



2020 Ward Boundary Review

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Final Report

March 23, 2021

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.
905-272-3600
info@watsonecon.ca

In association with: Dr. Robert J. Williams and
Dr. Zachary Spicer



Table of Contents

	Page
1. Introduction and Study Objectives	1
2. Context	1
3. Project Structure and Timeline.....	3
4. The Preliminary Options Report.....	3
5. Population and Growth Trends	4
5.1 Historical and Existing Population.....	4
5.2 Population Forecast, 2020 to 2030	6
6. Public Engagement	8
6.1 Online Engagement	8
6.1.1 Website.....	8
6.1.2 Surveys.....	9
6.1.3 Social Media Engagement	10
6.2 Public Consultation Sessions.....	11
6.3 Interviews and Direct Community Outreach.....	11
7. Principles	12
8. Whitchurch-Stouffville’s Existing Ward Structure.....	12
9. Recommended Options	16
9.1 Rural Ward Configurations.....	17
9.2 Urban Ward Configurations	22
10. Next Steps & Council Decisions	27
Appendix A	A-1
Appendix B	B-1
Appendix C	C-1
Appendix D	D-1



1. Introduction and Study Objectives

In the spring of 2020, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson), in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams, hereinafter referred to as the Consultant Team, to conduct a comprehensive review of the Town's ward boundaries before the 2022 municipal election.

The primary purpose of the Ward Boundary Review (W.B.R.) is to prepare Whitchurch-Stouffville Council to make decisions about whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative arrangement. The project has a number of key objectives in accordance with the project terms of reference, as follows:

- Develop a clear understanding of the present ward system, including its origins and operations as a system of representation;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the present ward system on the basis of identified guiding principles;
- Conduct an appropriate consultation process to ensure community support for the review and its outcome;
- Identify plausible modifications to the present ward structure; and
- Deliver a report that will set out recommended alternative ward boundaries to ensure effective and equitable electoral arrangements for Whitchurch-Stouffville, based on the principles identified.

This phase of the study provides Council with a final report and alternative ward boundary structures for their consideration, as presented herein.

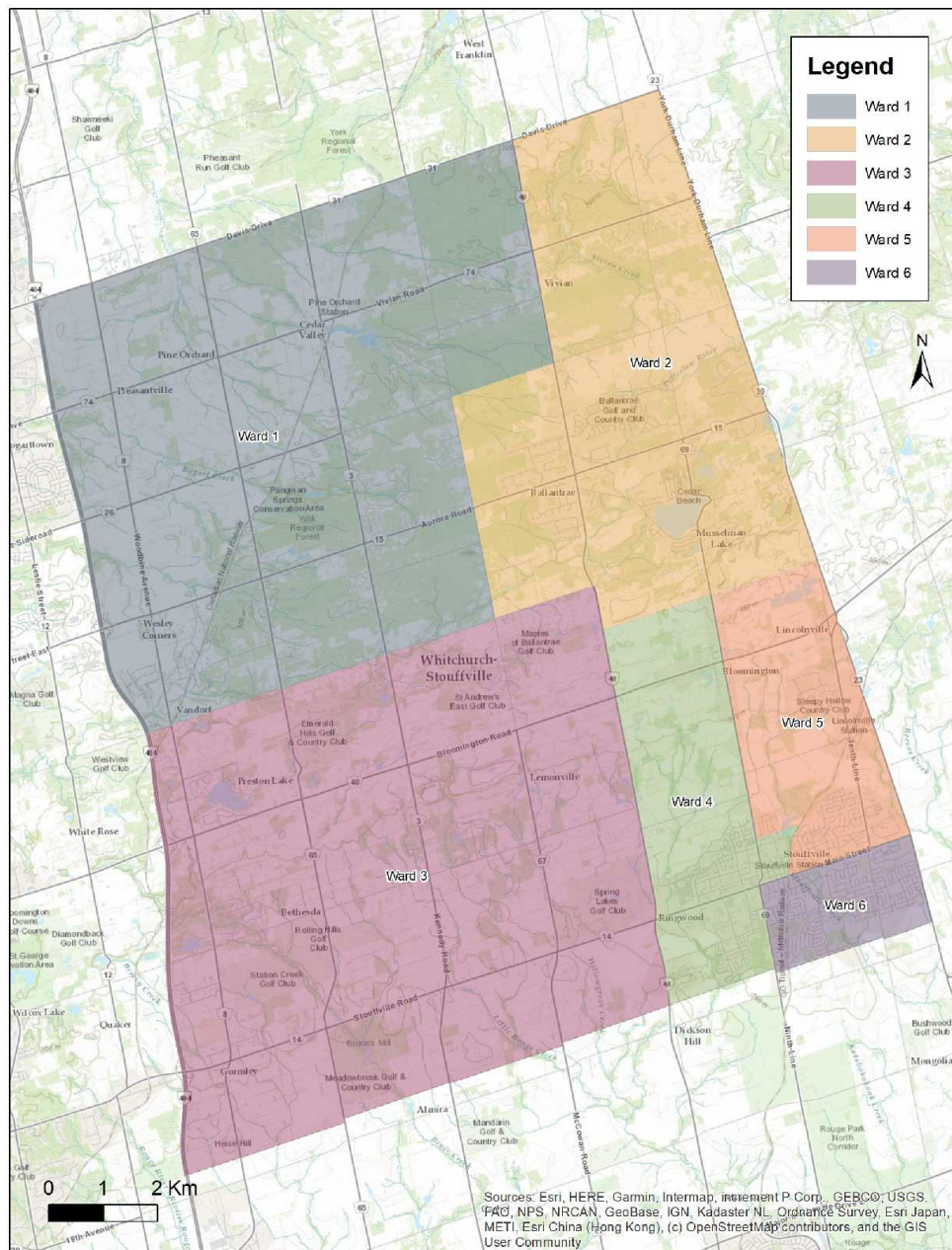
2. Context

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 provincial parliaments and typically as wards at the municipal level, as is the case in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.



At present, Council is comprised of seven members, consisting of a Mayor, who is elected at-large, and six councillors elected in six wards. The existing ward structure is presented in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1: Whitchurch-Stouffville Current Ward Structure





The wards in which councillors are elected in Whitchurch-Stouffville were established as a result of a W.B.R. conducted in 2009 that adjusted the original 1971 boundaries. Population data from 2016 and 2020 indicate that the wards are unbalanced in population, and population projections indicate that the overall population will grow by another 10,000 by 2030, primarily within the urban settlement area.

3. Project Structure and Timeline

The W.B.R. commenced in the late spring of 2020 and is anticipated to be completed by April 2021.

Work completed to date includes:

- Research and data compilation;
- Interviews with councillors, the Mayor and municipal staff;
- Population and growth forecasting and data modelling to 2030;
- Development of five preliminary ward boundary alternatives;
- Public consultation on existing ward structure and preliminary alternatives;
- Development of final options and recommendations, and preparation of a Final Report (this document constitutes the Final Report); and
- Presentation to Council (March 23, 2021).

4. The Preliminary Options Report

A Preliminary Options report was released in November 2020 which provided preliminary alternative ward options that were developed by the Consultant Team. That report is available here:

<https://www.cometogetherws.ca/16007/widgets/63105/documents/44994>

The Preliminary Options Report serves as a platform for the Final Report since it includes:

- An explanation of the terms of reference and objectives for the W.B.R.;
- An outline of the format and timeline for the project;
- The context and background for the W.B.R.;
- A detailed discussion and explanation of the guiding principles that frame the study;



- An analysis of the distribution of the present municipal population and a forecast of population growth over the 2020 to 2030 period;
- An analysis and preliminary evaluation of the present wards within the context of the guiding principles; and
- Five preliminary ward boundary options.

The Final Report does not explore the topics discussed in the Preliminary Options Report in detail, except in summary form to provide context, and assumes that those interested in the recommendations included herein have access to the document.

5. Population and Growth Trends

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. In order to evaluate the existing ward structure and subsequent alternatives in terms of representation by population in the existing year (based on 2020 population figures), the Consultant Team developed a detailed population estimate for the Town and its respective wards and communities.

5.1 Historical and Existing Population

Whitchurch-Stouffville has been one of the fastest growing communities in Canada over the past several years. Since the Town's existing wards were established in 2009, the population has increased by approximately 56%.

A mid-2020 population estimate was derived by utilizing the 2016 Census and a review of building permit activity from 2016 through the end of 2019, with an assumed six-month lag from issuance to occupancy. Whitchurch-Stouffville's estimated 2020 population is 50,900.¹ The Town's 2020 total population by settlement area is presented in Table 5-1. As shown, Stouffville is the major population centre within Whitchurch-Stouffville, accounting for approximately 72% of the current population (36,400) and is anticipated to continue to grow.

¹ Reflects a mid-2020 population estimate and includes Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.



Table 5-1: Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Settlement Area	2020 Population ¹
Stouffville	36,400
Ballantrae/Musselman Lake	5,100
Vandorf	900
Gormley	300
Bloomington/Rural	8,200
Total	50,900

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020.

¹ Includes Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

The 2020 base population was developed at a sub-municipal level, allowing the Consultant Team to aggregate these blocks to determine populations for existing and alternative ward options. As shown in Table 5-2, the three existing Stouffville (urban wards) Wards 4, 5, and 6 have the highest populations, accounting for 74% of the Town's existing population. Ward 6 has a population of approximately 17,440, almost five times that of both Ward 1 (3,890) and Ward 3 (3,430). As discussed through the Discussion Paper and the Preliminary Options Report, the urban and rural wards do not represent Whitchurch-Stouffville in an equitable way, and as growth continues to develop, these wards will continue to grow further out of parity.

Table 5-2: 2016 and 2020 Population Estimates by Existing Ward Structure

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Share
Ward 1	3,890	8%
Ward 2	6,070	12%
Ward 3	3,430	7%
Ward 4	12,290	24%
Ward 5	7,740	15%
Ward 6	17,440	34%
Total	50,860	100%
Average	8,477	17%

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020

¹ Population includes net Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.



The population projections and allocations developed for this study and reported below have been produced by the Consultant Team using the 2016 Census plus the addition of building permits through 2016 to 2019 to estimate a 2020 population base for the purposes of this W.B.R.

5.2 Population Forecast, 2020 to 2030

Disclaimer: The population projections stated within this report conform to the approved 2031 population targets stated within the Town's Official Plan, as per the Growth Plan targets and have been adjusted upward by the Consultant Team to account for the additional growth opportunities developing within the Lincolnville GO Station Area.

The Consultant Team prepared a Town-wide population forecast for the 2020 to 2030 period that is generally consistent with York Region's latest growth projections.² Community level growth allocations were guided by a comprehensive review of opportunities to accommodate future residential growth through plans of subdivision (registered unbuilt, draft approved, and proposed), site plan applications, and discussions with municipal planning staff.

The significant population growth in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville over the past decade is forecast to continue. By 2030, Whitchurch-Stouffville's population is anticipated to grow by approximately 10,600, bringing the total population (including undercount) to approximately 61,500, an increase of 21%, as shown in Table 5-3.

Stouffville is expected to experience significant growth through infill opportunities, building out of Phase 1 and Phase 2 lands with the ongoing development of Phase 3 lands, including the Lincolnville area, through 2030. Stouffville is expected to grow by approximately 10,700 persons, while the remaining settlement areas are to increase slightly by 200 persons, factoring in growth from new development, as well as changes in the existing population, a result of the aging population (a slight decline). Bloomington and the remaining rural area are anticipated to see a slight population decline as a result of the aging populations and growth opportunities.

² York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario – 2041 Population and Employment Forecasts, 2015.



Table 5-3: Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Population Growth, 2020 to 2030

Geographic Location	2020 Population ¹	2030 Population ¹	2020-2030 Growth
Stouffville	36,400	47,100	10,700
Other Settlement Areas	6,300	6,500	200
Bloomington/Rural	8,200	7,800	-400
Total	50,900	61,500	10,600

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020.

¹ Includes Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

During the course of this study, two significant Minister's zoning orders (M.Z.O.s) were put in place within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville related to residential development.³ These two M.Z.O.s are not included in the population metrics shown within this report and study, but have been reviewed and considered by the Consultant Team. Both of these orders are located west of Highway 48, straddling the municipal boundary and extending south into the City of Markham, and fall outside the existing Stouffville urban boundary. The M.Z.O.s are still at the pre-consultation stage and are anticipated to develop over the next decade with the potential to generate more than 2,500 units. These orders would fall within Ward 1 in the recommended rural option 1 and within Ward 2 in the recommended rural option 2. In both scenarios, these options have sufficient room to accommodate said growth and would remain below the optimal population; however, these options would result in an urbanized community falling within a ward that is currently built around the rural communities of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

³ A Minister's zoning order (M.Z.O.) controls the use of land and sets specific requirements for new development, such as minimum lot sizes, frontage, access and servicing requirements. An M.Z.O. may also restrict certain types of development. M.Z.O.s are common in areas without municipal organization and within areas covered by the Parkway Belt West Plan. An M.Z.O. could potentially be used to control land use in any area of the Province.



