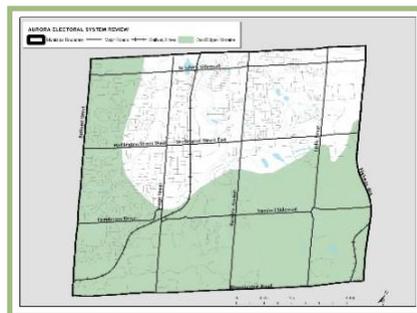
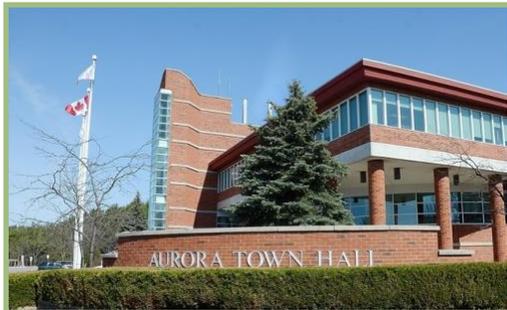


## Electoral System Review

# *Executive Summary* **Options Report**



Prepared by:  
**Beate Bowron Etcetera**  
**Hemson Consulting Ltd.**  
**The Davidson Group**

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This Options Report of the Aurora Electoral System Review (Aurora ESR) describes four Options for a new ward system for the Town of Aurora, in line with Council's resolution to endorse, in principle, a ward system for electing councillors. Council directed staff to investigate what such a ward system might look like. The entire Options Report is available at [www.aurora.ca/esr](http://www.aurora.ca/esr).

### ***Options Report Content***

The 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 of the Report;
- ***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.

### ***Effective Representation***

Any ward system that is established in a municipality must achieve "effective representation". 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.

To achieve effective representation, a number of components have to be balanced: voter parity; creating logical natural or physical ward boundaries; respecting geographic communities and neighbourhoods; recognizing minority interests, if they are geographically based; respecting ward history, if applicable; and factoring in a councillor's 'capacity to represent', geographic size and shape of a ward and expected population growth.

While all of these 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 is another high priority, along with well-defined, coherent ward boundaries.

## ***The Options***

Each of the four Options described in the Options Report 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.

Because the results of the Aurora ESR are to last for 3 and, possibly, 4 elections, the middle election, 2026, was selected as the Target Year for designing the Options.

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 W-3. In Option 2, the wards are numbered W2-1, W2-2, etc.

### **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 (a map of Aurora Neighbourhood Associations can be found in Appendix A of the Options Report). 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

