



2020/2021 Ward Boundary Review

City of Pickering

Interim Report

December, 2020

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1. Background

The City of Pickering has retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams, hereinafter referred to as the Consultant Team, to conduct a comprehensive and independent Ward Boundary Review (W.B.R.).

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare Pickering Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative. Other matters are integral to a comprehensive review, including:

- What guiding principles will be observed in the design of the wards?
- Is it appropriate to consider changing the composition (size) of Council as part of the same review?
- Is it appropriate to consider dissolving the wards to elect councillors at-large (in what the *Municipal Act, 2001* calls a “general vote” system)?

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

2. Study Objective

The project has a number of key objectives:

- 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 guiding principles adopted for the study;
- Develop and conduct an appropriate consultation process in accordance with Pickering’s public engagement practices during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) public health emergency to ensure community support for the review and its outcome;
- Prepare population projections for the development and evaluation of alternative electoral structures for the 2022, 2026, and 2030 municipal elections; and
- Deliver a report that will set out recommended alternative ward boundaries to ensure effective and equitable electoral arrangements for Pickering, based on the principles identified.



In October 2020, the Consultant Team prepared a Discussion Paper that set out:

- The basic electoral arrangements in Pickering;
- Council's legislative authority to modify electoral arrangements in the City;
- A sketch of potential modifications open to Council (the size of Council, the method of election for councillors, alternative ward configurations); and
- Guiding principles that could be considered by a municipality when establishing or modifying its ward system.¹

The purpose of this Interim Report is to provide:

- A summary of the work completed to date;
- A summary of the information received from the public engagement sessions and tools, such as the survey and website; and
- A series of initial ward boundary options for consideration.

After the release of this report, the public will once again be engaged to provide feedback on each alternative model.

3. Project Structure and Timeline

Council adopted the terms of reference for the W.B.R. in December 2019. Work completed to-date includes:

- Research and data compilation;
- Interviews with councillors, the Mayor, and municipal staff; and
- Public consultation on the existing ward structure.

Interviews with staff and Council, and meetings with the Clerk's office and other staff concerning this study, were initially conducted in person but were suspended in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following public health guidelines on gatherings, the Consultant Team conducted the initial round of public consultation (four sessions) electronically.

¹ <https://www.pickering.ca/en/city-hall/resources/WBR/Pickering-2020-Ward-Boundary-Review-Discussion-Paper.pdf>



4. Existing Population and Forecast Growth in the City of Pickering

As previously discussed, a basic premise of representative democracy in Canada is the notion 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 the City of Pickering, 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 (2020).

The City of Pickering is forecast to experience significant and urbanized (both South Urban Lands and Seaton Lands) population growth over the next decade and beyond. For this reason, it is important that this study assesses representation by population for both existing and future year populations. In accordance with the study terms of reference, the analysis considered representation of population over the next three municipal elections through to 2030. A population and housing forecast for the City for the 2020 to 2030 period 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 the existing as well as future population distribution. 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. Pickering's estimated 2020 population is 99,900.¹ The City's 2020 total population is presented by area in Table 4-1. As shown, the South Urban Lands account for the majority of population, that is approximately 93% of the current population (93,000), and is anticipated to continue to grow.

¹ Reflects a mid-2020 population estimate and includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%.



Table 4-1: 2020 Population by Community

Geographic Location	2020 Population ¹
South Urban Lands	93,000
Seaton Lands	2,500
Remaining Rural	4,400
Total	99,900

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020.

¹ Includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

4.2 Forecast Population Growth, 2020 to 2030

The Consultant Team prepared a City-wide population forecast for the 2020 to 2030 period that is consistent with the City of Pickering's latest growth projections.¹ 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), and site plan applications.

By 2030, Pickering's population is anticipated to grow by approximately 58,000, bringing the total population (including undercount) to approximately 157,900, an increase of approximately 58%. A majority of this growth is anticipated to occur north of the current urban lands and within the Seaton Lands south of Highway 407. Seaton is anticipating a growth of over 13,000 units over the ten-year horizon, equating to growth of approximately 38,200 persons.² This accounts for 66% of the City's growth, while the remaining 33% is expected to occur within the current South Urban Lands (19,400 persons) with minimal growth anticipated in northern rural Pickering (400 persons) as shown below in Table 4-2.

¹ City of Pickering Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast (December 31, 2019).

² Includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%.



Table 4-2: Population Growth, 2020 to 2030

Geographic Location	2020 Population ¹	2030 Population ¹	2020-2030 Growth
South Urban Lands	93,000	112,400	19,400
Seaton Lands	2,500	40,700	38,200
Remaining Rural	4,400	4,800	400
Total	99,900	157,900	58,000

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2020.

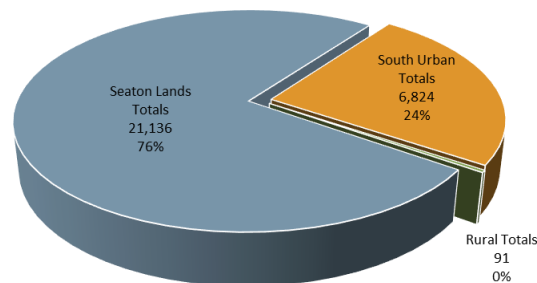
¹ Includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

The development of the Seaton Lands will change the landscape of Pickering from a southern urbanized City with a sparse northern rural community to a fully developed City south of Highway 407. Moreover, the growth in Seaton is anticipated to occur rapidly over the next 10 years.

The Seaton urban neighbourhood is currently (2020) home to approximately 800 housing units and 2,300 people. It is anticipated that this area will grow by more than 13,000 units over the ten-year horizon, with approximately 56% (7,250) of those units being added by 2024. This rapid growth over the next five-year time horizon is equivalent to adding approximately 21,000 persons, similar to incorporating the current population of the Townships of Scugog or Uxbridge, into Pickering. The outcome will be that these central rural lands will be converted into a predominantly urban landscape.¹

Figure 4-1: Population Growth by Area, 2020 to 2024



Source: City of Pickering Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast (December 31, 2019).

¹ Source: City of Pickering Detailed 20 Year Population Forecast (December 31, 2019). Population figures exclude the Census undercount.



5. Public Consultation

The W.B.R. incorporated a public engagement component that was delivered virtually and designed to:

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

Following public health guidelines put in place following the COVID-19 outbreak, four public open houses were conducted on October 7 and October 15, 2020 with two virtual consultation sessions each day. The Consultant Team's presentation and other information about the review, including the audio recording of the Virtual Public Open Houses, are available on the City's website:

<https://www.pickering.ca/en/city-hall/ward-boundary-review.aspx>

Through the public consultation sessions, a survey, and the project website's online comment/feedback form, participants were invited to provide their input/opinions with respect to the following:

- Existing Ward Structure – Strengths and weaknesses of the current ward structure.
- Guiding Principles – Which guiding principles should be given the greatest priority in the development of ward boundaries?

The feedback and comments collected through the public consultation process are reflected in the analysis presented below and have helped inform the preliminary set of ward options. While public input from consultation provides valuable insight into the review, it is not relied on exclusively. The Consultant Team utilized the public input in conjunction with its professional expertise and experience in W.B.R.s, along with best practices, to develop the preliminary options presented herein. The public will have another opportunity in the near future to comment on alternative ward system options.