6. Public Engagement

The W.B.R. employed a comprehensive public engagement strategy, in which the Consultant Team solicited feedback from staff, Council, and citizens of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville through a variety of methods:

- Online engagement through surveys, social media outreach, and a public-facing website;
- Public consultation sessions (online virtual open houses); and
- Interviews with members of Council, the Mayor, key members of staff, and direct outreach to citizen-run and municipal organizations.

Information on the W.B.R. process was communicated through the website, as well as through social media posts on Facebook and Twitter, and additional notices were provided through local news media. A full list of the engagements can be found in Appendix A with additional materials in Appendices B to D.

6.1 Online Engagement

6.1.1 Website

The website was established using the “Bang the Table” public engagement software, which helped to raise awareness about the W.B.R., to disseminate information about the process, and to give Whitchurch-Stouffville residents an opportunity to provide feedback (available at <https://www.cometogetherws.ca/wards>). Through this platform, residents could access the online surveys, view recordings of the public engagement sessions, 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 webpage, which distilled some key information about the W.B.R. into an accessible format.

Engagement with Whitchurch-Stouffville’s W.B.R. website was moderate. As of January 26, 2021, it had received 767 visitors, with a peak of 80 in a single day. Of these visitors, 608 simply visited the page but demonstrated little further engagement, and so were categorized by the “Bang the Table” software as “Aware.” Two hundred and seventy-eight people (278) visited the Key Dates page, the FAQ page, multiple



project pages and/or viewed images and downloaded documents, and so were categorized as “Informed.” Meanwhile, 159 visitors were categorized as “Engaged Participants,” having engaged with the tools such as the brain teaser. Note, however, that these metrics refer to engagement through the Town’s W.B.R. website, and do not convey the full extent of public engagement with the W.B.R. process as a whole – for example, others may have completed the longer-form surveys (129 respondents in round 1 and 37 respondents in round 2; see section 6.1.2) or participated in the Public Consultation Sessions. Detailed website engagement metrics are available in Appendix B.

6.1.2 Surveys

The surveys provided the Consultant Team with an opportunity to gauge 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, and a later survey which asked respondents to assess and rank a set of preliminary ward boundary options. The Phase 1 survey was open until September 15, 2021 and resulted in 129 responses. Respondents were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the existing wards, and to rank the guiding principles in terms of priority. In general, residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville indicated that representation by population is more important than the other guiding principles, both in the present and considering future trends, and many respondents also communicated a strong sense of identity with their local communities within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. A majority of respondents (63%) also indicated that they felt the existing ward structure did not represent them well. About half (52%) indicated that they felt the current number of councillors in Whitchurch-Stouffville is appropriate, while 26% said there are too few, and 22% said there are currently too many. Full survey results are reported in Appendix D.

A follow-up survey then asked participants to identify their preferred preliminary option, however this survey received fewer responses. Thirty-seven (37) people participated in the Phase 2 survey, with only 35 indicating their preferred option. Option 3-B was the most preferred, having been chosen by 37% of respondents, followed by Options 3-A and 2-B, which were both ranked first by 20% of respondents. It is worth noting, however, that all these options featured four urban wards and two rural wards, and a majority of respondents favoured a north-south split in the rural areas, which was present in Options 2-B and 3-B, compared to the east-west split presented in Options 2-



A and 2-B. In total, 57% of respondents opted for options that featured the north-south split, compared to 26% who voted for options with an east-west split. Finally, 17% voted for Option 1, featuring three urban wards and three rural wards.

Throughout both rounds of surveying, the open-form comments provided key insights into public preferences and the issues in play. The Consultant Team evaluated these comments for general themes and identified insightful responses that highlighted crucial issues. Many of these responses echoed the quantitative results, with a large number of participants expressing concerns over population disparities that will result from the rapid growth in the urban community of Stouffville. It must be noted, though, that a large majority of respondents were residents of Stouffville (84%), and so their perspectives did tend to dominate over the rural respondents, many of whom expressed concerns over the number of councillors representing rural areas, as well as other issues of rural representation.

6.1.3 Social Media Engagement

Social media proved an effective platform for disseminating information about the W.B.R. to the public. Source analysis from the Whitchurch-Stouffville W.B.R. webpage indicated that of the visitors directed there from external sources, more than half (58%) were from Facebook, more than any other avenue (Twitter accounted for 9% of references to the W.B.R. webpage). Three posts we made on Facebook, reaching 4,859 people, of which 290 engaged either through comments or shares, and two Twitter posts reached 3,518 people, of which 102 engaged. Direct engine searches through services like Google, Yahoo, and Bing came in second at 22% – it is unclear where these individuals first learned of the W.B.R., but it may have been through more other sources such as podcasts – for example the W.B.R. was mentioned in six “Talk of the Town” episodes.

In addition, a short brain-teaser survey entitled “How Well Do You Know Whitchurch-Stouffville?” was circulated through social media, which quizzed respondents on their knowledge of their municipality. It was intended to be a fun method for informing the public, which would hopefully generate excitement about the W.B.R., and also directed participants to the survey.



6.2 Public Consultation Sessions

The Consultant Team also held a series of public consultation sessions with Whitchurch-Stouffville residents. Following public health guidelines put in place due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, four public open houses were conducted virtually on December 3 and December 8, with two, approximately hour-long, virtual consultation sessions each day. Residents had the option of participating either online through a video conferencing platform, or by calling in via telephone. Feedback from these sessions was used to inform the recommendations provided in this report. It should be highlighted that, while these public consultation sessions had to be held virtually due to COVID-19, the four sessions that occurred is more than the number of in-person sessions that would have occurred under normal circumstances. Thus, while gathering restrictions may have posed some barriers to public engagement, such additional measures helped to mitigate any disruption. The Consultant Team's presentation and other information about the review, including an audio recording of a Public Open House, is available online at <https://www.cometogetherws.ca/wards>. Further, the slides presented in the public consultation sessions are also available in Appendix C of this document.

6.3 Interviews and Direct Community Outreach

In addition to the public engagement, it was crucial for the Consultant Team to benefit from the perspectives of professionals in government and community organizations throughout the Town. A series of interviews was conducted with the Mayor and members of Council, as well as with senior staff at the Town.

The feedback and comments received through the consultation process are reflected in the analysis and have helped inform the findings and recommendations. While public input from consultation provides valuable insight into the review, it is not relied on exclusively. This is in part because only a subset of the population participated in the W.B.R., which may not be representative of Whitchurch-Stouffville's population as a whole. The Consultant Team utilized the public input in conjunction with its professional expertise and experience in W.B.R.s, along with knowledge of best practices, to develop the recommended options.



7. Principles

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has established core principles and other directions for an electoral review. The Town’s Electoral Ward Boundary Policy directs that, “Subject to the overriding principle of ‘effective representation,’ as set out in the 1991 Supreme Court of Canada ‘Carter decision,’ the following criteria will be referred to for guidance in the conduct of the review:

- Communities of Interest
- Present and Future Population Trends
- Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries
- Representation by Population
- Effective Representation.”

These principles are discussed at length in section 1.5 of the Preliminary Options Report so they will not be addressed again in this Final Report. The Consultant Team has given a thorough consideration of the importance of each principle and a considered evaluation of which of the principles is most important for determining an appropriate system of representation for the 2022 municipal election in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

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 Whitchurch-Stouffville’s Council should be the one that best fulfills as many of the guiding principles as possible.

8. Whitchurch-Stouffville’s Existing Ward Structure

A preliminary evaluation of the existing ward structure in Whitchurch-Stouffville is found in Chapter 3 of the Preliminary Options Report. That discussion and our evaluation of the existing wards are found in Table 8-1 below.



Table 8-1: Existing Whitchurch-Stouffville Ward Configuration Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle? ¹	Comment
Consideration of Communities of Interest	Partially successful	Three wards combine rural and urban communities. Stouffville is divided.
Consideration of Existing and Future Population Trends	No	The current ward structure would not suitably accommodate future population growth. Population disparities throughout the wards would be expected to worsen through the 2022, 2026, and 2030 election cycles.
Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Partially successful	Some major roadways are used but inconsistently.
Representation by Population	No	Population data suggest that only one ward's population falls within the acceptable range of variance.
Effective Representation	Partially successful	The current population disparities between wards are too great to achieve effective representation. These disparities are likely to grow in the future. Other factors listed also contribute to effective representation being compromised.

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



The existing ward boundaries confront two main challenges: providing for existing population parity between wards and accommodating future population trends.

The objective of population parity (every councillor generally representing an equal number of constituents within his or her 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 Town. 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. 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 Whitchurch-Stouffville that include both urban and rural areas.

Based on the municipal population estimates for 2020 of approximately 50,860, the optimal population size for a local ward in a six-ward system in Whitchurch-Stouffville would be 8,477.⁴ This optimal ward population size increases to 10,250 by 2030 when the population is projected to increase to approximately 61,500 (Table 8-2).

¹ Population and growth trends for Whitchurch-Stouffville are included in the Preliminary Options Report.



Table 8-2: Population by Existing Ward, 2020 and 2030

Symbol	Description	Variance	2020 Population Range	2030 Population Range
OR+	Outside Range - High	25%	>10,600	>12,810
O+	Above Optimal	5%	8,901 – 10,600	10,761 – 12,810
O	Optimal Population Range	-	8,050 – 8,900	9,740 – 10,760
O-	Below Optimal	-5%	6,360 – 8,049	7,690 – 9,739
OR-	Outside Range - Low	-25%	<6,360	<7,690

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2020.

Note: 2020 population estimates have been rounded.

Population data for 2020 suggests that five of the six wards are outside the acceptable range of variance. The range in populations amongst the wards is approximately 13,000, with a low of 3,430 in Ward 3 and a high of 17,440 in Ward 6. While some variation is acceptable, especially with regard to the rural versus urban nature of some wards, this variation is on the extreme side. Wards 1, 2, and 3 are characterized as more rural in nature and even between these wards the population ranges between 3,430 and 6,070. The population range in the more urban Wards 4, 5, and 6 is also considerable with a low of 7,740 and a high of 17,440. Much of the aforementioned future residential growth is expected to continue to be largely concentrated in the urban boundary. Without adjustment, the disparities between the wards will continue.

Responses to the survey and participation in the public consultation sessions have largely shown that Whitchurch-Stouffville residents also think that population parity and future population trends should be prioritized in any alternative ward boundary system. The consultation process also revealed that there continues to be strong rural and agricultural interests and well-established hamlets and communities that should continue to be specifically represented on Council. It is clear that some of these communities have interests that are distinct from the larger, more populated communities in the urban area.



All told, analysis of the current and future population trends, along with feedback received during the public consultation, leads to a recommendation that Council should consider alternate ward configurations.

9. Recommended Options

As mentioned in the Preliminary Options Report, Whitchurch-Stouffville like many municipalities in Ontario, provides a unique challenge when finding a suitable ward boundary system. Whitchurch-Stouffville is a community with a large and growing population centre. The municipality has experienced some of the highest growth rates in the Region and in the decade since the existing ward boundaries were created, the population increased by well over 50%. In addition, there is a significant rural area that surrounds the urban area of Stouffville and accounts for the vast majority of the geographic area of the municipality. There are also distinct and unique hamlets and neighborhoods throughout the Town that should be recognized. As such, balancing communities of interest with population parity is always a challenge in a W.B.R.

Ultimately, the choice of ward system is a decision for Council. Taking the guiding principles of the review into consideration, along with feedback from residents and the expertise and experience of the Consultant Team, four options have been prepared for Council to consider. The options prepared for Council's consideration, shown below, have been divided into separate options for the rural wards (two wards) and options for the urban wards (four wards), and the options are interchangeable. This means that while there are a total of four final options prepared, in essence there are two options for the rural wards and two options for the urban wards for Council's consideration that can be combined to establish a new ward configuration for the Town.

The Consultant Team created a total of five preliminary options to garner feedback during the consultation process. One preliminary option retained some elements of the existing system in that three wards were predominantly rural and three were urban. This option was not carried forward as a viable final option based on evaluations and public feedback, primarily because the traditional design of three rural and three urban wards is no longer considered appropriate for Whitchurch-Stouffville. The final options included herein are largely based on the remaining four preliminary options, but include some revisions and changes that have been based on feedback received during the engagement period. The four options are based on two largely rural wards and four largely urban wards.



Two options each will be presented for both the rural and urban wards. Each places emphasis on the different values incorporated throughout the review process and takes into account their relative importance as identified through the consultation process. Council must implicitly decide which of the guiding principles it values the most. Doing so will make the decision about which system to adopt much easier. As discussed above, it is not recommended that Council retain the current ward boundary system.