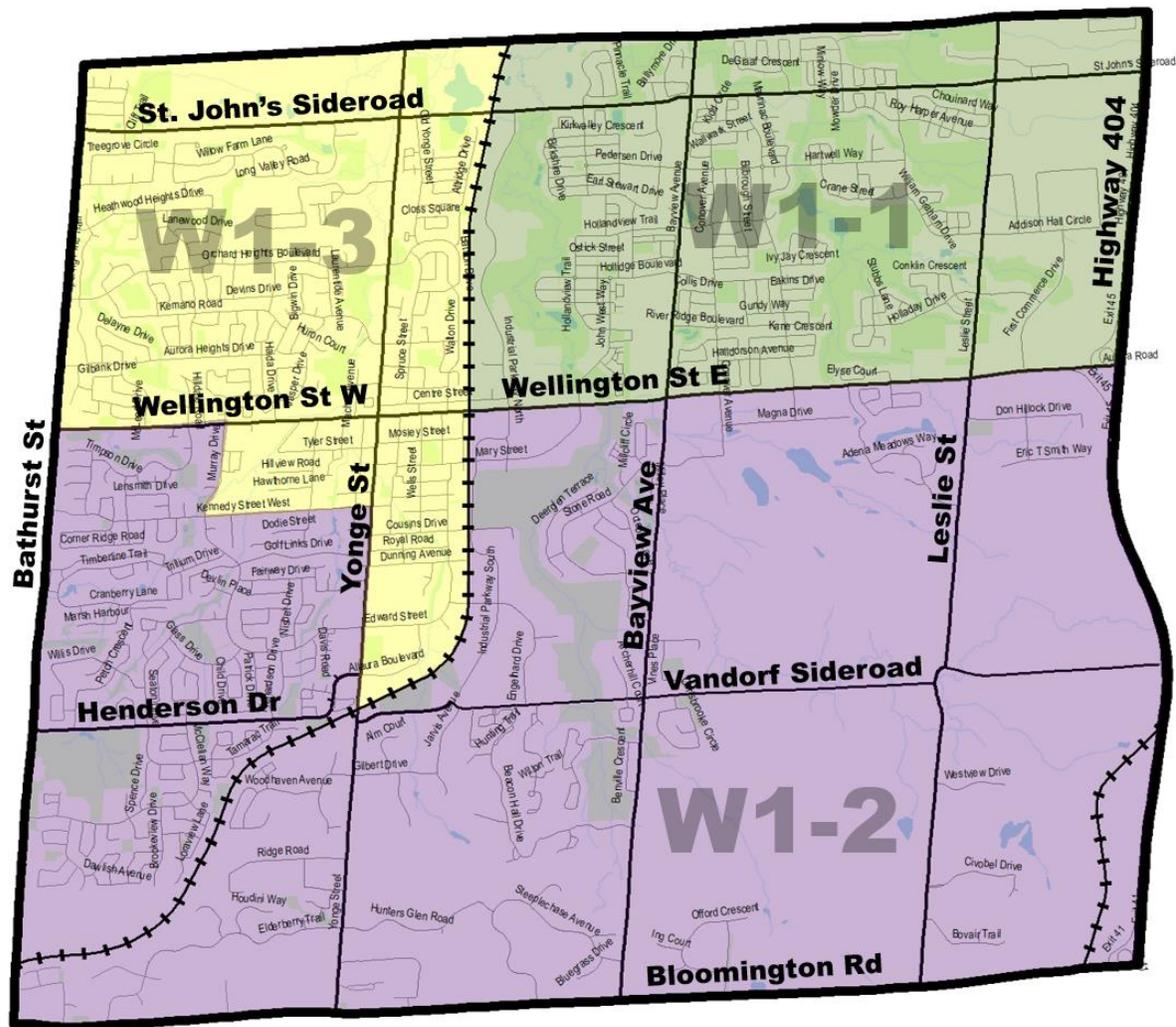


Table 5 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 1

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%
<b>Average Ward Population</b>	21,200		22,660		23,800		24,640	

## 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 of the Options Report). 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

