Average	8,988	-	-	11,106	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.



Figure 9-10: Preliminary Option 4

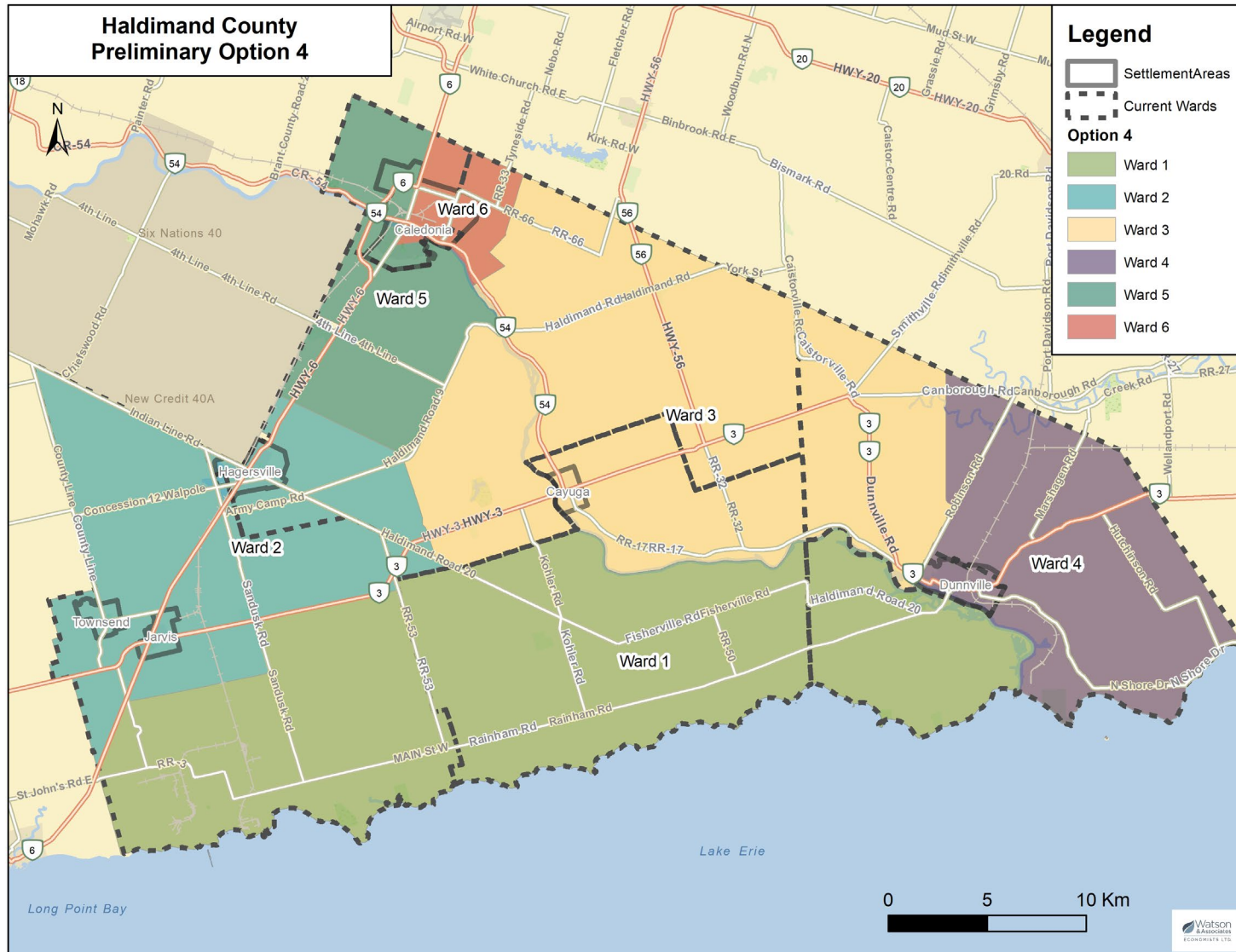




Figure 9-12: Preliminary Option 4
Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with two wards within the optional range ($\pm 5\%$).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Largely Successful	All six wards include coherent communities of interest with Caledonia being represented by two wards. This configuration does not divide Caledonia north and south of the river.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	Yes	All six wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Yes	Most boundaries are regular and/or visible lines.
Effective Representation	Yes	This model meets all the guiding principles and accounts for existing and future population parity while maintaining communities of interest.