9.1 Rural Ward Configurations

Rural Ward Boundary Option 1

Rural Ward Boundary Option 1 is based on the “A” variation from preliminary options 2 and 3 in the Preliminary Options Report. The two rural wards have an east/west configuration and use McCowan Road and Highway 48 as the primary boundary dividing lines. Ward 1 in this option covers a large rural area, is more sparsely populated, and has limited future residential growth. Ward 2 has a larger overall population that is expected to continue growing, is more compact, and includes the large Ballantrae community. As mentioned, this option is based on the “A” rural options in the Preliminary Options Report. For the final options presented herein, however, the community of Sleepy Hollow, west of Tenth Line between Bethesda Road and Bloomington Road is now included with the urban Stouffville wards (that is, Ward 6 in urban option 1 and Ward 3 in urban option 2), whereas in the original preliminary option it was included in Ward 2 of the rural options. Feedback received during the public consultation phase indicated that this community has ties and associations to the urban area of Stouffville.



Figure 9-1: Recommended Rural Ward Boundary Option 1

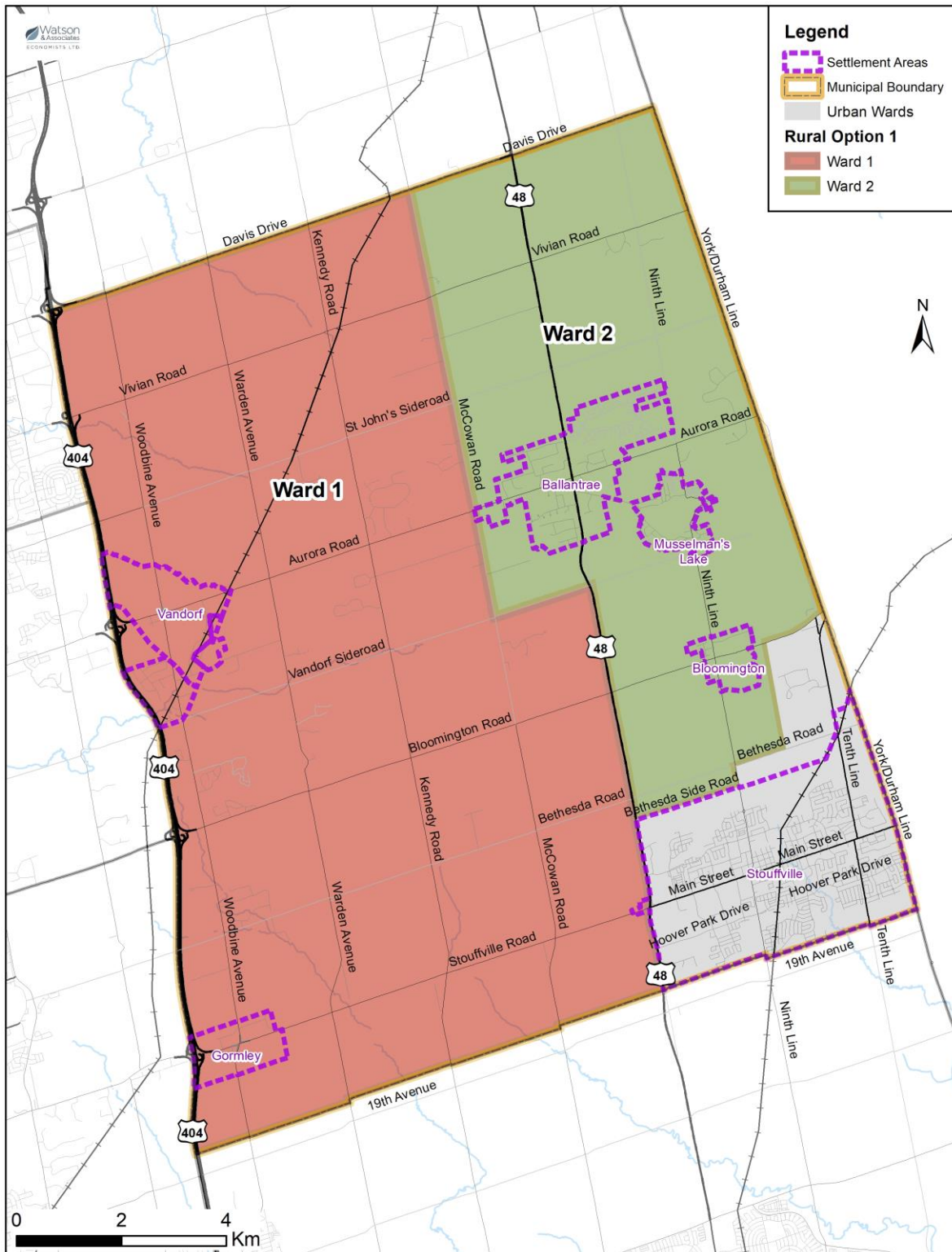




Figure 9-2: Recommended Rural Ward Boundary Option 1 Population Distribution

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Rural Option 1						
Ward 1	6,870	0.81	O-	6,320	0.62	OR-
Ward 2	7,180	0.85	O-	7,680	0.75	OR-
Total	50,860			61,500		
Average	8,477			10,250		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020

¹ Population includes net Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.

Note: numbers may not add due to rounding

Rural Ward Boundary Option 2

Rural Ward Boundary Option 2 is based on the “B” variation from preliminary options 2 and 3 in the Preliminary Options Report. In this option, the two rural wards have a north/south configuration and Vandorf Sideroad is one of the dominant boundaries between Wards 1 and 2. In contrast to Rural Ward Boundary Option 1, the two rural wards in this option have similar geographic sizes. The community of Ballantrae continues to be in one ward, but in this option it is in the same ward as both Mussleman’s Lake and Vandorf (Ward 1). Ward 2 in this option continues to be sparsely populated and has no significant population clusters, but is reflective of the nature of the area and the communities included in it.

This option considers the communities of interest present in Whitchurch-Stouffville and recognizes that the rural areas in the municipality have unique needs. This option also creates more compact wards that are both similar in size when compared with Rural Ward Boundary Option 1. It should be noted, however, that placing a greater emphasis on those principles creates a greater population disparity between the two rural wards. In Option 2, Ward 2 has a population of approximately 4,000 in both 2020 and 2030 compared with Ward 1 with just under 10,000 people.

There was a clear preference for this option based on the survey results received. Close to 60% of respondents picked either Option 2B or 3B as their preferred preliminary option and each of these options contained the north/south rural ward configuration.



As mentioned before, this option is based on the “B” rural options in the Preliminary Options Report; however, for the final options presented herein, the community of Sleepy Hollow, west of Tenth Line between Bethesda Road and Bloomington Road, is now included with the urban Stouffville wards (i.e Ward 6 in Urban Option 1 and Ward 3 in Urban Option 2), whereas in the original preliminary option it was included in Ward 2. Feedback received during the public consultation phase indicated that this community has ties and associations to the urban area of Stouffville.



Figure 9-3: Recommended Rural Ward Boundary Option 2

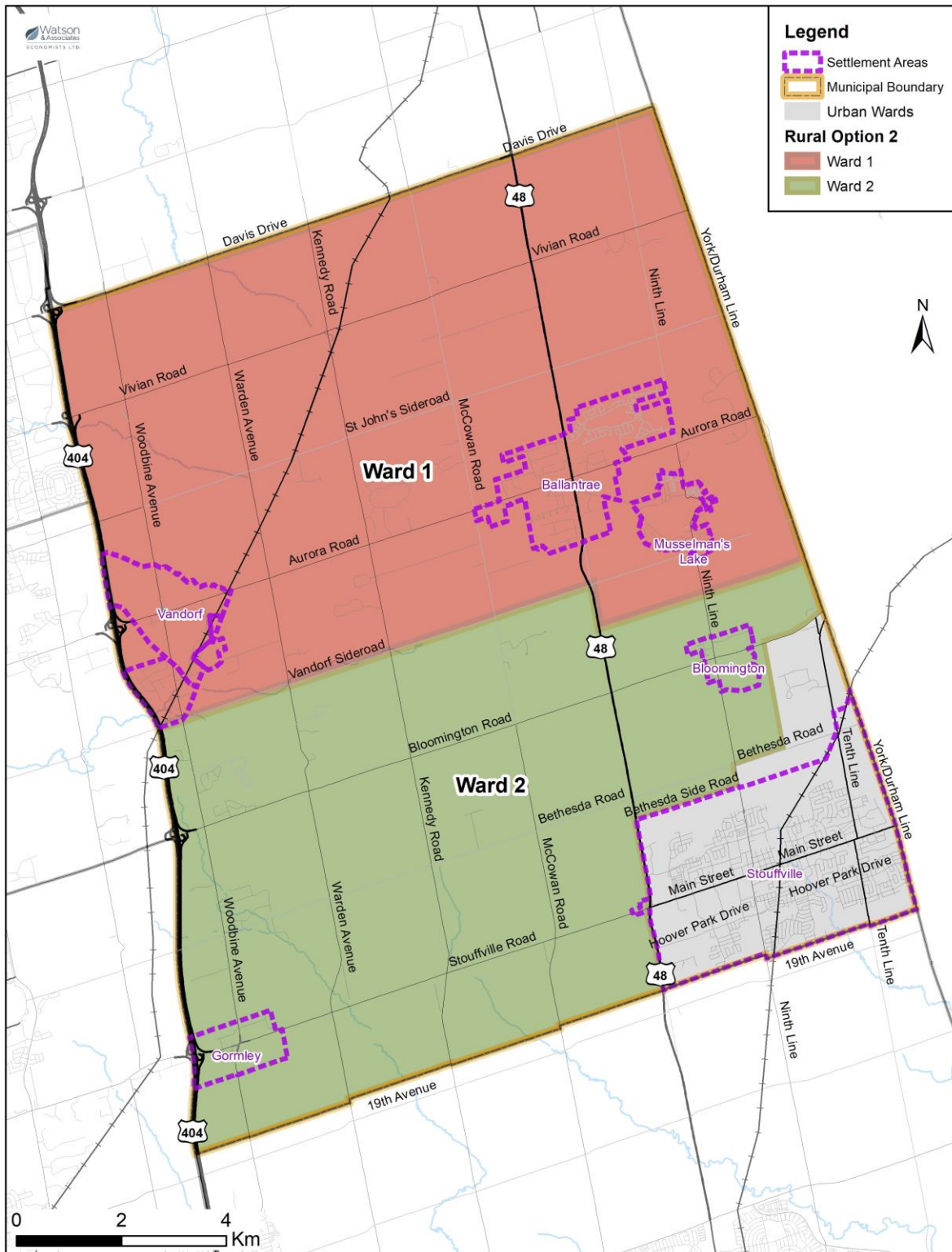




Figure 9-4: Rural Ward Boundary Option 2 Population Distribution

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Rural Option 2						
Ward 1	9,960	1.17	O+	9,900	0.97	O
Ward 2	4,080	0.48	OR-	4,090	0.40	OR-
Total	50,860			61,500		
Average	8,477			10,250		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020

¹ Population includes net Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.

Note: numbers may not add due to rounding

9.2 Urban Ward Configurations

Urban Ward Boundary Option 1

Urban Ward Boundary Option 1 is based on preliminary option 2 in the Preliminary Options Report (note that ward reference numbers have changed in the final options for consistency with existing ward reference numbers). There are four urban wards in this option, and they are identical to what was presented in preliminary option 2 with the exception of relocating the Sleepy Hollow area that was discussed in the Rural Ward Boundary Option section. In the options contained in the Preliminary Options Report, the area east of Tenth Line between Bethesda Road and Bloomington Road is included within Ward 2, whereas it is now included in Ward 3.

The wards have very good population parity by 2030 with no ward lower than 11,000 people or higher than approximately 12,450 and all wards within the optimal population ranges. In the shorter term, there are some wards that will be outside the ideal range with the obvious disparity being in Ward 3 with a population of just above 5,700. This compares to Ward 5 with a population approaching 11,700. Ward 3 is expected to undergo significant population growth over the next decade and will grow into parity and surpass the population of Ward 6.

While most of the boundary lines in this option are clear and use major roads, part of the boundary between Wards 4 and 5 uses the rail line, while in other places the rail line bisects wards.

This option places an emphasis on future population trends and achieving population parity in 2030 and is shown in Figure 9-5 and Figure 9-6.



