



2024 Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review

Haldimand County

Final Report

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

2. Study Objective

The project has several key objectives:

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

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

- The parameters and purpose for the review;
- The basic electoral arrangements in Haldimand County;



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

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

- Representation by population;
- Consideration of present and future population trends;
- Consideration of natural and physical boundaries; and
- Protection of communities of interest.

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

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

A Preliminary Options Report prepared in September 2024 set out to provide the County with alternative options to consider and provide feedback. The Final Report will not explore in detail the topics discussed in the Discussion Papers or Preliminary Options Report, except in summary form to provide context, and assumes that those interested in the recommendations included herein have access to the documents through the County's website. This report outlines two alternative options that the Consultant Team believes will provide effective representation to the residents of Haldimand County in the 2026 municipal election and beyond. All information related to this review may be viewed at: www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview.

3. Context

The basic requirement for any electoral system in a representative democracy is to establish measures to determine the people who will constitute the governmental body that makes decisions on behalf of electors. Representation in Canada is organized around geographic areas, units referred to as constituencies in the federal and

[1] www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview



provincial parliaments and typically as wards at the municipal level, as is the case in Haldimand County.

The Haldimand County municipal council is composed of seven members, including the mayor (elected at-large) and six councillors, elected in six wards.

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

Since the present wards were adopted over 25 years ago, it is timely to step back to consider their viability today. Aligning council representation with the distribution of the population will likely require an adjustment in some or all wards but could also be achieved by the addition of a seventh ward.

The Preliminary Options Report summarized the authority vested in County Council through the *Municipal Act, 2001* to make changes to the wards and will be discussed in what follows.

4. Existing Population and Forecast Growth in Haldimand County

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

Haldimand County is forecast to experience significant population growth over the next decade and beyond. For this reason, it is important that this study assess representation by population for both existing and future populations. In accordance with the study’s terms of reference, the analysis considered representation of population over the next two municipal elections and beyond through to 2034. A population and housing forecast for Haldimand for the 2024 to 2034 period, consistent with Haldimand

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



County's 2024 Population, Household & Employment Forecast Update (August 27, 2024) was determined, and the results of this analysis are discussed below.

4.1 Existing Population and Structure

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

Table 4-1
2024 Population by Ward

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

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

Note: Numbers may not add precisely due to rounding.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

^[3] The net Census undercount is an adjustment to the population to account for the net number of persons who are missed (i.e., over-coverage less under-coverage) during enumeration and is estimated at approximately 4.0%.



4.2 Forecast Population Growth, 2021 to 2031

Haldimand County is in the southwest of one of the fastest-growing Regions in North America, known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe (G.G.H.). This region comprises the municipalities that make up the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and the surrounding Regions/Counties within Central Ontario, known as the G.G.H. “Outer Ring,” which extends from Haldimand County and Niagara Region in the south to Simcoe County in the north. The strength of the broader regional G.G.H. economy presents a key opportunity for the County’s economy and its residents within commuting distance to many of the growing regional employment markets within this region, particularly within the west G.G.H.

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

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

Within the County, as of 2021, Caledonia accounted for approximately 27% of the population, with Dunnville at approximately 13%, and Hagersville at approximately 6%, while the remaining rural area accounted for over 40% of the 2021 population distribution across the municipality. Future growth is forecast to develop in a similar way, with Caledonia expecting to be a growth hub over the next decade, accounting for



approximately 60% of the future growth between 2024 and 2034; Hagersville is expected to account for over 20% of the future growth over the 2024 to 2034 period.

Table 4-2
2021 Population by Community

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

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

5. Public Consultation

5.1 Online Engagement

5.1.1 Website

A public-facing web page was established to raise awareness about the C.C.W.B.R., to disseminate information about the process, and to give the residents of Haldimand County an opportunity to provide feedback. Through this platform, residents could access the online surveys, view proposed ward boundary options, review background material, including the Preliminary Options Report, and provide feedback directly to staff and the Consultant Team. A purpose-built Whiteboard Animation Video was also posted on the web page, which distilled some key information about the C.C.W.B.R. into an accessible format.

5.1.2 Surveys

Of those who visited the C.C.W.B.R. web page, a significant number also opted to provide feedback through the public survey. The surveys provided the Consultant



Team with an opportunity to evaluate public preferences using both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques. Surveying was done at two different stages of the public consultation process – an initial round to evaluate public priorities and perspectives on the existing ward structure (Phase 1), and a later survey which asked respondents to assess and rank a set of preliminary ward boundary options (Phase 2). Results of these surveys are available in Appendix C (Phase 1) and Appendix D (Phase 2).

The Phase 1 survey was opened from June 25 to July 27, 2024, and resulted in 177 responses. Respondents were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the existing wards, and to rank the guiding principles in terms of priority. An in-depth discussion of the Phase 1 survey results is available in the Preliminary Options Report, which can be found on the C.C.W.B.R. web page. In summary, residents indicated that communities of interest should be the priority for this review (36% of respondents). A significant percentage of respondents also thought that representation by population should be the top priority (33%). The population and growth trends principle were ranked third most important by 18% and the geographic representation principle was prioritized by the fewest number of people (13%). Meanwhile, opinions were split evenly on whether the current ward system adequately represents the residents of Haldimand County, with 51% believing that it does. Lastly, about half the survey respondents (55%) thought having six local councillors, with one elected from each ward, was adequate to their needs. Of those who felt that the size of council is inappropriate, approximately 35% felt it was too small and only 9% indicated they would prefer a smaller council. As mentioned above, these results are discussed in greater detail in the Preliminary Options Report.

A follow-up survey was later opened from October 2 to October 27, 2024, which asked participants to identify their preferred preliminary option. There was a lower level of engagement with the Phase 2 survey, with 140 participants. Survey respondents were asked which of the Preliminary Ward Boundary Options they preferred. Preliminary Option 3 was selected by approximately 35% of the residents of Haldimand County and was most preferred. Approximately 28% of respondents voted for No Preference of any of the preliminary options. The other three preliminary options were all close in favourability. Preliminary Option 4 was favoured by 14%, Preliminary Option 2 was favoured by 12%, and Preliminary Option 1 was favoured by 11%. A total of 57 respondents skipped this question.



In interpreting these results, it is important to highlight that this survey does not constitute a representative sampling of the population and is by no means a scientific assessment of public preferences. The level of participation in this survey was strong with respect to surveys completed in other studies, but relative to Haldimand County's population, the sample is small and not randomly selected. Additionally, most survey respondents did answer all questions, but a good majority did not select a preferred Preliminary Option (as noted, 57 respondents skipped the question). The surveys were nevertheless a tremendous source of insight for the Consultant Team but should be viewed as one of several resources informing the recommendations provided in this report.

5.1.3 Social Media Engagement

Social media proved an effective platform for disseminating information about the C.C.W.B.R. to the public. For example, a short brain-teaser survey entitled "How Well Do You Know Haldimand County?" was circulated through social media, which quizzed respondents on their knowledge of their County. It was intended to be a fun method for informing the public, which would hopefully generate excitement about the C.C.W.B.R., as well as direct participants to the survey.

Paid digital advertising campaigns were also run through Facebook, Instagram and Metroland Media to reach a wider audience and amplify public interest and awareness.

5.2 Public Consultation Sessions

As outlined in the Preliminary Options Report, two rounds of public engagement were conducted during this study through both virtual and live events that were designed to:

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

The first round of engagement was held in June of 2024, and the second round, during which alternative ward and council configurations were presented, was held in October



of 2024. The Consultant Team's preliminary presentation to Council and other information about the review are available on the County's website (also see Appendix A, C and D): www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview/.

The feedback and comments collected through the public consultation process are reflected in the analysis presented throughout this study and have helped inform the final set of ward options.

5.3 Interviews With City Council and Staff

In addition to the public engagement, the Consultant Team has benefitted from the perspectives gained through interviews and workshops conducted with the mayor, councillors, and senior County staff.

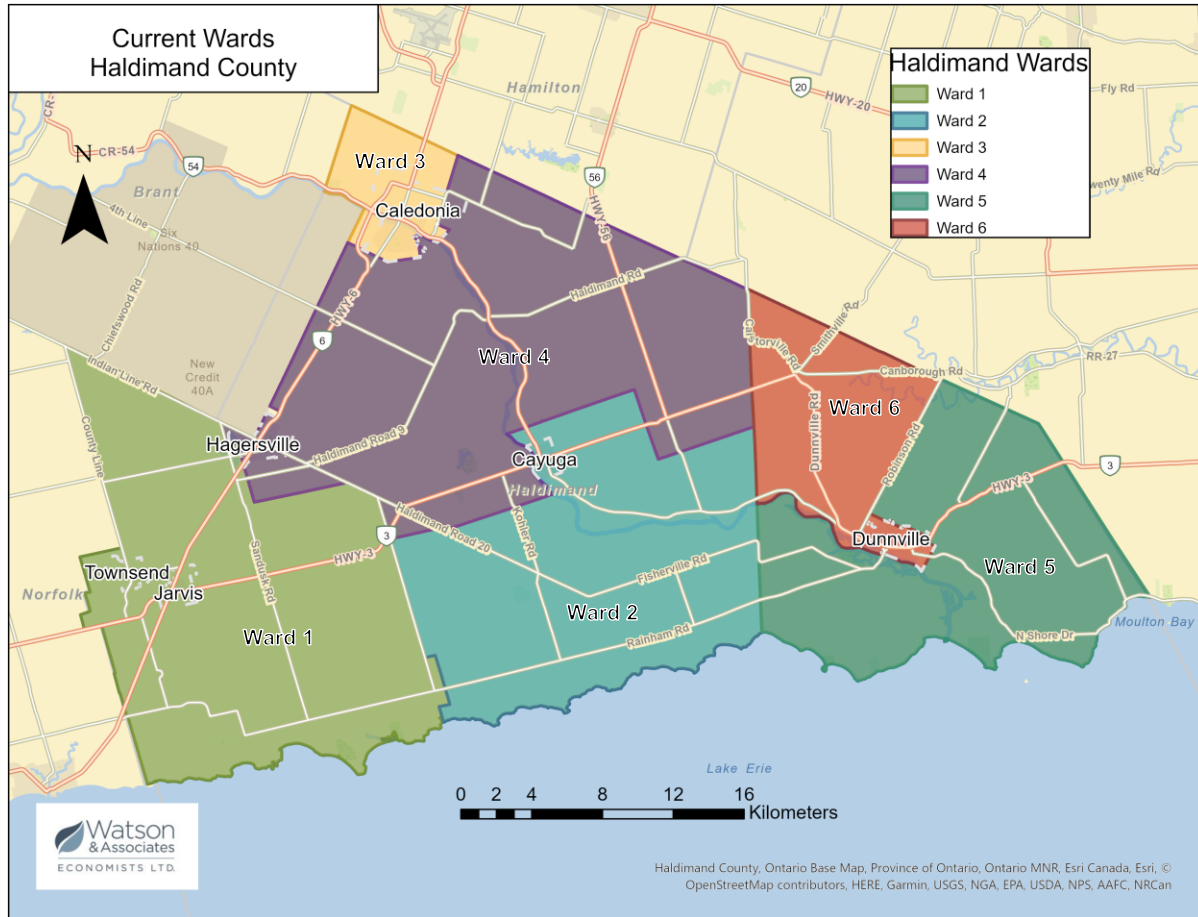
The feedback and comments received through the consultation process are reflected in the analysis and have helped inform the findings and recommendations. As has been mentioned previously in this report, public input from consultation provides valuable insight into the review but it is not relied on exclusively. This is in part because only a subset of the population participated in the C.C.W.B.R.