^[1] The degree to which each guiding principle is satisfied is ranked as “**Yes**” (fully satisfied), “**Largely Successful**,” “**Partially Successful**,” or “**No**” (not satisfied).

9.5 Evaluation Summary

In the Discussion Paper and earlier in this paper it has been established that the current ward boundary system in Haldimand County does not provide for effective representation. The Consultant Team, therefore, recommends that changes would better accommodate growth within the Haldimand, offering better population parity and protect communities of interest.



9.6 Further Considerations

The options presented herein are preliminary; they reflect the application of the core principles for this review to the distribution of population and communities within Haldimand County.

Designing an electoral system that will deliver effective representation to such a diverse and growing community requires some accommodation: designs that put an emphasis on representation by population today can hinder fair representation for residents who will locate in growing parts of Haldimand in the coming decade. Designs that place a priority on grouping selected communities and neighbourhoods can result in the over- or under-representation of those same communities around the Council table. Grouping several distinctive communities in the same ward may systematically reduce the voice of minorities, whether they be geographic, economic, or social.

The purpose of this report is to stimulate discussions in Haldimand County and encourage residents to consider their preferred ward boundary configurations. The options included are deliberately called “preliminary” since much of the next phase of this review involves gathering the perspectives of residents on these alternatives.



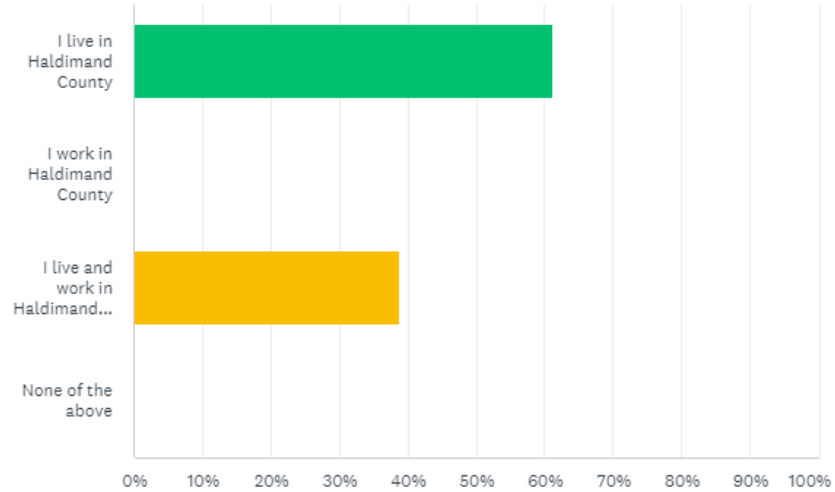
Appendix A

Survey Results



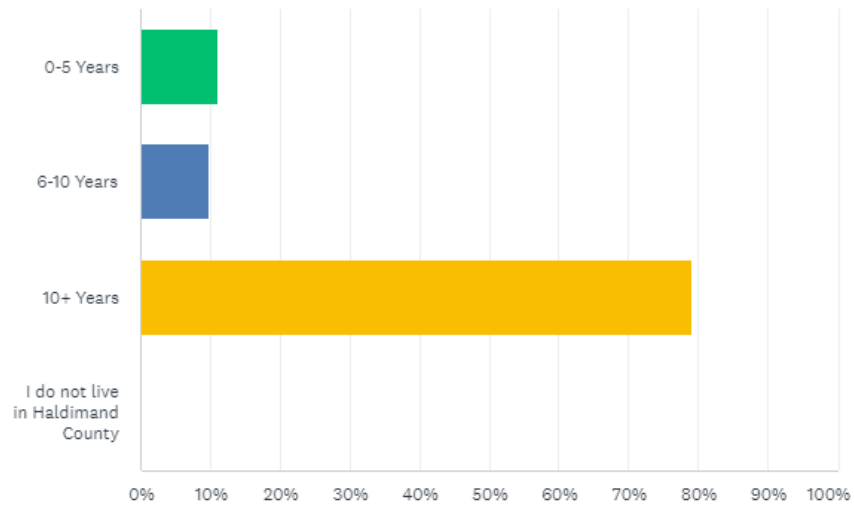
What best describes you?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 4



How long have you lived in Haldimand County?