Figure 9-5: Recommended Urban Ward Boundary Option 1

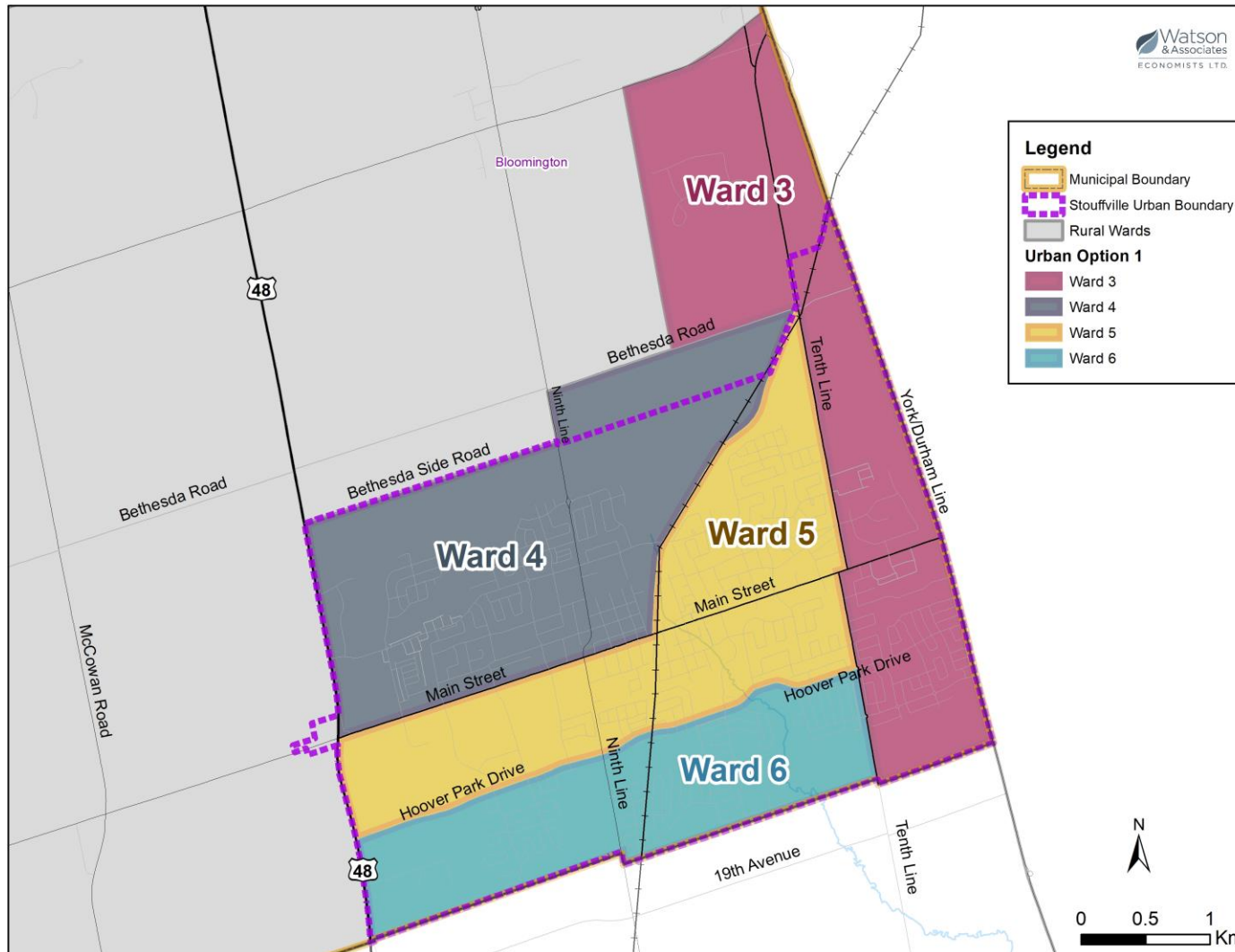




Figure 9-6: Recommended Urban Ward Boundary Option 1 Population Distribution

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Urban Option 1						
Ward 3	5,720	0.67	OR-	11,430	1.12	O+
Ward 4	9,220	1.09	O+	12,420	1.21	O+
Ward 5	11,650	1.37	OR+	12,360	1.21	O+
Ward 6	10,240	1.21	O+	11,300	1.10	O+
Total	50,860			61,500		
Average	8,477			10,250		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020

¹ Population includes net Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.

Note: numbers may not add due to rounding

Urban Ward Boundary Option 2

Urban Ward Boundary Option 2 was not presented as a preliminary option but is a “hybrid” option that was based on elements from both preliminary option 2 and 3 as presented in the Preliminary Options Report. Feedback was received that asked the Consultant Team to evaluate an option that combined characteristics from each of those preliminary options. For example, there was still a strong desire for better population parity amongst the urban wards; however, this hybrid option put greater emphasis on ensuring that boundaries and wards are recognizable and clear to residents while also recognizing future growth trends.

This option retains a similar ward configuration for Ward 3 as found in Urban Ward Boundary Option 1 where the ward is a thin ward running largely east of Tenth Line from the southern boundary of the municipality to Bloomington Road, but now captures the Sleepy Hollow community. The remaining three urban wards west of Tenth Line are a quadrant made up of three areas with only two roads used as boundaries: Main Street between Wards 5 and 6 and Ninth Line between Wards 4 and 5/6.

As described in Urban Boundary Option 1, the area directly east of Tenth Line between Bethedsa Road and Bloomington Road is included in Ward 3.

In this option, most of the wards will have better population parity by 2030 – similar to Final Option 1, Ward 3 grows into better parity as residential areas in that ward develop. Wards 4 and 6 both exceed the optimal population range in the short and long term,



while projected population growth in Ward 6 will bring this ward back closer to parity by 2030. While some of the wards, however, are not in the optimal population range, the absolute population differences are still not extreme (~8,400 to ~14,700).

Urban Ward Boundary Option 2 provides better population parity than the existing system while using clear and recognizable boundaries to create identifiable wards with some familiarity for residents to the current wards. It also considers the unique area east of Tenth Line and the projected changes in population.

While this option still places an emphasis on future population trends and population parity, it has greater consideration for the other core principles in this study, namely communities of interest and clear and identifiable ward boundaries, and is shown in Figure 9-7 and Figure 9-8.



Figure 9-7: Recommended Urban Ward Boundary Option 2

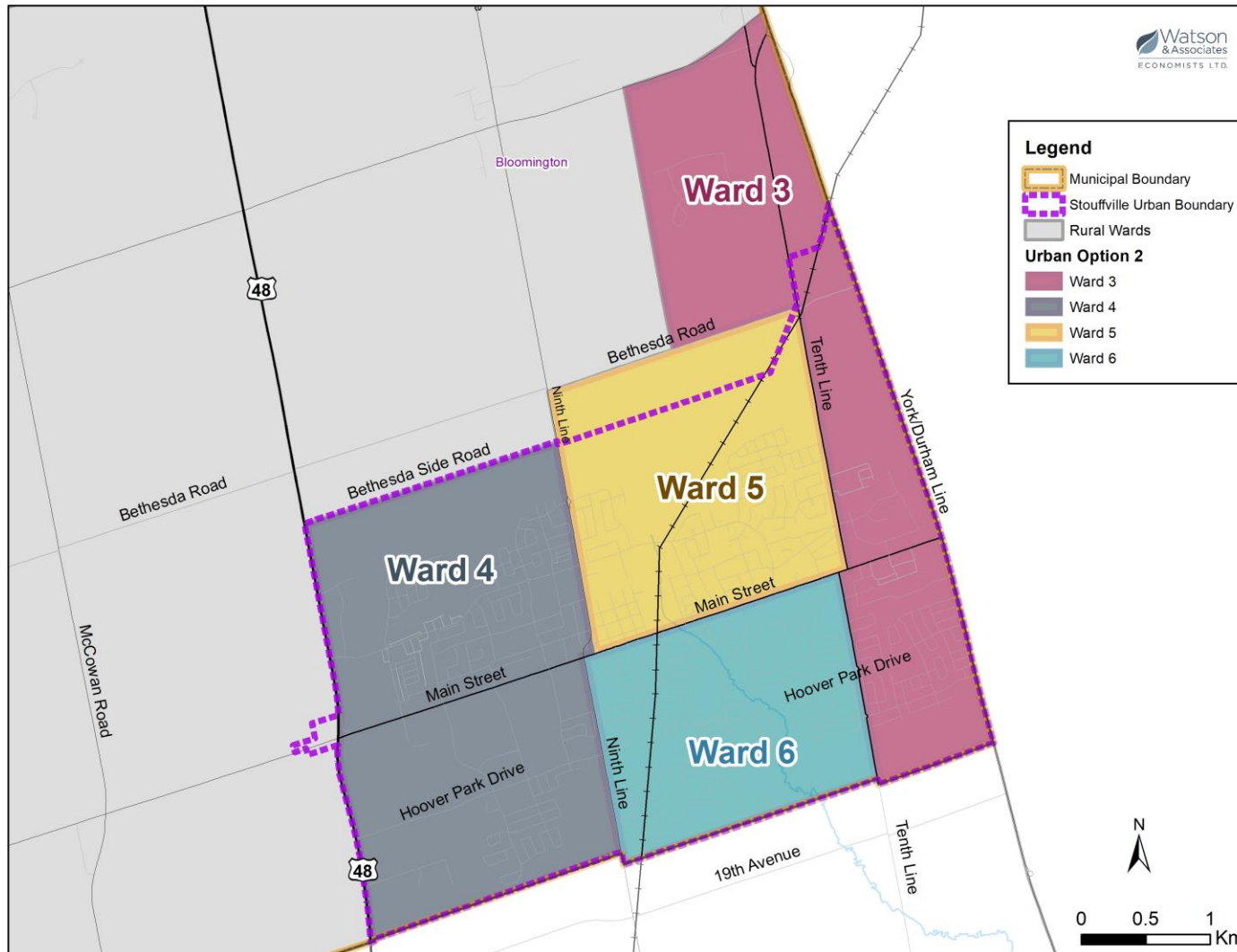




Figure 9-8: Recommended Urban Ward Boundary Option 2 Population Distribution

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Urban Option 2						
Ward 3	5,720	0.67	OR-	11,430	1.12	O+
Ward 4	10,930	1.29	OR+	14,700	1.43	OR+
Ward 5	7,470	0.88	O-	8,370	0.82	O-
Ward 6	12,700	1.50	OR+	13,000	1.27	OR+
Total	50,860			61,500		
Average	8,477			10,250		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020

¹ Population includes net Census undercount of approximately 3.1%.

Note: numbers may not add due to rounding

10. Next Steps & Council Decisions

This report will be presented to Council at a meeting scheduled for March 23, 2021. During their deliberation, Council has a series of choices to make. How do they want to see the rural areas and communities outside urban Stouffville represented? Should the wards be more reflective of existing populations and settlements or future population projections? How important are clear and identifiable ward boundaries to the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville? Council must decide which of these core principles best represents their communities and residents.

It is also important to recognize that the Town has an Electoral Ward Boundary Review Policy adopted in 2009 that commits the municipality to review its ward boundaries after three elections. The implementation of a new ward boundary model as provided for in this report can be viewed as addressing the distribution of population and communities as they exist in 2021, but as the municipality changes through population growth and new residential development, such new conditions can be incorporated within a relatively short period of time.

One final course of action for Council is to take no action at all. Council may view the current ward system as adequate and endorse it by not selecting an alternative option. In doing so, they must clearly understand and affirm the reasons why they believe the current ward system still serves the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville well.



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 Whitchurch-Stouffville well and ought to be changed. The public engagement efforts throughout this review have been largely consistent with this view.

Depending on Council's decision related to the Final Options contained in this report, ratification of a by-law to implement a preferred option is expected to occur shortly after the March 23, 2021 meeting.