6. Evaluation of the Existing Ward Structure

The survey conducted as part of the initial phase of public consultation asked respondents to assess the current wards in terms of their strengths and weaknesses; the survey in the second phase of the study sought the assessment of residents on the ward systems presented as preliminary options. For reference, the current wards are presented in Figure 6-1. These responses can be used to add depth to the evaluation of the existing ward structure included in Discussion Paper E and the Preliminary Options Report, which addressed the wards in terms of the guiding principles.



Figure 6-1
Existing Ward Structure



These principles are discussed at length in section 8 of the Preliminary Options Report in relation to the present wards, so they will not be addressed again in this Final Report. The Consultant Team has given thorough consideration to the importance of each principle and has carefully evaluated which of the principles is most important for determining an appropriate system of representation for the 2026 municipal election and beyond in Haldimand County.

The principles contribute to a system that provides for equitable on-going access between elected officials and residents, but they may occasionally conflict with one another. Accordingly, it is expected that the overriding principle of effective representation will be used to arbitrate conflicts between principles. Any deviation from the specific principles must be justified by other principles in a manner that is more supportive of effective representation.



The priority attached to certain principles makes some designs more desirable in the eyes of different observers. Ultimately, the ward design adopted by Haldimand County Council should be the one that best fulfills as many of the guiding principles as possible.

The evaluation of the current ward system in Haldimand County indicates several shortcomings when assessed against the guiding principles for this review. Our summary in Table 6-1 shows that, while the existing wards are partially successful at protecting communities of interest and largely successful at considering natural and physical boundaries, they fall short in terms of population representation, both now and in the future.

The ward system in Haldimand County must confront two main challenges: providing for population parity between wards at the present time and accommodating future population trends in accordance with data available at this time.

The objective of population parity (every councillor generally representing an equal number of constituents within their respective ward) is the primary goal of an electoral redistribution with some degree of variation acceptable in light of population densities and demographic factors across the County. The indicator of success in a ward design is the extent to which all the individual wards approach an “optimal” size.

Optimal size can be understood as a mid-point on a scale where the term “optimal” (O) describes a ward with a population within 5% on either side of the calculated optimal size. The classification “below/above optimal” (O + or O -) is applied to a ward with a population between 6% and 25% on either side of the optimal size and is considered an acceptable variation. A ward that is labelled “outside the range” (OR+ or OR-) indicates that its population is greater than 25% above or below the optimal ward size. The adoption of a 25% maximum variation is based on federal redistribution legislation and is widely applied in municipalities like Haldimand County that include both urban and rural areas.



Table 6-1
Haldimand County
Present Haldimand County Ward Configuration Evaluation Summary

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

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

In summary, the analysis of current and future population trends, combined with feedback from public consultations and other characteristics of Haldimand County in 2024, suggests that the existing wards do not provide effective representation across the County. Therefore, it is recommended that Council consider adopting an alternative ward configuration.



7. Alternative Council Composition and Final Ward Boundary Options

Since this report is the final contribution to the C.C.W.B.R., it is important to set out some of the implications of each of these alternatives as background to Council's deliberations. Council is to consider an appropriate ward system alternative to be selected and to put that decision into effect for the 2026 municipal election. A summary of the two alternative final options is presented below.

It should be noted that in the [Preliminary Options Report](#), four alternative ward configurations were proposed for Haldimand County. These options retained the six-ward system. Since this report, some additional preliminary options were drafted based on public and Council feedback. On November 4th, 2024, the Consultant Team presented some of these additional options (Options 1b, 3b) to Council. Afterwards, the Consultant Team designed and analyzed two additional 7-ward options. The additional Preliminary Options 1b and 3b can be found in the Preliminary Option Council Workshop Presentation found in Appendix B. One of the two 7-ward options mentioned previously will be presented as Final Option 2.

As discussed in section 5, feedback from Haldimand County residents indicated that Preliminary Option 3 from the first round of engagement, was preferred by most respondents.

7.1 Final Option 1 (Preliminary Option 1b)

The first final option is based on Preliminary Option 1 as presented in the Preliminary Options Report and in the public engagement sessions. The original option had very good population parity in 2024 with all wards in the acceptable range and the difference between the smallest and largest ward populations was under 3,000. However, the Consultant Team had heard that the proposed 'Lakeshore' ward (Preliminary Option 1, Ward 1) was too large and the seasonal homes and increase in population during the summer would hinder effective representation. The Consultant Team also heard that the Byng area on the west side of the Grand River should be associated with Ward 6 and the Dunnville community. As a result, the first final option attempts to maintain most of the design from Preliminary Option 1 while addressing the feedback received.



Final Option 1 retains a six-ward configuration, while addressing the need to distribute the populations within Caledonia across two wards (proposed Wards 3 and 4), utilizing the Grand River as the dividing line between the two. The remaining four wards then capture the remainder of Haldimand, respecting communities of interest, as much as possible, that we have heard have similarities and social connections.

Ward 1 (as seen as Preliminary Option 1 Ward 2) captures the Hagersville community and the Jarvis and Townsend communities within the same ward, unlike what is currently in place where these communities are divided between Ward 1 and Ward 4. The proposed ward is compact in area and its population is at parity in 2024, only rising slightly above that point despite being forecast to grow by close to 3,000 residents by 2034.

Ward 2's size has been decreased compared to the original Preliminary Option 1 (Ward 1) and now contains the lakefront communities from Haldimand Dunnville Townline Rd to the municipal boundary on the west. The proposed Ward's 2024 population is within the acceptable range but there are no large settlements in the ward. With a stable population through to 2034 while the rest of the County is forecast to grow by several thousand residents, proposed Ward 1 falls well below the acceptable range of population variation in the longer-term.

Cayuga is the main community within the proposed Ward 5, extending east to Robinson Road, capturing several small communities across a large rural area such as Canfield and Canborough. The proposed ward crosses the Grand River with only limited crossing points within the ward. The population in 2024 is within the acceptable range of variation but is forecast to fall towards the lower end of that range by 2034 despite modest growth.

The proposed Ward 6 is identical to the present Ward 5 except that the Dunnville urban area is moved from the present Ward 5, resulting in population well outside the optimal range in 2024 and a more coherent ward since Dunnville, Byng and the surrounding area on both sides of the Grand River are captured entirely within one ward. The ward is forecast to experience some population growth by 2034 but since the growth in the Caledonia area will be greater, it will be at the upper end of the range of variation by 2034 not beyond.

The Grand River divides the two remaining wards (proposed Wards 3 and 4) through Caledonia resulting in a relatively balanced population distribution between the two in



2024 but a significant imbalance in 2034. The proposed Ward 4 includes Caledonia west of the Grand River and some rural areas along the Highway 6 corridor towards Hagersville and along the River as far as York to the south. The ward population is well within acceptable range in 2024 and 2034. The proposed Ward 3 includes Caledonia east of the Grand River where significant future development is expected to continue - about one half of all forecast population growth in Haldimand between 2024 and 2034.

The main features of Final Option 1 include two wards centered on Caledonia that use the Grand River as defensible boundary in the urban area, a lengthy lakefront ward combined with a more compact ward that includes Hagersville, Jarvis and Townsend and a more coherent ward surrounding Dunnville. The Option provides a reasonable population balance 2024 that is not as successfully maintained for 2034 because of the scale of population growth in the proposed Ward 6.

An evaluation of Final Option against the guiding principles can be found in Table 7-2. The option provides strong community ties, while addressing some of the issues raised in the evaluation. Population distribution is adequate but not perfect in 2024, with future population imbalances somewhat hindering the achievement of complete effective representation. However, some of those future population imbalances could be rectified by changes in Caledonia and the proposed Wards 3 and 4. Some examples of this were presented as part of the Preliminary Options.

Table 7-1
Final Option 1 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2033 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,986	1.00	O	11,935	1.07	O+
Ward 2	7,058	0.79	O-	7,040	0.63	OR-
Ward 3	9,209	1.02	O	15,231	1.37	OR+
Ward 4	8,466	0.94	O-	10,154	0.91	O-
Ward 5	8,061	0.90	O-	8,741	0.79	O-
Ward 6	12,148	1.35	OR+	13,533	1.22	O+
Total	53,927	-	-	66,634	-	-
Average	8,988	-	-	11,106	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded.
Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.



Table 7-2
Final Option 1 – Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	Five wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation, with two wards within the optional range ($\pm 5\%$).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Yes	All six wards include coherent communities of interest, with Caledonia being represented by two wards, divided by the Grand River.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	Partially Successful	Four of the six wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation, while growth in Caledonia results in Ward 3 falling above the 25% variance and lack of growth in Ward 2 results in it falling below the 25% variance.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Yes	All boundaries are regular and/or visible lines.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Future population imbalances hinder the achievement of effective representation over the next decade.