6. What We Heard

As discussed above, the Consultant Team has solicited feedback from staff, Council, and the public in the City of Pickering through three main avenues:

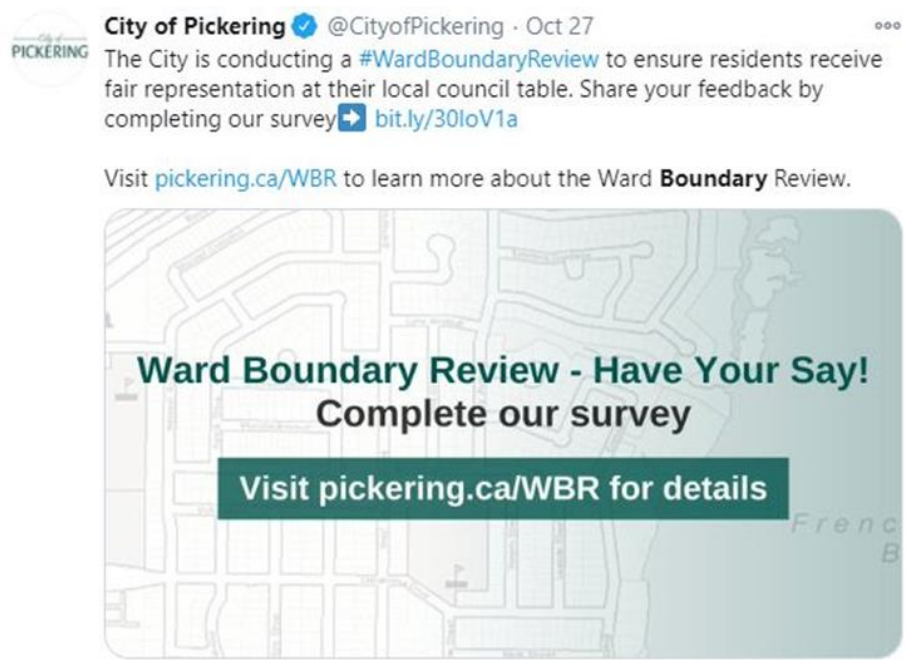
- Interviews with members of Council, the Mayor, and key members of staff;
- Four virtual public engagement sessions; and
- A survey and engagement website where comments were collected.

There was a moderate level of public participation in the W.B.R. public consultation process. Attendance at the public engagement sessions averaged approximately five persons per session. Each open house engagement session was done on an online video call-in platform where residents had the ability to sign in using their computers through the internet or, if technology or internet was a concern, there was also the option to call in (toll free) via telephone. A presentation and informational video were shown, followed by a question-and-answer session and discussions. Participants had the option to ask questions or leave comments either verbally or through the written chat feature. The open houses were advertised by the City through various means including the website, signage, and notices. For example, the City's four digital signs were used to help advertise the W.B.R. between September 15 and October 30, 2020.

In addition to the public information sessions, there are a number of resources available on the aforementioned web page dedicated to this W.B.R. process. Between July and October, there were almost 2,400 unique views of the W.B.R. website. The City's social media presence was also used to raise awareness of the project and advertise important dates and events (see Figure 6-1). There were approximately 13 Twitter posts (tweets) between September and October reaching more than 12,500 people and those tweets were retweeted multiple times. There were also 13 Facebook posts reaching more than 20,500 people as well as Instagram posts and stories, all reaching thousands of residents. The online survey received 74 responses and asked questions ranging from the strengths and weaknesses of Pickering's wards to thoughts on the guiding principles framing this study.



Figure 6-1: City of Pickering W.B.R. Survey Page



Through each avenue, the Consultant Team has heard a number of consistent and important points about the current ward system and the principles used to guide this W.B.R.

1. Those living in Pickering felt strongly that the existing ward system suffers from both population imbalances as well as underrepresentation of certain communities, making it difficult to achieve effective representation. Residents were also concerned with how the significant growth expected in Pickering would be integrated into the existing ward boundaries. In particular, the Consultant Team heard about similar perspectives regarding the challenges in Ward 3 because of its geographic size, its existing and growing population, and the mix of residents and communities.
2. There are strong rural and agricultural interests and many well-established hamlets that are not specifically represented on Council. While the Consultant Team has been told the current councillors do an admirable job representing both rural and urban parts of Ward 3, it is not a foregone conclusion that the same would necessarily hold true for future Councils. Wards are not built around incumbent officeholders. There were responses in the survey that indicated there are “two distinct Pickering, one rural and one urban. The issues are vastly



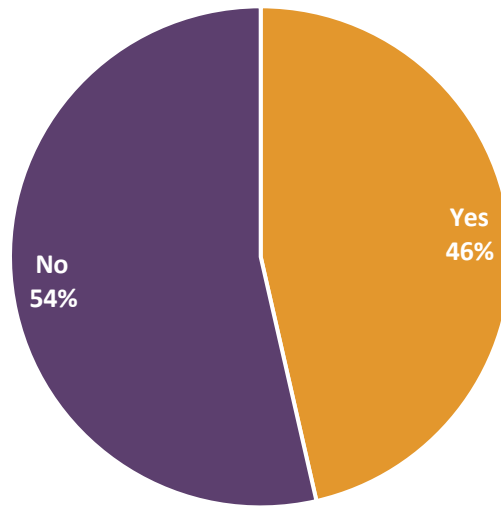
different. North Pickering deserves its own representation,” and another resident also said, “Create a new north Pickering ward.” The rural and urban issues, however, are further complicated by two main issues. Firstly, the existing rural portion of Pickering is sparsely populated, making it difficult to create a rural ward while still achieving any type of reasonable population parity. Secondly, a significant part of Pickering’s existing rural area (most of the area south of Highway 407) is projected to grow significantly over the next five to ten years, transforming into a dense urban area with significant housing and employment.

3. The role of Regional Councillors is not always well known to some members of the community. Having Regional Councillors attached to a specific location (that is, to specific wards) has proven helpful and has allowed residents a more direct connection to those representing them. Regional Councillors are also strong advocates for their wards on both the Local and Regional Councils and ease the workload of Local Councillors. This W.B.R. cannot make any recommendations on the number of Regional Councillors,¹ but there are indications that Pickering has been well served by having Regional Councillors attached to wards.
4. Adding wards is not explicitly in the mandate of this W.B.R. The Consultant Team, however, has heard that adding extra voices to the Council table may be prudent in the future to contribute to the democratic needs of the community. There were multiple mentions in the survey suggesting that there are too few representatives given the present population of Pickering, let alone the future population. Some quotes from residents included, “Council increases should be directly related to population increases” and, “As the population increases, there should be more representation and access to our municipal officials.” The population in the City is projected to increase by more than 58,000 people over the next ten years with a significant portion of that growth occurring in a concentrated area (the Seaton Lands). Residents, when asked if the number of councillors should be increased, were largely split over the issue with 46% responding “yes” and 54% “no” (Figure 6-2).

¹ The authority to adjust the allocation of Regional Council seats is assigned to the Regional Council not to lower-tier municipalities like Pickering. *Municipal Act, 2001*, section 218. Durham Regional Council has affirmed that Pickering will elect three Regional Councillors in 2022.



Figure 6-2: Survey Results – Should the Number of Councillors be Increased?



Given councillors in Pickering are part-time, the cost to add councillors would be somewhat modest in relation to the City’s overall budget and could increase the quality of representation across the community. It is important to note, however, that more than half the City felt that the number of councillors was adequate and a survey respondent stated, “Our taxes are too high. We cannot afford more politicians. I think you should even out to balance the number of residents in each ward.”

A ward system with additional wards may be reasonable to consider as an alternative to the current model. Given the Consultant Team has heard the benefits of having Regional Councillors attached to specific wards, it may make sense to consider additional wards in even numbers so that each Regional Councillor can represent an equal number of wards on Pickering Council.

