Electoral System Review

Final Report
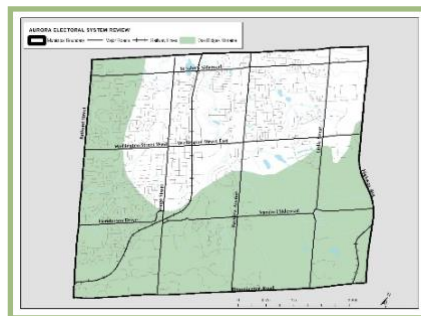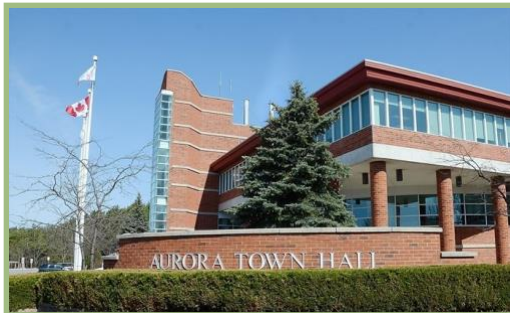
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June 2020

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1. Introduction

In May 2019, Aurora Town Council passed a motion to investigate a ward system for the Town and launched the Aurora Electoral System Review (Aurora ESR).

A team of independent consultants undertook the Aurora ESR using an approach that has been recognized by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (formerly the Ontario Municipal Board) and the Courts. Briefly, the approach includes background research, examination of growth trends, extensive public engagement, development of ward boundary options and review of these options by the public, stakeholders and Members of Council and a final recommendation.
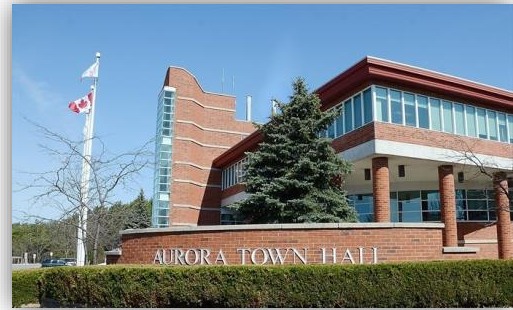
This report is the Final Report of the project and recommends a ward configuration for the Town of Aurora. The recommendation is based on projected populations for the Town, an objective analysis of the ward boundary options for Aurora and two rounds of public engagement. Along with the expertise of the Consultant Team, Round 1 informed the development of four Options for a new ward system and Round 2 informed the selection of the preferred Option and its ward boundaries.

Given the projected populations, the recommended ward alignment should serve Aurora for three, and possibly four, municipal elections – 2022, 2026, 2030, and perhaps 2034. The recommended ward configuration achieves effective representation and is based on principles established by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and the Courts.

2. Aurora ESR Public Engagement

2.1   What We Did

The Aurora ESR included two rounds of public engagement. Round 1 (October 8 – 28, 2019) sought input into what a ward system for Aurora might look like. Issues such as potential number of wards, ward population sizes, growth in Aurora and possible ward boundaries were discussed. Round 2 (December 4, 2019 – January 17, 2020) asked for feedback on four Options for a ward system for the Town.

Both rounds of the engagement process were multi-faceted and offered a multitude of opportunities to get involved. They included the following:
- Web banner on the Town's website with link to project webpage at aurora.ca/esr
- Online survey at surveymonkey.com/r/aesr
- Placespeak, Aurora's online engagement platform, at placespeak.com/esr
- Social media posts (Facebook; Twitter; Instagram);

- Council member interviews
- Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee meetings
- Public meetings in accessible locations
- Emails to residents/ratepayers' associations
- Print advertising
- Advertising on Auroran Town Notice Board
- Library/community centre/Seniors Centre posters
- Display panels at the Town Hall and rotating panels in community centres
- E-blasts to Seniors Association
- In-person contact at Aurora Seniors Centre
- Mobile signs
- E-mails to project mailing list

The dedicated webpage contained background information on the project, including an explanation of the differences between electing councillors at-large versus through wards and the concept of 'effective representation'. The webpage outlined the multiple opportunities to become involved in the Aurora ESR, linked users to the online surveys and displayed project documents such as the Aurora ESR Options Report.

Appendix A summarizes the project's extensive public engagement activities.

2.2   What We Heard

In addition to the general social media activity, over 580 individuals participated actively in both rounds of the Aurora ESR. Based on our experience, this is a very respectable number. This high rate of public involvement is undoubtedly due to some of the innovative ways the project was promoted, such as through the mobile signs, the rotating display panels at the Town Hall and community centres and paid social media advertisements.

By comparison, recent ward boundary reviews in Vaughan (population 300,000) involved 235 individuals; Hamilton (population 540,000) 447 individuals; and Ajax (population 120,000) 180 individuals.

During Round 1 of the public engagement process, participants expressed their opinions on potential number of wards, preferred ward population size, suitable ward boundaries and communities which should be kept together. During Round 2, participants ranked the four Options and made suggestions for how various ward boundaries could be improved. Section 3 of this Report describes the Round 2 results in more detail.

During both Rounds, participants also made a number of other comments, which are not directly related to the Aurora ESR. Notably, there was animated discussion of whether or not Aurora should implement a ward system and the relevance of the 2014 referendum on the issue. Appendix C of the November 2019 Aurora Electoral System

Options Report (https://www.aurora.ca/esr) summarizes the comments from Round 1. Round 2 'Other Comments' are attached to this Report as Appendix D.