Appendix A

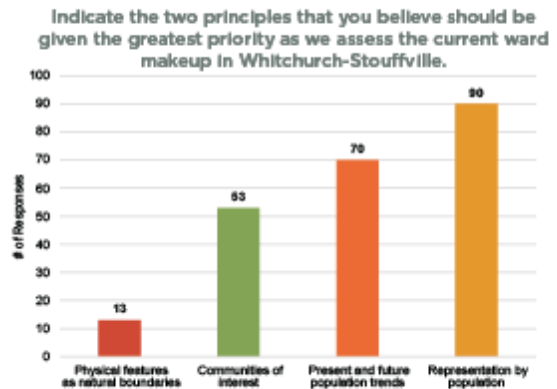
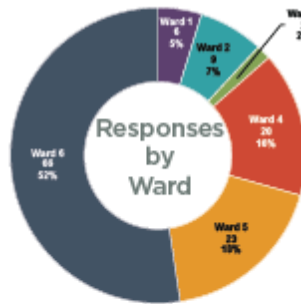
Public Engagement



Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Ward Boundary Review 2020



Phase 1 - Survey



Phase 2 - Survey

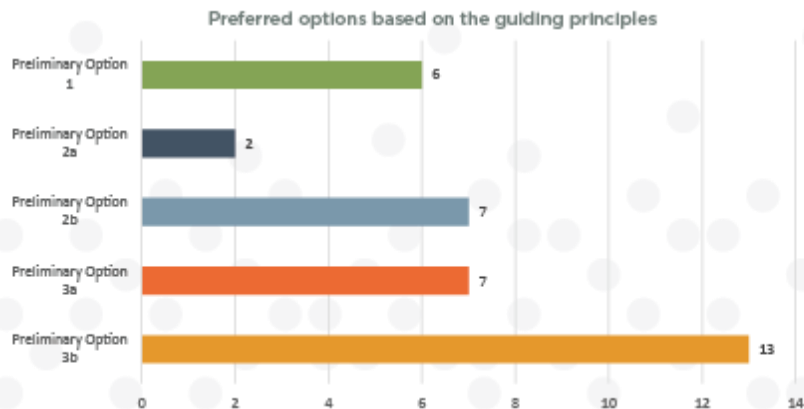




Figure A-1: List of Public Engagement Tools

Tool	Description
Whitchurch-Stouffville W.B.R. Webpage	<p>A dedicated engagement website was developed for the Ward Boundary Review (W.B.R.) study at https://www.cometogetherws.ca/wards. The webpage 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 W.B.R. Further, the review was featured on the front page of the Town’s Website.</p> <p>See Appendix B for Engagement Metrics</p>
Public Open Houses	<p>Four open houses were held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 3, 4:00 PM • December 3, 6:30 PM • December 8, 4:00 PM • December 8, 6:30 PM <p>See Appendix C for additional Information.</p>
Public Engagement Surveys	<p>Two phases of surveys were posted on the W.B.R. webpage: the first intended to discern which guiding principles were prioritized by the community, and the second to discern which preliminary option was preferred.</p> <p>See Appendix D for a summary of the results.</p>
Interviews with members of Council	<p>Each member of Council was invited to participate in a one-hour discussion with the consultant.</p>
Social Media	<p>Three notices were posted on Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug 28, 2020 → 3,360 viewed; 261 engaged • December 23, 2020 → 773 viewed; 18 engaged • January 6, 2021 → 726 viewed; 11 engaged <p>Two notices were posted on Twitter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 11, 2020 → 2,201 viewed; 70 engaged • December 23, 2020 → 1,317 viewed; 32 engaged



Tool	Description
Podcasts	Mentioned in six episodes of the “Talk of the Town” podcast; September 2 & 10, 2020, November 18, 2020 December 1 & 8, 2020, and January 11, 2021.



Appendix B

Online Engagement Metrics



Summary Report

29 September 2019 - 26 January 2021

Come Together, Whitchurch-Stouffville

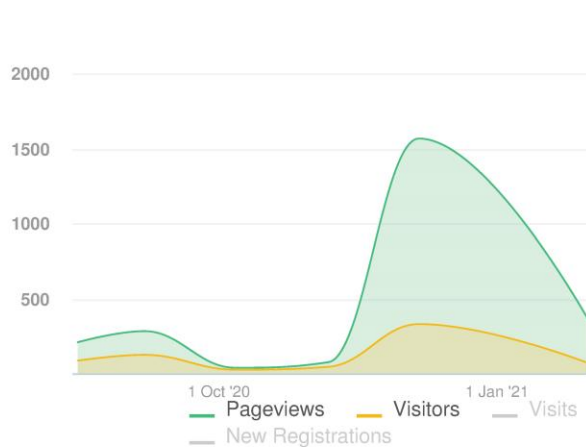
PROJECTS SELECTED: 1

Ward Boundary Review

FULL LIST AT THE END OF THE REPORT



Visitors Summary



Highlights

TOTAL VISITS	767	MAX VISITORS PER DAY	80
NEW REGISTRATIONS	1	ENGAGED VISITORS	159
		INFORMED VISITORS	278
		AWARE VISITORS	608

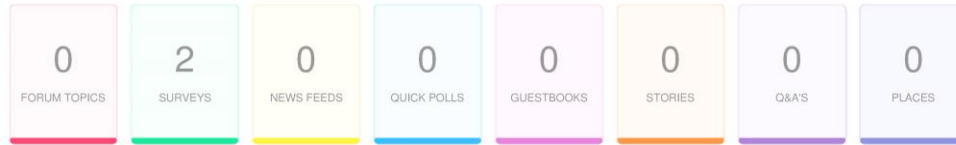


PARTICIPANT SUMMARY

ENGAGED		159 ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS			Ward Boundary Review (%)	
		Registered	Unverified	Anonymous		
INFORMED	Contributed on Forums	0	0	0	Ward Boundary Review 159 (26.2%)	
	Participated in Surveys	6	0	153		
	Contributed to Newsfeeds	0	0	0		
	Participated in Quick Polls	0	0	0		
AWARE	Posted on Guestbooks	0	0	0		
	Contributed to Stories	0	0	0		
	Asked Questions	0	0	0		
	Placed Pins on Places	0	0	0		
	Contributed to Ideas	0	0	0		
				* A single engaged participant can perform multiple actions		* Calculated as a percentage of total visits to the Project
ENGAGED		278 INFORMED PARTICIPANTS			Ward Boundary Review (%)	
		Participants				
INFORMED	Viewed a video	0			Ward Boundary Review 278 (45.7%)	
	Viewed a photo	94				
	Downloaded a document	46				
	Visited the Key Dates page	9				
AWARE	Visited an FAQ list Page	16				
	Visited Instagram Page	0				
	Visited Multiple Project Pages	130				
	Contributed to a tool (engaged)	159				
				* A single informed participant can perform multiple actions		* Calculated as a percentage of total visits to the Project
ENGAGED		608 AWARE PARTICIPANTS			Ward Boundary Review (%)	
		Participants				
INFORMED	Visited at least one Page	608			Ward Boundary Review 608	
AWARE						
				* Aware user could have also performed an Informed or Engaged Action		* Total list of unique visitors to the project



ENGAGEMENT TOOLS SUMMARY

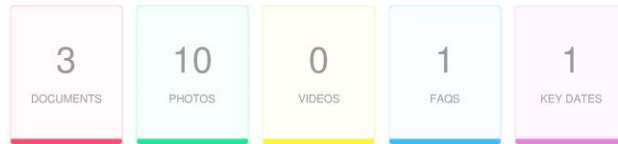


SURVEYS SUMMARY	
2	Surveys
159	Contributors
166	Submissions

TOP 3 SURVEYS BASED ON CONTRIBUTORS	
126	35
Contributors to	Contributors to
Ward Boundary Review Survey	Preliminary Ward Boundary Reconfiguration Options



INFORMATION WIDGET SUMMARY



DOCUMENTS	
3	Documents
46	Visitors
86	Downloads

TOP 3 DOCUMENTS BASED ON DOWNLOADS		
56 Downloads	24 Downloads	6 Downloads
Preliminary Options Report.pdf	Current Whitchurch-Stouffville Ward Boundaries and Voting Subdivisions	Detailed Study Process

PHOTOS	
10	Photos
94	Visitors
279	Views

TOP 3 PHOTOS BASED ON VIEWS		
86 Views	56 Views	46 Views
PreliminaryOption1_v2.jpg	PreliminaryOption2-A_v2.jpg	PreliminaryOption3-B_v2.jpg

FAQS	
1	Faqs
16	Visitors
17	Views

TOP 3 FAQS BASED ON VIEWS
17 Views
Ward Boundary Review

KEY DATES	
1	Key Dates
9	Visitors
25	Views

TOP 3 KEY DATES BASED ON VIEWS
25 Views
Ward Boundary Review



TRAFFIC SOURCES OVERVIEW

REFERRER URL	Visits
m.facebook.com	190
www.google.com	42
l.facebook.com	36
t.co	36
www.townofws.ca	33
www.bing.com	25
www.google.ca	16
www.facebook.com	4
ca.search.yahoo.com	2
mail.yahoo.com	2
stouffvillereview.com	2
virtualwatson.ca	2
www.hotg.ca	2
android-app	1
duckduckgo.com	1



SELECTED PROJECTS - FULL LIST

PROJECT TITLE	AWARE	INFORMED	ENGAGED
Ward Boundary Review	608	278	159



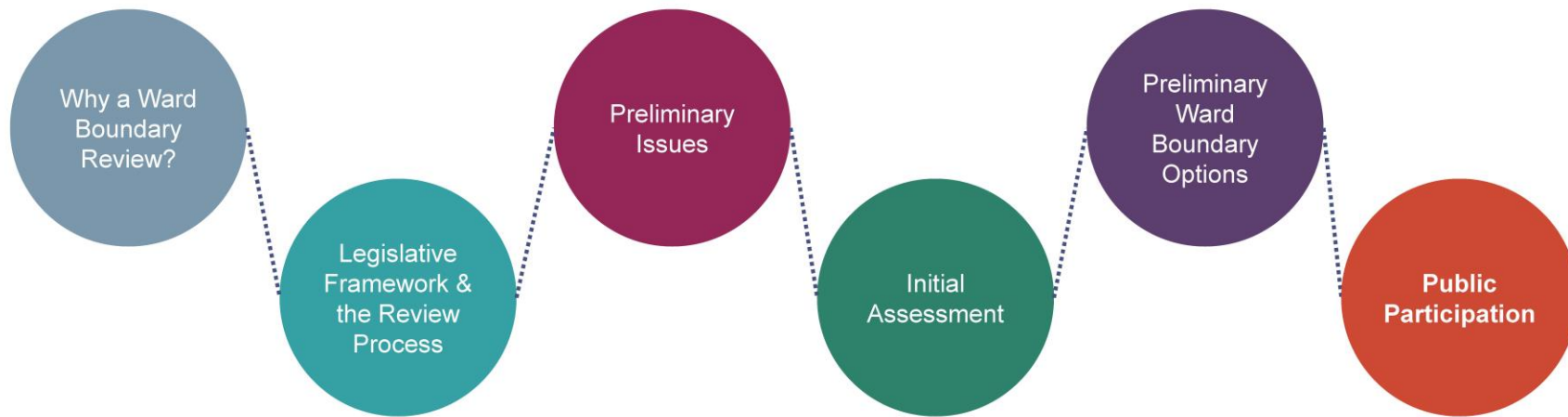
Appendix C

Public Consultation Sessions



Introduction

What Will Be Covered in This Information Session?





What Are We Trying to Figure Out?

How well does the present ward boundary structure serve the citizens of
Whitchurch-Stouffville?

Do the current wards provide fair and effective representation?

Would a reconfigured ward system provide better representation
for the citizens of Whitchurch-Stouffville?

cometogetherws.ca/wards

3



Context



cometogetherws.ca/wards



WHY A WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW?

To prepare Whitchurch-Stouffville Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative arrangement

cometogetherws.ca/wards

5



Whitchurch-Stouffville Ward Boundary Review

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare Whitchurch-Stouffville Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative arrangement

Existing Structure

- Whitchurch-Stouffville will have one regional representative for 2022—the Mayor, who is elected at-large.
- Whitchurch-Stouffville is divided into six wards, each electing one local Councillor.



Legislative Framework

Ontario's *Municipal Act, 2001* authorizes a lower-tier municipality to:

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

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

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

cometogetherws.ca/wards

7



Review Process





Guiding Principles

A **ward-based** electoral system should reflect these core principles:

- 1 Communities of Interest
- 2 Future Population Trends
- 3 Physical and Natural Boundaries
- 4 Representation by Population

EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION

cometogetherws.ca/wards

9



Initial Assessment

The WBR begins with an assessment of the present ward system to determine whether it constitutes an equitable and effective electoral arrangement (i.e. “effective representation”) to the residents of the Town

- If there are shortcomings, the Consultants will present alternatives for consideration.





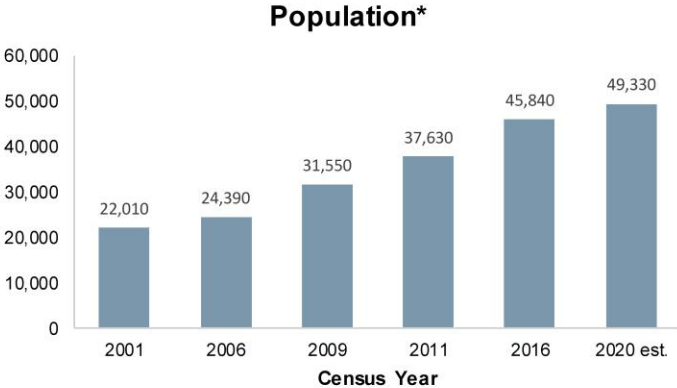
Initial Assessment

Preliminary assessment of the present ward system suggests:

- Present wards fail to adhere to the representation by population principle and disparities are expected to worsen through the next three election cycles.
- Based on 2020 populations, Ward 6 (the largest ward by population) currently has more than 5x the population of Ward 3 (the smallest ward by population).