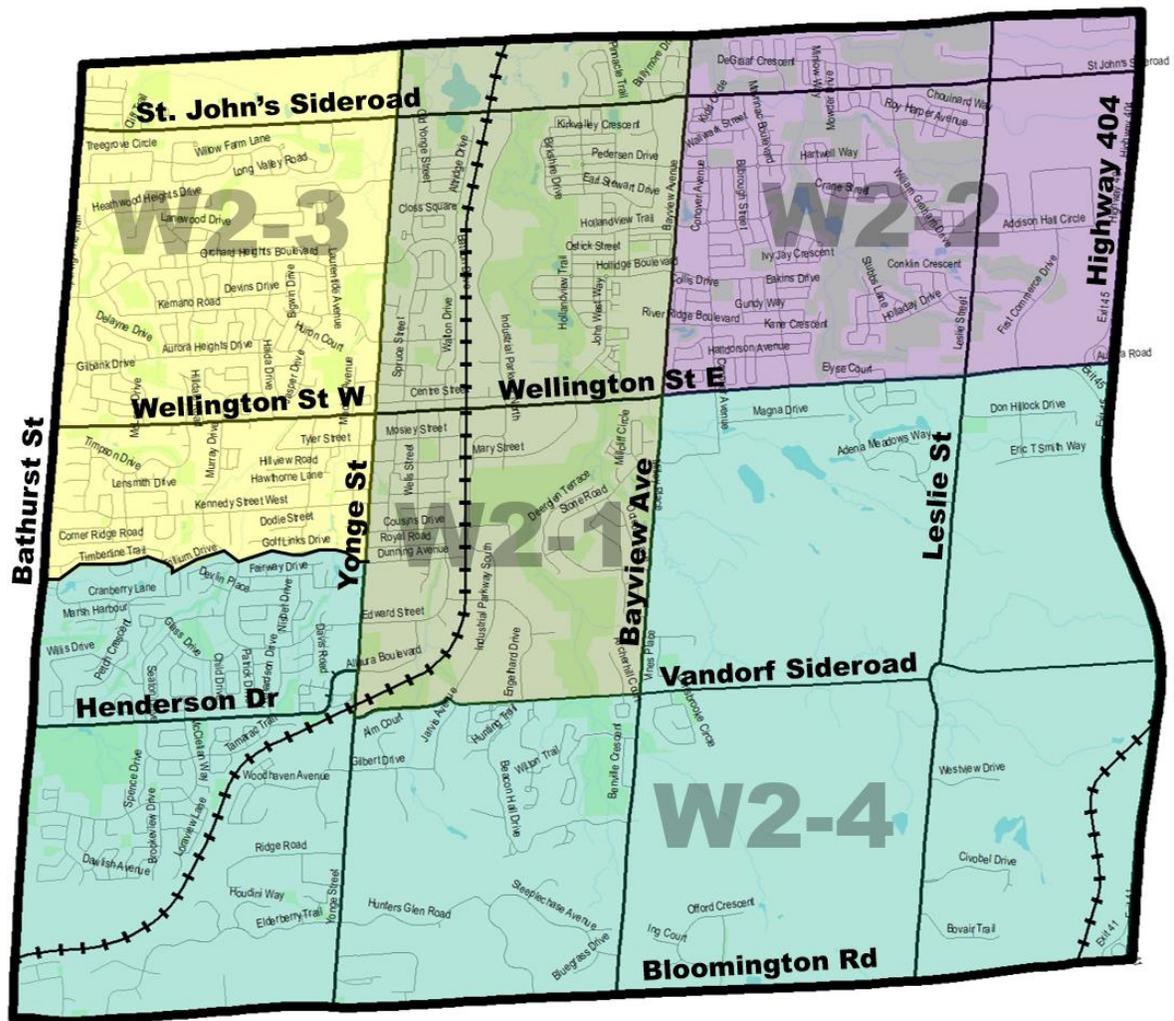


Table 6 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 2

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	

### 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 of the Options Report). 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

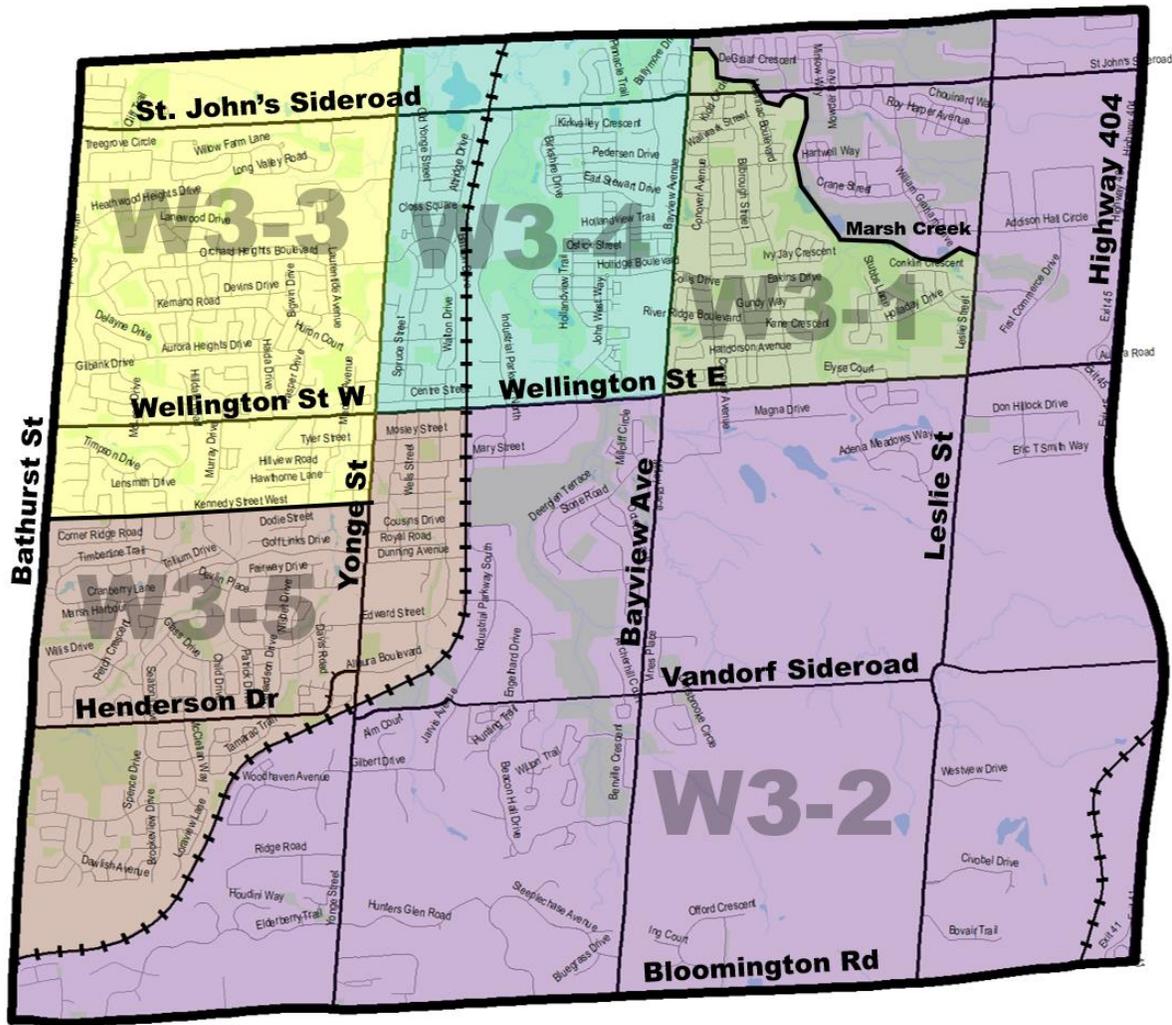


Table 7 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 3

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%
Average Ward Population	12,720		13,600		14,280		14,780	

## Option 4 – 6 Wards

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 (see Appendix B of the Options Report). However, this voter parity variance is still within acceptable levels.