3. A Preferred Option

Following Round 1 of the public engagement process, the Consultant Team developed four ward boundary Options: Option 1 – 3 Wards; Option 2 – 4 Wards; Option 3 – 5 Wards; and Option 4 – 6 Wards. All the Options were designed based on population estimates for the target year of 2026.

The Options Report illustrated each Option on a map showing the ward boundaries and a table calculating relative voter parity for the election years of 2022, 2026, 2030 and 2034. The Report also discussed the implications for the composition of Town Council for each Option. For a detailed discussion of the development of the ward boundary options, see the Aurora Electoral System Review Options Report which can be found at https://www.aurora.ca/esr.

All the ward boundary Options achieve "effective representation". This means that the Options balance the key criteria for designing wards – relative voter parity, clear boundaries, consideration of future growth and respect for geographical communities of interest. Any of the Options would provide a sound ward system for Aurora.

While all Options achieve effective representation, they are all quite different. Choosing amongst the four Options was the focus of Round 2 of the public engagement process. Round 2 sought to determine which was the preferred Option. Participants were asked to rank the Options and to suggest any boundary adjustments that would improve the Options.

Through the Round 2 survey, public meetings, interviews with all Members of Council and a meeting with the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee option preferences and suggestions for boundary changes were gathered and analyzed.

The two tables below show the rankings from the Round 2 survey, Members of Council and the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee.

Table 1- Rankings of Options – Round 2 Survey

Option	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice	Don't like the Option
Option 1 – 3 Wards	20	17	15	25	31
Option 2 – 4 Wards	42	31	33	5	1
Option 3 – 5 Wards	28	44	23	8	5
Option 4 – 6 Wards	38	12	14	16	32

- Results from 133 surveys filled out on-line and 3 completed at the public meetings

Table 2 - Rankings of Options – Members of Council and Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee

Option	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice	Don't like the Option
Option 1 – 3 Wards				2	4
Option 2 – 4 Wards		1			3
Option 3 – 5 Wards	4	1			1
Option 4 – 6 Wards	7	1			

- Results from interviews with all Members of Council and a meeting with the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee

The data on rankings present a complex pattern and show a wide range of preferences from first to fourth choice to "Don't like the Option". Survey respondents ranked Option 2 (4 Wards) in top place with 42 first choice mentions and Option 4 (6 wards) in second place with 38 mentions. Neither Members of Council nor Members of the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee selected Option 2 as their first choice, while Option 4 received 7 first place mentions. If the first place mentions of all participants are added together, then Option 2 has 42 mentions and Option 4 has 45. In terms of rankings this is a virtual tie.

For ease of reference, Appendix B shows the Option 2 - 4 Ward and Option 4 - 6 Ward maps and voter parity variance tables.

Since Options 2 and 4 were virtually tied as first place choices, suggested boundary changes to those Options were explored individually, to see if they could be incorporated and still achieve effective representation. The main concerns in evaluating proposed boundary changes are voter parity, clear and recognizable boundaries and communities of interest.

Appendix C lists all the proposed boundary changes for Option 2 and Option 4 and indicates what action was taken on each. Many participants indicated that they liked the proposed boundaries of the Options and these comments have been included. There are certain themes to the suggested boundary changes and the ability to act on them.

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3.1   Suggested Boundary Changes to Option 2 - 4 Wards

The map and variance table for Option 2, as they appeared in the Options Report, are attached to this report in Appendix B.

Participants appear to consider the boundaries of W2-1 and W2-2 to be quite appropriate.
A majority of the suggested boundary changes focus on the boundary between W2-3 and W2-4. This boundary is Timberline Trail/Trillium Dr./Golf Links Dr. Participants suggested moving the boundary either north to Kennedy or Wellington or south to Henderson, mostly to keep the whole Highland Gate community in the same ward.

The major issue with moving the boundary away from its current location is the number of people living in the area between Wellington and Henderson and how they are distributed. For example, in 2026 the target year for the Aurora ESR, there will be some 5,700 people between Timberline Trail and Wellington and 1,522 between Timberline Trail and Kennedy. Between Timberline Trail and south to Henderson there will be some 7,000 people. Any movement of this boundary between W2-3 and W2-4 leads to a situation in which the two wards fail to achieve acceptable voter parity.

A similar situation arises if the railway tracks became the boundary between W2-3 and W2-4. While the railway is a clear boundary, the loss of population between the railway tracks and Timberline Trail leaves W2-4 with far too few people, and conversely W2-3 with far too many.

The current boundary alignment between W2-3 and W2-4 does split off a small portion of the Highland Gate community. Including the whole of the Highland Gate community in either W2-3 or W2-4 would lead to unacceptable voter parity.

There is one minor change that would keep the residents on both sides of Timberline Trail in the same ward. The boundary could be moved to the Tannery Creek Tributary immediately south of Timberline Trail and then follow Trillium, Dr. and Golf Links Dr. to Yonge. If Option 2 is the Option that Council selects, we would recommend this minor change.

3.2   Suggested Boundary Changes to Option 4 - 6 Wards

The map and variance table for Option 4, as they appeared in the Options Report, are attached to this report in Appendix B.

As the number of wards increases from Option 1 to Option 4, the boundaries become more complex in the quest for voter parity and keeping communities of interest together. Option 4, the 6- ward option, demonstrates this situation. There were numerous suggestions for boundary changes, which are all listed and analysed in Appendix C.

Many of the suggestions focus on the irregular shape of W4-1. Based on the population distribution in Aurora three wards are needed west of the railway tracks to create six wards. W4-2 and W4-3 have excellent boundaries, voter parity and keep communities together. W4-1 has a small population west of Yonge and needs additional area, hence the area east of Yonge to the railway tracks has to be added. This area contains much of "old Aurora" and it has clear boundaries.

