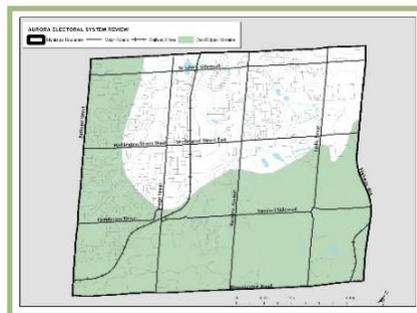
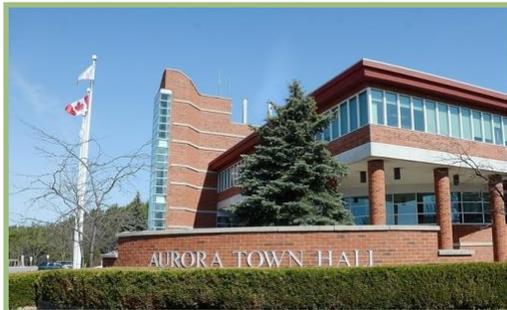


## Electoral System Review

# Options Report



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## 1. Introduction

This report presents Options for wards in the Town of Aurora. In May 2019 Aurora Town Council passed the following resolution: “*That Council endorse, in principle, the electing of all Aurora councillors, other than the Mayor, by ward vote instead of general Town-wide vote*”. Council also directed staff to investigate what such a ward system might look like.

To be able to contemplate a ward structure, even in principle, requires detailed ward boundaries – lines on a map. Further, any decision on a ward system needs to be based on options that can be compared and evaluated both by the public and Council.

This Options Report offers four Options for a ward system in Aurora and outlines the background and context within which these Options were developed. The Report is composed of the following Sections:

- *Background Research*: provides a general framework for investigating a ward system to elect councillors in Aurora;
- *Effective Representation*: overviews the legal requirements that any ward system must adhere to;
- *Growth*: factors in Aurora’s rapid growth so that any ward system will last for several elections;
- *Round 1 Engagement*: details the results of Round 1 of the project’s public engagement process and outlines what the public, stakeholders, and Members of Council suggest should be considered in designing a ward system for Aurora; detailed comments are listed in Appendices C and D;
- *Designing Options*: overviews how Options were developed;
- *The Options*: presents four Ward Options that could be used in Aurora; and,
- *Next Steps*: lays out a path for moving from these Ward Options to a preferred ward system for Aurora which can be recommended to Council.

## 2. Background Research

The Town of Aurora has experienced considerable growth over the last decade and is forecast to continue growing at a rapid pace. Currently the Town’s population is approximately 62,800 and is projected to grow to 77,000 by 2036. In the face of this change, Aurora Town Council has initiated the “Aurora Electoral System Review” (Aurora ESR).

Historically, Aurora has elected all Members of Council, the Mayor and Councillors, by a general Town-wide vote. This approach is referred to as an “at-large” system of voting. Such at-large systems for electing councillors are quite common in Ontario, but primarily in smaller municipalities. Large municipalities tend to use a “ward system” to elect councillors. Municipal wards are specific geographic areas with logical and recognizable boundaries. In both systems, ward and at-large, the mayor is elected by general vote across the entire municipality.

The Consultant Team for the Aurora ESR scanned Ontario municipalities with similar populations to determine their approach to electing councillors. Table 1 below reviews municipalities in Aurora’s population size range (40,000 to 75,000) and describes how they elect councillors. The Table also indicates the number of councillors and the number wards, if applicable.

**Table 1 – Municipal Comparisons (Ontario)**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population (2016 Census)</b>	<b>Governance Model</b>	<b>Council Size</b>	<b>Number of Wards</b>
<b>Aurora</b>	<b>55,455</b>	<b>At-large</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Woodstock	40,902	At-large	7	N/A
Georgina	43,517	Wards	7	5
Quinte West	43,577	Wards	13	4
Whitchurch-Stouffville	45,837	Wards	7	6
Cornwall	46,589	At-large	11	N/A
Belleville	50,716	Wards	9	2
North Bay	51,533	At-large	11	N/A
Welland	52,293	Wards	15	6
Halton Hills	59,013	Wards	11	4
Sarnia	71,594	At-large	9	N/A
Sault Ste. Marie	73,368	Wards	11	5

N/A means Not Applicable

Table 1 shows that most of the municipalities in this population range use a ward system to elect councillors. Only Sarnia has a larger population than Aurora and still uses an at-large approach to electing councillors. Also, the table shows that while the general approach is one councillor per ward, some municipalities elect more than one councillor in each ward. Further, some municipalities elect both the mayor and deputy mayor at-large and also regional or county councillors at-large.

Table 2 reviews the electoral approach in York Region.

**Table 2 – York Region Comparisons**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population 2016 Census</b>	<b>Governance Model</b>	<b>Council Size</b>	<b>Number of Wards</b>
<b>Aurora</b>	<b>55,455</b>	<b>At-large</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N/A</b>
East Gwillimbury	23,991	Wards	7	3
Georgina	43,517	Wards	7	5
King	24,512	Wards	7	6
Markham	328,966	Wards	13	8
Newmarket	84,224	Wards	9	7
Richmond Hill	195,022	Wards	9	6
Vaughan	305,233	Wards	6	5
Whitchurch-Stouffville	45,837	Wards	7	6

N/A means Not Applicable

As Table 2 shows, Aurora is the only municipality in York Region that currently uses an at-large approach to electing councillors.

As a general observation, both with respect to Ontario towns and cities with similar populations and municipalities in York Region, the decision to investigate options for a ward system in Aurora is appropriate.

There are certain requirements for a municipality that decides to change from an at-large system to a ward approach to electing councillors. The legal requirements, as set out in the Ontario Municipal Act, only stipulate that the minimum council size is five and that the head of council (mayor) must be elected at-large. The size of council is determined by council and can be any number above five. Council's decision on its size is non-appealable.

Thus, council can have as many wards as it likes and can also determine the number of councillors per ward. However, while the Municipal Act does not speak to wards other than to indicate that a council can have them, there is considerable jurisprudence around how to delineate wards. Both the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal (LPAT, formerly the OMB) and the courts have specified that wards must be designed to achieve "effective representation". The design of wards is appealable to the LPAT and its decision can be appealed to the courts. Also appealable is the decision to move from an at-large system to a ward-based system. In next section of this Report, the meaning of "effective representation" and how it is used to determine ward boundaries is reviewed.

### 3. Effective Representation

Any ward system that is established in a municipality must achieve “effective representation”. This is an inclusive term used to assess how well residents are represented in our form of government, which we call “representative democracy”. At a general level it means that one person’s vote should be of similar weight to another person’s vote. When applied to wards, it suggests that wards should have similar populations.

The Supreme Court of Canada has employed the term “effective representation” to set the standard for creating provincial and federal ridings and, by extension, municipal wards.

The OMB (now LPAT) has in numerous decisions on ward boundary appeals used the concept of effective representation as its standard for approving new ward boundaries. In the case of the City of Toronto, not only did the OMB use this standard, but so did the divisional court and the appellate court.

In practice, achieving effective representation when establishing ward boundaries involves balancing several components. These are:

*Voter Parity:* Voter parity speaks to the relationship between a ward’s population and the average ward population of all wards. To achieve parity, ward populations need to be similar but not identical. Voter parity has special prominence in weighing whether effective representation has been achieved. It is assessed in terms of incremental percentage ranges around the average ward population.

A range of up to +/- 15% is considered appropriate for urban areas. Population variances can be greater, in limited instances, in order to satisfy other criteria, for example respecting communities of interest, using recognizable boundaries or accommodating anticipated growth. However, if the range gets too large, effective representation is lost.

*Natural/Physical Boundaries:* Natural boundaries such as rivers and ravines often separate wards. Similarly, expressways, railways, hydro corridors and arterial roads can be used as ward boundaries. Examples are Yonge Street, Wellington Street and the GO train tracks. Natural/physical boundaries are highly recognizable and often separate communities of interest.

*Geographic Communities of Interest:* The term ‘communities of interest’ refers to neighbourhoods or areas that have a common bond, such as Aurora Heights or Highland Gate as well as new communities like Aurora Northeast and Bayview Northeast. A map of Aurora’s neighbourhood associations is attached as Appendix A.

To form a basis for determining ward boundaries, communities of interest must be geographically contiguous. It is important to avoid dividing geographic communities of

interest and/or neighbourhoods when creating wards. However, this objective cannot always be achieved. Sometimes a community is so large that to respect voter parity it must be split among more than one ward.

*Minority Interests:* Minority interests should be considered, if they are geographically based.

*Ward History:* Ward history is also a component of effective representation. However, in Aurora it is not applicable, as Aurora does not currently use wards.

*Capacity to Represent:* Capacity to represent is often equated with councillors' workload. It encompasses ward size, types and breadth of concerns, ongoing growth and development, complexity of issues, etc. For example, wards with extensive employment areas, major infrastructure facilities, tourist attractions, or rapid development contain a host of issues a councillor has to deal with, in addition to the concerns of local residents within the ward.

*Geographic Size and Shape of a Ward:* All wards cannot be the same geographic size. Some areas of a municipality are more densely populated than others and some wards have more open space. In Aurora, the Oak Ridges Moraine area represents a challenge due to its existing low-density development (see Appendix B).

*Population Growth:* Population growth has to be taken into consideration, if a ward system is to last for multiple elections. Any new ward system should last Aurora for three elections – 2022, 2026 and 2030- and possibly a fourth, 2034. The Aurora ESR sets the Target Year for designing a ward system at 2026. This allows for the Town's expected growth to be factored into ward boundary design.