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



Figure 7-1
Final Option 1

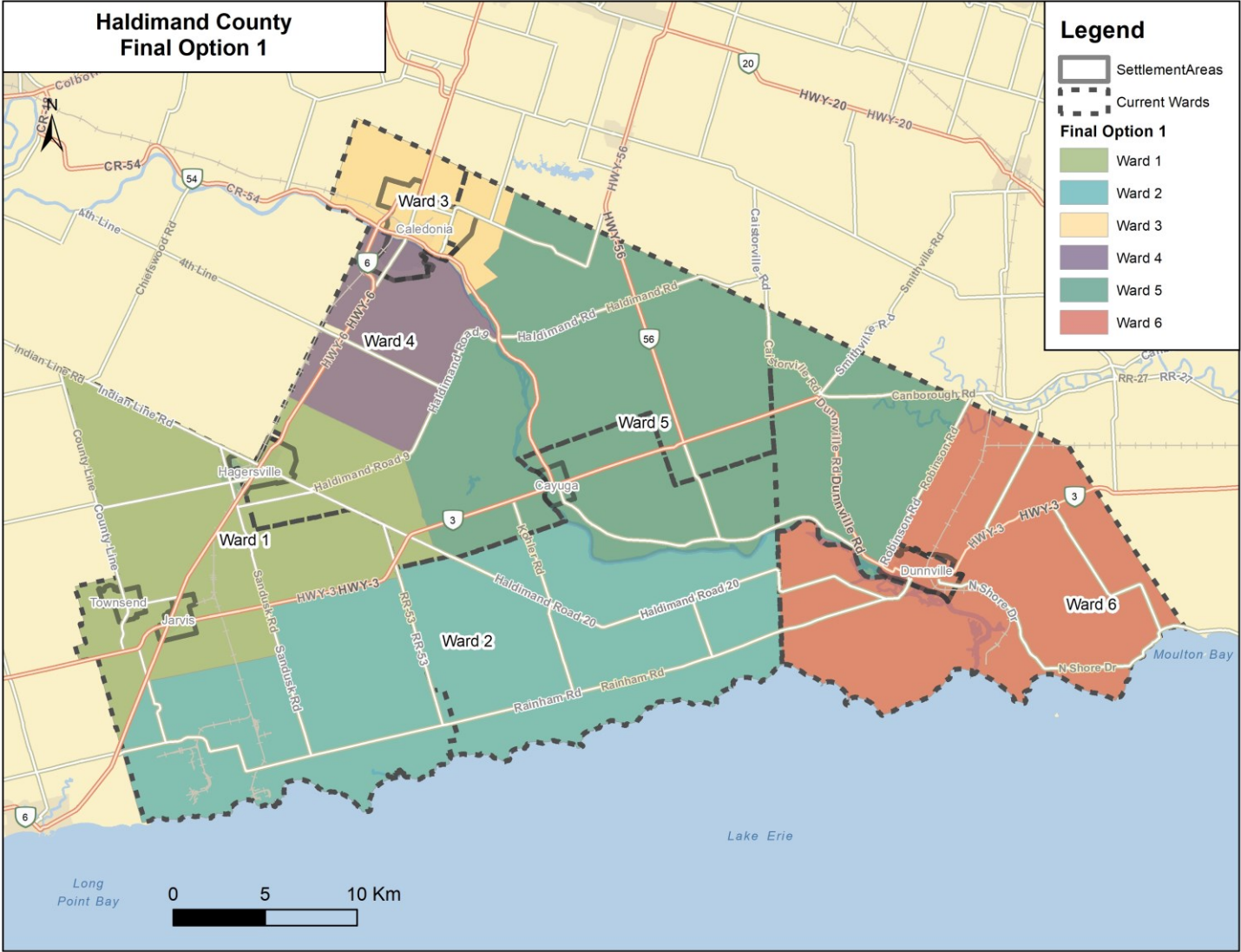
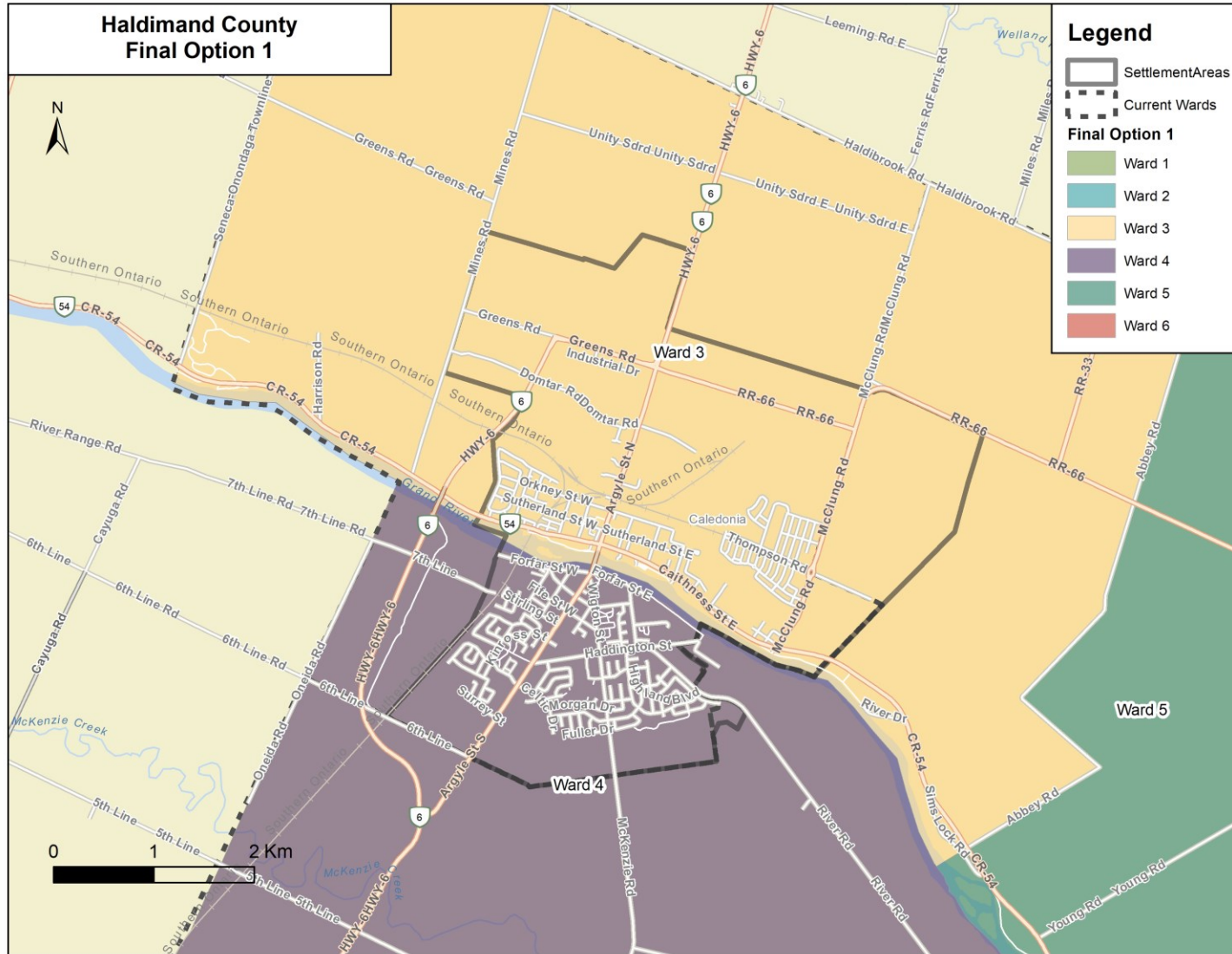




Figure 7-2
Final Option 1 – Caledonia





7.2 Final Option 2 (7-Ward Option)

Other Preliminary Options considered alternate configurations but resulted in some proposed wards being too large in geographic size or in wards with communities that had little connection to each other. As a result, the Consultant Team designed and reviewed 7-ward options to try and deal with some of those issues.

Final Option 2 is one of those options and introduces an additional ward into the configuration. During the first phase of the study, the Consultant Team heard that some people felt Council was too small, especially considering the responsibilities of part-time Councillors in a single-tier municipality. While not presented as a preliminary option, Council and staff requested the Consultant Team to consider a seven-ward option. It should be observed that Ontario legislation does not mandate that councils be composed of an odd number of representatives so if adding a seventh councillor can enhance effective representation in the County, the Consultant Team can appreciate its value. It can also be noted that municipal councils in Toronto and Hamilton are even numbered.

Of course, with an additional ward, the optimal population of the wards decreases, and the area of the wards is likely smaller, both factors that could contribute to more effective representation.

In Final Option 1, the proposed Wards 1 and 2 are actually identical to the current Wards 1 and 2. The proposed Ward 1 in this Option groups Jarvis and Townsend with Springvale to the north and a lakefront area as far east as Selkirk. The population of the proposed ward is very close to the optimal point in 2024 but falls below the new optimal point in 2035 despite a modest increase in population. The proposed Ward 2 in this Option is centered on Cayuga with rural areas and small settlements south of the Grand River and along the lakefront east of Selkirk. The population figure for 2024 is below the optimal level and falls further below the new optimal point in 2035 despite some growth. Populations in both wards remain well inside the acceptable range.

The proposed Ward 3 includes Caledonia south and west of the Grand River and some rural areas along the Highway 6 corridor towards Hagersville as far as the Second Line and along the River as far as York to the south. The ward population is well within acceptable range in 2024 and 2034 and gets very close to optimal.



The proposed Ward 4 includes Hagersville and several small settlements in the central part of the County. It covers a large rural area much like the current Ward 4 except for the area added to the proposed Ward 3 between the municipal boundary and County Road 9. The ward population is within the acceptable range of variation in 2024 and 2034 despite some growth forecast for the Hagersville area. The proposed ward crosses the Grand River with only limited crossing points within the ward.

The proposed Ward 5 mirrors the current Ward 5 plus except for a small area downriver from Dunnville that is moved to the proposed Ward 6. Although the ward includes the Byng community, its population is the smallest of the seven wards in 2024 and 2034 when it falls below the acceptable range of variation. Residents of the proposed ward live on both sides of the Grand River with no crossing points within the ward.

As noted, the proposed Ward 6 is extended downriver to include territory adjacent to the Dunnville urban area north of the Grand River. As in the current Ward 6, most of the area is the former Canborough Township but the population is concentrated in Dunnville. The 2024 population is at parity but drops below that point by 2034 despite some modest growth.

The proposed Ward 7 is identical to the proposed Ward 6 in Final Option 1 and includes Caledonia north and east of the Grand River. This is the major growth centre for the County where about one half of all forecast population growth in Haldimand between 2024 and 2034 is expected to occur. As a result, its population falls within the acceptable range of parity in 2024 but balloons to well above parity in 2034. Again, these concerns could be addressed by some modest changes to the boundaries in the Caledonia wards and likely moving away from using the Grand River as the ward boundary.

In a seven-ward design, the optimal population of the wards decreases with an impact on the capacity of the proposed wards to reach parity. In this Option, Hagersville and Springvale are placed in different wards and Hagersville is grouped with communities some distance away (as in the present format). Dunnville is effectively placed at the heart of two wards, making it equivalent to Caledonia (despite the difference in population connected to the two settlement areas).

As in the current ward system, lakefront communities are grouped with inland areas. Two wards proposed for Caledonia use the Grand River as defensible boundary in the urban area and achieve a reasonable population balance 2024 but both increase



considerably by 2034 with the growth disproportionately north of the Grand River in the proposed Ward 7. In Final Option 2, population parity remains strong since all wards are within the 25% variance for 2024 but by 2034 two wards are outside the range, one significantly.

An evaluation against the guiding principles is presented in Table 7-4.

Table 7-3
Final Option 2 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2024 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2034 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,111	1.05	O+	8,353	0.88	O-
Ward 2	7,041	0.91	O-	7,723	0.81	O-
Ward 3	8,466	1.10	O+	10,154	1.07	O+
Ward 4	7,361	0.96	O	10,052	1.06	O+
Ward 5	6,040	0.78	O-	6,437	0.68	OR-
Ward 6	7,699	1.00	O	8,683	0.91	O-
Ward 7	9,209	1.20	O+	15,231	1.60	OR+
Total	53,927	-	-	66,634	-	-
Average	7,704	-	-	9,519	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.



Table 7-4
Final Option 2 – Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation, with two of the seven wards within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$) of the average population.
Protection of Communities of Interest	Largely Successful	The wards each contain plausible groupings of settlements and/or neighbourhoods as found in the current system.
Consideration of Present and Future Population Trends	Partially Successful	Population growth within Haldimand County settlements is distributed unevenly. Two wards fall outside the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Consideration of Natural and Physical Boundaries	Yes	All boundaries are clear and/or visible lines.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Existing population parity results in the achievement of effective representation in the short term. Population growth will weaken effective representation over time.