5. In the survey conducted primarily in September and October of 2020, respondents were encouraged to rank the guiding principles they believed should be given the greatest priority during the W.B.R. Respondents had the choice of ranking each of the five guiding principles as “High Priority,” “Medium Priority,” and “Low Priority.” Of the five guiding principles (described in the Discussion Paper and below), the survey found strongest support for effective representation (63% of votes were of high priority). Effective representation is largely dependent on the other guiding principles being achieved and, when analyzing



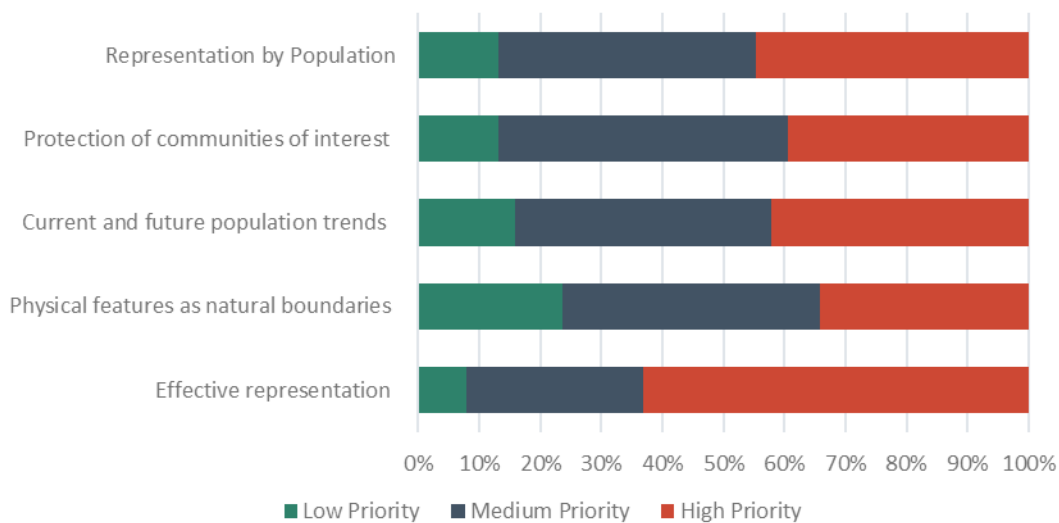
responses in the survey, there was a strong feeling that effective representation was related to a better balancing of the existing ward population disparities. One resident mentioned that, “Ward 3 is the largest ward and with the new homes on Taunton, it will have too many residents.” Multiple responses in the survey regarding the current weaknesses of the existing wards referenced “population inequity” and “unbalanced representation.”

Representation by population and current and future population trends also scored high with residents in terms of their priority, reflecting the importance that future population growth will play in any ward boundary design. While future population growth and population parity are certainly noted as priorities that should be given significant consideration by the survey respondents, protection of communities of interest was also noted as an important priority. Nearly half the respondents (47%) ranked it as a principle that should be given a medium priority and based on the survey’s overall ranking of priorities, it was tied for third most important guiding principle with current and future population trends. There were various responses in the survey highlighting the importance of Pickering’s unique rural hamlets and communities. For example, one resident noted that, “Ward 3 is a strange ward...mixing urban with rural, in a very large geographic area” and another resident mentioned that their “ward is disproportionately represented by the urban southern residents. Claremont and the rural lands north of Taunton Rd. do not receive the attention they deserve.”

It is difficult to say that any one of the principles is necessarily more important than another and they may occasionally conflict with one another. Getting a sense of the priority the community places on these principles, aids in the work of the W.B.R. and the consideration and design of new ward reconfigurations.



Figure 6-3: Priority Assigned to Guiding Principles



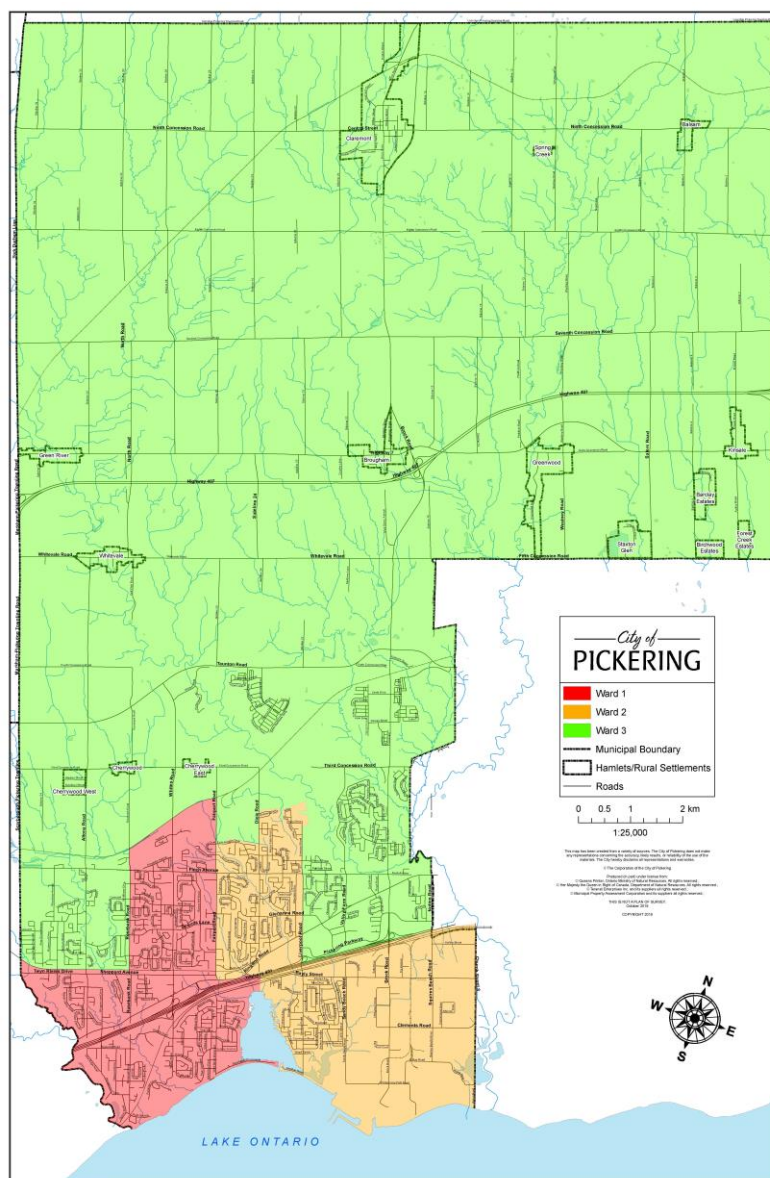
- Each of Pickering’s three wards was fairly well represented by survey respondents – 33% came from Ward 1, 24% from Ward 2, 27% from Ward 3, and 16% of respondents were unsure of which ward they reside in. It should be noted that there is some difference when the survey results are broken down by ward. Those in Ward 2 were less inclined to value representation by population as highly as a guiding principle. Only 33% of the responses from Ward 2 selected representation by population as a top priority, compared to 50% in Ward 1, and 46% in Ward 3. This result may indicate dissatisfaction with Ward 2’s current boundary, since it is currently comprised of two components that are only loosely connected. This is corroborated by the preference rankings for protection of communities of interest, in which respondents from Ward 2 indicate a greater preference for that principle than respondents from other wards – 45% of respondents from Ward 2 ranked it as a High Priority, compared to 30% in Ward 1 and 38% in Ward 3. Another notable difference is how respondents from Ward 1 ranked current and future population trends compared to other wards – it was ranked as a High Priority by 56% of respondents from Ward 2 and by 46% from Ward 3, but only 20% of those residing in Ward 1 ranked it as a High Priority. It is unclear what the cause for this discrepancy might be, but it should be noted that when splitting the responses by ward the sample sizes are small, which limits the conclusiveness of findings at the ward level.



7. Evaluation of Existing Ward Structure

The survey conducted as part of the initial phase of public consultation also asked respondents to assess the current wards in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. These responses can be used to add depth to the preliminary evaluation of the existing ward structure included in the Discussion Paper that addressed the wards in terms of the guiding principles. The current wards are presented in Figure 7-1 for reference purposes.

Figure 7-1: Existing Ward Structure





7.1 Representation by Population

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 City. 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 -) 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 Pickering that include both urban and rural areas. An example of optimal sizes for a three-ward system for the 2020 and 2030 populations is shown below in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Optimal Range for a Three-Ward System

Symbol	Description	Variance	2020 Population Range	2030 Population Range
OR+	Outside Range - High	25%	41,633	65,817
O+	Above Optimal	5%	34,972	55,286
O	Optimal Population Range	-	33,307	52,653
O-	Below Optimal	-5%	31,641	50,021
OR-	Outside Range - Low	-25%	24,980	39,490



Based on the City’s estimated overall 2020 population (99,920), the optimal population size for a ward in a three-ward system in Pickering would be 33,307.¹

Table 7-2: Estimated Population by Existing Ward, 2020

Ward	Estimated Population 2020 ¹	Variance	
1	30,440	0.91	O -
2	22,550	0.68	OR -
3	46,940	1.41	OR+
Total	99,920	Optimal	33,307

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Population includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%.