*Balancing the Components of Effective Representation:* Designing a new ward structure requires balancing the many components of effective representation. While all of the components have to be taken into consideration, they are not all equal. Voter parity is pivotal and is a key determinant of effective representation. Respecting communities of interest is another high priority, along with well-defined, coherent ward boundaries.

## 4. Growth in Aurora

Aurora's rapid population growth is mentioned at several points throughout this Report. It is one of the reasons Council has embarked on the Aurora ESR. Growth rates, both of Aurora as a whole and within certain parts of the Town, are a key component of designing wards.

Any ward system should last for multiple elections. Once a ward system is established, it should not have to be reviewed for every election. The Ward Options presented in this report are designed to last for three and possibly four elections. This means that

any wards established for the next election in 2022 should still be in place up to the 2030 election and hopefully the 2034 election.

To achieve a ward system that will last for multiple elections, the first step is to assess overall growth based on election dates. Both the Town of Aurora and the Region of York undertake population projections based on Census years. The Consultant Team held discussions with both the Town and York Region and agreed on overall population projections for Aurora. Table 3 provides this information for the 2022 to 2034 election cycles.

**Table 3 – Population by Election Cycle**

<b>Election Year</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
2022	66,000
2026	70,000
2030	74,000
2034	76,200

*Selecting a “Target Year”*

Ward options must be designed around a specific election year. In ward option design this is referred to as the “Target Year”. The range in voter parity – the percentage variance from the average ward population – is an important component of effective representation and focuses on a specific year. Since Aurora’s population grows each year, the calculation of voter parity and variances will be different depending on the year chosen.

Elections for Aurora’s Council will occur in 2022, 2026, 2030 and 2034. When designing wards for at least three elections, the year 2026 becomes the Target Year for evaluating the voter parity component of effective representation.

The Options in this Report are all constructed using a projected 2026 population of 70,000 for the whole Town and are designed to minimize variances in voter parity for that year.

**5. Aurora ESR Round 1 Engagement**

An extensive and appropriate engagement process is essential when designing a potential ward system for a municipality. Although the topic is, perhaps, not top-of-mind for many, the public, stakeholders and Members of Council have to be given ample opportunity to participate. The Aurora ESR uses two engagement rounds. Round 1 collected input into options for possible ward boundaries and potential number and populations of wards, respecting old and new neighbourhoods. Round 2 will seek feedback on a variety of options for a ward system for Aurora. The following reports on the results of Round 1.

## 5.1 What We Did

Round 1 of the Aurora ESR's engagement process has been multi-faceted. It included: a web banner on the Town's website directing users to a dedicated webpage [aurora.ca/esr](http://aurora.ca/esr), to an online survey at [surveymonkey.com/r/aesr](https://surveymonkey.com/r/aesr), and to Aurora's online engagement platform [placespeak.com/esr](https://placespeak.com/esr); social media posts; Council member and stakeholder interviews; and 2 public meetings.

The dedicated webpage contains 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 opportunities to become involved in the Aurora ESR.

The online survey was open between October 8 and 28 and was also available in hard copy at Aurora's Town Hall and at the public meetings. 174 responses were received (5 in hard copy). Five members of the public provided comments on placespeak and 4 commented on Facebook. All Members of Council were interviewed individually, and the Project Team met with the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee. Print advertisements notifying the public of the project and of the public meetings were placed in the *Auroran* and the *Aurora Banner* on October 10 and 17, 2019. "Posters" advertising the project were placed on the community notice boards in Aurora's community centres and in the Aurora Public Library.

The public meetings took place in accessible locations on October 23 (Aurora Cultural Centre) and 28 (Town Hall). Nine individuals attended the October 23 meeting and 15 attended on October 28. Each public meeting began with a presentation of the project and was followed by a discussion. Council member interviews and the public meeting discussions solicited answers to the same questions as those contained in the survey.

On October 17, 2019, Town staff sent an eblast to the Aurora Seniors Association (ASA) advising members of the Aurora ESR and directing them to the project webpage and online survey. Of the 1,044 recipients, 88 went to the online survey, 8 went to the project webpage and 1 went to the ASA's Facebook page. Communications staff informed the public of the Aurora ESR and reminded them of the online survey and the public meetings via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on October 7, 22, 23 and 28 as well as through targeted ads on Facebook and Twitter throughout the period of October 7 to 22. There were 1,121 Impressions and 24 Engagements on Twitter, 3,900 Impressions and 250 Engagements on Facebook and 13 'likes' on Instagram.

The Project Team communicated with Aurora's 8 residents' and ratepayers' associations and the Aurora BIA to invite them to participate. School Board Trustees were notified of the project, although any new ward system will not affect Trustee Areas in Aurora.

A master project mailing list was established, which currently contains 122 contacts.

## 5.2 What We Heard

In addition to the social media activities, a total of 312 individuals participated in Round 1 of the Aurora ESR in one way or another. Based on our experience, this number is quite impressive for a community the size of Aurora, especially considering that Round 1 was soliciting general input into the development of a ward system, rather than feedback on specific proposals.

### 5.2.1 Survey

Like all other Round 1 activities, this survey was meant to elicit responses that provided information for developing wards for Aurora rather than statistically relevant data. As expected, respondents answered some but not all of the questions and did not necessarily relate their answers to one question to their answers to other questions. Many survey participants wanted to receive project updates, but did not provide an email or other address where they could be contacted.

*Q1 What area of Aurora do you live in? Please give the nearest major intersection.*

People who answered the survey live all over Aurora, although the majority live west of the railway tracks. This is not surprising, since these areas have long established residents' and ratepayers' associations, who are involved regularly with the Town's initiatives. Fifty-nine of the 174 respondents live east of the railway tracks.

*Q2 Ward boundaries need to be easy to recognize. What specific boundaries (roads, railway lines, natural features, utility corridors, etc.) would you suggest?*

A large majority of people who responded to the survey suggested Aurora's major arterials as ward boundaries, such as Yonge Street, Wellington Street, Bayview Avenue, as well as the railway tracks. Secondly, Bathurst Street, Henderson Drive/Vandorf Sideroad, St. John's Side Road and Leslie Street were mentioned. However, some respondents also thought about neighbourhood roads which might make good boundaries, such as Aurora Heights Drive, Orchard Heights Boulevard or Golf Links Drive.

*Q3 Are there certain communities or neighbourhoods that should be together in the same ward? Please list.*

This question elicited a great deal of information and creativity as respondents not only listed many communities they thought should be kept together, but also began to draw potential wards. Expanding on the boundaries identified in Question 2, Kennedy Street West and Industrial Parkway were listed as potential boundaries, among many others.

Communities that should be kept together included the Downtown Core /Town Centre; Aurora Heights and Orchard Heights; Town Park; Regency Acres and Aurora Highlands; and the estate homes in the south of Aurora. In addition to specific areas and neighbourhoods, survey participants suggested that rural areas, heritage areas, stable neighbourhoods, old Aurora and new Aurora be each kept together. A map of Aurora Neighbourhood Associations is attached as Appendix A.

*Q4 How many wards do you think there should be in Aurora?*

The total number of wards suggested for Aurora ranges from 3 to 12. When a range was provided, e.g. 3-5 wards, it was counted in the 3, 4 and 5 categories respectively.

Number of wards	Responses
3	3
4	27
5	12
6	55
7	5
8	19
9	1
10	6
12	1

Comments:

- Half the number of wards than councillors and two councillors per ward to work as a team
- If 5 wards, elect Deputy Mayor at-large
- 4 wards and 2 at-large (2)
- 5 plus 1 at-large Councillor

*Q5 Aurora currently has approximately 62,800 people and the Town continues to grow. How many residents should there be in a ward?*

Number of residents/ward	Responses
4,000 – 6,000	4
6,000 – 10,000	8
8,000 – 12,000*	54
10,000 - 15,000	18
10,000 – 20,000	3
15,000 – 20,000	16
25,000	1

\*a large number of responses clustered around 10,000 in this category, which may be due to the current population and Council size.

*Q6 Would you like to provide any other comments?*

This question elicited a large number of varied comments, many of them directed at the relative merits of whether or not to implement a ward system in Aurora. Comments were thoughtful, but emotions also ran high on both sides of the debate. Of the 174 survey responses, 52 were strongly opposed to a ward system. Some of the opposition relates to the 2014 public referendum on the issue. Rather than quoting any of the comments selectively, all have been included in their entirety in Appendix C to this Report.

### 5.2.2 Public Meetings/Stakeholders/Members of Council/placespeak/Facebook

Responses and comments from the two public meetings, meetings with the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee and Members of Council, placespeak and Facebook have been consolidated to avoid inadvertent identification of individual responses.

Question 1 regarding the location of individuals' residences is not relevant to this summary.

*Q2 Ward boundaries need to be easy to recognize. What specific boundaries (roads, railway lines, natural features, utility corridors, etc.) would you suggest?*

Most respondents suggested the railway tracks as a strong potential east-west ward boundary. This was followed by major streets such as Yonge Street, Wellington Street, Bayview Avenue, Leslie Street and more local roads such as Aurora Heights Drive and Orchard Heights Boulevard.

*Q3 Are there certain communities or neighbourhoods that should be together in the same ward? Please list.*

Like the people who answered the survey, respondents identified specific areas and communities, such as Town Park, the north-east quadrant of Aurora, Aurora Heights, the Heritage District, Regency Acres, the Oak Ridges Moraine estate homes and stable neighbourhoods as designated in Aurora's Official Plan. Some respondents also tried their hand at drawing specific potential boundaries for 4 and 6 wards. A map of Aurora Neighbourhood Associations is attached as Appendix A.