A number of suggestions and comments attempt to include portions west of Yonge in W4-1 in order to keep all of the heritage areas in one ward. However, there are no north-south connections that would result in clear ward boundaries. Many other boundary changes in the area east of Yonge to the railway tracks were tested, but all lead to unacceptable voter parity. The reason is that W4-1 is a small ward, with respect to population. In our experience, having more than one Councillor responsible for areas that are important to the whole Town is an advantage rather than a disadvantage.

One apparent anomaly in W4-1 is the area east of the railway tracks, north of St. John's Sideroad and west of Bayview. Moving this area to either W4-5 or W4-6 was tested. However, this area will have some 1,400 people in 2026. Shifting it out of W4-1 makes W4-1 too small and its voter parity becomes unacceptable. Similarly, adding this area to either W4-5 or W4-6 makes their populations too large and leads to unacceptable voter parity in those Wards.

It should also be pointed out that several respondents found the boundaries of Option 4 quite acceptable. Having tested alternative boundaries for Option 4 in considerable detail, the Consultant Team does not recommend any boundary changes.

4. Recommended Ward Configuration

Based on the results from the Round 2 public engagement process, Option 2 – 4 Wards and Option 4 – 6 Wards were in a virtual tie. Both Options achieve effective representation and either one could be adopted by Aurora Town Council.

However, the Consultant Team is recommending Option 4 – 6 Wards. The reason has to do with the implications for Council composition.

The 4-ward configuration would most likely lead to a Council size of 5, 4 Ward Councillors and a Mayor. During the public process there was some discussion of having an elected Deputy Mayor, but opinions on this issue were divided. There was some concern that Council would then have an even number of members, which was seen as undesirable.

The 6-ward configuration results in a Council of 7 members, 6 Ward Councillors and a Mayor. This is the same size as the current Council. Aurora Town Council has recently reduced its size from 9 to 7 and, at this juncture, a further reduction does not seem appropriate.

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Because Option 4 achieves effective representation and includes the least impact on Council operations, it is the Option recommended by the Consultant Team. The recommended Ward map showing boundaries and the voter parity table are shown below.

Recommended Ward Configuration
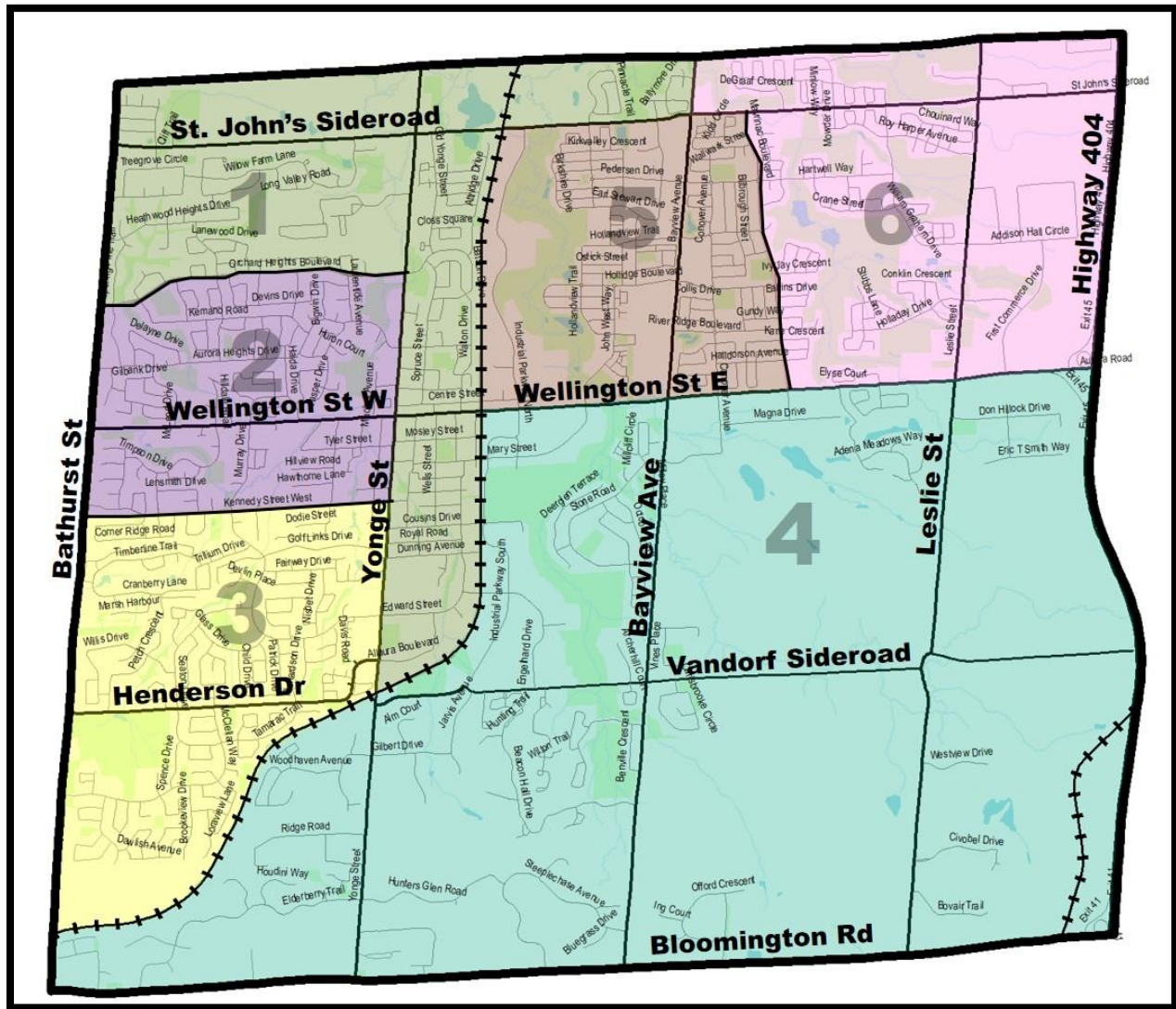
Ward Populations and Variances for Recommended Ward Configuration