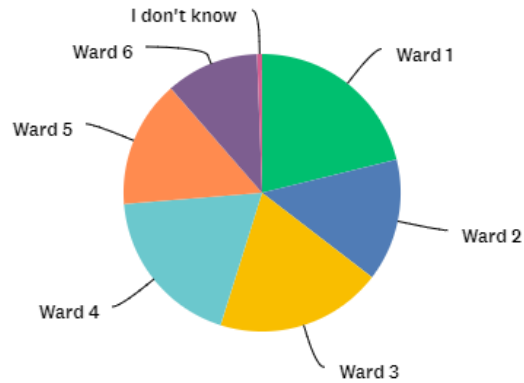
Answered: 173 Skipped: 4





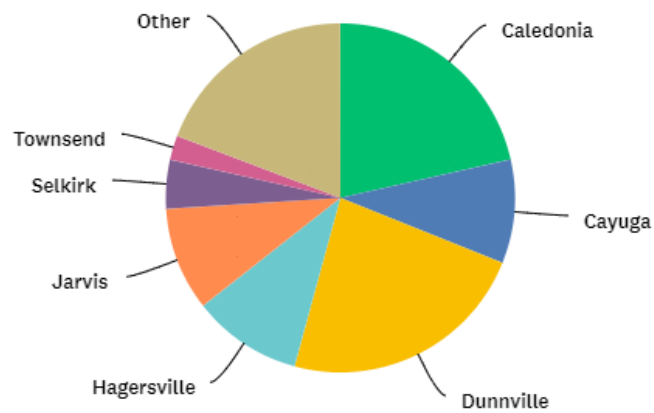
Which ward do you live in?

Answered: 175 Skipped: 2



Which community in Haldimand County do you live in?

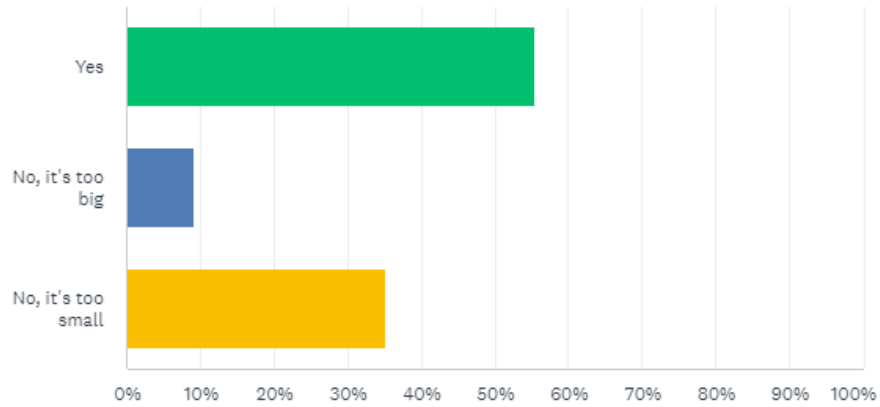
Answered: 177 Skipped: 0





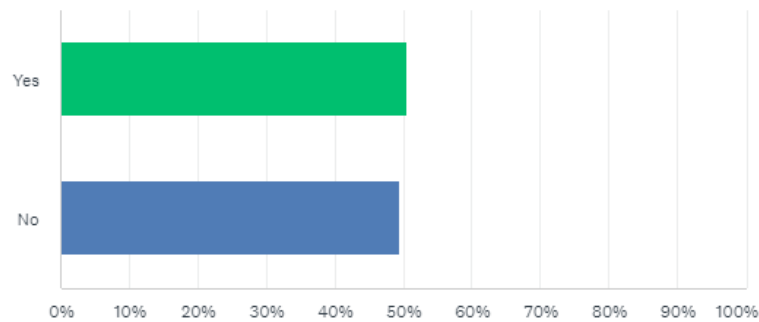
Is Haldimand County's Council the right size?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 4



Does the current ward system represent you fairly?