*Q4 How many wards do you think there should be in Aurora?*

The total number of wards suggested for Aurora ranges from 3 to 8.

Number of wards	Responses
3	1
4	4
5	2
6	8
8	1
Don't know	1

Notes:

- 4 part-time ward Councillors plus 2 full-time at-large Councillors

*Q5 Aurora currently has approximately 62,800 people and the Town continues to grow. How many residents should there be in a ward?*

Number of residents/ward	Responses
10,000	5
10,000 – 12,000	2
15,000 – 20,000	1
Don't know	11

### *Q6 Would you like to provide any other comments?*

Like the replies to the survey, this question resulted in arguments in favour and against adopting a ward system for Aurora. The opposing comments stemmed mainly from a very lively discussion at one of the public meetings as well as from placespeak and Facebook. Respondents also raised the issue of whether Aurora's Councillors could become full-time and whether the Town could implement a hybrid system of ward and at-large Councillors and/or a combination of full-time and part-time Councillors.

All comments have been included in their entirety in Appendix D to this Report.

### **5.3 Informing the Options**

Round 1 of the public engagement for the Aurora ESR has informed the creation of Options for a new ward system for the Town in a variety of ways. Participants suggested the number of wards that would be appropriate as well as the possible populations of these wards. Participants also identified recognizable natural and physical boundaries, such as the railway tracks, major roads, neighbourhood streets and rivers/creeks. And lastly, participants also pinpointed Aurora's many and varied communities and neighbourhoods, which should not be divided by any new ward boundaries.

Yonge and Wellington Streets are Aurora's main streets and are also recognizable ward boundaries. Aurora's Business Improvement Area (BIA) is part of the Aurora Promenade Secondary Plan, which includes both sides of these streets. Ward boundaries along Yonge and Wellington, of necessity, divide the Secondary Plan area and thereby the BIA. The question of whether to divide a BIA along a main street is often raised during reviews of ward boundaries. BIA members generally believe that being represented by more than one councillor who understands their concerns is beneficial. Of course, the Promenade is arguably very important to Aurora as a whole and, therefore, will remain a focal point for all Aurora Councillors.

The discussion of whether or not to implement a ward system for Aurora and whether the Town's governance system should be changed from part-time to full-time Councillors is outside of the purview of the Aurora ESR. However, all comments on these issues are listed in Appendices C and D to this Report.

## **6. Designing Options**

Developing different ward options is an integral part of an electoral system review. Options allow the public and Members of Council to evaluate what will "work best" in Aurora. All ward options must achieve 'effective representation' to be implementable and to withstand any potential appeal.

Selecting the basic parameters of any option is guided by both the engagement process (Section 5) and the components of effective representation. Several suggestions regarding potential ward populations, appropriate boundaries and communities of

interest were offered during the Round 1 engagement process. These have all been considered in the design of Ward Options.

Section 4 of this Report describes the overall growth of Aurora and mentions that 2026 has been selected as the “target year” for the Aurora ESR. The Ward Options are all constructed using a projected population of 70,000 for 2026. The next step is to determine where this growth will occur. Growth is not uniform across Aurora. The Official Plan and the Strategic Plan provide guidance on which areas are growing and which communities are stable. Also, existing development applications and their status add valuable information.

A further step allocates current populations and projected growth to specific areas within the Town. To assess if an option achieves effective representation, especially the voter parity component, the population of each possible ward must be calculated for all the election years under consideration. This calculation assembles “small area data” from the Census of Canada and from York Region.

Projected ward populations must be assessed to determine how well voter parity is achieved. As noted, wards do not have to have the same populations, but “similar” populations. In ward boundary design for urban areas “similar” is defined as a variance of up to +/- 15%. Larger variances may be possible to achieve other components of effective representation, for example, protecting communities of interest.

Three key considerations need to be established at the outset of designing Ward Options. The first consideration was the Target Year for the options (2026) and the second was the estimated population of Aurora (70,000) in that year. The next consideration revolves around the interrelated items of the number of wards, the number of councillors and the population of the wards. Of course, any one of these considerations influences the others. However, the best starting point in Aurora’s case is the number of wards.

The Ontario Municipal Act allows municipal council to determine both the number of councillors and the number of wards. These need not be the same. Some municipalities elect more than one councillor per ward. Two conditions in the Municipal Act constrain council in these matters. The minimum size of any council is five and the mayor must be elected at-large. Neither of these conditions impact Aurora.

Currently, Aurora has a Council of 7 members, a Mayor plus six Councillors. Recently, Council’s size was reduced from 9 to 7 members. The Council resolution launching the Aurora ESR indicates that all councillors should be elected by ward. During the engagement process suggestions were put forward for 3 to 12 wards. This would mean a Council size of 5 to 13 when the Mayor is included. Table 4 shows the approximate ratio of population per ward under these various scenarios, based on a 2026 total population estimate for Aurora of 70,000.

**Table 4 – Average Population per Ward in 2026**

<b>Number of Wards</b>	<b>Population per Ward*</b>
3	23,350
4	17,500
5	14,000
6	11,650
7	10,000
8	8,750
9	7,750
10	7,000
12	5,850

\*Rounded to the nearest 50 people

The population per ward is important when assessing ‘capacity to represent’, one of the components of effective representation, especially given the part-time status of Aurora’s current Councillors. During the engagement process there were also suggestions for a hybrid model of ward councillors and councillors at large. To the extent that a hybrid model was premised on a councillor at-large sitting on York Regional Council, this was investigated. The conclusion was that there would be no additional representative for Aurora, other than the Mayor, on York Regional Council in the foreseeable future.

Tables 3 (Population by Election Cycle) and 4 (Average Population per Ward in 2026) are based on the total population for Aurora. When considering the detailed ward populations as presented in each Option, it will be evident that the total 2026 population adds up to only 68,000. The difference is explained by a factor termed “Census undercount”.

When the Census gives the total population for a municipality, it also provides the estimated undercount for the entire municipality. This is an estimate of the number of people not included in the Census for various reasons. Aurora’s undercount estimate is 3%. Unfortunately, for the purpose of ward boundary calculations, undercount estimates are not available for the small areas (Dissemination Areas) that are used to gage voter parity when designing wards. Hence, the total population of the proposed wards when added up for any year will be slightly less than the total population estimate for the Town. The population used in designing wards for the 2026 target year totals 68,000. If the undercount (3%) is added, then the total population is 70,000 as shown in Table 3.

## 7. The Options

This Section of the Options Report presents four Options for a ward system for the Town for consideration. Each Option displays a map with detailed ward boundaries and a table with population projections for the next four elections, plus a calculation of the variance of voter parity for each ward in each election year. The variance is the

percentage that the ward population is above or below the average ward population. All Options achieve effective representation, although there is a difference in how well each achieves the various components of effective representation.

Designing ward boundary options for Aurora has its challenges because of the Town's geography, the varying densities and distribution of populations, the different street patterns in the older and newer parts of Town and in those areas where future growth will occur. Balancing these issues with the requirements of voter parity led to the ward patterns developed for the four Options.

The Oak Ridges Moraine dominates the southern part of Aurora (see Appendix B). It has developed with large lots and estate residences at a very low density. Future growth in this area is limited. In contrast, the northeast area, between Bayview and Leslie and north of Wellington contains over a third of the Town's population and accounts for a large percentage of future growth.

The street patterns across Aurora vary considerably. The old Town is dominated by a grid pattern, while newer development is based on a curvilinear road network with few connecting streets and few streets that cross entire communities. Street patterns are important in delineating clear ward boundaries, a vital component of effective representation.

These challenges, as well as the need to keep communities and neighbourhoods together, are reflected in the four Options for a new ward system for Aurora. As best as possible, the Options balance voter parity, use of recognizable boundaries and avoiding splitting communities. The discussion of each Option references to what degree this balance has been achieved. Each Option has implications for Council composition, which are also pointed out in the discussion of each Option.

The Ward Option Maps use a numbering system that denotes both the Option number and the Ward number. Hence in Option 1, the 3 Ward Option, the numbering system is W1-1, W1-2 and W1-3. In Option 2, the wards are numbered W2-1, W2-2, etc.

## 7.1 Option 1 – 3 Wards

Option 1 has 3 wards. The average 2026 ward population is 22,660. Ward populations in this Option range from 20,780 to 25,520 with a variance from the average of -8% to +12.6%., well within the appropriate range for voter parity.

Option 1 also keeps communities together (see Appendix A). In addition to major roads like Yonge, Wellington and Bayview, and the railway tracks, this Options also uses neighbourhood streets like Kennedy Street West and Murray Drive as ward boundaries.

### *Implications for Council composition*

In the 3 Ward Option there would have to be more than one councillor per ward to meet the Municipal Act requirement of a minimum council size of five members, including the Mayor. Electing two Councillors per ward would be the most direct way of implementing Option 1. The result would be a Council of seven members. A Deputy Mayor would have to be elected by Council or appointed by the Mayor.

Another approach would be to reduce Council size to five members. In this configuration, there would be one Councillor per ward plus a Mayor and Deputy Mayor elected at-large.

Map 1 shows the 3 Ward Option and its accompanying table indicates estimated ward populations for the election years 2022, 2026, 2030 and 2034.