| | Town of Aurora | | | | | | | |
| | Forecast Census Population at Election Years | | | | | | | |
	Population 2022	Variance from average	**Population 2026**	**Variance from average**	Population 2030	Variance from average	Population 2034	Variance from average
Ward 1	10,155	-4.2%	**10,595**	**-6.5%**	10,935	-8.1%	11,185	-9.2%
Ward 2	10,785	1.7%	**11,545**	**1.9%**	12,115	1.8%	12,555	1.9%
Ward 3	11,660	10.0%	**12,000**	**5.9%**	12,280	3.2%	12,490	1.4%
Ward 4	8,780	-17.2%	**9,690**	**-14.5%**	10,400	-12.6%	10,890	-11.6%
Ward 5	11,740	10.8%	**12,440**	**9.8%**	13,000	9.2%	13,410	8.8%
Ward 6	10,490	-1.0%	**11,710**	**3.4%**	12,680	6.6%	13,380	8.6%
Average Ward Population	10,600		11,330		11,900		12,320	

Appendix A - Aurora ESR Public Engagement

Types of Engagement	Round 1 Date(s)	Round 1 Responses	Round 2 Date(s)	Round 2 Responses
Online Survey	Oct. 8 – 28, 2019	174	Dec. 4, 2019 – Jan. 17, 2020	133
Survey (hard copies) at Town Hall; public meetings; Seniors Centre	Oct. 8 – 28, 2019	5	Dec. 4, 2019 – Jan. 17, 2020	3
placespeak	Oct. 8 – 28, 2019	5	Dec. 4, 2019 – Jan. 17, 2020	1
Meeting with Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee	Oct. 9, 2019	N.A.	Nov. 27, 2019	N.A.
Facebook	Oct. 7 – 28, 2019	4 discussion participants; 3,900* Impressions; 250 Engagements	Dec. 4 – 11, 2019 & Jan. 6 - 13, 2020	Approx. 25 discussion participants; 7,494* Impressions; 452 Engagements
Twitter	Oct. 7 – 28, 2019	1,121* Impressions; 24 Engagements	Dec. 4 – 11, 2019 & Jan. 6 - 13, 2020	4,071 Impressions; 60 Engagements
Instagram	Oct. 7 – 28, 2019	13 Likes	Dec. 4 – 11, 2019 & Jan. 6 - 13, 2020	52 Likes*
Aurora Seniors Association e-blast	Oct. 17, 2019	1,044 recipients (88 to online survey; 8 to webpage)	Dec. 10, 2019	1,070 recipients (64 to online survey)
Aurora Seniors Centre Posters	N.A.	N.A.	Jan. 7 – 17, 2020	N.A.
Aurora Seniors Centre (in person)	N.A.	N.A.	Jan. 8, 2020, 11 am to noon	10 Contacts
Print Ads (Aurora Banner, Auroran)	Oct. 10 & 17, 2019	N.A.	Nov. 28, 2019 & Jan. 9, 2020	N.A.

Auroran (Town Notice Board)	Oct. 17, 2019	N.A.	Nov. 28, Dec. 12, 19, 2019 & Jan. 2, 2020	N.A.
Public Meetings	Oct. 23 & 28, 2019	9 + 15	Dec. 11, 2019 & Jan. 15, 2020	17 + 16
Meetings with Members of Council	Oct. 9 – 23, 2019	7	Dec. 10 – 20, 2019	7
Email to Residents/Ratepayers Associations/BIA	Oct. 16, 2019	N.A.	Dec. 8, 2019 & Jan. 7, 2020	N.A.
Library/Community Centre Posters	Oct. 8 – 28, 2019	N.A.	Dec. 4, 2019 – Jan. 17, 2020	N.A.
Mobile Signs	N.A.	N.A.	Nov. 28 – Dec. 12, 2019 & Jan. 2 – 16, 2020	N.A.
Aurora ESR Display Panels (Town Hall; SARC; AFLC; AAC)	N.A.	N.A.	Dec. 19, 2019 – Jan. 17, 2020	N.A.
Email to Aurora ESR Mailing List	Oct. 16, 2019	122 contacts	Dec. 8, 2019 & Jan. 7, 2020	200 contacts (total)

*Included paid advertisements, which reached individuals not usually part of Aurora's social media outreach.