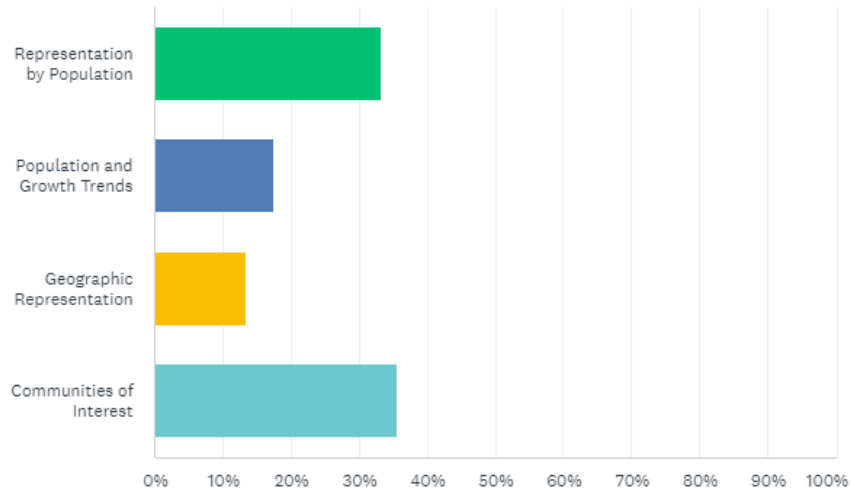
Answered: 174 Skipped: 3





Please indicate the ONE guiding principle that should be given the greatest priority to ensure effective voter representation as we assess the current ward makeup in Haldimand County:

Answered: 171 Skipped: 6





Appendix B

Public Consultation



The Haldimand County logo, featuring a sun and waves, is positioned to the left of a map of the county's wards. The map shows several irregularly shaped regions representing different wards. Below these elements is a dark blue rounded rectangle containing the text "COUNCIL COMPOSITION AND WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW" in white, uppercase letters.

Haldimand County Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review Public Engagement Session #1

June 27, 2024



Jack Ammendolia

Managing Partner
Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

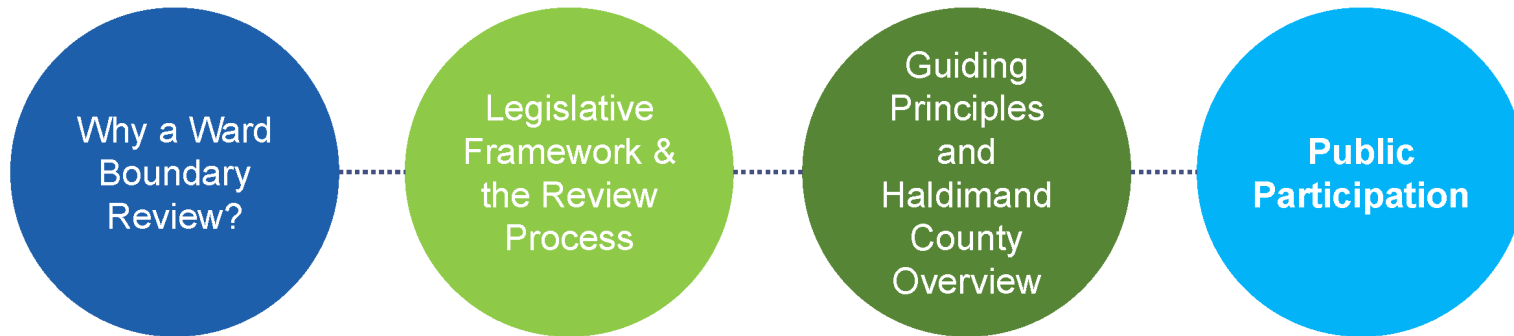
Dr. Robert Williams

Public Affairs Consultant
Municipal Electoral Systems Expert

Introduction



What Will Be Covered At This Open House?



www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

2

Context



Haldimand County was established (Haldimand Act, 1999)
Six wards were established with a Mayor elected at large



Minor Boundary Adjustments
Made to reflect changes related to urban boundary changes, largely unchanged



2024 Ward Boundary Review



Next Municipal Election
Any alternative system would be in effect for the October 26, 2026 Municipal Election

www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

Composition of Council

7-Member Council



**Mayor of Haldimand
County**



1 Councillor for Each Ward (x6)



The Mayor is elected at-large.