Option 4 keeps most communities together (see Appendix A of the Options Report). 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 Mavrinac 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 was faced with 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.

### *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

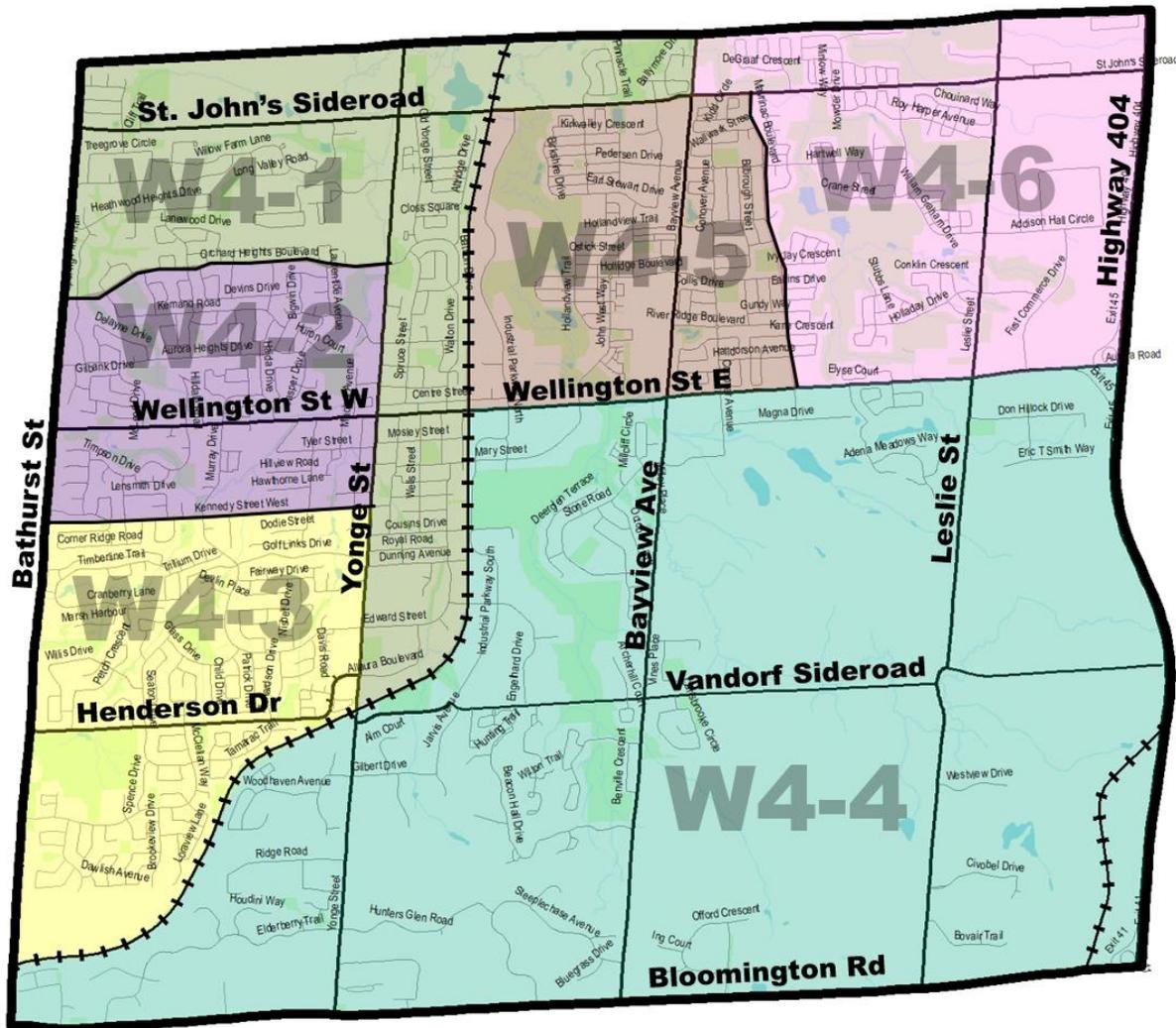


Table 8 – Ward Populations and Variances – Option 4

Town of Aurora - Ward Boundary Options								
Forecast Census Population at Election Years								
OPTION 4	Population 2022	Variance	Population 2026	Variance	Population 2030	Variance	Population 2034	Variance
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	

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.