Appendix B – Options 2 and 4 Maps and Tables

Option Map 2: 4 Wards

Ward Populations and Variances – Option 2

OPTION 2	Population 2022	Variance from average	Population 2026	Variance from average	Population 2030	Variance from average	Population 2034	Variance from average
			Town of Aurora - Ward Boundary Options					
			Forecast Census Population at Election Years					
W2-1	15,960	0.4%	**16,510**	**-2.9%**	16,940	-5.1%	17,250	-6.7%
W2-2	15,990	0.6%	**17,840**	**4.9%**	19,310	8.2%	20,380	10.3%
W2-3	14,640	-7.9%	**15,500**	**-8.8%**	16,140	-9.6%	16,640	-10.0%
W2-4	17,020	7.0%	**18,130**	**6.6%**	19,020	6.6%	19,640	6.3%
Average Ward Population	15,900		17,000		17,850		18,480	

Option Map 4: 6 Wards
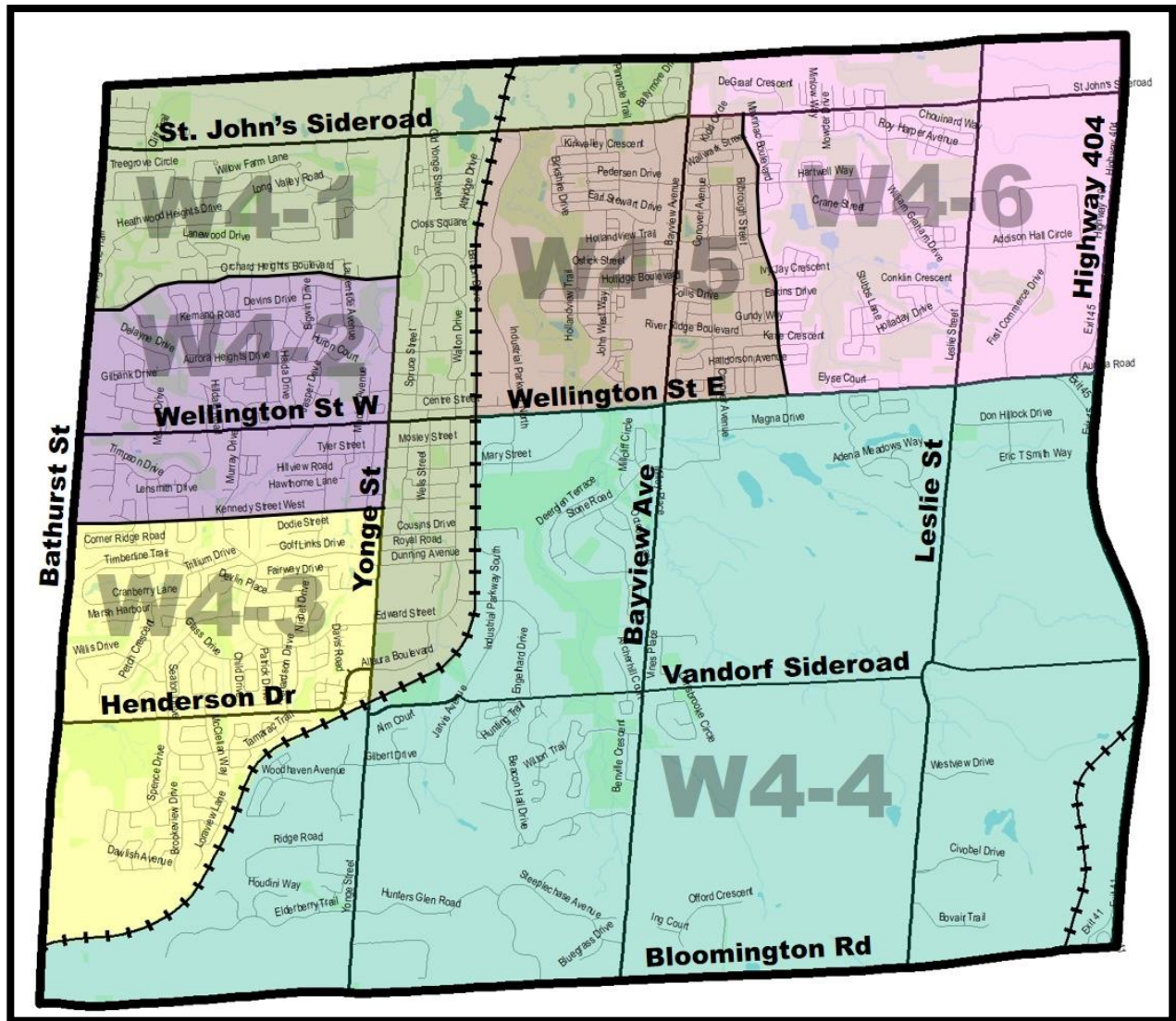
Ward Populations and Variances – Option 4

	Town of Aurora - Ward Boundary Options							
	Forecast Census Population at Election Years							
OPTION 4	Population 2022	Variance from average	**Population 2026**	**Variance from average**	Population 2030	Variance from average	Population 2034	Variance from average
W4-1	10,155	-4.2%	**10,595**	**-6.5%**	10,935	-8.1%	11,185	-9.2%
W4-2	10,785	1.7%	**11,545**	**1.9%**	12,115	1.8%	12,555	1.9%
W4-3	11,660	10.0%	**12,000**	**5.9%**	12,280	3.2%	12,490	1.4%
W4-4	8,780	-17.2%	**9,690**	**-14.5%**	10,400	-12.6%	10,890	-11.6%
W4-5	11,740	10.8%	**12,440**	**9.8%**	13,000	9.2%	13,410	8.8%
W4-6	10,490	-1.0%	**11,710**	**3.4%**	12,680	6.6%	13,380	8.6%
Average Ward Population	10,600		11,330		11,900		12,320	

Appendix C – Analysis of Suggested Boundary Changes

Suggestions/Comments on Options 2 and 4 (Survey/Public Meetings/ GRAHC/Members of Council)