Option Map 1: 3 Wards

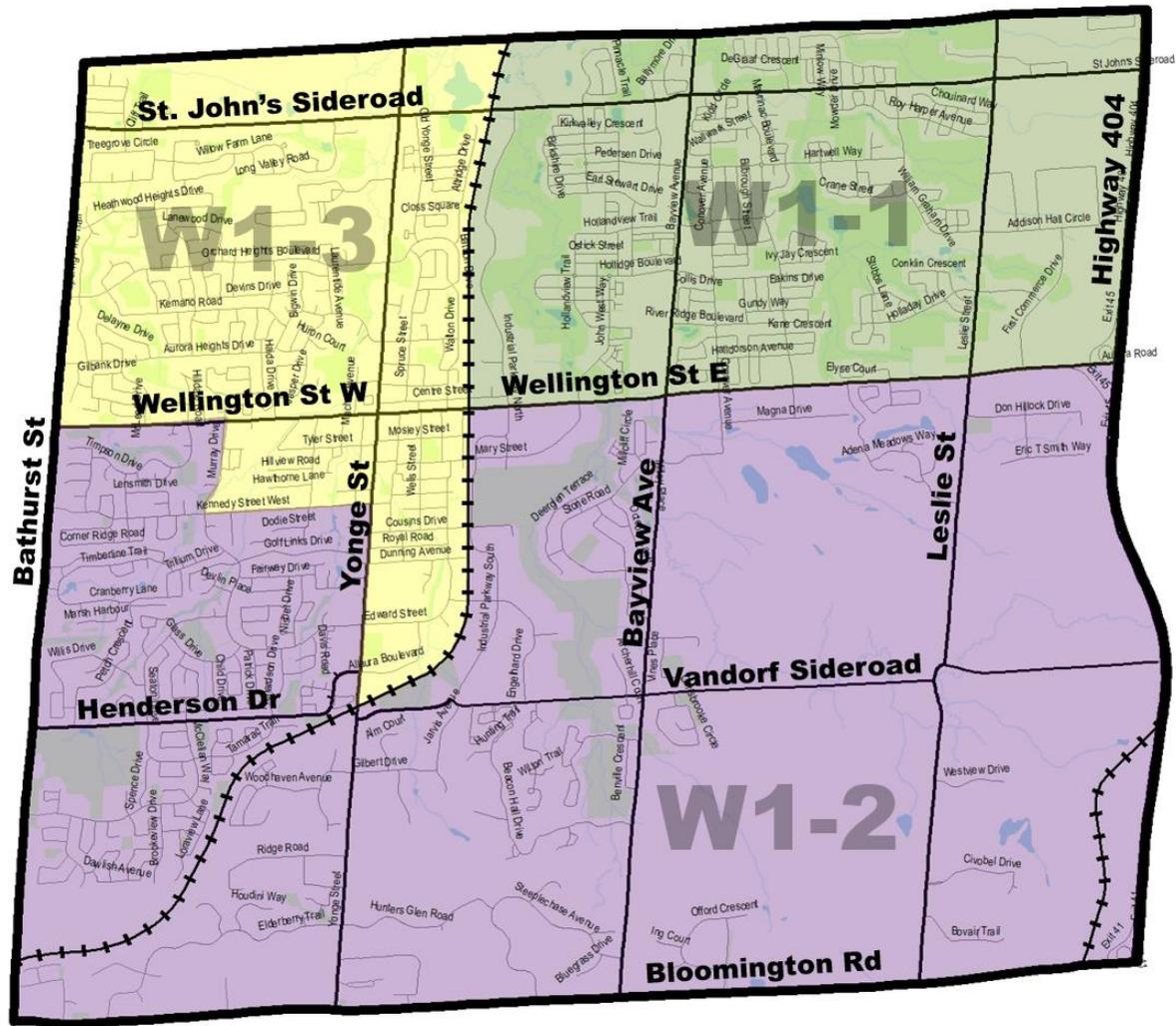


Table 5 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 1

Town of Aurora - Ward Boundary Options								
Forecast Census Population at Election Years								
OPTION 1	Population 2022	Variance from average	Population 2026	Variance from average	Population 2030	Variance from average	Population 2034	Variance from average
W1-1	23,540	11.0%	25,520	12.6%	27,100	13.9%	28,240	14.6%
W1-2	20,430	-3.6%	21,680	-4.3%	22,680	-4.7%	23,380	-5.1%
W1-3	19,640	-7.4%	20,780	-8.3%	21,630	-9.1%	22,290	-9.5%
Average Ward Population	21,200		22,660		23,800		24,640	

## 7.2 Option 2 – 4 Wards

Option 2 has 4 wards. The average 2026 ward population is 17,000. Ward populations in this Option range from 15,500 to 18,130 with a variance from the average of -8.8% to + 6.6%. This voter parity range is excellent.

Option 2 also uses major roads like Yonge, Wellington, Bayview and Vandorf Sideroad as ward boundaries. Most communities are kept together (see Appendix A). However, to achieve voter parity, the northern part of the Highland Gate community had to be split off by drawing the southern boundary of W2-3 along Timberline Trail/Trillium Drive and Golf Links Drive. Also, the railway tracks are not a ward boundary in Option 2, but are part of W2-1 and W2-4 respectively.

### *Implications for Council composition*

This Option would lead to a Council of five members, four Ward Councillors plus the Mayor. A Deputy Mayor would have to be elected by Council or appointed by the Mayor.

If a slightly larger Council was desirable, a Deputy Mayor could be elected at-large for a Council of six members.

Map 2 shows the 4 Ward Option and its accompanying table indicates estimated ward populations for the election years 2022, 2026, 2030 and 2034.

Option Map 2: 4 Wards

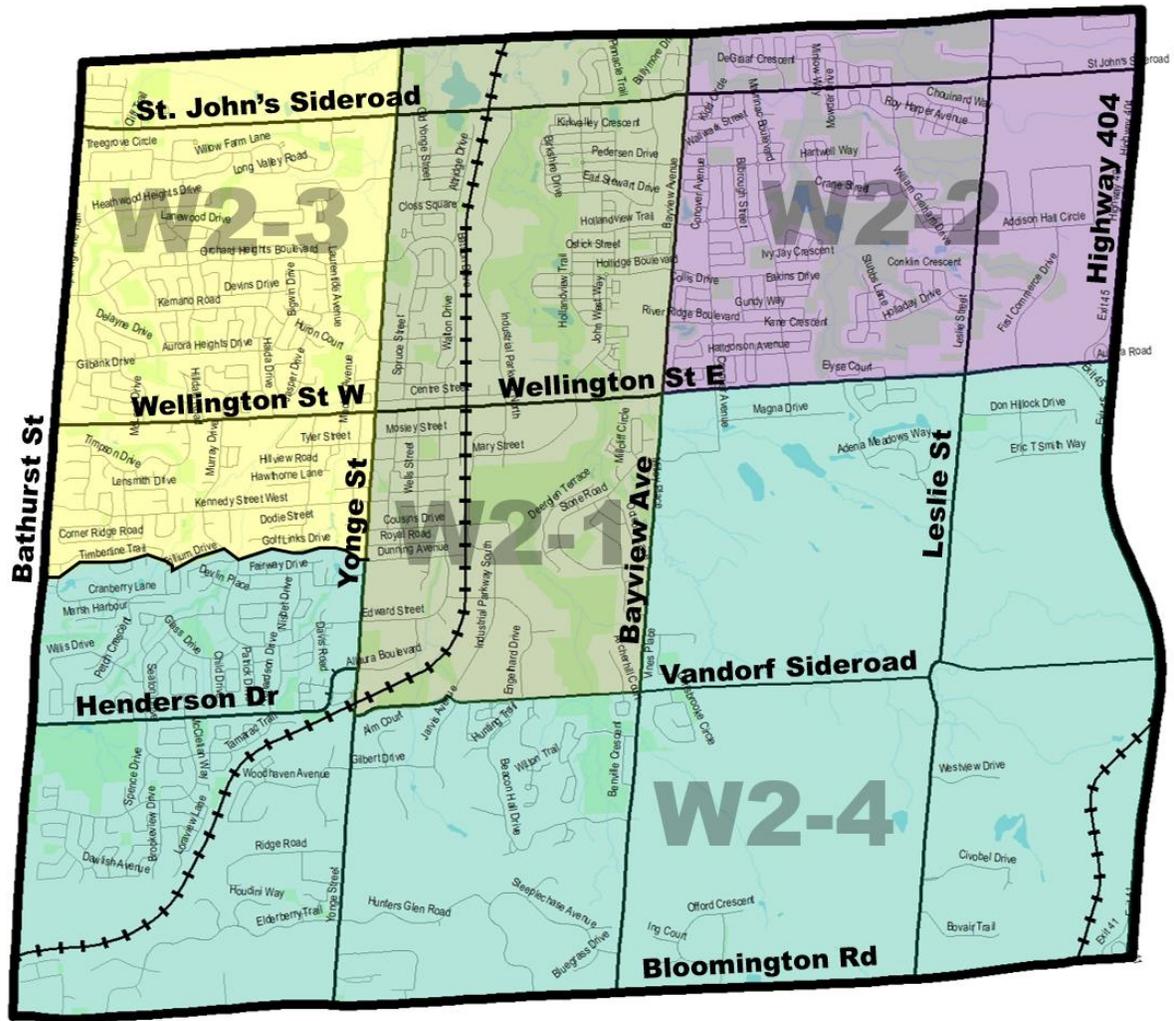


Table 6 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 2

Town of Aurora - Ward Boundary Options								
Forecast Census Population at Election Years								
OPTION 2	Population 2022	Variance from average	Population 2026	Variance from average	Population 2030	Variance from average	Population 2034	Variance from average
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%
<b>Average Ward Population</b>	15,900		17,000		17,850		18,480	

### 7.3 Option 3 – 5 Wards

Option 3 has 5 wards. The average 2026 ward population is 13,600. Ward populations in this Option range from 12,030 to 14,880 with a variance from the average of -11.5% to +9.4%. The 5 Ward Option's voter parity range is entirely appropriate.