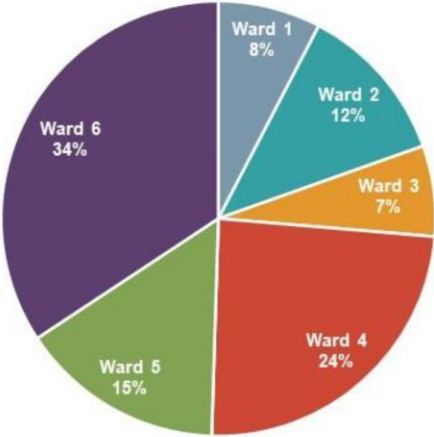


Population Trend and Distribution



*Excluding Census Undercount
Note: 2009 Population Sourced from 2009 Development Charge Background Study.
Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Population Share by Ward (2020 est.)



cometogetherws.ca/wards



Representation by Population

Optimal Population

Symbol	Description	Variance	2020 Population Range	2030 Population Range
OR+	Outside Range - High	25%	>10,600	>12,810
O+	Above Optimal	5%	8,901 – 10,600	10,761 – 12,810
O	Optimal Population Range	-	8,050 – 8,900	9,740 – 10,760
O-	Below Optimal	-5%	6,360 – 8,049	7,690 – 9,739
OR-	Outside Range - Low	-25%	<6,360	<7,690

2020 Optimal Population: 8,477

2030 Optimal Population: 10,250



Projected Total Population Disparity

Ward	Total Population 2020	Variance		Total Population 2030	Variance	
1	3,890	46%	OR -	3,540	35%	OR -
2	6,070	72%	OR -	6,360	62%	OR -
3	3,430	40%	OR -	3,190	31%	OR -
4	12,290	145%	OR +	15,960	156%	OR +
5	7,740	91%	O -	12,600	123%	O +
6	17,440	206%	OR +	19,850	194%	OR +
Total	50,860	Optimal	8,480	61,500	Optimal	10,250

cometogetherws.ca/wards

14



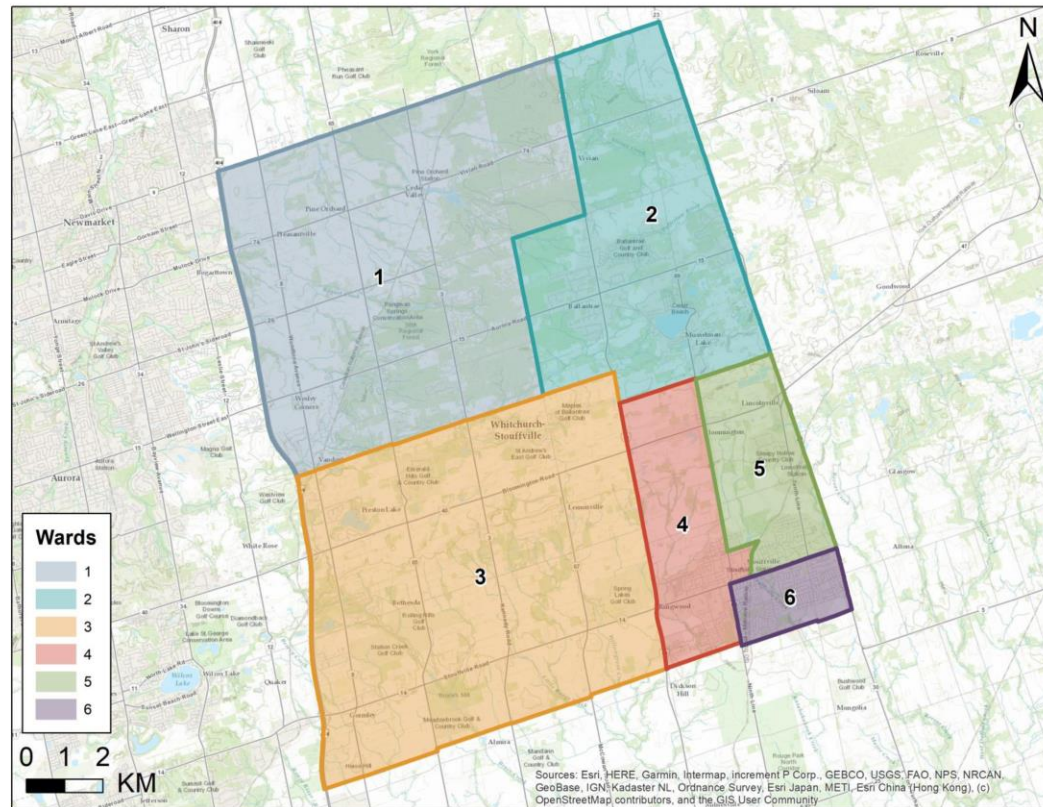
Initial Assessment (cont'd)

Preliminary assessment of the present ward system suggests:

- Present wards fail to adhere to the representation by population principle and disparities are expected to worsen through the next three election cycles.
- Based on 2020 populations, Ward 6 (the largest ward by population) currently has more than 5x the population of Ward 3 (the smallest ward by population).
- Wards 4 and 6 represent most of Stouffville's urban area and their populations are disproportionately large.
- The representation of urban and rural dwellers is unevenly distributed across some wards; Wards 1 and 3 are predominantly rural, Ward 6 is urban, and Wards 2, 4, and 5 are mixed. Some wards do not constitute plausible groupings of communities of interest.
- Ward boundaries are primarily roadways, however in one case the boundary line is notional and main arterials are not always used consistently.



Existing Ward Map





Effective Representation?

Overarching principle of “effective representation” means:

- Each resident should have comparable access to their elected representative
- Each Local Councillor should speak on behalf of an equal number of residents

Do the existing wards achieve effective representation?



Do the Wards Need to Be Changed?



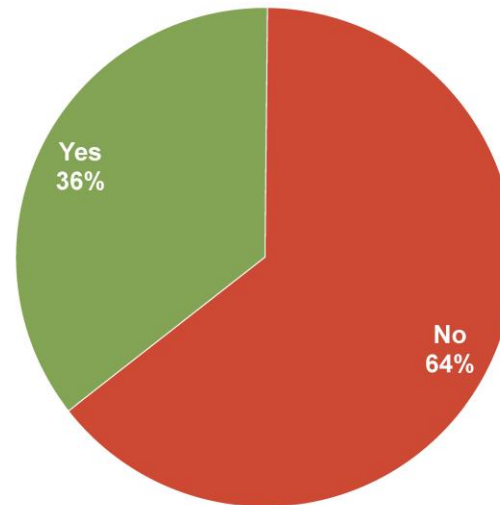
The wards do not provide “effective representation” based on the core principles.

- Preliminary alternatives to “re-divide” the municipality have been developed considering quantitative and qualitative data, case law, successful models adopted in other municipalities and the core principles.
- No ward system design can **uniformly** meet all the core principles, especially with the unique challenges in Whitchurch-Stouffville: the population concentration in Stouffville, large rural areas, and concentrated future growth.



What we Heard

Do you feel the current ward system accurately represents you?



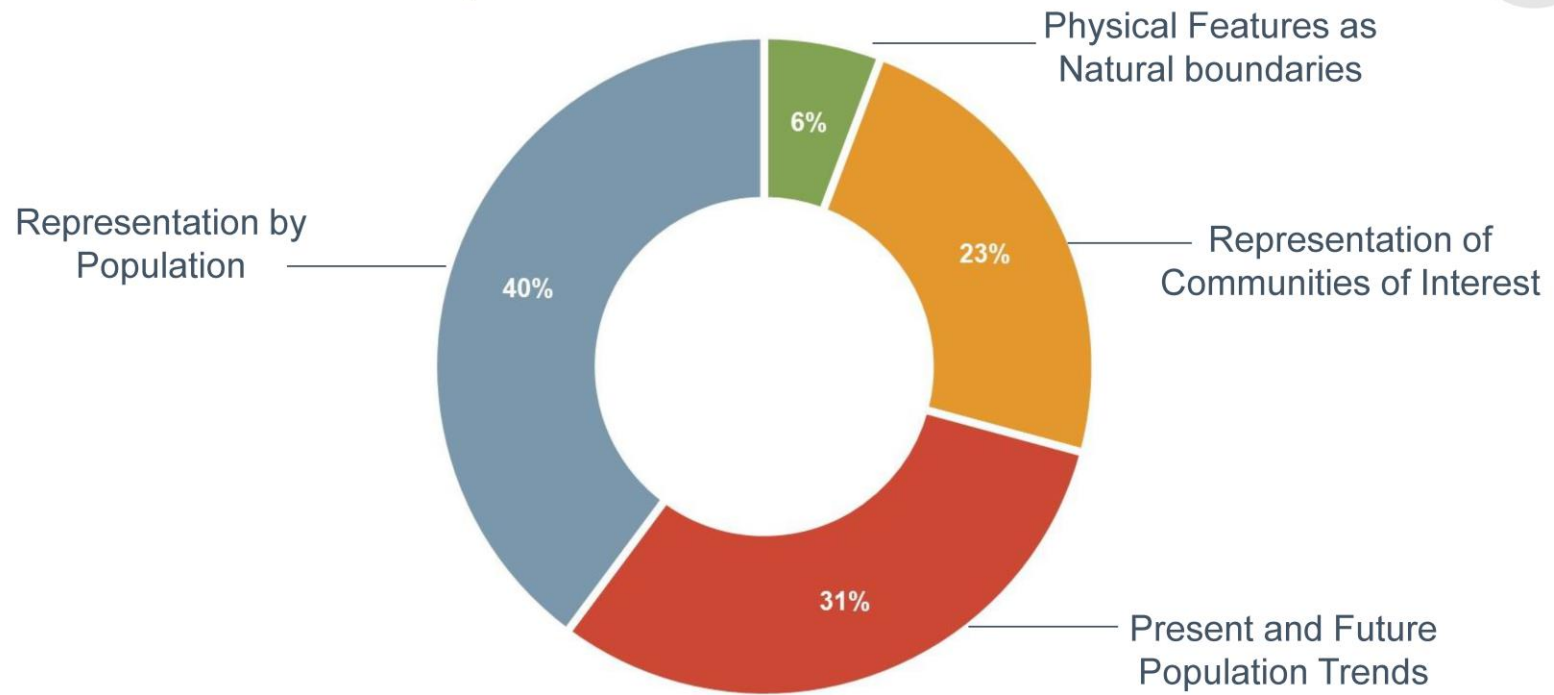
cometogetherws.ca/wards

19



What we Heard

What Should an Alternative System Prioritize?



cometogetherws.ca/wards

20



Further Considerations

Whitchurch-Stouffville is unique:

- Several historically recognized population centres of varying sizes;
- Ballantrae G&CC Community – an adult lifestyle community where many traditional Municipal services are offered by a private development, largely dominates Ward 2;
- the concentration of population in the major urban centre of Stouffville; and
- future growth will be largely concentrated in a few select areas.

**The characteristics just noted will not change;
what could change is the configuration of the wards.**

cometogetherws.ca/wards

21



Next Steps

The Public Consultation has and will contribute to:

- 1** An opportunity for the Consultant team to better understand Whitchurch-Stouffville
- 2** An understanding of the preferences of members of the public who choose to participate in the Review
- 3** A recommendation to Council of final ward boundary reconfiguration options

cometogetherws.ca/wards

22



Your Contribution to This Review Public Engagement

- Be willing to ask questions at the open house and through the Town's website .
- Read the Interim Report and other materials on the Town's website to better understand the issues under consideration.
- Complete the **survey** on the Town's website .

cometogtherws.ca/wards





Preliminary Options

Five preliminary ward options have been prepared for review.

Preliminary Option 1: 3 Predominantly rural wards and 3 predominantly urban wards

Preliminary Option 2-A: 2 predominantly rural wards and 4 predominantly urban wards

Preliminary Option 2-B: Same urban ward reconfiguration as Option 2-A with an alternate rural ward reconfiguration.

Preliminary Option 3-A: 2 predominantly rural wards and 4 predominantly urban wards.

Preliminary Option 3-B: Same urban ward reconfiguration as Option 3-A with an alternate rural ward reconfiguration.



Appendix D

Public Engagement Survey Results



Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Engagement Survey – Phase 1

Figure D-1
Which ward do you live in?