#	Suggestions/Comments – Option 2 – 4 Wards	Action
1	Should W2-4 end at the RR tracks?	Does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W2-4 and W2-3
2	W2-1 has good boundaries	Comment
3	W2-1 is different north and south of Wellington	Comment
4	Shift area north of Henderson from W2-4 to W2-3 (6)*	Does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W2-4 and W2-3
5	End W2-3 at Wellington	Makes W2-3 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
6	Expand W2-4 north to Wellington (incl. area from W2-1)	Makes W2-4 population too large; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
7	W2-4 Timberline boundary divides Highland Gate community; Timberline should be in W2-4; move boundary north to Kennedy (4)*	Does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W2-4 and W2-3; boundary between W2-3 and W2-4 changed to Tannery Creek Tributary/Trillium Dr./Golf Links Dr.; all of Timberline now in W2-3
8	Would like the number of Council members to total 5. Keep Kennedy NOT as a boundary	Comment
9	Use Tamarac as boundary between W2-3 and W2-4	Does not create clear boundary; makes W2-4 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W2-3 and W2-4
10	Option 2 is fine as is; looks good; ideal (6)*	Comment
11	One ward north of Wellington, west of Yonge to Bathurst to a little north of St. John's Side Rd to the Newmarket border. The other north of Wellington, east of Yonge to 404 and up to Newmarket border.	Does not achieve acceptable voter parity among the four wards

	The third south of Wellington, west of Yonge to Bathurst and south to Bloomington. The fourth south of Wellington, east to 404, south to Bloomington. Equal.	
12	Option 2 is my first choice simply based on the boundaries, however, I think 5-6 wards for Aurora seems to be the best case	Comment
13	Splitting wards along Yonge Street especially in the old downtown area is potentially problematic. Aurora has an old core area which should be part of a single ward	Comment
14	W2-2 should extend to Vandorf	Does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W2-2 and W2-4
15	As long as ward populations are similar...very important	Comment
16	Excellent voter parity	Comment
17	1) Best population variance of all ward options comparing 2022 & 2034. (14.9% & 20.3%) 2) It is the best balanced of wards and boundaries. The area south of Wellington and east of Yonge is not stuck on like an extra arm or leg like in the other ward options. e.g. this area has little in common with other areas such as Bathurst and St. Jon's Sideroad. 3) It keeps the north south flow of Aurora's greenbelt, Mackenzie Marsh, Arboretum and Sheppard's Bush leading into the Moraine without boundaries cutting through	Comment

#	Suggestions/Comments – Option 4 – 6 Wards	Action
1	Transfer Stone Road area from W4-4 to W4-5 or to W4-3	Does not create clear boundaries on its own; moving area incl. Vandorf/RR tracks/Wellington/Bayview out of W4-4 makes W4-4 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
2	Can historic area east & west of Yonge, north & south of Wellington be kept together?	Does not create clear boundaries
3	Extend W4-1 to Aurora Heights; make Mark north of Wellington its southern boundary east of Yonge	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not

		achieve acceptable voter parity
4	Add south of Mark Street to RR tracks to W4-2	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
5	Dodie Street and George Street are part of Kennedy West area; include in W4-2 (2)*	Does not create clear boundaries
6	Add area east of RR tracks north of St. John's to W4-5 (6)*	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W4-1 and W4-5
7	It's good that areas north and south of Wellington west of RR tracks are together in W4-1	Comment
8	Could Temperance between Wellington and Kennedy be part of W4-1 to keep more of the historic area together?	Does not create clear boundaries
9	W4-1 feels right; boundaries are ok (3)*	Comment
10	W4-1 is hard to understand; can Town Park area become part of W4-2 or W4-3?	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
11	W4-4 works as a ward; people with similar interests (4)*	Comment
12	Boundaries of W4-3 are good	Comment
13	Boundaries of W4-2 are good	Comment
14	Transfer area west of Marsh Creek from W4-6 to W4-5, if Pinnacle Trail area shifts to W4-5. But both wards are ok as is, if populations work	Comment
15	Extend W4-2 across Yonge to RR tracks; end W4-2 at Kennedy or at Dunning	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
16	Extend W4-3 across Yonge up to Wellington; Councillors will share heritage areas	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
17	Shift area east of RR tracks north of St. John's into W4-6	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W4-1 and W4-6
18	Shift Town Park area from W4-1 into W4-4	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not

		achieve acceptable voter parity
19	Heritage area in W4-1 is combined with other development south of Dunning	Comment
20	Adding the old area west of Yonge - keeping all the heritage areas in one ward; It is essential to keep all the heritage areas together to ensure their position on development is sensitive to the value of a distinct heritage area	Does not create clear boundaries
21	Intensification probable in W4-1 and W4-2 because of large lots	Comment
22	Shape of W4-1 is a problem; extends a long distance N-S and covers too wide a range of socio-economic neighbourhoods	Comment
23	W4-1 includes a mix of developments	Comment
24	Can W4-2 be extended across to RR tracks?	Makes W4-1 population too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity
25	Boundaries seem reasonable/excellent (3)*	Comment
26	Use Wellington as a boundary as the needs/ interests on either side can be very different	Wellington is boundary east of RR tracks
27	W4-6 should include Bayview and Wellington, not dissecting with a small streets	Makes W4-5 too small; does not achieve acceptable voter parity between W4-5 and W4-6
28	The north-south boundary line between Ward 4-5 and Ward 4-6 seems unusual. People just east of Mavrinac will still have things in common with the people just west of that street. Perhaps consider moving this boundary line to the east to be consistent with the green "valley area"	Mavrinac is a clear boundary (bus route); worsens voter parity between W4-5 and W4-6
29	Keep north-east area as a unit	If W4-5 and W4-6 are combined, there are only 5 wards
30	I don't understand why the boundaries of Option 4 are so muddled. I would prefer to see neater boundaries	Comment
31	Splitting wards along Yonge Street especially in the old downtown area is potentially problematic. Aurora has an old core area which should be part of a single ward	Comment. Examined in context of other specific comments

*Numbers in brackets refer to the number of times a suggestion/comment was made.