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



Figure 7-3
Final Option 2

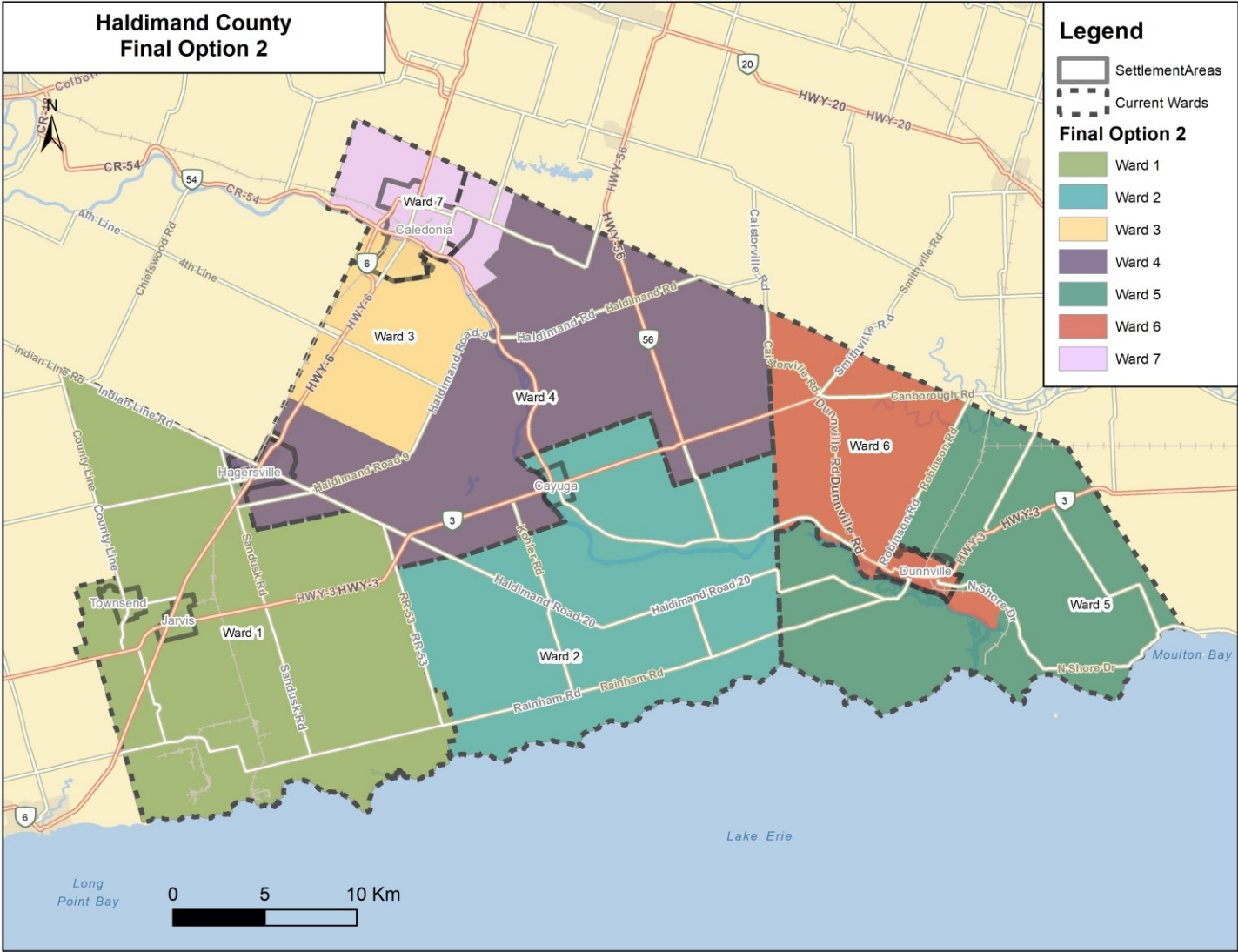
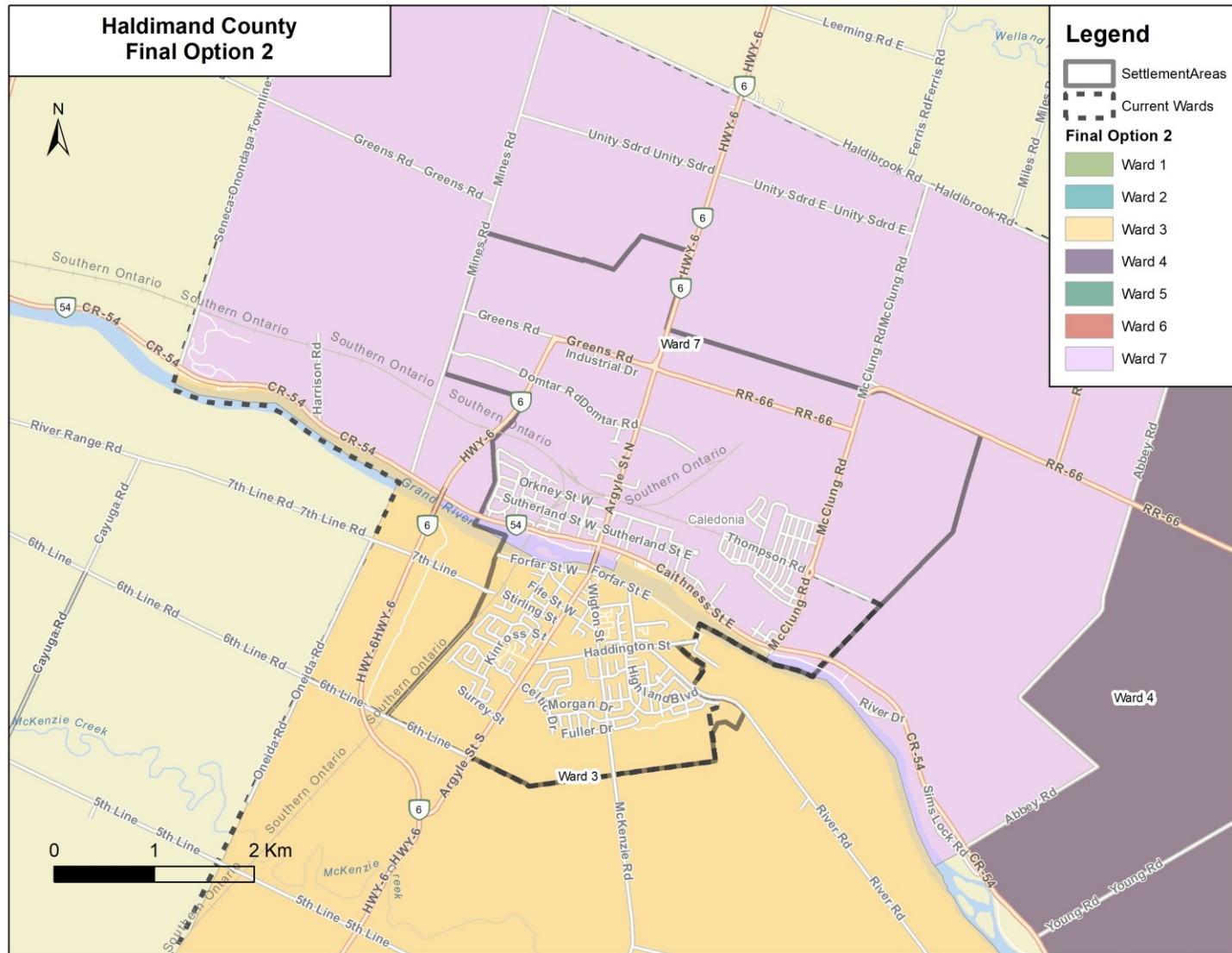




Figure 7-4
Final Option 2 – Caledonia





8. Next Steps and Council Decisions

This report will be presented at the Council in Committee meeting scheduled for February 4, 2025.

The present ward boundaries have been in place since 2001 and as mentioned before, according to a report to Council in August 2023, “There have been minor adjustments made to the wards related to urban boundary changes, but on the whole, the current ward boundaries are similar to what was established in 2001.”^[1]

The 2024 review was undertaken in response to a motion passed by Council in August 2023, to conduct a Ward Boundary Review in the County for the 2026 Municipal Election. This review has provided alternatives for Council to consider, ensuring the boundaries in place for the 2026 Election provide fair and equitable representation. Any new map adopted by Council in 2024 should, however, be monitored as further population growth continues to develop.

Within this report, the Consultant Team has highlighted some deficiencies in the current ward boundary system in relation to the guiding principles. These deficiencies have led the Consultant Team to conclude that the current ward boundary system no longer serves the residents of Haldimand County well. The public engagement efforts throughout this review have been largely consistent with this view.

Council can respond to this report in several ways:

- It can adopt an alternative option as set out in this report with or without minor modifications and later ratify a by-law to implement changes to the boundaries of the wards. Such a by-law is open to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT, formerly LPAT). The Consultant Team has identified some deficiencies with the options presented, particularly around the impact of future population trends. Each option has merits and its own advantages and shortfalls, but the Consultant Team believes that either Option is a defensible alternative to the current ward configuration. The Consultant Team advises Council that if it endorses an entirely different ward design drawn up on its own initiative or itself modifies one of the options presented by the Consultant Team, the Consultant Team would

^[8] Report CLE-10-2023 Ward Boundary Review Project – Scope and Budget (August 29, 2023).



not be able to defend the by-law before the OLT in the event it is appealed, given the extensive arm's-length process conducted to determine and evaluate the alternative options described in this report.

- It can take no action at all; that is, Council may view the current ward system as adequate and, by default, endorse it by not selecting an alternative option. If it declines to act, Council must clearly understand that such a decision essentially indicates to the County's residents that it believes retaining the current ward system still serves Haldimand County well. The Consultant Team has reached a different conclusion.

It is also important to note, section 223 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* indicates that one per cent of the electors or 500 of the electors in the municipality, whichever is less, may "present a petition to the council asking the council to pass a by-law dividing or redividing the municipality into wards or dissolving the existing wards." If Council does not pass a by-law in accordance with such a petition within 90 days after receiving the petition, any of the electors who signed the petition may apply to the OLT to have the municipality redivided into wards. In the unlikely event that residents choose to appeal Council's decision to make no changes, the Consultant Team – which has recommended that the present system not be maintained – would not be able to act in support of Council's decision to retain the present system.

If Council's decision is to endorse one of the Final Options contained in this report, a by-law to implement a preferred option is expected to occur as soon as possible. The by-law would describe the boundaries associated with the approved wards and assign numbers (or names) to them that may be different than those included in Table 7-1 or Table 7-3 and as Council sees fit.

Appendices



Appendix A

Public Engagement Overview



Figure A-1
List of Public Engagement Tools

Tool	Description
Haldimand County C.C.W.B.R. Web Page	A dedicated engagement web page was developed for the review at: https://www.haldimandcounty.ca/wardboundaryreview/ . The web page included an informative whiteboard video, links to public engagement sessions and surveys, and up-to-date messaging to inform the public of the status of the C.C.W.B.R.
Public Open Houses	Five open houses were held: <u>Phase 1</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 25, 2024 (x2) • June 27, 2024 (Virtual) <u>Phase 2</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2, 2024 (x2) • October 3, 2024 (Virtual)
Public Engagement Surveys	Two phases of surveys were posted on the C.C.W.B.R. web page: the first intended to discern which guiding principles were prioritized by the community, and the second to discern which preliminary option was preferred. See Appendix C and Appendix D for a summary of the results.
Interviews with Members of Government	The mayor and each member of Council were invited to participate in a one-hour discussion with the consultant.