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Population data suggests two wards are below the optimal range of variance and one ward is above the acceptable range of variation. None of the wards can be considered to fall within what is referred to as the “optimal” range, that is, within 5% on either side of optimal.

Based upon the empirical evidence and the observations of many survey respondents, the present wards fail to adhere to the representation by population principle.

7.2 Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods

The first principle is based on the number of people who reside in the City, but people live in a neighbourhood or community that is the most identifiable geographic point in most people’s lives: it is where they make their home. More importantly, the responsibilities of the City are also closely associated with where people live, such as roads and their maintenance, the utilities that are connected to or associated with their dwelling, and the myriad of social, cultural, environmental, and recreational services are often based on residential communities. Even municipal taxation is inextricably linked to one’s dwelling. Identifying such communities comes from a recognition that

¹ Population and growth trends for Pickering are included in the Discussion Paper, pages 11 to 13.



geographic location brings shared perspectives that the representational process should seek to reflect.

Care should be taken to ensure communities of interest remain intact during the design of ward boundaries. Such communities represent social and economic groups that may have deep historical roots, but they can also be social, economic, or religious in nature, depending on the history and composition of the municipality in question.

This principle addresses two perspectives: what is divided by ward boundaries, and what is joined together? The first priority is that communities ought not to be divided internally; as a rule, lines are drawn around communities, not through them. Secondly, as far as possible wards should be cohesive units composed of areas with common interests related to representation, not just contrived arithmetic divisions of the City.

Wards should have a “natural” feel to those that live within them, meaning that they should have established internal communication and transportation linkages and boundaries should be drawn taking existing connections into mind. This is done to avoid creating wards that combine communities with dissimilar interests and no obvious patterns of interaction.

Pickering’s urban settlement area contains several distinctive neighbourhoods located primarily in Wards 1 and 2, but more importantly also in Ward 3. The Bay Ridges and West Shore neighbourhoods are placed in two separate wards on either side of Frenchman’s Bay, even though both are isolated from the remainder of their own ward by the multi-lane Highway 401 and two Canadian National Railway (C.N.R.) lines, making for a tenuous connection between the two parts of Wards 1 and 2. North of the 401, a recognized urban neighbourhood on either side of Fairport Road (Dunbarton) is divided, while two other urban areas (east of Liverpool Road and west of Rosebank Road) are split from adjacent neighbourhoods and placed in the same ward as each other, even though they are not contiguous and share few demographic similarities. All told, the population in the urban settlement area of Pickering may have originally been divided internally to address the goal of population parity, but is grouped in a fashion that makes it difficult to claim that the wards constitute coherent electoral units.

The majority of Pickering’s geography is located in Ward 3; much of Ward 3 is an active agricultural area dotted with numerous hamlets that can be differentiated from the urban area by its significantly lower population density and distinctive social and economic



characteristics. It is also the area where most future residential developments will occur in Pickering (namely in Seaton). We understand that in 1974 the areas on the eastern and western sides of the ward south of Finch Avenue were largely rural and it would have been appropriate to place them in Ward 3. Today that is not the case and Ward 3 thus includes not only rural Pickering but significant existing urban communities, as well as the rapidly developing new communities along the Brock Road corridor. All of this means this ward is also not a coherent electoral unit.

A significant proportion of the survey comments highlighted the impact of having communities from north and south in the same ward (sometimes seen as a rural-urban mix).

It is difficult to argue that the current ward system reflects communities in Pickering in an equitable way and may hinder giving a voice to a distinctive part of Pickering.

7.3 Current and Future Population Trends

The composition of Pickering's wards should adequately accommodate for future growth and population shifts to maintain the representation by population principle over time. Pickering is, and has been, growing quite rapidly which spurred the need for a W.B.R. now. This principle seeks to ensure that a ward design does not merely "catch up" with such changes, but addresses the City's future by giving some weight to projected population growth within the City. In other words, it encourages the design of wards that will not be out-of-date the day after they are adopted.

Although there are restrictions placed upon future residential development through the provincial growth plan, which directs the development to designated areas of Pickering, the City's population is forecast to grow by more than 50% over the next ten years (see the Discussion Paper, page 16, and section 4.2 above). Although some of that growth will occur in the City Centre neighbourhood, most will occur in Seaton and other areas in Ward 3, such as Duffin Heights and Brock Ridge.

The population in the present Ward 3 already exceeds that of Ward 1 and Ward 2. The development of Seaton means that future population growth will not correct this imbalance and will push that difference further away from parity, although forecast growth in the City Centre neighbourhood will offset some of the growth in Seaton.



Based upon the empirical evidence and the observations of many survey respondents, the present wards are unlikely to ensure that the representation by population principle can be sustained over the next decade.

Table 7-3: Existing Wards Population Distribution, 2020 and 2030

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Existing Wards						
Ward 1	30,440	0.91	O-	33,390	0.63	OR-
Ward 2	22,550	0.68	OR-	28,120	0.53	OR-
Ward 3	46,940	1.41	OR+	96,460	1.83	OR+
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	33,307			52,653		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

¹ Population includes Census undercount of approximately 4.0%

Note: Numbers have been rounded

7.4 Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

Ward boundaries should be easily recognizable and take advantage of natural and built geographic features. Many of these features already tend to separate communities within the City, which usually explains their historical use as boundary lines between existing wards.

Ward boundaries in Pickering are largely based on transportation corridors; the only exception is a notional line across Frenchman’s Bay from the C.N.R. right-of-way to the sandspit that separates the bay from Lake Ontario. Three of the transportation features, however, are not used consistently: a C.N.R. right-of-way serves as a boundary between the Toronto boundary and Rosebank Road but not further east; a Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) right-of-way serves as a ward boundary but only between Rosebank and Fairport Roads; and Highway 401 is the ward boundary between the Ajax boundary and Liverpool Road but not further west. These are largely visible boundaries within the community, but each appears to be a “natural” boundary in one part of the City but not in another.

Two of the three north-south ward boundaries (along Rosebank and Liverpool Roads) are significant arterial roadways that divide the neighbourhoods on either side of the



road. This is much less so with Fairport Road, which is more of a neighbourhood street than a divider.

On the whole, the boundaries of the existing wards fall short of meeting the expectation of “natural” boundaries in the sense of being easily identifiable and consistent.

7.5 Effective Representation

As stated above, the four principles are subject to the overarching principle of “effective representation,” meaning that each resident should have comparable access to an elected representative and each councillor should speak on behalf of an equal number of residents. Deviations from population parity can be justified if they contribute to more effective representation.

As noted earlier, effective representation is not based on the performance of incumbent councillors. It is, rather, a concept that is premised on the on-going relationship between residents and elected officials – not just on the way the resident is “counted” on election day, although that is an important component of a fair system of representation. Are the individual wards plausible and coherent units of representation? Are they drawn in such a way that representatives can readily play the role expected of them? Do they provide equitable (that is, fair) access to councillors for all residents of the municipality?

The combination of accelerating population imbalances, the mix of neighbourhoods and communities within the wards, and the extreme size of Ward 3 compared to the other two wards all suggest that the present wards in Pickering do not contribute to effective representation. One significant factor underpinning these undeniable limitations is the challenge of reflecting the increasing complexity of the City in only three wards.

It bears repeating that this principle is not directed at the way present members of Pickering Council perform their responsibilities, but assesses the features of the electoral system and how they enhance or restrict the capacity of residents to be represented fairly at election time and throughout the term of the Council. In most ways, the present ward system in Pickering is an obstacle to overcome rather than a contribution to effective representation.



In our Discussion Paper we provided an initial evaluation of the current ward system. For the most part, the current arrangements failed to meet the principles in place for the W.B.R. We have since taken the feedback received through our various engagement activities and again, for the most part, members of the public have confirmed many of our initial perceptions. The current system largely fails to meet the W.B.R. principles and cannot be said to serve the residents of the City of Pickering well.