Appendix D – Other Comments

Other Comments – GRAHC/Members of Council

- Not sure whether there should be wards
- There should be another referendum re wards
- Community will not like 3-ward system
- Don't increase Council size (2)*
- No less than 5 wards
- 1 Councillor per ward
- Real representation would mean having full-time Councillors; part-time Councillors don't have enough time to prepare for larger issues and/or attend community events
- Before contemplating full-time Councillors, a cost-benefit study would need to be done
- Current Councillors are able to function well, in addition to having full-time jobs
- Not in favour of full-time Councillors
- If at-large system remained, there should be fewer, but full-time Councillors
- If a 4-ward system were adopted, 2 additional full-time Councillors should be elected at-large
- Deputy Mayor position is more ceremonial; should rotate among Councillors, just like Committee Chairs (2)*
- Deputy Mayor does not have many responsibilities now
- Need defined role for Deputy Mayor
- Elect Deputy Mayor (4)*
- Electing a Deputy Mayor is not a good idea, would compete with the Mayor
- Unsure about whether or not to elect a Deputy Mayor
- Allow Deputy Mayor to represent Town, if needed
- No Deputy Mayor needed with 6 wards
- May not need Deputy Mayor, if no extra seat on Regional Council
- Deputy Mayor can attend Regional Council (non-voting)
- Aurora has no chance of getting an extra Regional Council seat
- 5 wards would only work, if Aurora got an extra seat on Regional Council; waste of a Deputy Mayor position
- 2 Councillors per ward in 3- ward Option not helpful; results in competition among Councillors, just like now (3)*
- 4-ward Option could work, if Councillors were full-time; meetings could be during the day
- Don't have fewer than 6 wards
- Current at-large system is inefficient; results if competition and duplication; a ward system can encourage new people to run
- Have just changed number of Councillors; should not change them again right now

*Numbers in brackets refer to the number of times a suggestion/comment was made.

Other Comments – Public (Survey, Public Meetings, placespeak, Facebook)

Questions

- Will there be growth in the Moraine?
- Could one start with three wards and then grow to 4 or 5 later?
- Could a 3-Ward Option include 3 Ward Councillors and 3 at-large Councillors?
- What's more important – similar numbers of people in a ward or keeping communities together?
- Will there be another round of public engagement on recommended ward system?
- Has any municipality elected a councillor at-large solely in charge of business and industry?
- Has any town ever switched to a ward system and then changed back to at-large elections?

Wards

- Base ward boundaries on the age of houses
- Use school area boundaries as ward boundaries
- Wards are too large in Option 3. Aurora needs better representation
- Keeping "like" areas together. For example, we live in a heritage neighbourhood which has different needs than a new subdivision or business area
- Option 3 provides the boundaries that are most natural for the Town of Aurora and would allow for more growth in each Ward in the future
- Keep it simple
- 4 Wards makes the most sense to me and is equitable now with plenty of room for population growth in the 'open' areas
- The boundary really not that important to me long as its mixed with different age groups and has schools, parks, recreation, etc. in each ward
- I'm concerned about the wards inadvertently being segregated by income class

Council Composition/Roles

- Councillors should be full-time
- The issue of councillors part time responsibilities has not been addressed at all! I.e. what if the councillor in my ward has a job which does not allow weekday calls, but another will. I think the approach taken is too simplistic and lazy
- 2 Councillors per ward is good. 6 plus the Mayor gives an odd number of votes, no ties
- Dislike 2 Councillors per ward, results in competition
- Like 2 Councillors per ward, because residents have 2 Councillors to talk to, if one doesn't respond (2)*
- Wards are the way to go. A rotating deputy Mayor may be an option rather than having Council or the Mayor appoint
- Prefer 3 Councillors + Mayor and Deputy Mayor at large
- More wards would give a better chance of representative needs in council
- I like the idea of still voting for the Mayor at-large

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- Good idea to have a Deputy mayor elected
- OPTION TWO WITH FOUR COUNCILLORS AND ONE MAYOR; THIS OPTION PROVIDES FOR ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS TO BE ELECTED ON AN EQUAL BASIS; 4 COUNCILLORS SHOULD PROMOTE COMPETITION AMONGST THE GROUP
- I far prefer the ward system and would not like to see the size of Council reduced. More voices means more debate, plus, too few Councillors would entail too heavy a work load for committees and other business. 6+a mayor seems the proper number for a town of this size. I come from Fredericton, NB which has a population of ~60000 and 10 Councillors. (I thought that was too many but you certainly could get their ear on an issue)
- My preference would be that each of 3 wards would elect one Councillor and the mayor and deputy-mayor would be elected in SEPARATE at-large elections i.e. run for mayor/ deputy-mayor. This would result in 5 members (odd number for votes) and provide a balance of "local" ward interests and Aurora "global" town interests (2)*
- My second choice would be that each of 5 wards would elect one Councillor and the mayor and deputy-mayor would be elected in SEPARATE at-large elections i.e. run for mayor or deputy-mayor. This would result in 7 members (odd number for votes) and also provide a balance of "local" ward interests and Aurora "global" town interests (2)*
- Options with equal number of councillors lead to tie votes. That is very undesirable. 6 -7 councillors is as current and too many
- We need to ensure that we can vote for a Deputy Mayor who is full time and can attend regional council when the Mayor is not able to attend. There are many regional issues that are affecting Aurora and we need to make sure that our small but strong voice is heard!!