Option 3 keeps communities together (see Appendix A). This Option also uses major roads like Yonge, Wellington and Bayview as ward boundaries. Kennedy Street West, a neighbourhood street, is also a boundary. In order to balance ward populations, W3-1 had to be carved out of the north-east quadrant of Aurora. In addition to easily recognizable boundaries like Bayview, Wellington and Leslie, its north-eastern boundary is Marsh Creek. In this Option the railway tracks are a ward boundary south of Wellington.

#### *Implications for Council composition*

This Option would lead to a Council of 6 members, five Ward Councillors plus the Mayor. A Deputy Mayor would have to be elected by Council or appointed by the Mayor.

If a Council size similar to the current Council was desirable, a Deputy Mayor could be elected at-large for a Council of seven members.

Map 3 shows the 5 Ward Option and its accompanying table indicates estimated ward populations for the election years 2022, 2026, 2030 and 2034.

Option Map 3: 5 Wards

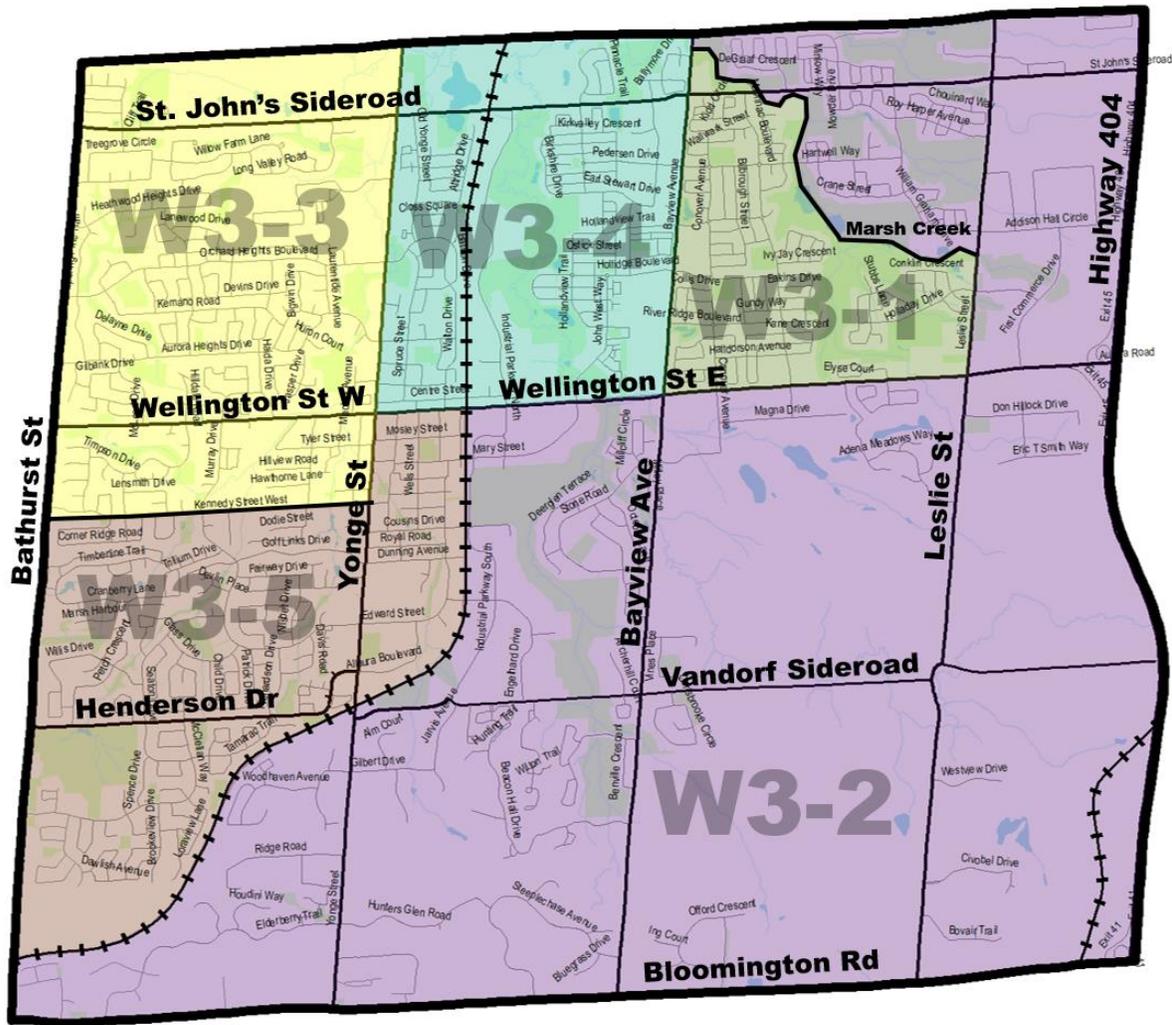


Table 7 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 3

Town of Aurora - Ward Boundary Options								
Forecast Census Population at Election Years								
OPTION 3	Population 2022	Variance from average	Population 2026	Variance from average	Population 2030	Variance from average	Population 2034	Variance from average
W3-1	11,390	-10.5%	12,720	-6.5%	13,770	-3.6%	14,540	-1.6%
W3-2	13,360	5.0%	14,800	8.8%	15,940	11.6%	16,730	13.2%
W3-3	14,040	10.4%	14,880	9.4%	15,520	8.7%	16,010	8.3%
W3-4	11,610	-8.7%	12,030	-11.5%	12,350	-13.5%	12,590	-14.8%
W3-5	13,210	3.9%	13,550	-0.4%	13,830	-3.2%	14,040	-5.0%
<b>Average Ward Population</b>	12,720		13,600		14,280		14,780	

#### 7.4 Option 4 – 6 Wards

Given that Aurora Council now has 6 Councillors and that the number of Councillors was recently decreased from 8 to 6, ward options with 6 wards have certain merit. The Consultant Team endeavoured to develop more than one option based on 6 wards. This proved impossible to do without violating the principles of effective representation, due to the current population distribution in Aurora, the location of projected population growth and the need for clear ward boundaries.

Option 4 has 6 wards. The average 2026 ward population is 11,330. Ward populations in this Option range from 9,690 to 12,440 with a variance from the average of -14.5% to +9.8%.

The south-eastern ward (W4-4) is the smallest and, therefore, has the largest voter parity variance. This is due to the low-density development in this part of Aurora and the presence of the Oak Ridges Moraine. However, this voter parity variance is still within acceptable levels.

Option 4 keeps most communities together (see Appendix A). However, by using Orchard Heights Boulevard as the boundary between W4-1 and W4-2, a small portion of the Aurora Heights neighbourhood is split from the main community to the south.

This Option also uses major roads like Yonge, Wellington and St. John's Sideroad as ward boundaries, as well as the majority of the railway tracks. Kennedy Street West, a neighbourhood street, is again a boundary and so is Mavrillac Boulevard in the northeast quadrant of Aurora.

All wards in Option 4 have clear boundaries. Only Ward W4-1 has an odd shape. The Consultant Team had to consider the low population numbers in the north-west area of the Town. To achieve appropriate voter parity in this area with 6 wards requires adding population to the area bounded by Orchard Heights Boulevard, Yonge Street, Aurora's northern boundary and Bathurst Street. The logical area to be added is across Yonge to the railway tracks. However, those combined populations are still too low, or conversely the populations of the adjacent wards are still too high. To achieve appropriate voter parity, the area south of Wellington and the area north of St. John's Sideroad had to be added to Ward W4-1.

It is possible to create a more rectangular ward in the north-west area of the Town. However, this leads to the 5 Ward Option - Option 3.

#### *Implications for Council composition*

This Option would lead to a Council of seven members, six ward Councillors plus the Mayor and would replicate the current size of Council. A Deputy Mayor would have to be elected by Council or appointed by the Mayor.

Map 4 shows the 6 Ward Option and its accompanying table indicates estimated ward populations for the election years 2022, 2026, 2030 and 2034.