Appendix B

Preliminary Option Council Workshop Presentation



Haldimand County
Ward Boundary Review

Council Update
November 4, 2024



Jack Ammendolia

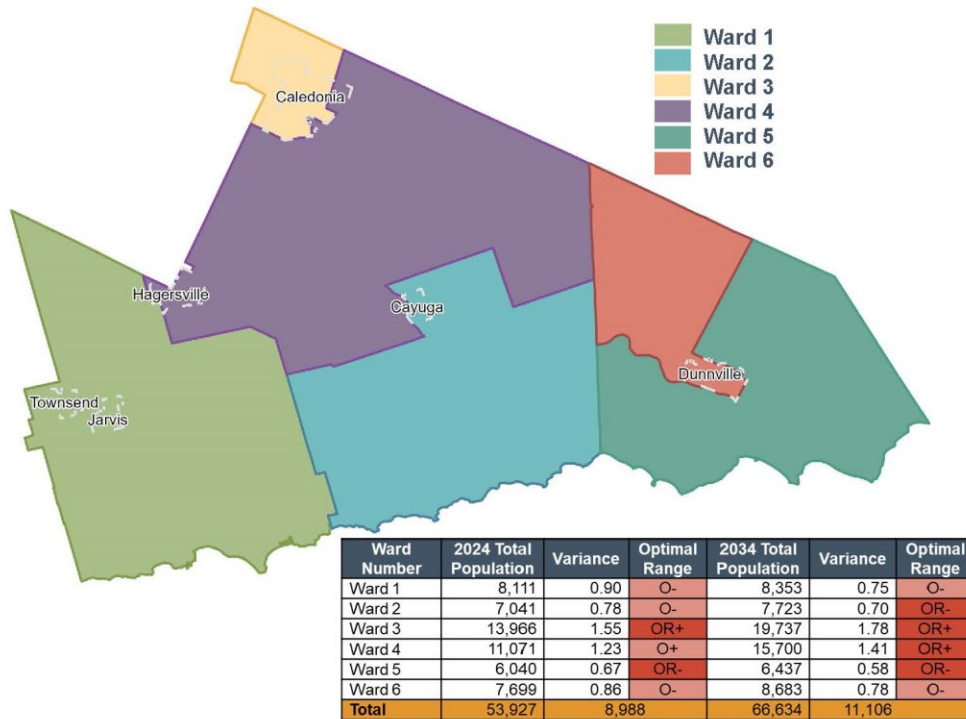
Managing Partner
Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Dr. Robert (Bob) Williams

Public Affairs Consultant
Municipal Electoral Systems Expert



Existing Ward System



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

2024 WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW





What We Heard

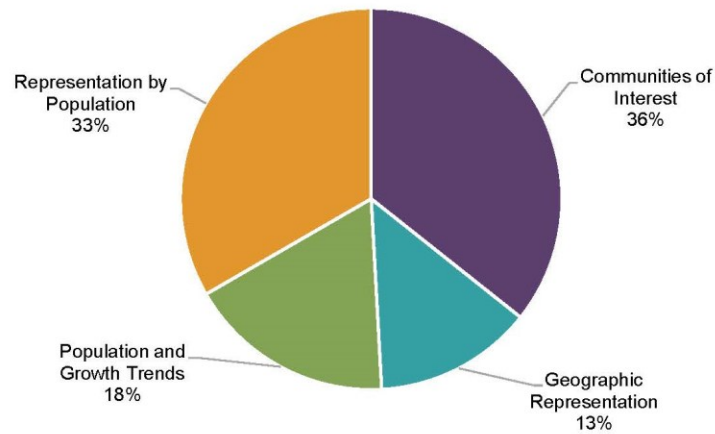




Public Engagement – Round 1

177 Responses

Please indicate the ONE guiding principle that should be given the greatest priority to ensure effective voter representation:



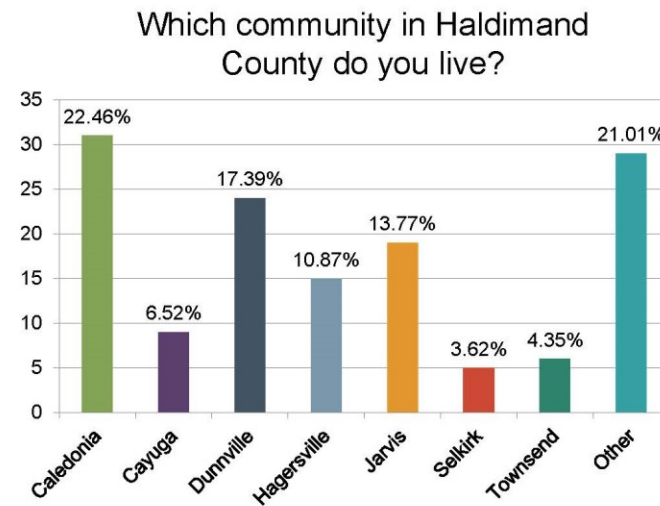
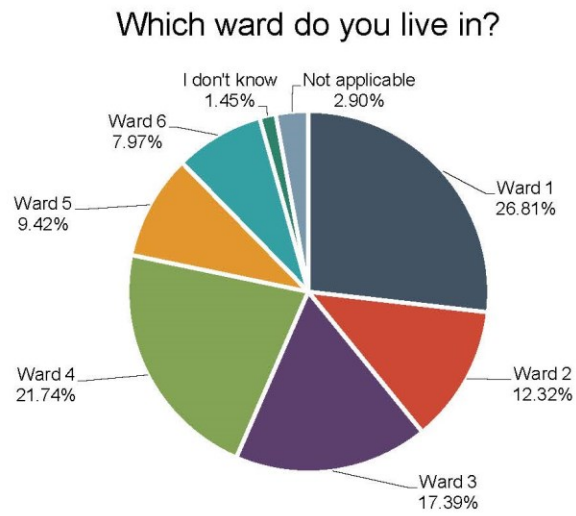
2024 WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW





Public Engagement – Round 2

140 Responses



2024 WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

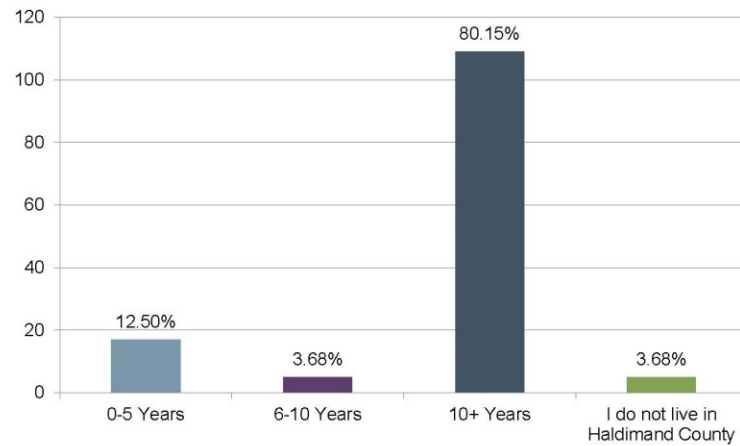




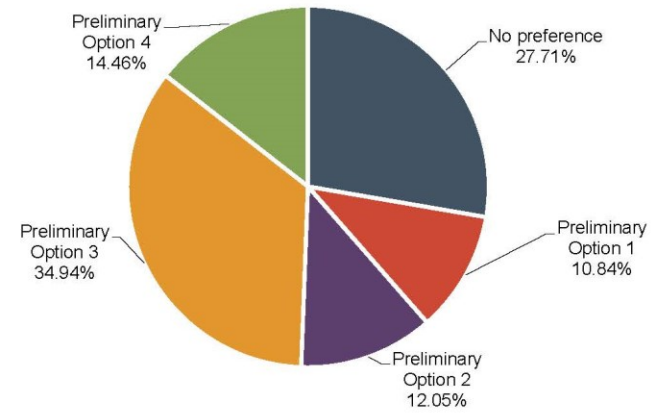
Public Engagement – Round 2

140 Responses

How long have you lived in Haldimand County?



Which of the four preliminary options do you prefer?



2024 WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW



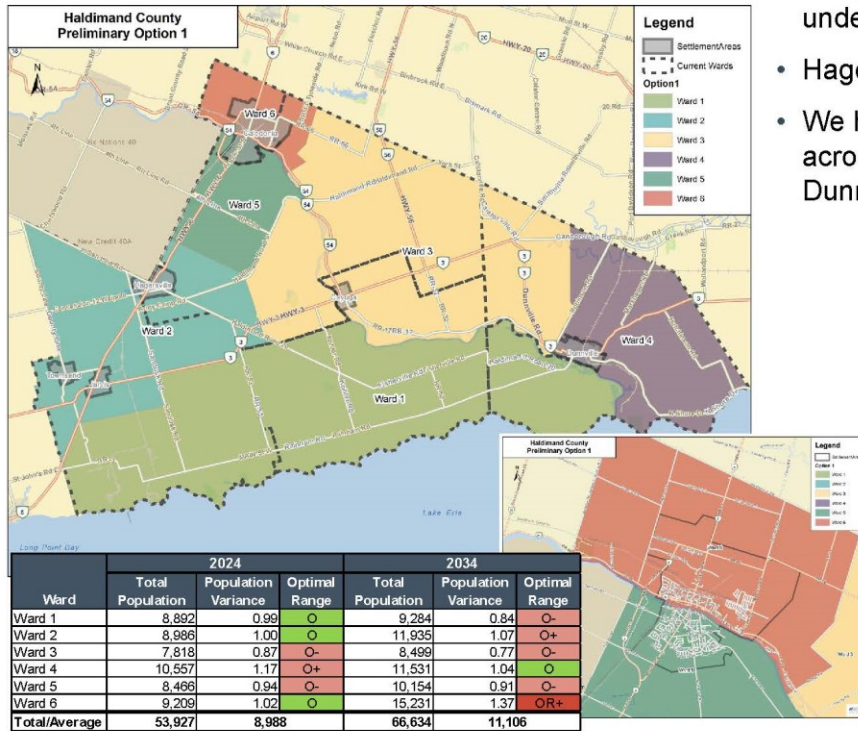


Preliminary Options Review

8



Preliminary Option 1



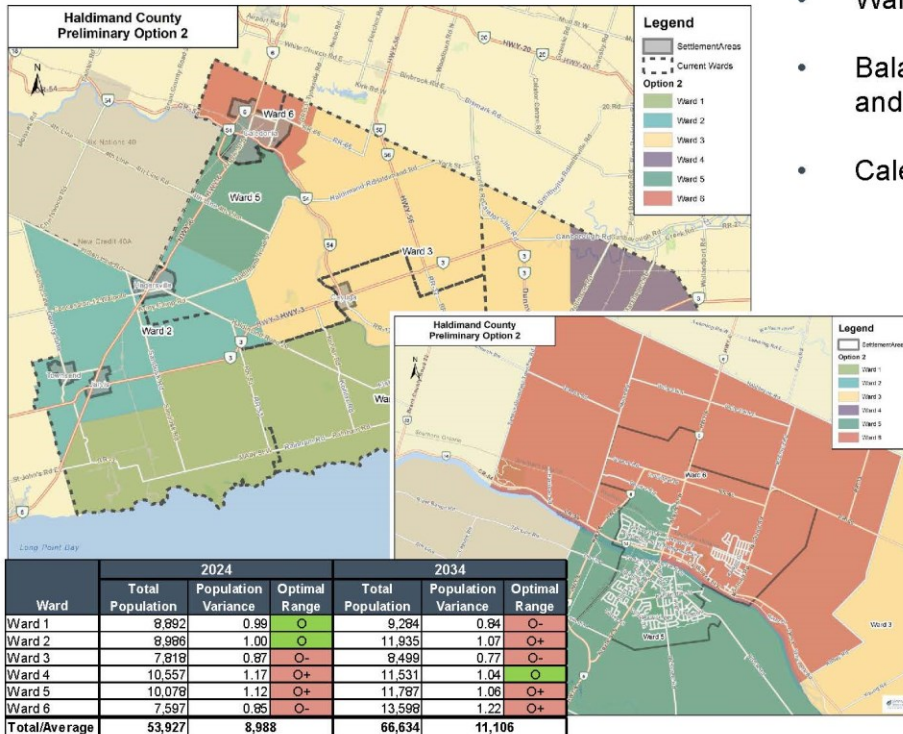
- Caledonia split: river is a logical delineation;
- Keeps the lakeshore in one ward with similar issues under one jurisdiction BUT is a very large ward;
- Hagersville now in same ward with Jarvis/Townsend;
- We heard from many residents that the Dunnville area across the river should be contained with urban Dunnville.