Figure 7-2: Present Pickering Ward Configuration Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	No	One ward is outside the acceptable range of variation and two wards are below optimal.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	No	None of the wards are coherent electoral units because of limited natural, social, or economic connections within them.
Current and Future Population Trends	No	One ward is outside the acceptable range of variation and two wards are below optimal.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Partially successful	Most markers used as boundaries of the wards are straightforward but are not used consistently.
Effective Representation	No	Effective representation is hindered by uneven population distribution and the inclusion of rural residents in a ward with predominantly urban population.

Meets Requirements of Guiding Principle?

Yes	Largely successful	Partially successful	No
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8. Alternative Ward Boundary Options

The evaluation of the current ward system in Pickering suggests that it largely fails when evaluated against the guiding principles for this review. Council could still choose to retain the status quo by turning down all recommended options for an alternative ward configuration. That decision, however, could result in a petition submitted under section 223 of the Municipal Act, 2001. The analysis presented here suggests that it could be difficult for the City to defend the existing ward system before LPAT.

If Council decides to change the ward boundary system, what would alternatives look like? The consultants have prepared 4 preliminary options examining possible ward re-configurations under the existing 3-ward system. Keeping the identifiable communities of interest intact, creating wards with roughly equal populations and providing for effective representation throughout Pickering poses a significant challenge, given the large geography and population concentration discussed above. In response to this challenge, we have included additional alternative ward boundary configurations using four-, five- and six-ward formats. The preliminary options included herein are concepts intended to highlight the various configurations available in relation to the guiding principles and aforementioned issues.

Preliminary Option 1:

This is a three-ward system that grows into an acceptable population distribution in 2030 with minimal changes to the current three wards. The proposed Wards 1 and 2 include most of the present urban areas, with the downtown in a single ward. At present, both proposed wards include areas north and south of Highway 401 but a major regional road (Whites Road) is used as a boundary between them instead of Fairport Road. A cleaner and consistent northern boundary with the proposed Ward 3 along Concession Road 3 is used. The proposed Ward 3 encompasses the entire rural part of Pickering but still includes the Duffin Heights and Brock Ridge urban neighbourhoods that contribute the bulk of the population in 2020. By 2030, the population of the proposed ward is expected to triple in size, primarily associated with Seaton.

The 2020 population distribution includes one proposed ward (Ward 3) in the optimal range but the other two proposed wards are outside the acceptable 25% variation. This would not meet the representation by population principle but, as Table 8-1 shows, it



comes very close to meeting the future population principle with one proposed ward in the optimal range and the other two within the margins of the acceptable 25% variation.

In the shorter term, the proposed Ward 3 will include about two-thirds of the City's land mass but only approximately 20% of the population. It is already the case that it is difficult to conclude that rural Pickering and its historic hamlets can claim effective representation in the present Ward 3; those communities within Pickering will be even less visible by the further transformation of rural Pickering.



Figure 8-1: Preliminary Option 1

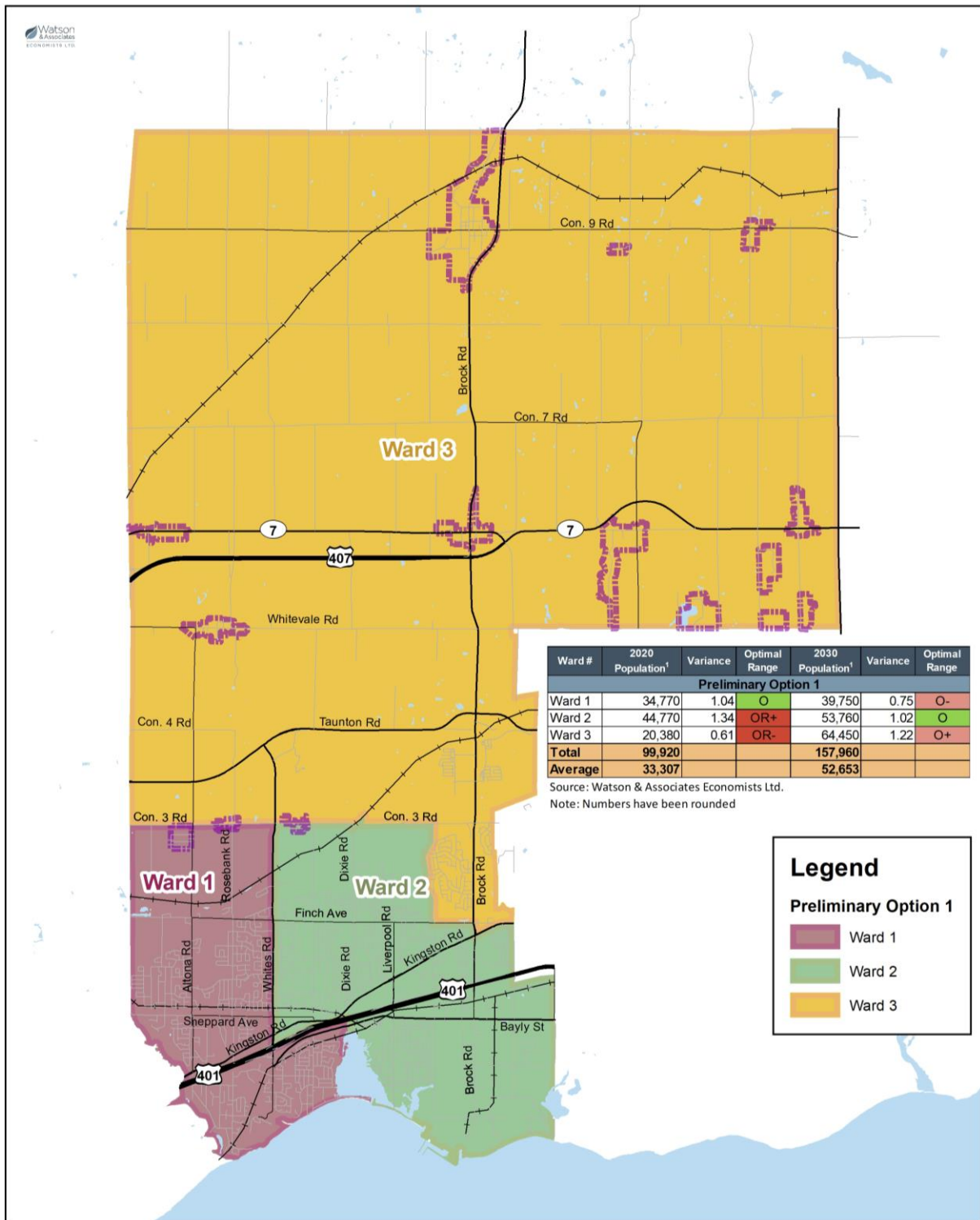




Table 8-1: Preliminary Option 1 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 1						
Ward 1	34,770	1.04	O	39,750	0.75	O-
Ward 2	44,770	1.34	OR+	53,760	1.02	O
Ward 3	20,380	0.61	OR-	64,450	1.22	O+
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	33,307			52,653		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-2: Preliminary Option 1 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Partially successful	Two wards are outside the acceptable range of variation, one ward is at optimal size.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Partially successful	Present urban area plausible groupings of neighbourhoods; third ward is a mix of urban and rural communities.
Current and Future Population Trends	Largely successful	Two wards are narrowly within the acceptable range of variation, one ward is at optimal size.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Clean and recognizable features serve as boundaries.
Effective Representation	Partially successful	Effective representation hindered by uneven population distribution and the inclusion of rural residents in a ward with predominantly urban population.

Preliminary Option 2:

Preliminary Option 2 provides a way to align the three wards in a manner that achieves the representation by population principle for the 2022 municipal election. In terms of



community of interest, it places the central business district, a significant concentration of employment and major cultural institutions that are components of the urban fabric of Pickering, in a single ward along with a number of well-established nearby neighbourhoods. It also locates all the shoreline and other neighbourhoods south of Highway 401 in a single ward. The common boundary of the proposed Wards 1 and 2 is Highway 401 from Ajax on the east side of the City through to Whites Road, but it becomes less clear-cut north of Highway 401 where it follows Sheppard Avenue and Rosebank Road.