The minimum size for council of a local municipality in Ontario is five (5), “one of whom shall be the head of council” (mayor).



Context

Composition of Council

- The minimum size for the council of a local municipality in Ontario is five, “one of whom shall be the head of council”
- No clear principles at play, no “standards” and no formulas to apply in determining the appropriate size of Council
- Haldimand County council is composed of 7 members, 2 above the minimum
- The composition of local councils in Ontario varies widely.

Context

Council Size



Municipality	2021 Population	Area (sq.km)	Council Members	Avg. Population per Member
Norfolk County*	67,490	1,597.68	9	7,499
Welland	55,750	81.16	15	3,717
Belleville	55,071	247.15	9	6,119
North Bay	52,662	315.53	11	4,787
Haldimand County*	49,216	1,270.34	7	7,031
Cornwall	47,845	61.50	11	4,350
Woodstock	46,705	56.46	7	6,672
St. Thomas	42,840	35.61	9	4,760
Brant County*	39,474	817.66	11	3,589
Average	50,784	498	10	5,391

* Single-tier municipalities

Council Members include head of Council and Regional/County Councillors where applicable.

Legislative Framework



Ontario’s *Municipal Act, 2001* authorizes a single-tier municipality to:

- define the size of the Council
- determine how Council (other than the Mayor) will be elected
- “divide or re-divide the municipality into wards or dissolve the existing wards”

No stipulated schedule, standardized process or established criteria exist for electoral reviews in Ontario






- Each municipality must set its own terms, parameters, guiding principles, etc.
- A review is typically framed by established procedures and principles applied in several Ontario municipalities (and by the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT)) and judicial rulings on representation

www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

Guiding Principles to Design Wards



A **ward-based** electoral system should address these core principles/guidelines:

-  **REPRESENTATION BY POPULATION**
Ensure that residents are equitably represented, have comparable access to their elected representative, and the wards have reasonably equal population totals.
 -  **POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS**
Take account of anticipated population growth in Haldimand County, specifically over a two-election cycle (2026, 2030) and beyond.
 -  **GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION**
Ward boundaries will be drawn impartially and with consideration for natural and man-made features within Haldimand County that may serve as effective internal boundaries.
 -  **COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST**
Consider residential and commercial clusters but also geographic, social, historical, economic, and/or cultural factors, including the identifiable rural and agricultural component of Haldimand County.
-  **ENSURING EFFECTIVE VOTER REPRESENTATION**
The four articulated principles contribute to achieving the over-arching principle of effective representation.

www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

System Attributes: Wards or No Wards (At-Large)



The two systems offer alternative attributes:

- **Wards:** Councillors elected in specific areas, choices and responsibility clearer for electors, should reflect population distribution and community identities across the municipality
- **No wards:** all officials elected on the same basis
 - Must campaign across and represent all parts of Haldimand County – but no designated voices for particular parts of the municipality
 - Electors get to choose from among all candidates

What Are We Trying to Figure Out?



How well does the present electoral structure serve the citizens of Haldimand County?

Does the present electoral structure provide fair and effective representation?

Would an alternative system provide better representation for the citizens of Haldimand County?