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





Preliminary Option 2



- Wards 1-4 remain unchanged from Option 1;
- Balanced Caledonia populations both present and future;
- Caledonia wards no longer split cleanly by river

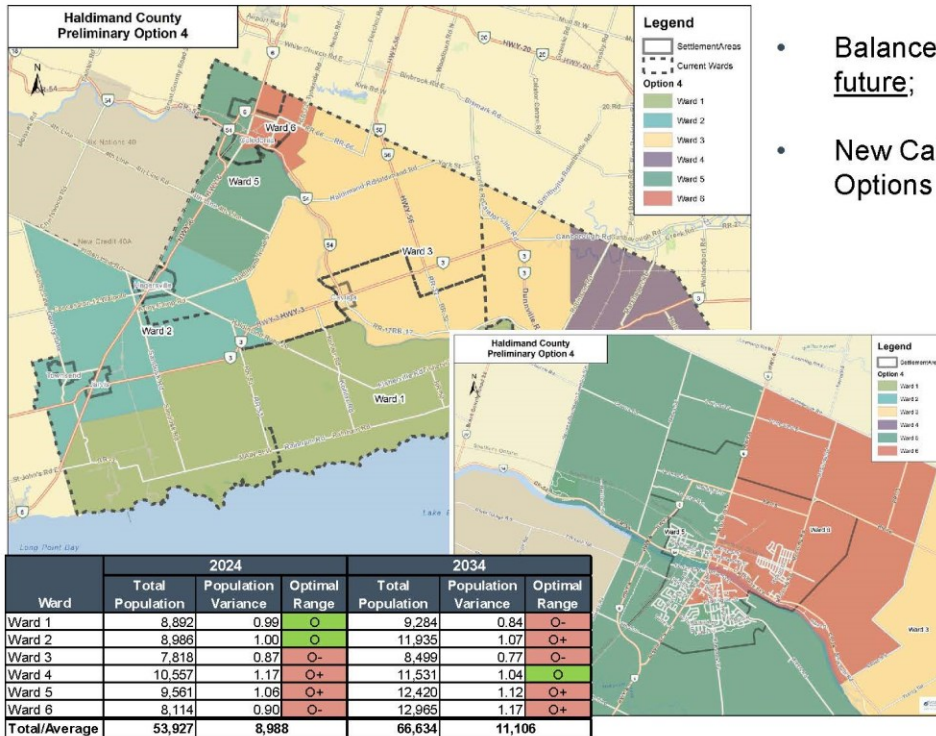
Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards fall within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with two wards within the optional range ($\pm 5\%$).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Yes	All six wards include coherent communities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





Preliminary Option 4

- Wards 1-4 remain unchanged from Option 1/2;
- Balanced Caledonia populations both present and future;
- New Caledonia ward configuration compared with Options 1 and 2.



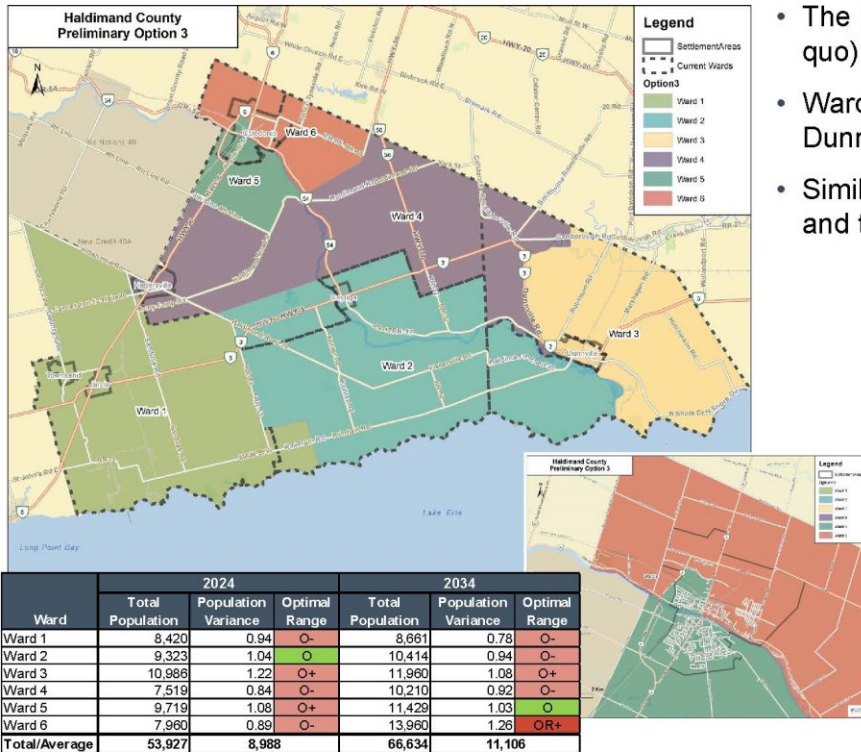
Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards fall within the ±25% range of variation with two wards within the optional range (±5%).
Protection of Communities of Interest	Largely Successful	All six wards include coherent communities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

2024 WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW





Preliminary Option 3



- Has similarities to the existing system outside of the Caledonia/Dunnville areas;
- The lakeshore is split amongst 3 different wards (status quo);
- Ward 4 remains large and stretches from Hagersville to Dunnville;
- Similar feedback to Options 1,2 & 4 regarding Dunnville and the river.

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





For Consideration

13

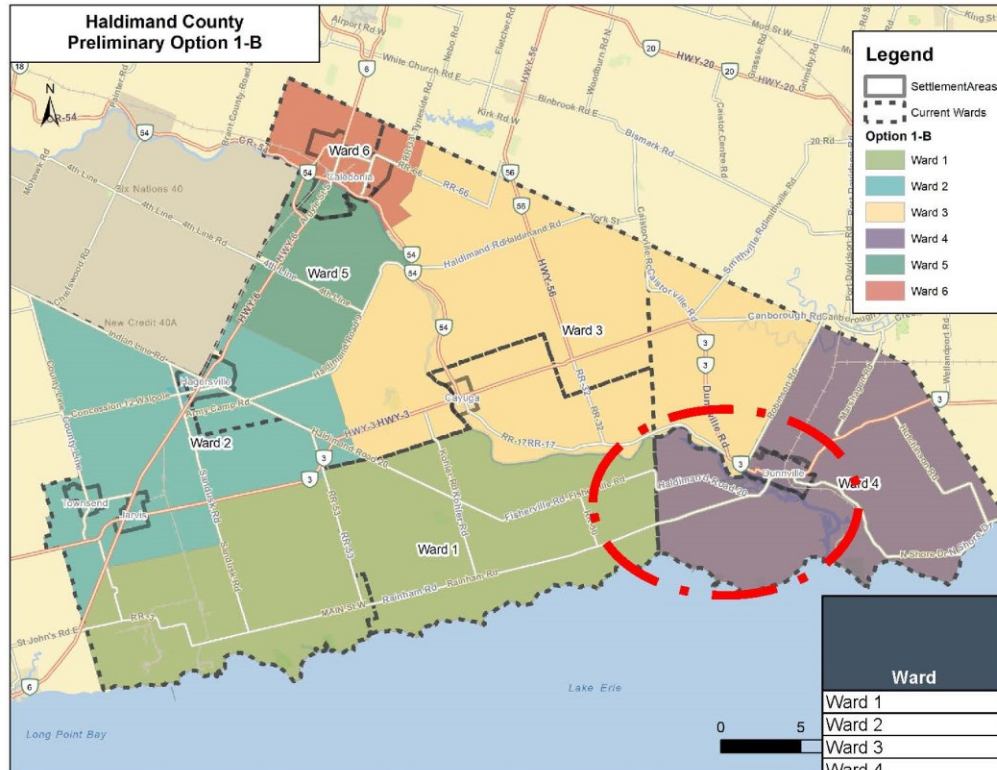


How should the lakeshore be distributed?



If Considered too big:

- Add eastern area to Dunnville?
- Add in western area to Hagersville/Jarvis/Townsend



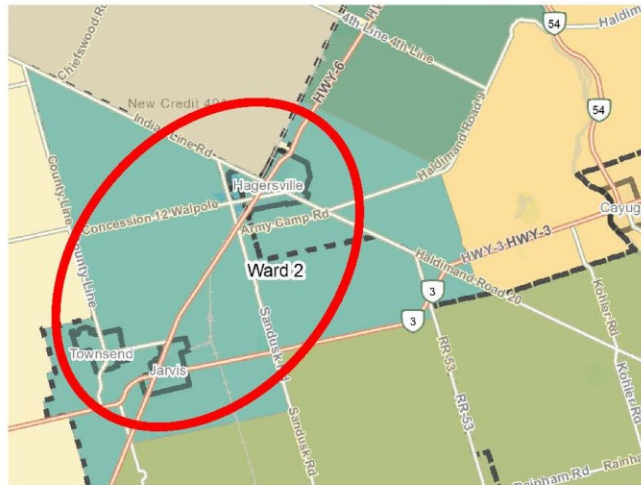
Adjusted Options For Discussion Option 1-B

- Adjustment made between Wards 1 and 4 (wards 2, 3, 5, 6 same as Option 1)
- Ward 4 outside of acceptable population range in 2024 (+35%) but comes into parity.
- Ward 1 falls outside of acceptable 25% population range in longer term.

Ward	2024			2034		
	Total Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range	Total Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	7,058	0.79	O-	7,040	0.63	OR-
Ward 2	8,986	1.00	O	11,935	1.07	O+
Ward 3	8,061	0.90	O-	8,741	0.79	O-
Ward 4	12,148	1.35	OR+	13,533	1.22	O+
Ward 5	8,466	0.94	O-	10,154	0.91	O-
Ward 6	9,209	1.02	O	15,231	1.37	OR+
Total/Average	53,927	8,988		66,634	11,106	



What areas are connected to Hagersville?