To achieve better parity in 2020, the northern boundary of the two proposed urban wards is Finch Avenue, effectively keeping several established neighbourhoods in Liverpool and the growing Brock Ridge and Duffin Heights neighbourhoods in the same ward as rural Pickering. Preliminary Option 2 maintains population parity as the population grows in Pickering over the next three elections – but only in the two proposed southern wards. The drawback of this Preliminary Option is that the population growth in proposed Ward 3 (forecast to be around 40,000) pushes the proposed ward well over the acceptable range – while the proposed ward also encompasses about 60% of the City’s land mass. This is not a desirable combination but it appears to be inevitable in a three-ward system in Pickering.

In other words, Preliminary Option 2 is premised on “catching up” with the population growth since 1982 to arrive at population parity across the three wards but not on preparing for growth. This is a legitimate priority for the 2020/2021 W.B.R. but will likely mean that the boundaries will need to be reviewed again as the Seaton neighbourhood closes in on buildout.



Figure 8-3: Preliminary Option 2

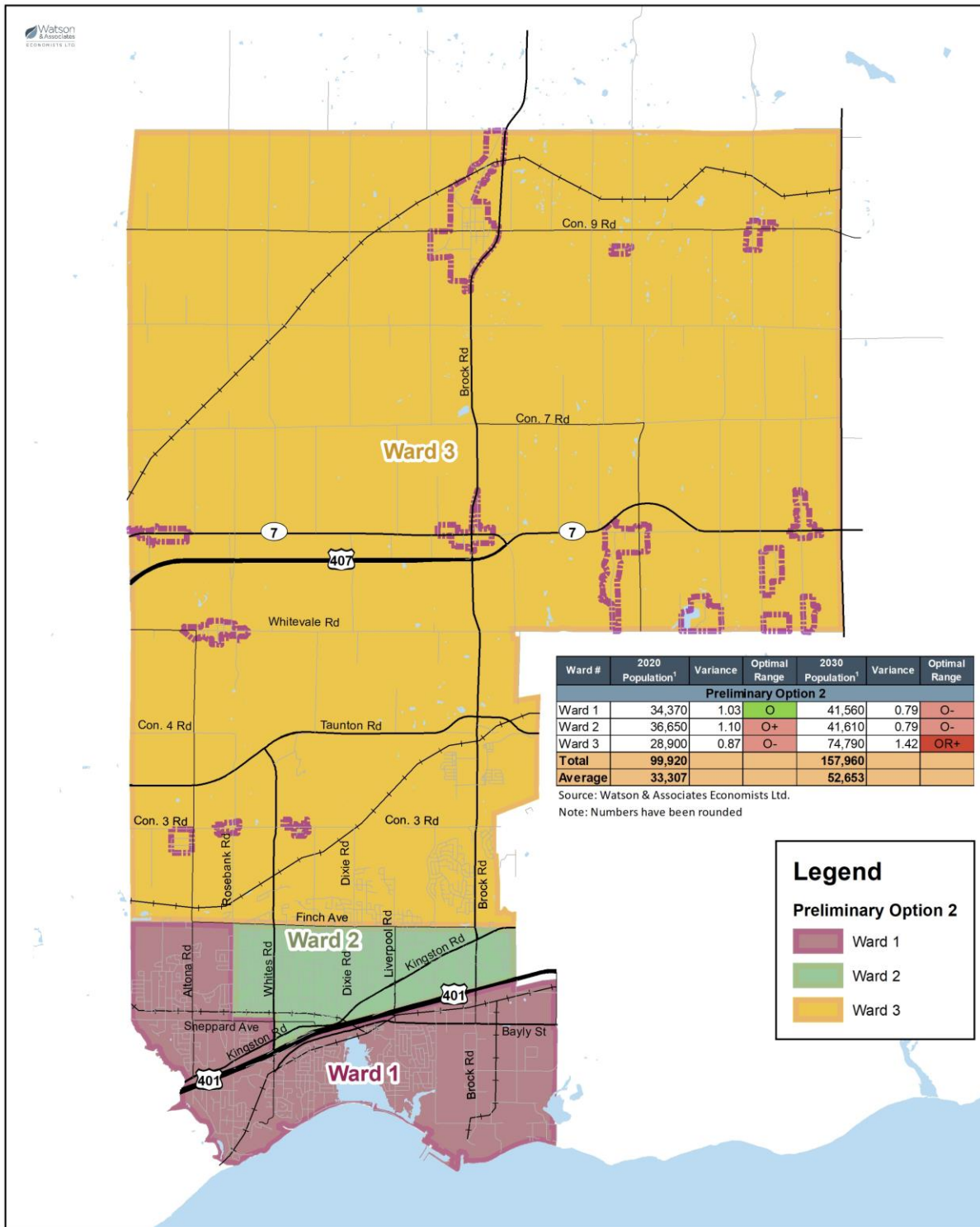




Table 8-2: Preliminary Option 2 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 2						
Ward 1	34,370	1.03	O	41,560	0.79	O-
Ward 2	36,650	1.10	O+	41,610	0.79	O-
Ward 3	28,900	0.87	O-	74,790	1.42	OR+
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	33,307			52,653		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-4: Preliminary Option 2 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	One ward is optimal, two wards are well within the acceptable range.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Partially successful	Present urban area plausible groupings of neighbourhoods; third ward is a mix of urban and rural communities.
Current and Future Population Trends	No	One ward is outside the acceptable range of variation and two wards are below optimal.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Largely successful	Boundary between two proposed wards uses less visible roadways west of Whites Road.
Effective Representation	Largely successful	Effective representation is largely achieved for 2022 but is hindered by the area of one ward and its large population in 2030.



Preliminary Option 3:

The ultimate rationale for this Preliminary Option is a ward configuration that is forecast to achieve population parity for the 2030 municipal election.

There are only two actual ward boundary lines in Preliminary Option 3: Concession Road 3 and Dixie Road. Although establishing the northern boundary for the two southern wards at Concession Road 3 means the 2020 population of proposed Ward 3 is well below the acceptable range of variation, councillors elected in that ward will need to be engaged in the complex task of representing a brand new large urban community in the heart of the ward.

As in some other Preliminary Options, population parity is not realistic in 2020, but the dynamics of growth in Pickering point to a successful population balance in 2030. The proposed Ward 1 begins as the ward with the largest population, but is largely built out and likely to experience minimal growth. The proposed Ward 2 is the smallest by area and population, but encompasses downtown Pickering and the associated neighbourhoods, businesses, and extensive employment lands south of Highway 401. The population of the proposed Ward 3 is only about a quarter that of the other two wards in 2020, but grows by about 40,000 residents by 2030 and into the optimal range (that is, within 5% of optimal).

If achieving population parity in a three-ward system over the next two or three elections is Council's priority, on balance Preliminary Option 3 is a plausible alternative.