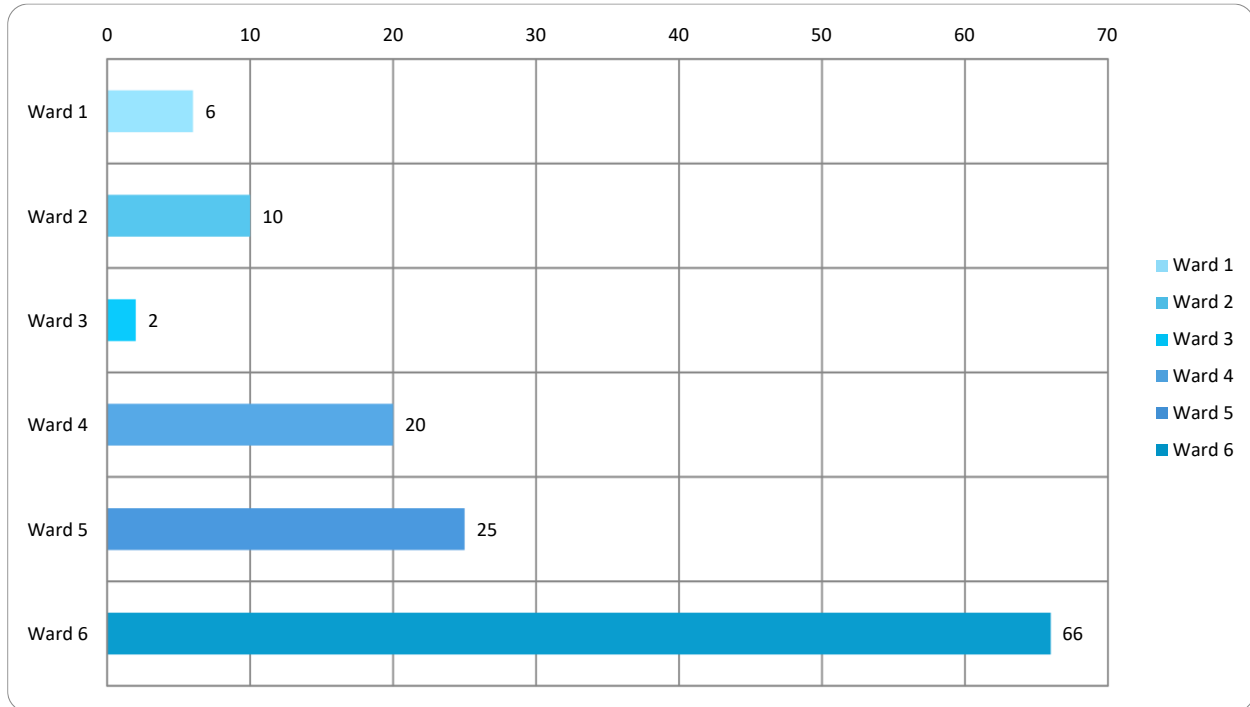




Figure D-2
In which community or hamlet within the ward do you reside?

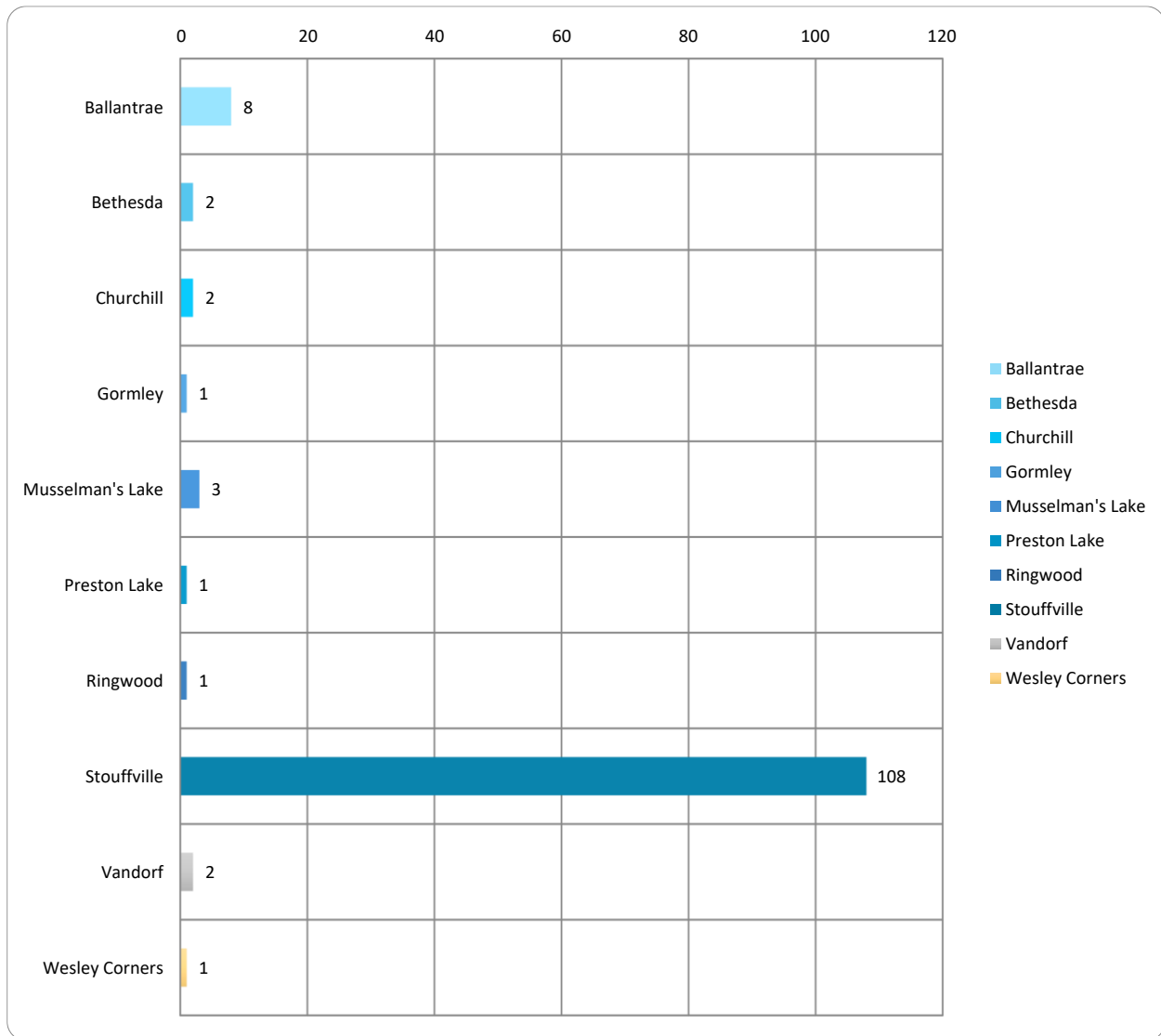




Figure D-3

Select up to 3 additional communities or hamlets in Whitchurch-Stouffville that you are connected to? (e.g. shopping, work, school)

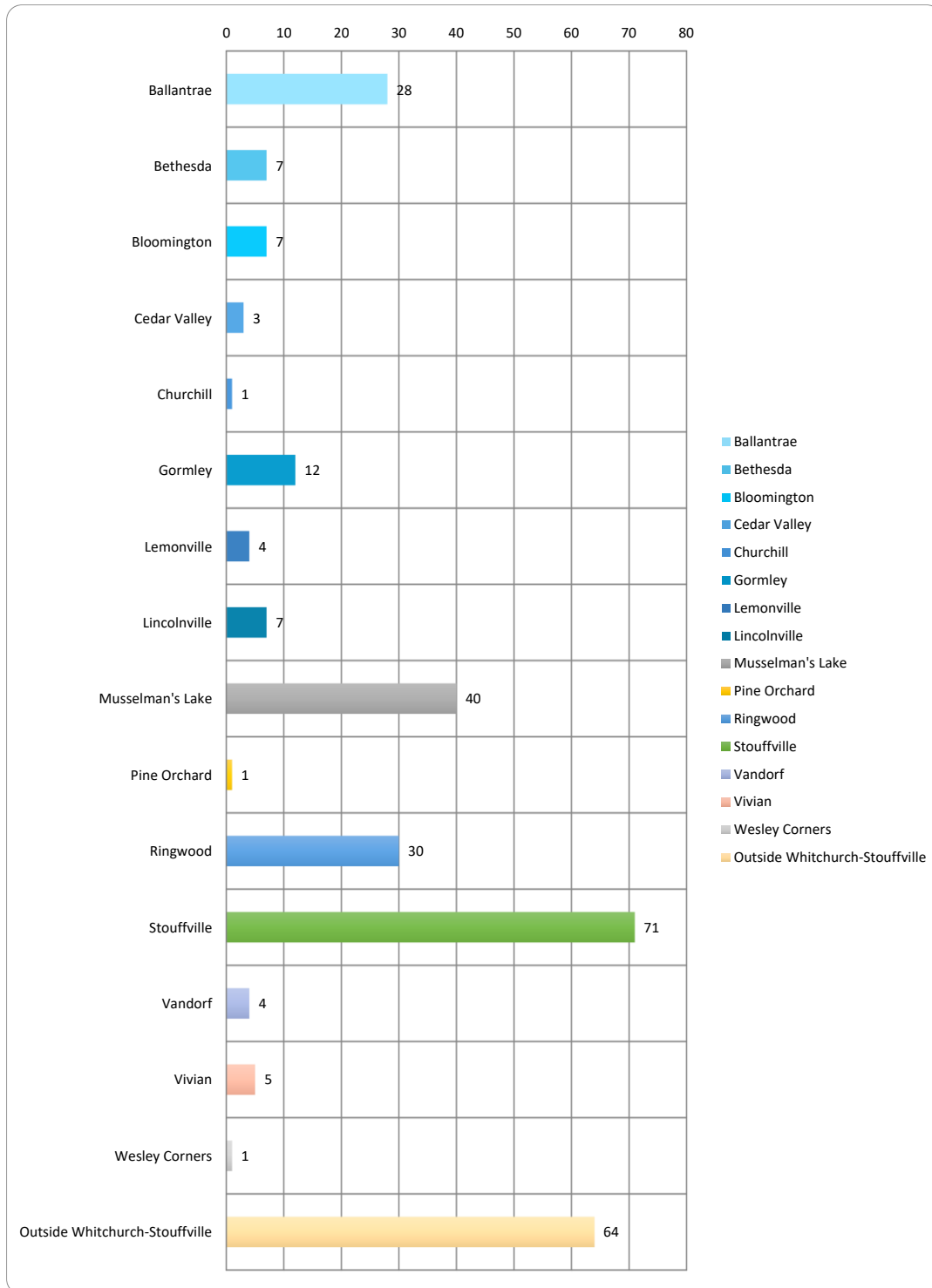




Figure D-4
Do you feel the current ward system accurately represents you?

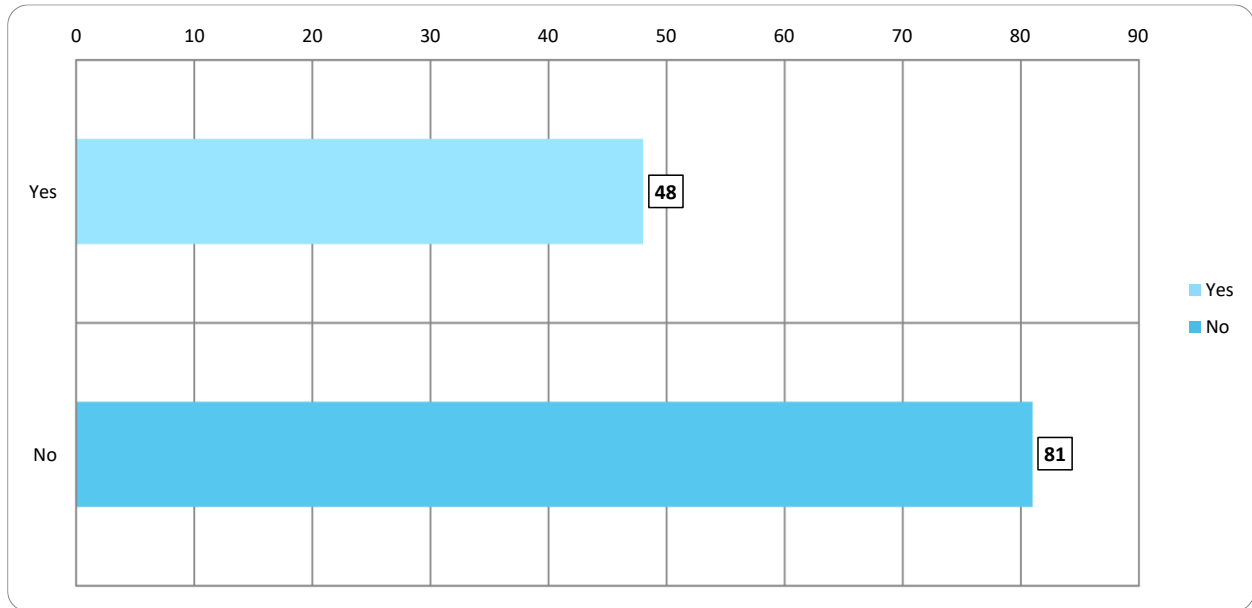




Figure D-5
Does the Town have the right number of elected officials for the Town?