Option Map 4: 6 Wards

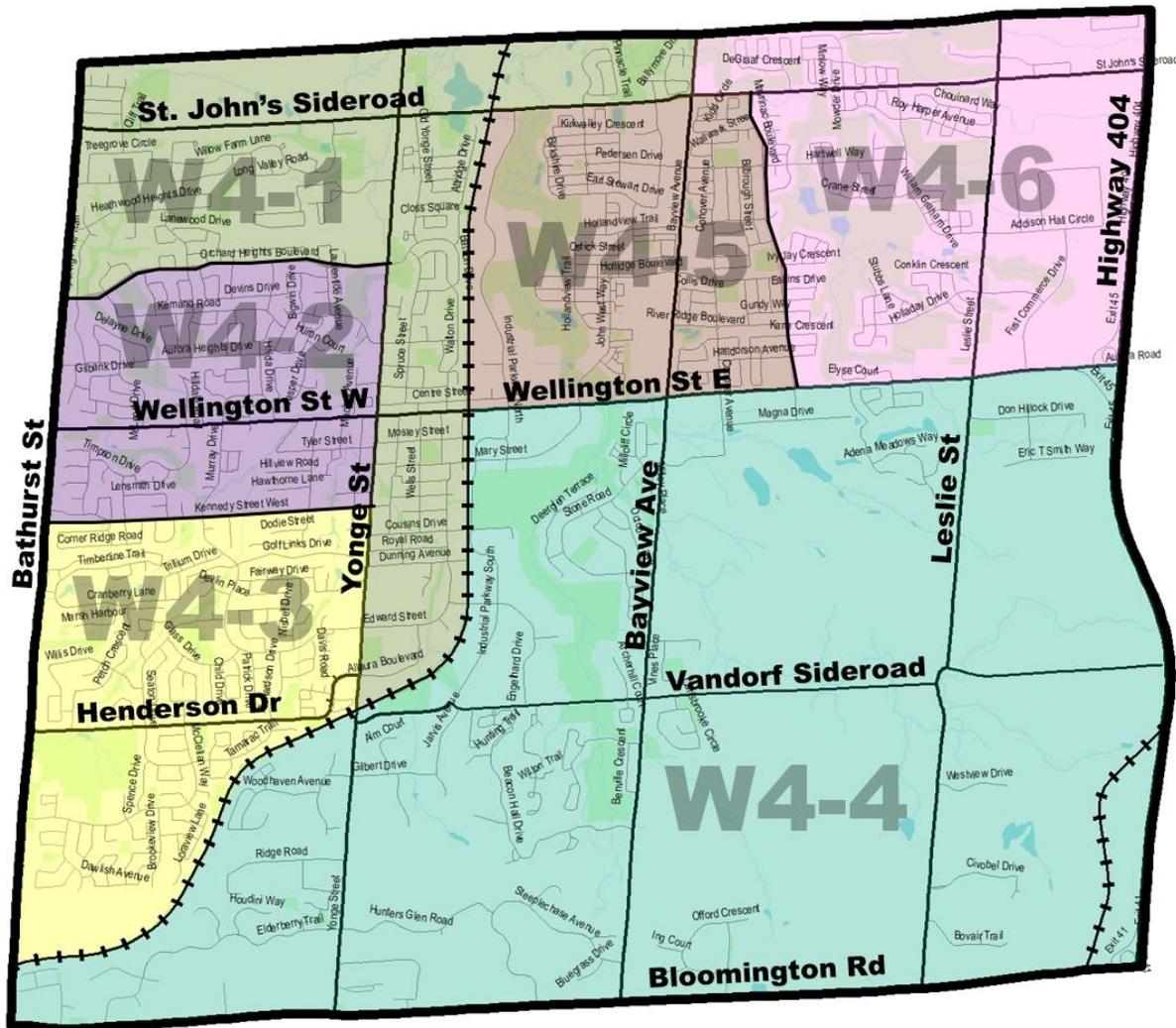


Table 8 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 4

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%
<b>Average Ward Population</b>	10,600		11,330		11,900		12,320	

## 7.5 Other Options

During the Round 1 engagement process, both during the public meetings and through responses to the survey, suggestions were made for ward configurations of more than 6 wards, possibly 7, 8, 10 or even 12. The Consultant Team attempted to create options with more than 6 wards. However, the realities of Aurora's population distribution, particularly varying densities, and the street patterns in the newer areas of Town made it impossible to create options with more than 6 wards and still respect the components of effective representation.

With approximately a third of Aurora's population, some 21,000, east of the railway tracks and north of Wellington Street, this area would have to be broken up into 3 or 4 wards. There are no discernable boundaries to be used in this area for such a large number of wards. Another issue west of Yonge is the number of established communities. Trying to divide this area (approximately 22,000) into 3 or 4 wards would divide communities.

Given the difficulty of achieving effective representation in any options above 6 wards, the Consultant Team did not pursue any other options.

## 7.6 How the Options Compare

While all the Options achieve effective representation, some achieve slightly better voter parity, some are stronger on recognizable boundaries and some are better at keeping Aurora's communities together. The purpose of Round 2 of the engagement process is to collect feedback on the Options within the context of effective representation.

# 8. Next Steps

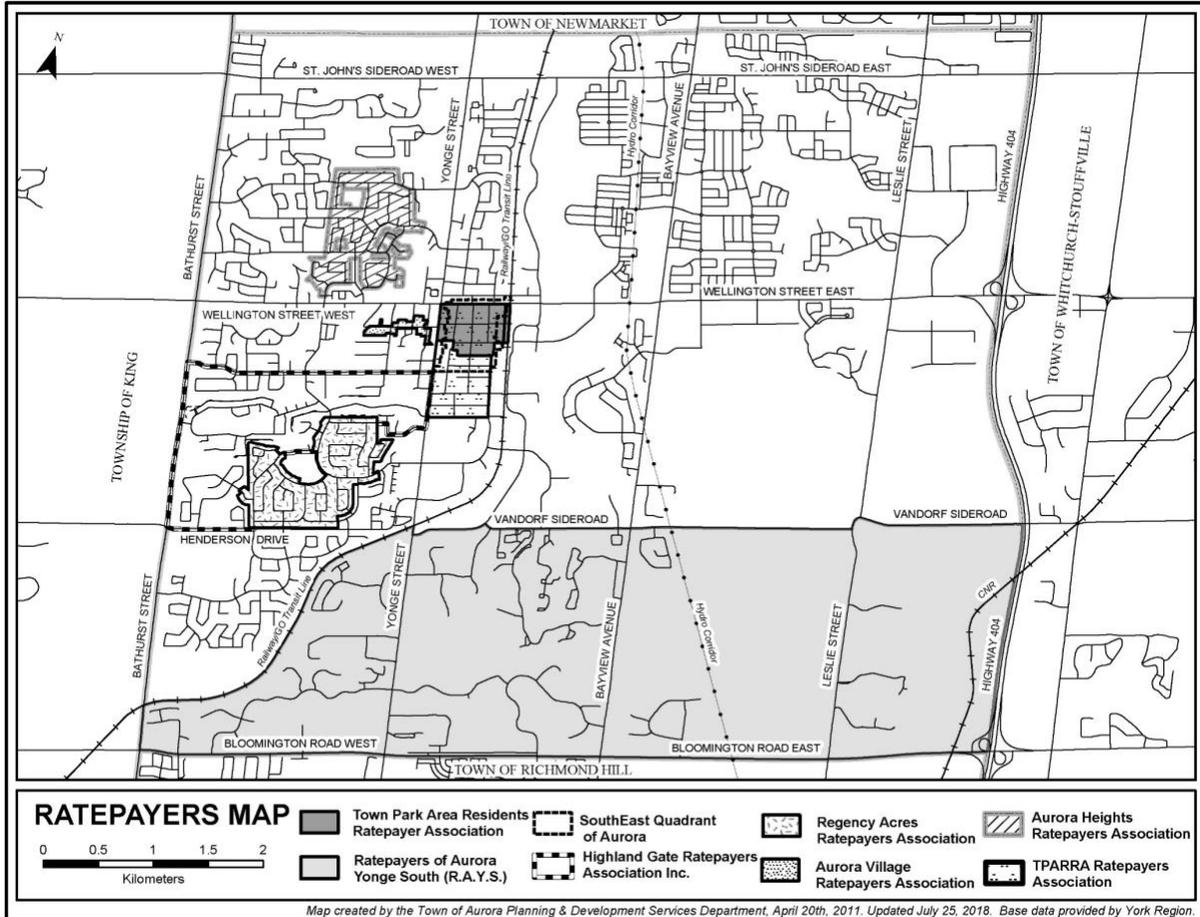
The purpose of the Options Report is to start a conversation about which Option is preferable. Experience suggests that during this conversation refinements will be suggested.

The immediate next step is a second round of engagement. Round 2, like Round 1, will include public meetings, a feedback survey, meetings with stakeholders, social media input opportunities and meetings with Members of Council. Round 2 is scheduled to run from early December 2019 to mid-January 2020.

Following Round 2, the Consultant Team will prepare a Final Report that reviews the Aurora ESR project, outlines the results of the two rounds of public engagement and recommends a preferred Option to Council. The Final Report is scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2020.