Figure 8-5: Preliminary Option 3

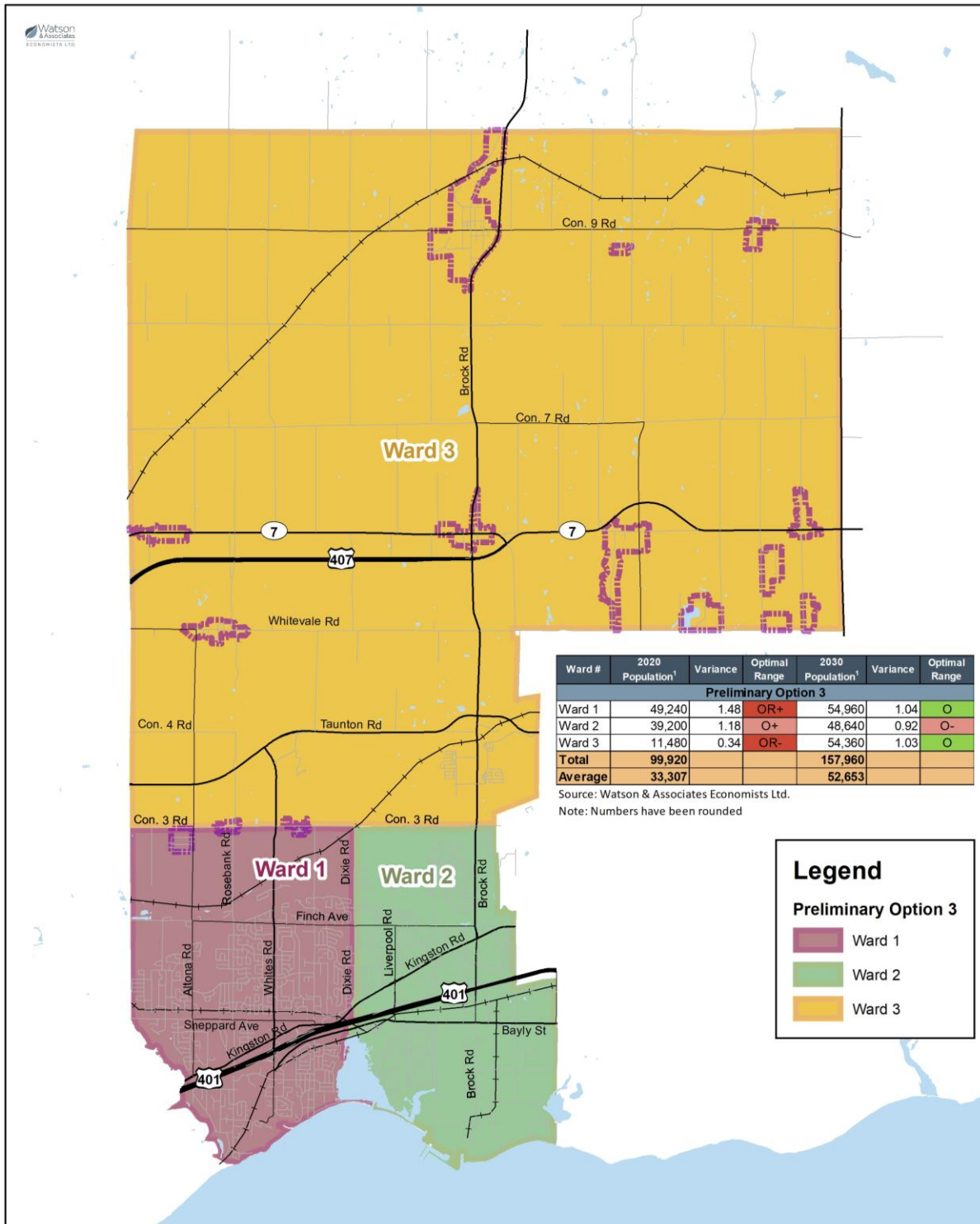




Table 8-3: Preliminary Option 3 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 3						
Ward 1	49,240	1.48	OR+	54,960	1.04	O
Ward 2	39,200	1.18	O+	48,640	0.92	O-
Ward 3	11,480	0.34	OR-	54,360	1.03	O
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	33,307			52,653		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-6: Preliminary Option 3 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Partially successful	All wards are within the acceptable range of variation, one ward is at optimal size.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Partially successful	Present urban area plausible groupings of neighbourhoods; third ward is a mix of urban and rural communities.
Current and Future Population Trends	Largely successful	Two wards are narrowly within the acceptable range of variation, one ward is above the acceptable range of variation.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Clean and recognizable features serve as boundaries.
Effective Representation	Largely successful	Effective representation is hindered by the inclusion of rural residents in a ward with significant urban population.



Preliminary Option 4:

In this Option, the northern boundary line for the proposed Ward 1 and Ward 2 west of West Duffins Creek is Finch Avenue. The northern boundary of the proposed Ward 2 follows Concession 3 and the western boundary north of Finch Avenue is the West Duffins Creek. The boundary between the proposed Wards 1 and 2 south of Finch Avenue is located along Dixie Road north of Highway 401 and follows the existing notional boundary across Frenchman's Bay to the south of Highway 401. These are all clear boundary lines.

Expanding the proposed Ward 1 eastward makes it a little more compact but actually larger by population than in Preliminary Option 1; however, it is expected to achieve better population parity in the longer term because of the impact of the growth in other parts of the City. The proposed Ward 2 recognizes the community of interest of the downtown area that includes the central business district, a significant concentration of employment and cultural institutions that are components of the urban fabric of Pickering, rather than being located in the present Ward 3 along with the City's extensive rural territory. Over the three-election cycle, these two wards will grow into parity with one another, despite the inclusion of the Brock Road corridor in the proposed Ward 2.

As in the present ward system, some urban neighbourhoods are included in the proposed third ward, a mix of the growing Duffin Heights neighbourhood and the more established subdivisions in the Liverpool neighbourhood. Despite the transfer of the heavily populated eastern and western urban neighbourhoods that currently bracket Wards 1 and 2 into the proposed Ward 3, the proposed Ward 3 is still well short of the acceptable range of variation in 2020. This is, however, where another rationale for this Option becomes clear: by 2030, the proposed Ward 3 will be able to absorb the 40,000 people expected to eventually move into the Seaton development, yet can remain within the acceptable range of variation for the City.