VS

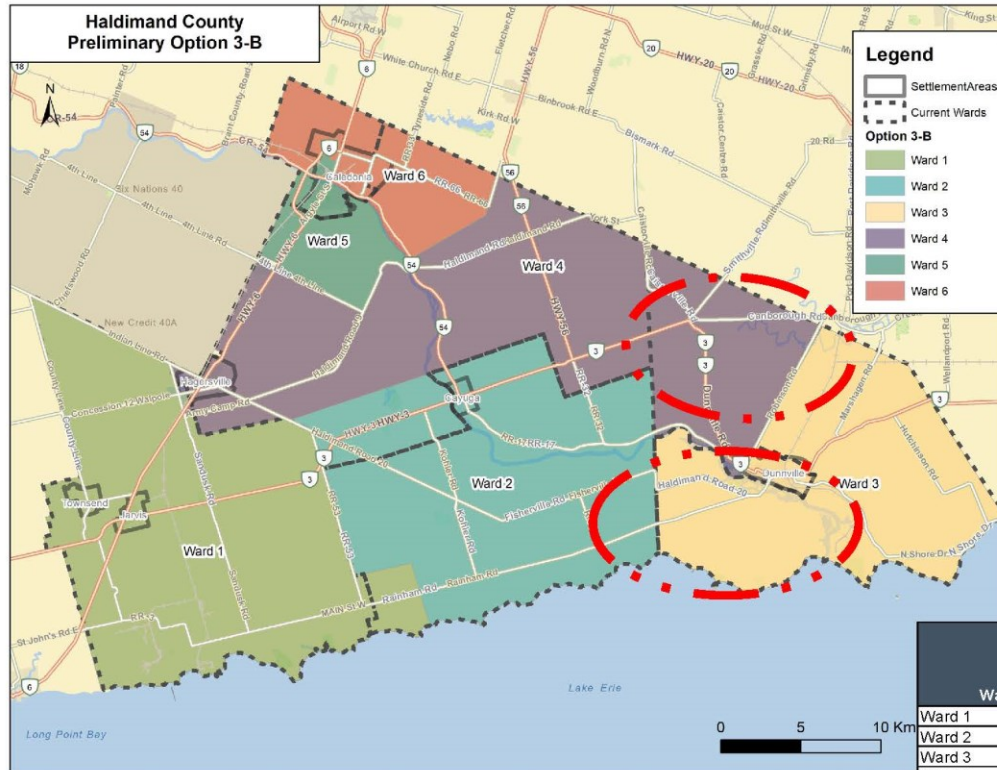


Options 1, 2, 4 = large lakeshore ward

Option 3 = large ward 4

It is practically impossible to attach Hagersville to other ward configurations due to its population concentration





Adjusted Options For Discussion Option 3-B

- Adjustment made between Wards 2, 3 and 4 (wards 1, 5, 6 same as Option 3);
- Ward 4 becomes larger;
- Ward 3 outside of acceptable population range in 2024 (+35%) but comes into parity;
- Ward 2/6 fall *slightly* outside of the acceptable 25% population range in longer term.

Ward	2024			2034		
	Total Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range	Total Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	8,420	0.94	O-	8,661	0.78	O-
Ward 2	7,484	0.83	O-	8,165	0.74	OR-
Ward 3	12,148	1.35	OR+	13,533	1.22	O+
Ward 4	8,196	0.91	O-	10,886	0.98	O
Ward 5	9,719	1.08	O+	11,429	1.03	O
Ward 6	7,960	0.89	O-	13,960	1.26	OR+
Total/Average	53,927	8,988		66,634	11,106	

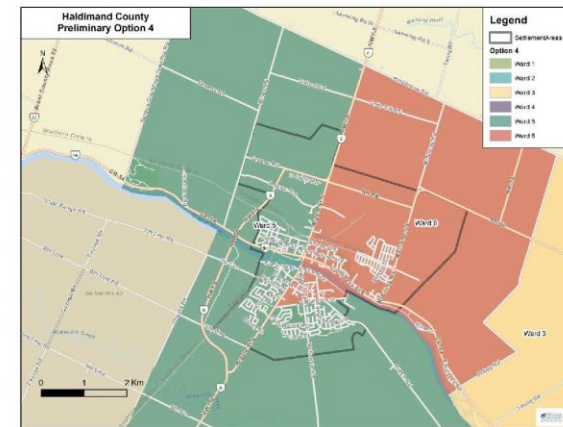
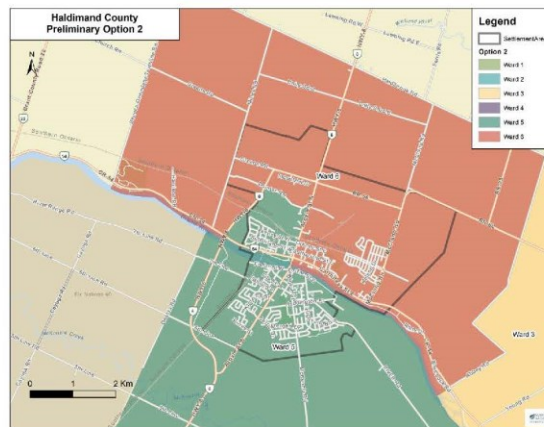
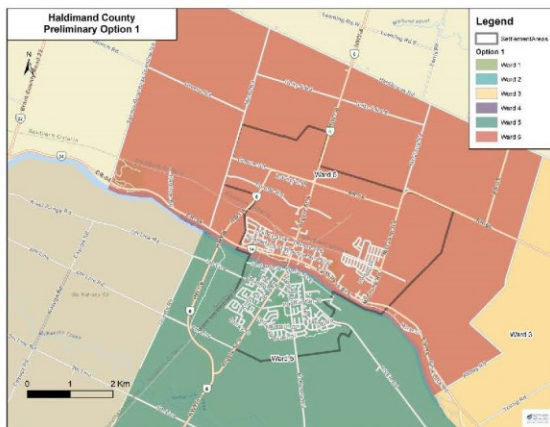


How should the proposed Caledonia wards be configured?

Option 1: River Split (Good population parity in 2024 but not in future)

Option 2: Better Pop. Parity (In 2024 and longer term)

Option 3: Best Pop. Parity (In 2024 and longer term)





Questions?



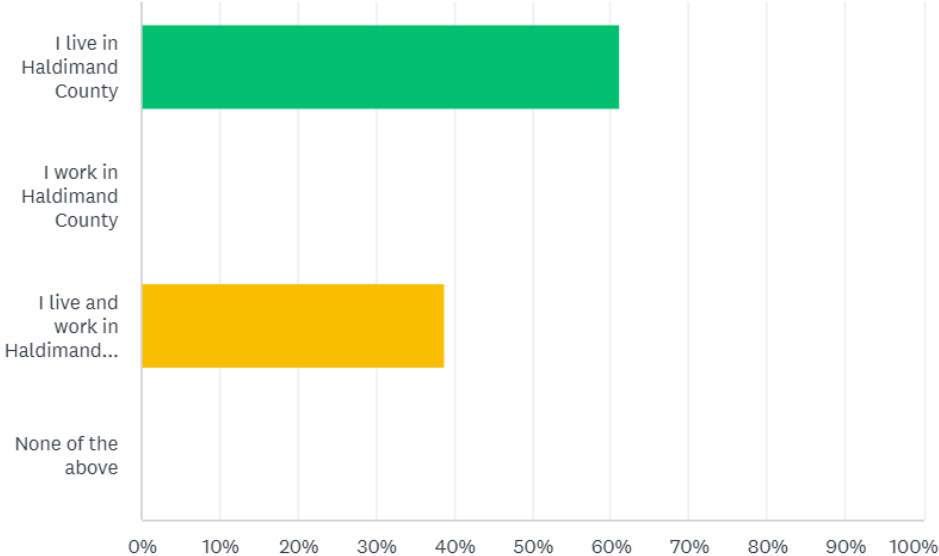
Appendix C

Survey Results (Phase 1)



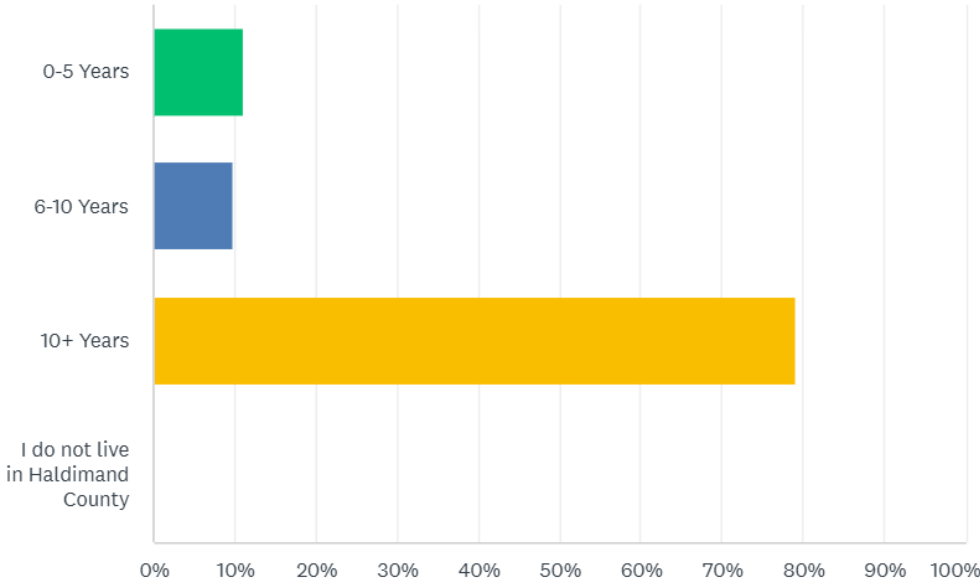
What best describes you?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 4



How long have you lived in Haldimand County?

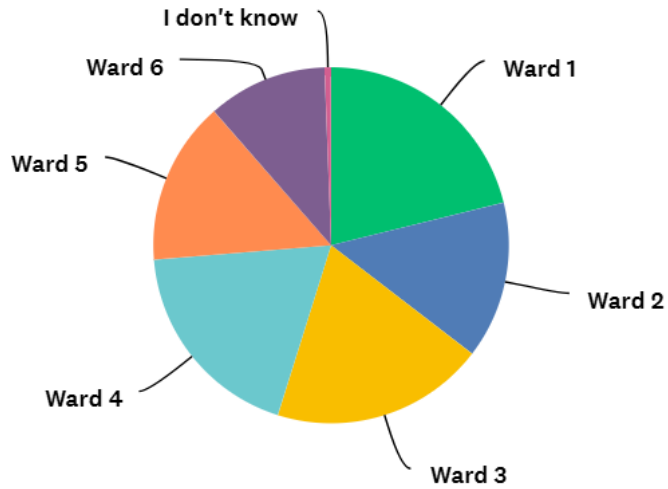
Answered: 173 Skipped: 4





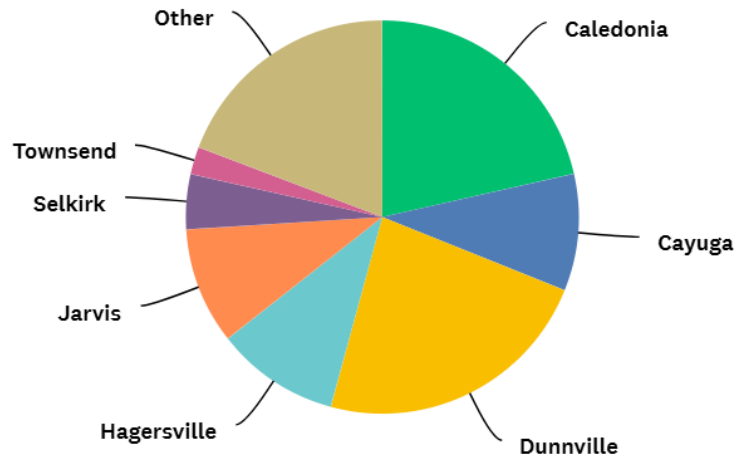
Which ward do you live in?