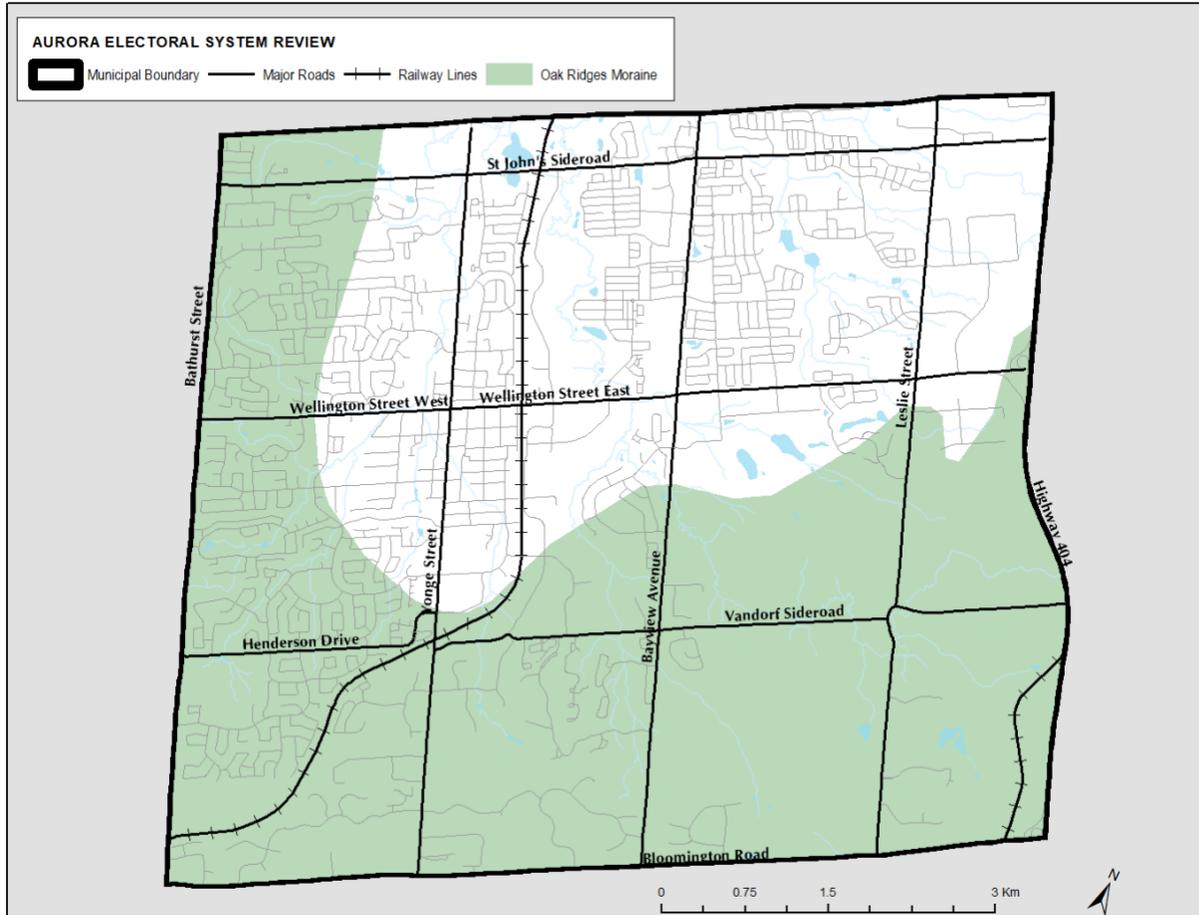
# Appendix A

## Aurora Neighbourhood Associations



# Appendix B

## Oak Ridges Moraine



## Appendix C

### Responses to Survey Q6: Would you like to provide any other comments? (174 respondents)

#### a. 122 respondents (multiple comments have been recorded)

- I really think this survey has zero benefit. An interactive map that I can move boundaries that shows population within my selected boundaries would help. This survey does nothing of value IMO
- I recall that we voted on this issue recently without a solid mandate. Will be most interested to see if that changes now. One reason why I think it would be good for Aurora is that it seems to me that it's the same councillors who stand up again and again while others don't participate as visibly. This would draw them out as the Ward Councillor or they'd lose next time
- When demographic is highly diverse, a ward system won't help represent me any better [NB: but not against wards]
- Strongly support the ward system and as a 30-year resident hope it finally happens When I have an issue, I don't feel it is necessary to notify each and every councillor - would prefer one name to contact
- Thanks for the opportunity to comment
- Amalgamate Aurora, Newmarket, Sutton, Keswick
- Use common sense to keep natural communities together - unlike the federal and provincial boundaries cutting Aurora in half! Communities with like needs should be kept together - business-focus, green-focus, congestion-focus etc.
- Aurora has gotten too large for a at-large system. Councillors need to live in the ward they represent
- Councilors cannot run in a ward unless they live in the ward, hard stop. It does not make sense for a councilor who lives in central Aurora to run for an eastern ward when they have no idea what the issues are (and probably don't care, they are running to get into politics)
- The folks who live in Central Aurora and in parts of the west are snobs to old Aurorans and are bigots to the new folks (Asians, Eastern Europeans) coming in and buying homes on the eastern parts of town... old money vs new money, us vs 'them ('sniff) is not going to help. I think it should be divided based on resident count or household count... I know that you guys who are the consultants will put central Aurora in one or two wards so doesn't matter what we think
- A ward system would bring more responsibility to each representative as would be reflected at the polls for each area
- I have never voted for councillors because I want to be an informed voter and there are too many to learn about. A ward system would produce a reasonable number of candidates to research, and select based on my neighbourhood's needs
- Boundaries should also take into account any possible new developments so remapping boundaries won't have to happen for a while as Aurora grows

- Ward system for Aurora is long overdue. I applaud this move. Time to update the way we do things. And we've got an awesome mayor to boot. Great place to live!!
- Not ideal for Aurora at this time [NB: but not against wards]
- On the town's website it states there must be equal representation. Why ask open ended questions like how many wards and how many people in each when there are rules around wards. Questions should have been multiple choice. How many wards 2, 4, 6, 8 etc.
- I think a ward system is better as a Councillor would live in your area and be more familiar with the issues/problems. Additionally, having a ward Councillor one would know who to talk to directly to resolve issues rather than finding a Councillor at- large and hoping they care what happens in my neighborhood when they live on the other side of town. A local ward Councillor would be more likely to respond
- Current Council needs to communicate why a ward system is being considered. I know this has been a topic of discussion for years, so why is this now being raised? Any assessment needs to include a side by side of pros/cons of current vs. ward system. Also need to consider a likely future where there is no Aurora-specific Council but rather only a regional one - and how the proposed wards would fit there, as well
- Ward system should not be a reason to increase taxes
- Slow down the growth!
- Keep it simple. There are 4-5 natural quadrants that are easily recognizable
- Good idea. Someone to contact directly
- Make it simple
- Keep it simple, logical and not manipulatable
- Wards should recognize future growth in some areas, if there are approved residences that will be built and occupied in the near future
- Ward system would be better for this growing town
- Please note that Aurora has had wards in the past!
- I am certainly in favour of a ward system
- Under current system, it is very difficult to properly assess the qualities of all the people running for election
- Get It done, it is long overdue
- I hope this study isn't costing taxpayers too much
- The elected councilor should physically live in that ward. If no one is available, the ward occupants vote to approve the person appointed
- If we move to wards, at least half of the council positions should be full time and those council support the part time wards (I would hate that my councillor works 9 to 6 and I can only talk to him/her outside those hours). Current system allows to communicate with any councillor available
- This is long overdue. Aurora needs local representation where their Councillor can be held to account on local issues that are unique to the neighborhood
- Wards would improve communication between a councillor and the public

- It is time to have a ward system, with a councillor focusing on his area most of the time
- The Ward System is long past due. This would mean that elected members would be responsible for decisions made that affect their ward
- A ward system is long overdue. Maybe we would have faster action on the stable neighbourhoods issue if there'd been a ward system
- I think a ward system would be good for Aurora
- Richmond Hill has a much larger population and only 6 wards. Aurora should be able to manage with 5
- As a longtime resident in an older, original neighbourhood of Aurora I feel we are being shafted in so many ways; we are losing our schools and being bused to new areas (for example). These changes in our area are breaking apart our community instead of strengthening it at a time when community building and spirit is extremely important. Having wards where each one can have a separate voice can be a good thing to bring areas within Aurora back together as unified areas
- You need to elect more than one councillor per ward -- maybe one to address local concerns and the other to sit at regional council. The provincial government can change things on a whim, so you better consult them too...
- Ward representation would bring added accountability and direct access to democracy for residents. I'm not an expert on boundaries etc., but I trust town planners to create fair zones. I'm in strong support of this change
- One councillor per ward. Easier for residents to know who their councillor is and councillor more familiar with issues in their ward
- We have a lot of planners, executives and many staffers...get the hell to work and divide up the town. This is NOT BRAIN SURGERY!!!
- It would be helpful to see how wards are created in other, similar size towns
- Trade-offs between "at-large" and "ward" systems are well known. Aurora's development over decades has seen a lot more cultural diversity overall, esp. in newer suburbs. Quite stratified along geographic lines. So, I feel Aurora needs an overlay that looks through that diversity lens in terms of decision-making process for new investment \$ spends
- I have a fear that a ward system, if not well-thought out vis-vis it's boundaries, could pit one or more wards against the others in determining the "face" of Aurora. The current non-ward system helps us to think of Aurora as a whole. I understand the desire for a ward system, but if implemented, it needs to be thought out very carefully to avoid dividing the town into separate parts
- Would appreciate a dedicated councillor to represent my ward
- Wards create improved accountability and communication by Council members
- I want a councillor that represents my neighbourhood - Aurora needs wards
- Wards are necessary for fair representation of all. Ward councillors have to remember they are making decisions for ALL residents of the Town not just their ward

**b. Not in favour of wards - 52 respondents (multiple comments have been recorded)**

- I am not in favour of the ward system. I much prefer a group of people able to work together, to their own strengths, as Aurora currently has. I think that putting Aurora into silos will limit what gets done. Wards assume that citizens in various zones have different needs, and that the strengths of the councillor living in that area match the ward. This seems highly unlikely. It also seems to limit the pool of talent to pull from for councillors - - if two people with different strengths and a passion for becoming a councillor both happen to live in the same ward, Aurora has lost half of the talent they could have on their council. I think the system works well now, and I don't see any reason to change it. Therefore, unless I hear evidence that I am incorrect in my understanding of how Aurora would lose out if we switched, I would like to formally object to this change
- No wards. It will come soon enough when we are merged with Newmarket
- I do not think a ward system would be appropriate for our town. It is not big enough. I think having the number of Councillors we have serves our town properly. So, basically, 2000 people have to go to one certain Councillor. Seems silly
- I am against a ward system, and this survey never asked me if I was for or against it. "Are you for or against a ward system?" The survey just assumed we were setting up a ward system. When was that decided? According to the Town of Aurora's website the following question was on the 2014 ballot: "Are you in favour of electing all Aurora councillors, other than the Mayor, by ward vote instead of general Town-wide vote?" 54.75 of voters said no to that question. Was there another vote I missed?
- What happens when wards are made and no one wants to run for council that lives within a ward?
- We have been through this already and the response was "No separate wards...all councilors for one ward. WHY are we wasting time and money on this yet AGAIN! Ridiculous. You are saying that our previous votes were worthless. We have a right to have our previous decisions respected and accepted!
- No wards thank you. I'm happy with councillors at- large. They are doing a good job
- I remember having a referendum with the majority voting against the ward system. Live by that
- No ward system. We've done just fine with a council that actively works together to represent everyone in various forms. A ward system in a town like Aurora would only cause more segregation at a time when there is a prominent divide between the rich part of town and the poor part of town. I have no interest in being identified as part of a ward - I am an Auroran. Period
- I don't think Aurora is large enough for a ward system. What happens IF there is amalgamation?
- No need for extra wards. It's a small town not an island. No need for extra expenditures
- Residents voted AGAINST a ward system so why is Council even looking at this?