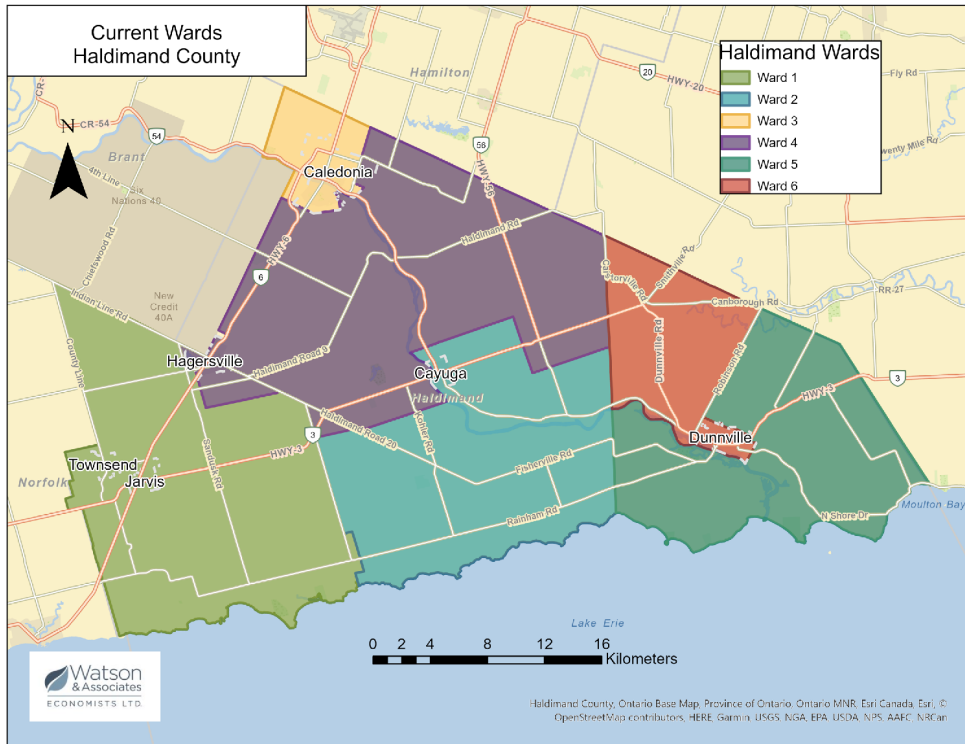
www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

10

Review Process



Existing Ward System - Evaluation



2011 Population by Ward

Ward	Area (SqKm)	2011		
		Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	311.2	6,993	0.93	O-
Ward 2	252.7	6,205	0.83	O-
Ward 3	41.1	10,948	1.46	OR+
Ward 4	354.5	8,219	1.10	O+
Ward 5	210.3	5,433	0.73	OR-
Ward 6	100.5	7,079	0.95	O-
Total/Average	1,270.3	44,876	7,479	

2021 Population by Ward

Ward	Area (SqKm)	2021		
		Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	311.2	7,515	0.92	O-
Ward 2	252.7	6,732	0.82	O-
Ward 3	41.1	13,379	1.63	OR+
Ward 4	354.5	8,307	1.01	O
Ward 5	210.3	5,767	0.70	OR-
Ward 6	100.5	7,516	0.92	O-
Total/Average	1,270.3	49,216	8,203	

O	±5% of the Optimal (Average) Population
O-	±5%-25% of the Optimal (Average) Population
OR-	>±25% of the Optimal (Average) Population

Existing Ward System - Evaluation



Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle? ^[1]	Comment
Representation by Population	No	Two of the six wards exceed the ±25% range of variation.
Protection of Communities of Interest	Partially Successful	Only two of the six wards include coherent communities of interest.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	No	Population growth will not overcome the existing population imbalance.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are regular and/or visible lines. A significant natural boundary is not used.
Effective Representation	No	The relationships between constituents and councillors hinder the achievement of effective voter representation.

^[1] The degree to which each guiding principle is satisfied is ranked as "Yes" (fully satisfied), "Largely Successful," "Partially Successful," or "No" (not satisfied).

A Public Consultation Process



A municipal electoral system should be subject to a public consultation process to ensure the legitimacy of the recommendations placed before Council

Public engagement activities will be conducted aimed at both informing residents about the review and gathering informed evaluations about the existing system and (later) alternative designs. Several outlets have been designed for residents to safely participate in the review process

- ✓ Online & Print Engagement (website, social media, etc.)
- ✓ Survey
- ✓ In-Person & Virtual Open House Sessions
- ✓ Public Feedback Analysis
- ✓ Reporting

www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

14

Your Contribution to This Review: Background Materials



WBR Webpage

Background Reports

www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview

Project Next Steps



Based on feedback from this public consultation, next steps will include:

- Preparing **alternative ward designs** that will be brought to a public consultation in **Fall of 2024**;
- Making **recommendations for a ward structure** that will accommodate growth and population for the next **two Municipal elections (2026 & 2030) and beyond**, if feasible (If existing ward configuration is determined to not meet the guiding principles);
- A **by-law to enact the new boundaries** would be brought to a later Council meeting for adoption (If Council approves a recommendation for a change to the present ward boundaries).

16