Answered: 175 Skipped: 2



Which community in Haldimand County do you live in?

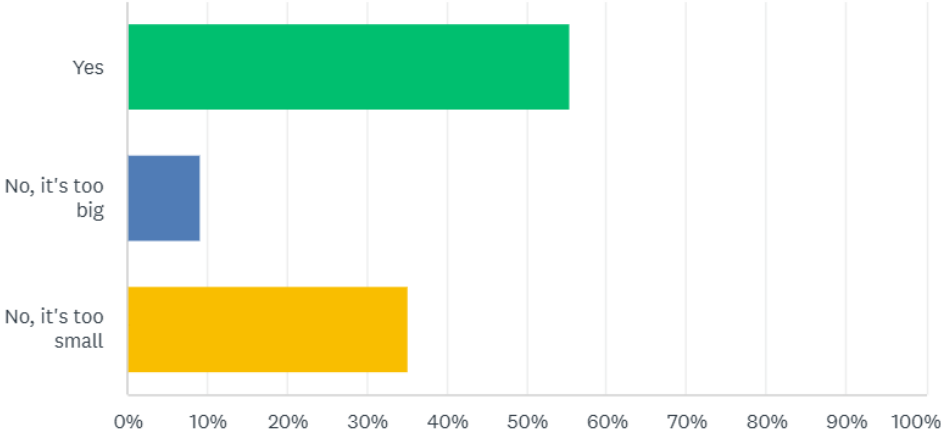
Answered: 177 Skipped: 0





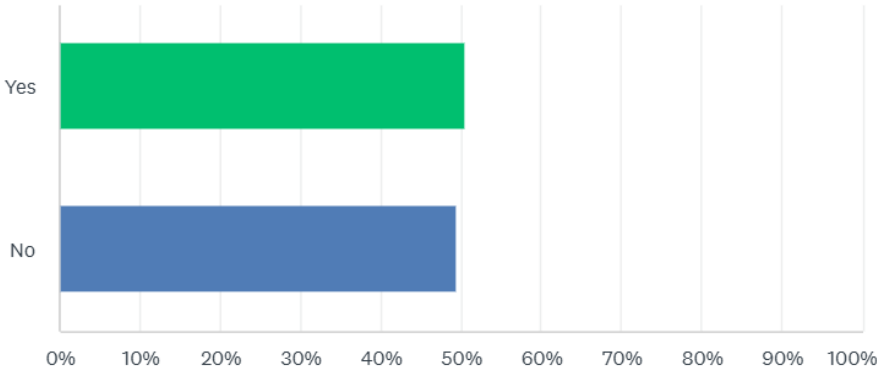
Is Haldimand County's Council the right size?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 4



Does the current ward system represent you fairly?

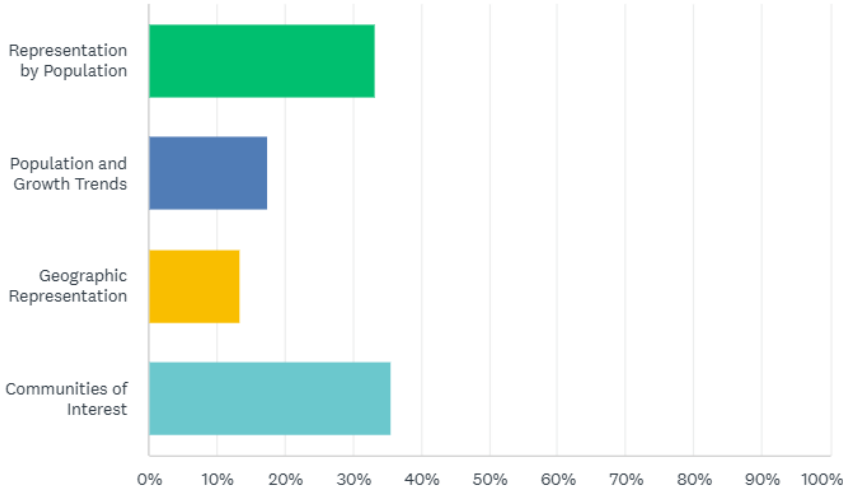
Answered: 174 Skipped: 3





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

Answered: 171 Skipped: 6





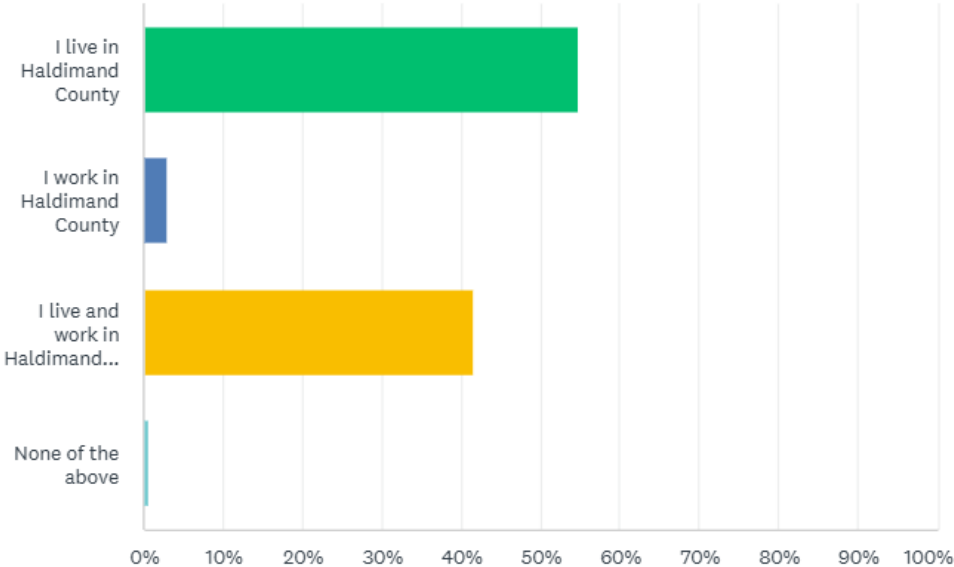
Appendix D

Survey Results (Phase 2)



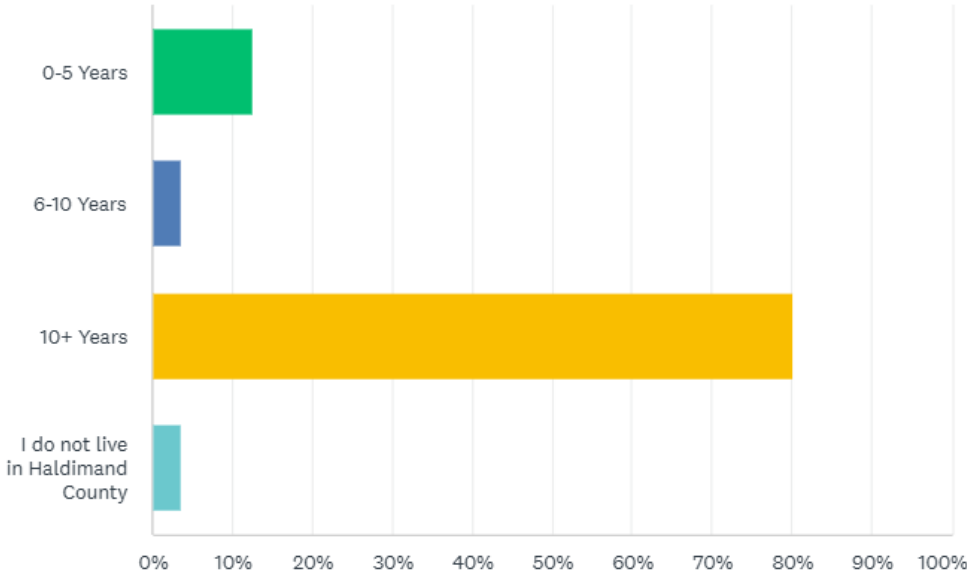
What best describes you?

Answered: 135 Skipped: 5



How long have you lived in Haldimand County?

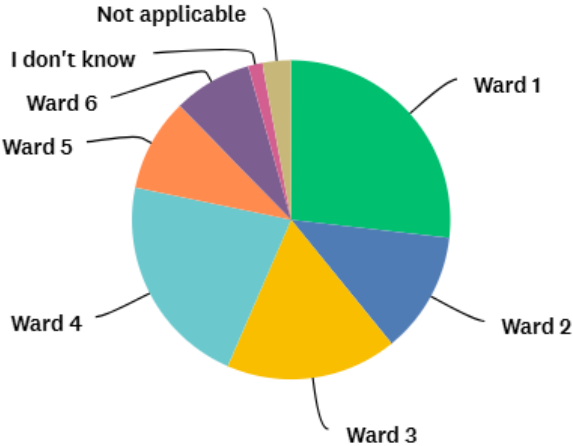
Answered: 136 Skipped: 4





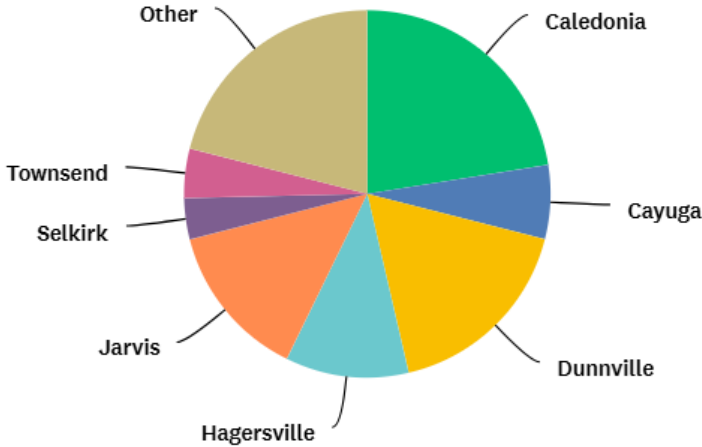
Which ward do you live in? (See map above)Interactive Map

Answered: 138 Skipped: 2



Which community in Haldimand County do you live in?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 2





Which of the four preliminary options do you prefer? Please note that you can view previous options using the "prev" and "next" buttons at the bottom of each option page.

Answered: 83 Skipped: 57