- Wards are divisive. Just because some other towns/cities do this doesn't mean it is best for Aurora. I like having multiple councillors to look out for my interests. From what I've seen in other towns/cities the ward system bogs things down when ward appointed councillors have differing interests. Opposite of progress.
- NO WARD SYSTEM!
- I don't believe a ward system should be implemented. We currently have great councilors who support the whole of Aurora not just their own ward. With this set up ALL councilors work for all of us. With a ward system I personally think we lose that representation. With a ward system our area may get a dud councillor and we would have no recourse for 4 years. If there is a dud voted in in our current system at least we have others who are willing to help. Just because other towns the size of Aurora have a ward setup does not mean we have to. Look at our provincial and federal boundaries that have split Aurora down the middle. How has that helped? NOT. Please DO NOT DO THIS.
- No wards please. Make it an election referendum or respect the results of the previous referendum. Placespeak is not a democratic tool so please stop using as one or make wards and suffer the consequences at the next election when you don't get elected. Aurora works well when we don't divide ourselves into separate states.
- Please honour previous opinions instead of asking until you get the answer you want
- No wards. It's helpful to be able to speak to any councillor - not just the one in your ward. Aurora voted down the ward system in the last municipal election
- I am concerned that a ward system will create divisiveness and an "us vs them" mentality
- This ward system is contrary to the question asked in approx. 2014 when residents turned down the ward system. Why do politicians only persist in asking questions when it advances their ambitions. The collective council is working and we should maintain it
- We should not do wards at all
- I don't want wards. I don't think it's necessary and would only divide our town. I think our town should stick together as one
- Hello- may you please provide some information in the Aurora- Our Town Facebook page as to the reasoning for now considering wards, apart from the fact that other municipalities do it? It was my understanding that during the last election, many residents and candidates stated that wards were not desired. What is the justification behind, and what are the PRACTICAL reasons for having a ward system in Aurora? I don't think Aurorans can make an informed decision filling out this survey (which is why I have not completed it), unless we know what the wards would be aiming to accomplish, practically speaking, that is not already done by the current council as is
- This is such a shameful survey. You should be very disappointed with yourself. Very disturbing to lead people through a manipulative survey where the presumption is to introduce one outcome
- I'm against the ward system (3)

- I strongly disagree in a ward system for Aurora. The town is geographically too small to split into parochial segments
- I don't agree with the ward system! I used to live in a city that has a ward system, and it's only as good as the councillor assigned that area. Our councillor couldn't have cared less about our concerns. It didn't work for us!
- I do NOT want a ward system. The only benefit is that it's easier for council candidates to campaign. If there is to be a ward system - must the ward rep live in the ward? I say yes, but what if there are no willing candidates in the ward? What if the ward councillor does not support an individual's concern? There is no other representation, except the Mayor (1 vote).
- Personally, I don't think a ward system is good for Aurora, fosters us- against-them government
- I really don't like the ward system period. Some councillors can do more good and have time to address many issues for many residents, than other councillors. Some councillors are more approachable than others. So having one councillor for one ward may not have issues resolved (if there are many wards)
- Why complicate a system that's working? Aurora is a small place. We don't need wards
- No ward system. I believe there would not be enough quality candidates to have elections in each ward. I would expect some wards would have only 1 candidate resulting in an acclaimed councillor
- I don't like the ward system; I prefer the current system of electing our mayor and councillors
- Aurora doesn't need a ward system. I like the system we have now; a ward system promotes competitive regionalistic interests and the councilors -- instead of being interested in the welfare of the whole town -- are interested only in the welfare of their own little baileywick. This is not a healthy idea for Aurora. Aurora needs to be FAR greater in size for a ward system to be a good idea
- The citizens spoke clearly in a ballot question in the fall of 2014 that they did not want a ward system; there has been no consultation with citizens regarding the same simple question since then. Asking for comments on how to divvy up the town before returning to the citizens with the same question, i.e., "Do you want a ward system?" is premature and irresponsible
- Opposed to ward system; option to answer 'no wards' should be provided in this survey. Format is misleading
- We don't need wards. We need 8 councillors. It is ridiculous that we now have 6 councillors for 60,000 people when we used to have 8 councillors for 10,000 people. We are all in the same community. Stop trying to artificially divide us. This survey is rigged. The questions assume that there will be wards. The phrasing of the questions precludes the possibility that anyone could not want wards
- This survey assumes that participants are in favour of wards. I am not. Aurora is already disconnected due to the two electoral areas. A ward system will further destroy municipal unity, with councillors competing on behalf of their ward, instead of working as one for the benefit of the town as a whole

- I enjoy knowing that all the councillors at the table represent me and have my best interests. We have just reduced the number of councillors from 8 to 6. Looking at the map it might appear that more than 6 wards are natural, so we'd be back to more than 6 councillors. Does that make sense?
- Leave as is, we already get enough division with the Provincial and Federal Elections that we do not like, why do we want to encourage more division?
- I do not think there should be a ward system. As it stands, all councillors need to take into consideration all the residents of Aurora. A ward system could set up one ward against the other
- I am not in favour of WARDS
- I do not agree with having a ward system; In my opinion ward systems create competition between council members and there can be a disregard for what is best for the entire town
- Keep Aurora councillors elected at- large. It provides for a greater diversity of councillors
- No wards. This was decided in the election of 2018 that the public did not want wards. Our wishes should be considered!
- No to ward system. Increased power to mayor. A no vote is not an option with this survey, making it null and void!
- No wards, current system is not broken. Please don't move to ward system. Reduces choice of residents as to which Councillor to approach.

## Appendix D

### **Public Meetings/Stakeholders/ Members of Council Responses to Q6: Would you like to provide any other comments? (Comments on placespeak/social media included) (54 respondents)**

#### **a. 41 respondents (multiple comments have been recorded)**

- Some areas have more complex issues (i.e. Town Park area with Go-station, Heritage District, Library Square, commercial development along Yonge Street)
- Council is not interested in increasing the number of Councillors
- Town Council of 7 appropriate, should not be smaller to preserve diversity
- Merits of a ward system: better accountability; residents know whom to call; better communications
- Should change to ward system (3)
- With a ward system, it's easier to attract new councillor candidates
- Wards would make Councillor's job easier
- I can see how a ward system can create an increased sense of accountability to voters based on geography. Right now, if I have a topic I want to address, I would send an email blast to all councillors to determine who might be sympathetic to the issue, and I am not sure if this is the most effective way to go about things
- There may also be merit in having a Councillor living in and representing the views of their specific ward if you believe that the values and interests of residents living in older, more established neighbourhoods of Aurora (e.g. Town Park) are different from residents who will be moving into the newer neighbourhoods of construction (e.g. closer to Highway 404)
- Ward system could result in vote-trading
- What happens if your ward Councillor does not respond
- Should change from part-time to full-time Councillors
- Will Aurora ESR include debate about making Councillors full-time
- Part-time Councillors don't have enough time to do their research
- Councillors need visibility/offices at Town Hall
- Could have more than one Councillor representing some wards; could solve the large area of the Oak Ridges Moraine with low-density population
- Should perhaps have 2 Councillors per ward
- 1 Councillor per ward (4)
- Hybrid system of 4 part-time ward Councillors plus 2 full-time at-large Councillors
- Hybrid system of Councillors would not work; electing anyone, including Deputy Mayor, at-large would only work if Aurora got an extra seat on Regional Council; that is not going to happen (2)
- Appoint Deputy Mayor by secret ballot
- Have Mayor appoint Deputy Mayor
- Public should make decision on this kind of governance issue

**b. Not in favour of wards - 13 respondents (multiple comments have been recorded)**

- Aurora should not have a ward system
- Status quo should be an option
- Aurora does not take very long to drive across, so it's not like we need a ward system to be in closer proximity to our councillors. Also, keeping our current system ensures that the top vote getters overall are elected, the popular vote, instead of potential issues with top representatives vying for the same ward
- I was under the impression that voters of Aurora DID NOT WANT a ward system. How is it that this council believes that they have a mandate to create one now? With the reduced size of council, the last thing we need is a ward system
- Don't fix what isn't broken
- Poor survey. Let them know it is disingenuous and dirty. Fiefdom behavior with myopic engagement. Pressure to further balkanize. Questionable cost impact. Risk of quality drop in candidates. Would appear as a result of a ward system. Not the way to go. Be bigger than this
- Why is there not a question asking if there should be wards? This survey leads people to believe wards are happening so you can use that information to justify it. Aurora already said no to wards
- Does this mean more paid bureaucrats and more red tape? What's wrong with what we have now? It seems to work fine since I moved here 20 years ago...
- Sounds like they want a "first past the post" system as opposed to the popular vote. It worked for JT and the Libs.. (monkey see, monkey do); sorry cuz.....when you moving to the U.S.??