Accountability/Representation
- Like the idea of wards for Aurora; better accountability; get it done (9)*
- Implement a ward system so we have a ward councillor who understands the needs of a particular neighbourhood and is the clear representative to approach when there is an issue. Then he/she is accountable to their constituents. In the past it was very difficult to find the right person on Council to talk to about a very local issue, ie a walkway needed creating in our neighbourhood.
- Issues are different in various wards; good to have Ward Councillors
- The ward system will work provided the elected Councillor lives in the ward. This way the Councillor knows the issues and voice the residents concern. Each Councillor will be held accountable and will vote for the wishes of the majority of the Councillor's constituents
- Need people that care about the area. I am extremely disappointed that there is not one person I can call about the issues I have in my area, i.e. speed on my street; I am always given the run around
- We REALLY need the Ward system. If you live in a new area, the councillors don't care about you!!! They all live in old Aurora and that's all they care about

- Reducing council and making elected councillors responsible for areas will reduce taxpayer costs and improve efficiency; Aurora must be one of the only municipalities in Canada calling itself a TOWN that does not have a Ward system, shameful
- I feel totally out of touch with what is happening in my area (Bayview Greens). I didn't know there was a monster home going in to 130 St. John's, wasn't aware a McDonald's was being built, now the Fire Department is being relocated here. I should be informed about these changes in advance of them happening I assume there would be councillors dedicated to each ward that would keep us informed of what is happening in our ward?
- The ward system only works with councillors who are committed and dedicated to their constituents. I've already lived through this in Toronto, where this was not the case
- I am glad to see that the ward system is likely to be adopted here. I think it will bring new people in to represent us on council and elections will mean residents have to get to know who is running to prevent the same people being elected every time
- We like the ward system as residents know which Councillor to approach first with any local concerns
- I love 3 or possibly 4 ward system, given proper training is given to all candidates who run for Council in the areas of diversity, PR and involvement in their community. We don't want candidates who only show up when it's convenient or for council meetings, but absent in their community

General
- I have eagerly awaited the ward system since moving here 18 years ago. The long list of potential councillors every election has been a total voting turn off leaving both my husband and I disinterested and disappointed in Aurora. After living with a ward system in Richmond Hill, I was frustrated with Aurora's stubborn lack of forward thinking
- Seems absurd to grow the council...simply costs taxpayers more money for another salary on council. We pay more than enough in property tax as it is to support town bureaucracy
- Please reduce government expenses

- I believe that the revitalization of old downtown Aurora will never happen until deliberate policy and by-laws are set to see all businesses there be people attractive. Businesses such as quality restaurants, swanky antique or novelty shops, quality night life bars and maybe theatre. There are only a few shops there that bring those looking to be wowed and do local shopping, one being Mary's Flowers. There are far too many services at this location, dentists, nail salons, chiropractors, Canada Services and community services, lawyers and a tile and floor shop, etc. Yes, they are needed but not at this location. We really need things there that give us all the wow factor

Parking could be better, far less reserved parking on the East Side behind businesses. First come first get. Also not too far away, the old Tannery location if it ever gets detoxed would make a wonderful extra parking area for the downtown. You can put all the overhead lighting you can, all the flowers you can, but if the businesses there are not the right ones, their taxes are too high to maintain the business and they are not quaint and beautiful window and interior shops no one will go out of their way to go to the downtown. Case in point, beautiful downtown quaint and pretty of Uxbridge. Unionville, Alora Newmarket, Schomberg all put ours to shame. Sorry to say but this is how I and many see it

Not in Favour of Wards

- Don't go to ward system; not broken, don't fix it (6)*
- Should discuss the pros and cons of a ward system
- Survey should have included a question re whether to have a ward system (6)*
- This survey is completely biased in favour of wards. My preference is zero division of wards! That option is not even offered so my preference when FORCED to choose, is the lesser number and more councilors! You are wasting our tax dollars! We have been through this already! I don't want the Town divided and ward against ward! Stop this stupidity. Who determined to waste our tax dollars in this manner! There is no format here to guarantee that my voice in the future will be equal to any others
- NO CHOICE! THIS A TOTALLY BIASED SURVEY. WE DO NOT NEED A WARD SYSTEM AND ARE WASTING OUR TAX DOLLARS YET AGAIN ON WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN REJECTED BY OUR COMMUNITY! Stop this anti-democratic process! I want to ensure that my concerns are carried forward by whomever I choose, in a 6-7 councillor community. I do not want to choose between 2 candidates and I do not want our community further divided...which this WILL do!

- I am not in favour of a ward system - we have already voted on this issue (23 – Facebook discussion)
- I dislike the ward system and all options (2)*
- Concerned that wards will divide Aurorans (2)*
- I oppose a ward system for Aurora strongly. This council is hurting the residents of Aurora by attempting to disenfranchise our democratic ability to select Councillors in an at-large system and by trying to further reduce the number of Councillors
- Do not have any Wards. We should be just one town - NO WARDS. Keep the Council as small as possible. Too many Councillors cost too much & are certainly NOT cost effective
- No wards, the population and geographical area does not support an expensive administration of ward implementation; elected politicians are to support and represent all areas, all people and take all factors into consideration when making best decisions for the community they represent

*Numbers in brackets refer to the number of times a suggestion/comment was made.