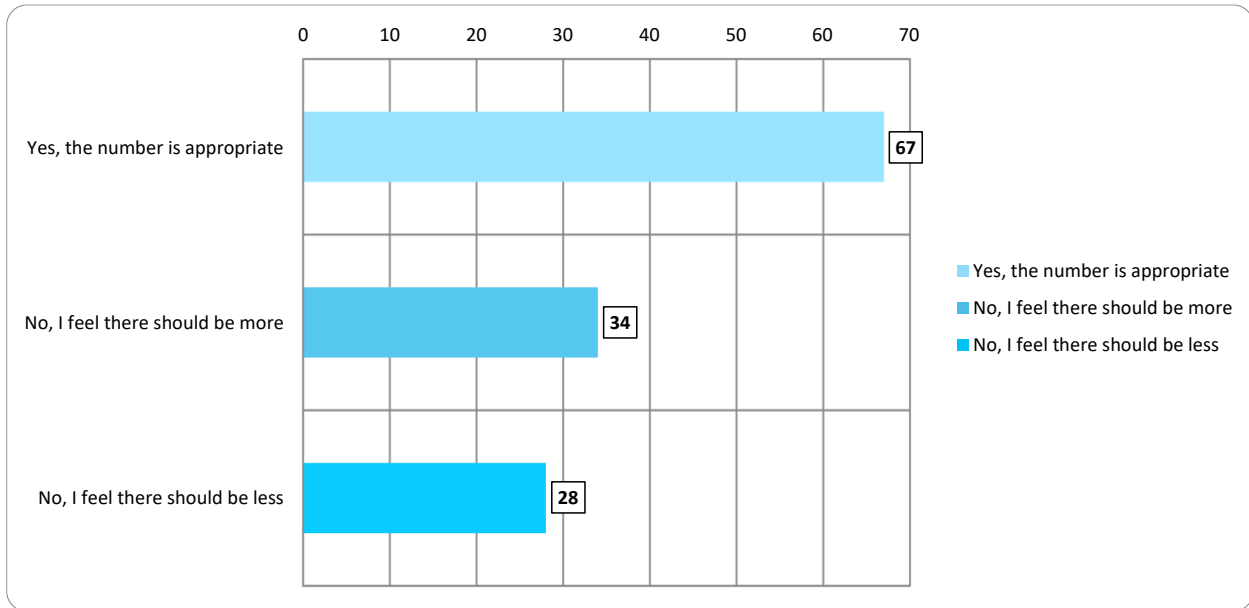
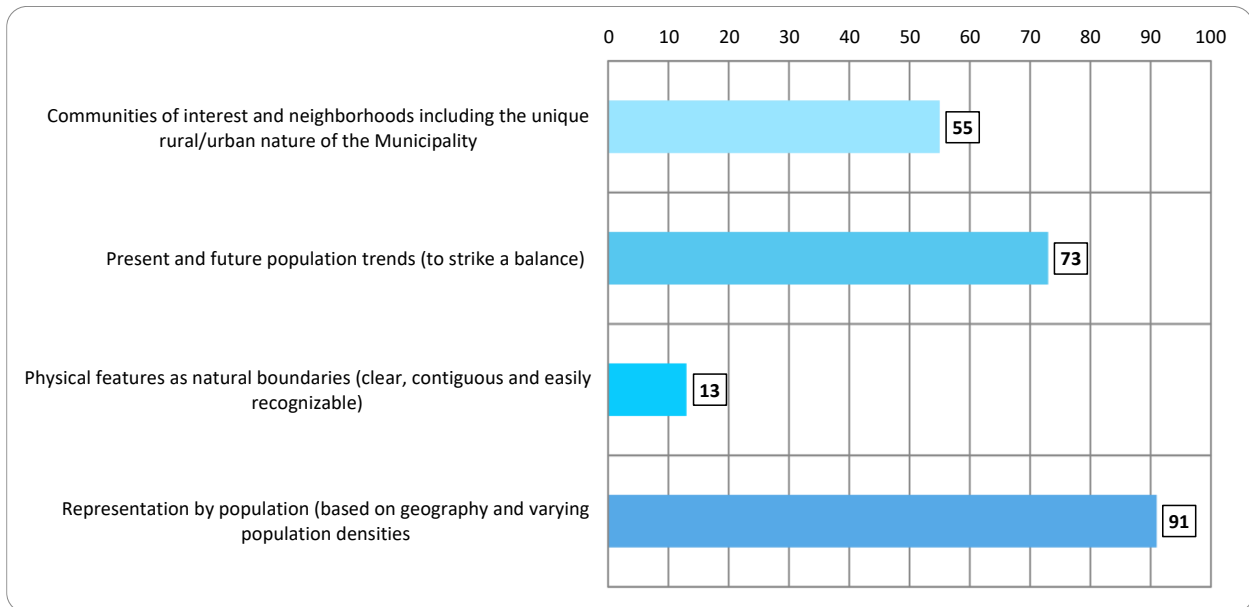


Figure D-6
Please indicate the two principles that you believe should be given the greatest priority as we assess the current ward makeup in Whitchurch-Stouffville.





Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Engagement Survey – Phase 2

Figure D-7
What Best Describes you?

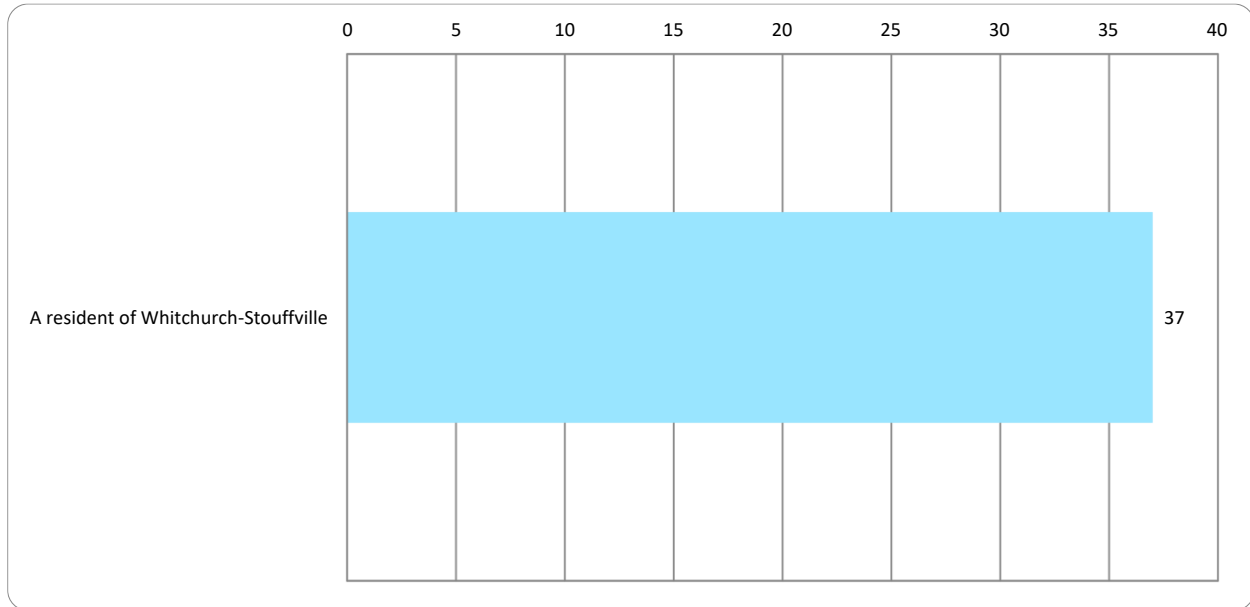




Table D-8
What ward do you live in?

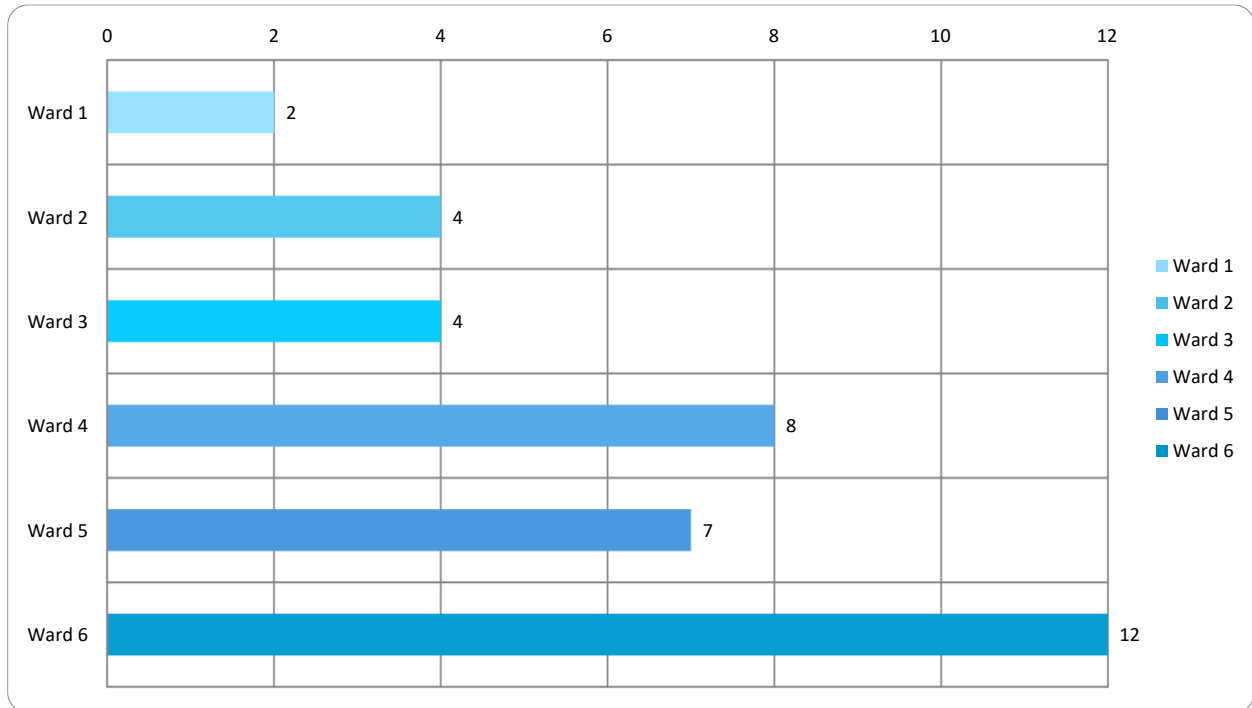




Figure D-9
In which community or hamlet within the ward do you reside?

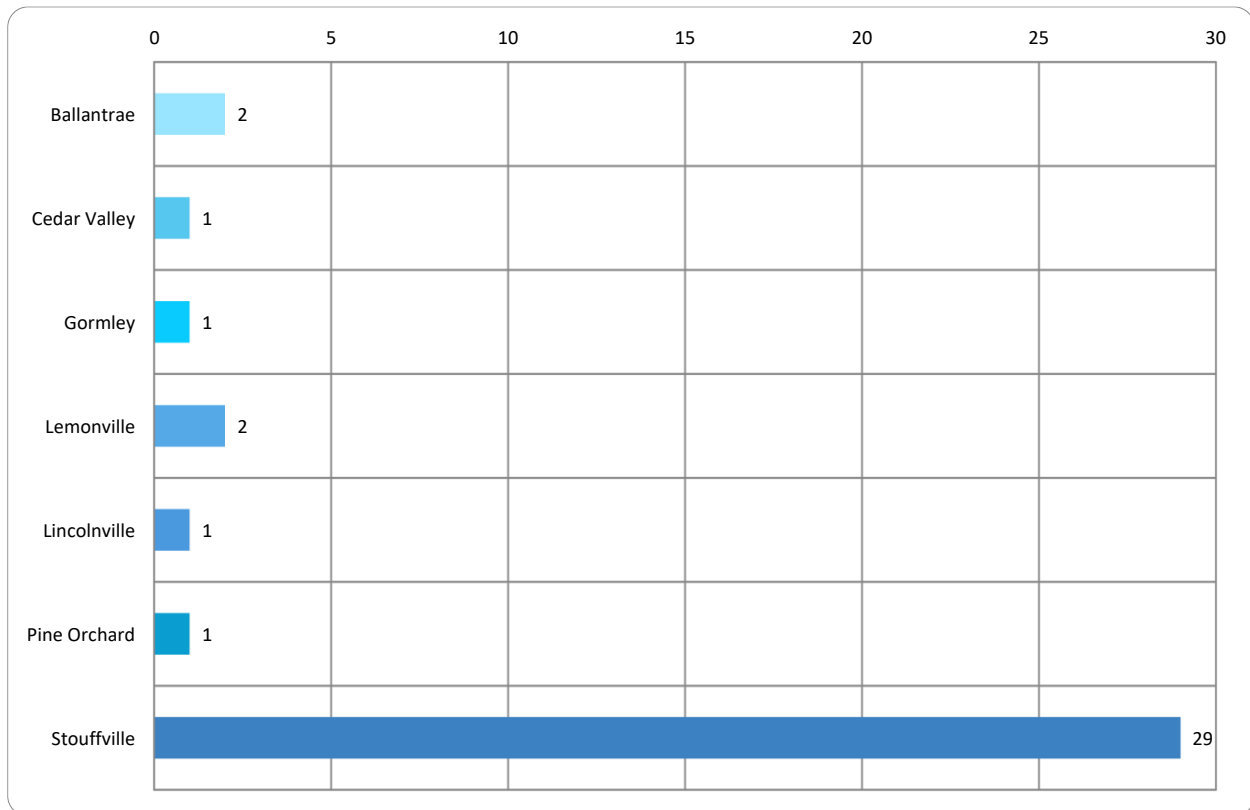




Table D-10
Please tell us your preferred ward boundary reconfiguration option