Figure 8-7: Preliminary Option 4

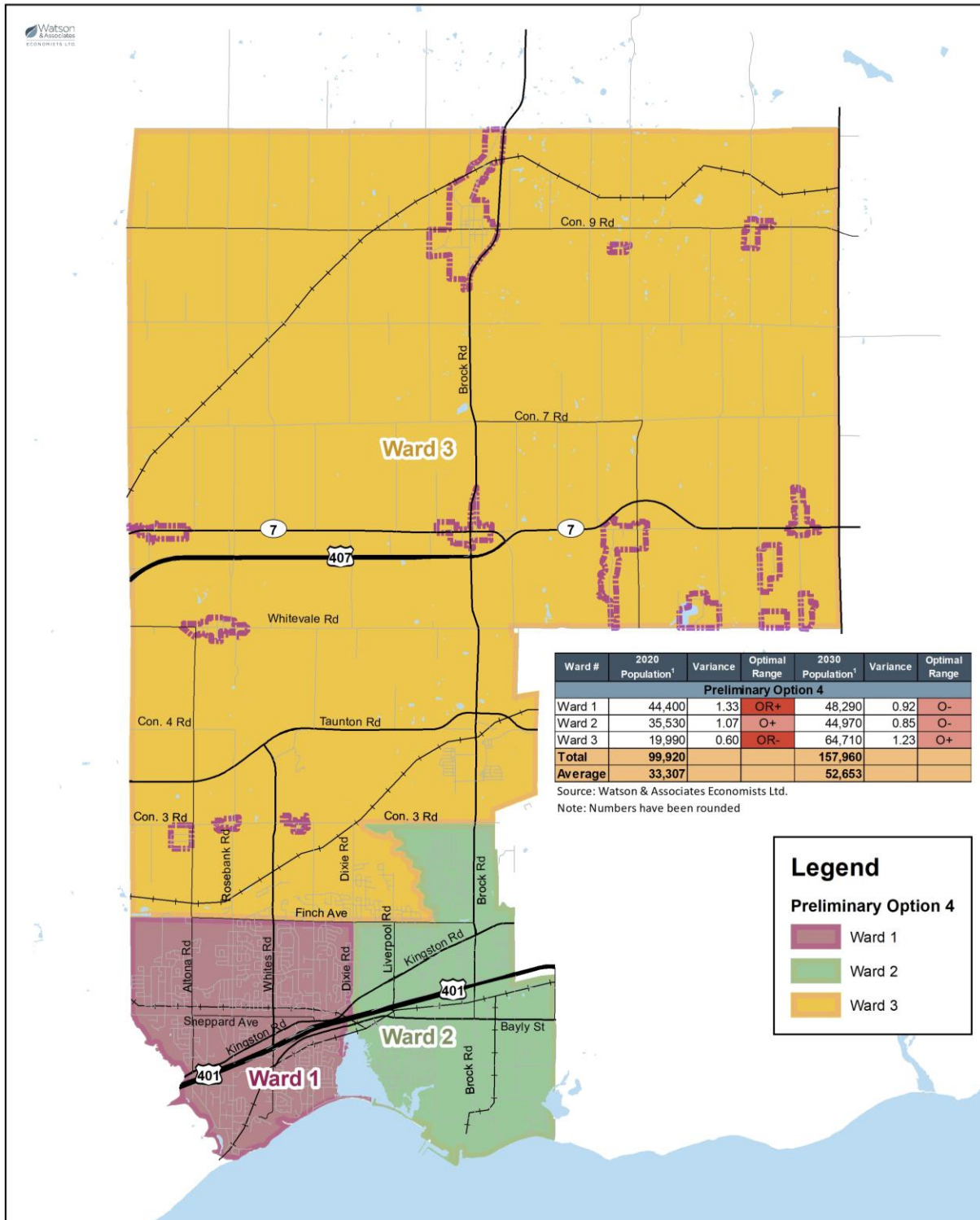




Table 8-4: Preliminary Option 4 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 4						
Ward 1	44,400	1.33	OR+	48,290	0.92	O-
Ward 2	35,530	1.07	O+	44,970	0.85	O-
Ward 3	19,990	0.60	OR-	64,710	1.23	O+
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	33,307			52,653		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-8: Preliminary Option 4 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Partially successful	Two wards are outside the acceptable range of variation, one ward is just above the optimal size.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Partially successful	Present urban area plausible groupings of neighbourhoods; third ward is a mix of urban and rural communities.
Current and Future Population Trends	Yes	Two wards are within the optimal range, one ward is just below the optimal size.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Only two lines used, both are clear and straight.
Effective Representation	Largely successful	Effective representation is largely achieved for 2030 but is less successful in the shorter term.



Further Preliminary Options: Four-, Five- and Six-Ward Models

Pickering's Council has included three local councillors since the municipality was created in 1974 when the population was less than 40,000 people. This report has repeatedly found that achieving the primary guiding principles (representation by population, protection of communities of interest, and current and future population trends) to elect three councillors has required designs that seriously compromise one or more of them, often impacting the objective of achieving effective representation. We believe that there are Preliminary Options outlined in this report that can bring more effective representation (as understood in the Carter decision) to the residents of Pickering, but in each case requiring a deliberate foregoing of some of the guiding principles to achieve another.

The reasons for this outcome are numerous: Pickering's present population is concentrated in the southern urban neighbourhoods while only about 5% of the population resides in the defined rural area that encompasses about two-thirds of the land mass.

Within ten years, however, around 40,000 people will live in the Seaton neighbourhoods – as many people as lived in Pickering when the three-ward system was created. As mentioned above in section 4.2, Seaton is expected to grow rapidly, and this growth is anticipated to start development within the next five-year period. By 2024, Seaton is expected to grow from 2,300 people to over 23,500 people. Over the next five-year period, 76% of the City's population growth is to be accommodated within the Seaton Lands, while 24% is to be accommodated within the South Urban Lands. Over the ten-year period, 66% of the population growth is expected within Seaton while 33% is anticipated in the South Urban Lands.

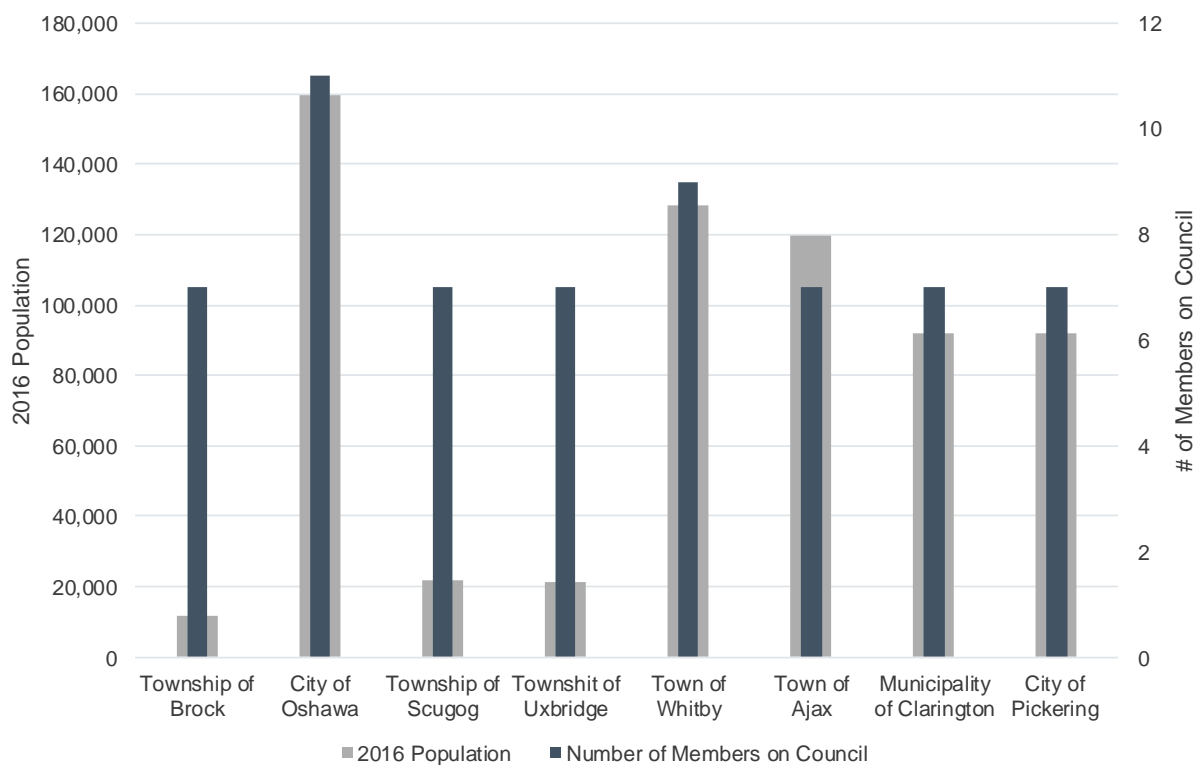
The projected population growth in the Seaton neighborhoods is therefore a number that is approximately twice that of the present population of municipalities in Durham Region such as Scugog and Uxbridge. Each of those municipalities elects councillors in five wards, yet this review has been working to incorporate this very large new population cluster into a single ward alongside the existing population and clearly at the expense of the rural community of interest.

On an overall basis, as shown in Figure 8-9, Pickering has the same size council as five of the other municipalities in Durham Region; however, it is much larger in population



than three of them (Brock, Scugog, Uxbridge). It is also worthwhile mentioning that, while Pickering and Clarington both have similar-sized populations and seven-member Councils, Clarington actually has four wards and four local councillors but one less Regional Councillor than Pickering. The Town of Ajax has the same council configuration as Pickering, albeit with a larger population (~120,000, 2016 Census). The Town of Whitby, similar in size to Ajax, has four Local Councillors and four Regional Councillors for a total Council size of nine with the Mayor. Oshawa, Durham's most populous municipality (~160,000, 2016 Census) has a Council size of 11 with the Mayor and five Local and five Regional Councillors elected in five wards. While Council size varies throughout the Province and also within Durham Region, the City of Pickering's population will be more in-line with the Towns of Whitby and Ajax in the next several years and is projected to approach the size of Oshawa over the next decade.

Figure 8-9: Region of Durham Council Composition vs. Population



While members of the present Council and many residents are reluctant to see a change in the composition of council – often citing costs – this report has demonstrated that there are constraints that prevent a three-ward system from providing the Pickering community with an equitable electoral system. Those conditions are given and cannot



be treated as unimportant in designing a ward system for a City that will be home to more than 150,000 people in about ten years. Kicking the ball down the road on the premise that it is “too soon” or “too expensive” to make a change to the Council structure overlooks the fact that the municipality’s population has doubled since the present design was established and is about to grow even more. Residents are already living in an inequitable ward configuration that this review seeks to address.

What follows are models for three Preliminary Options to elect City Councillors that each can result in more equitable representation for the residents of Pickering by 2030 or earlier, while better reflecting the present and future communities in the City. At this time, these are exploratory concepts of what ward systems built around a slightly larger Council could look like. We urge the community and Council to see these as an opportunity to show vision, to look to a future Pickering where residents will be effectively represented through its ward configuration rather than despite it.



Preliminary Option 5: Six-Ward Model

Figure 8-10: Preliminary Option 5

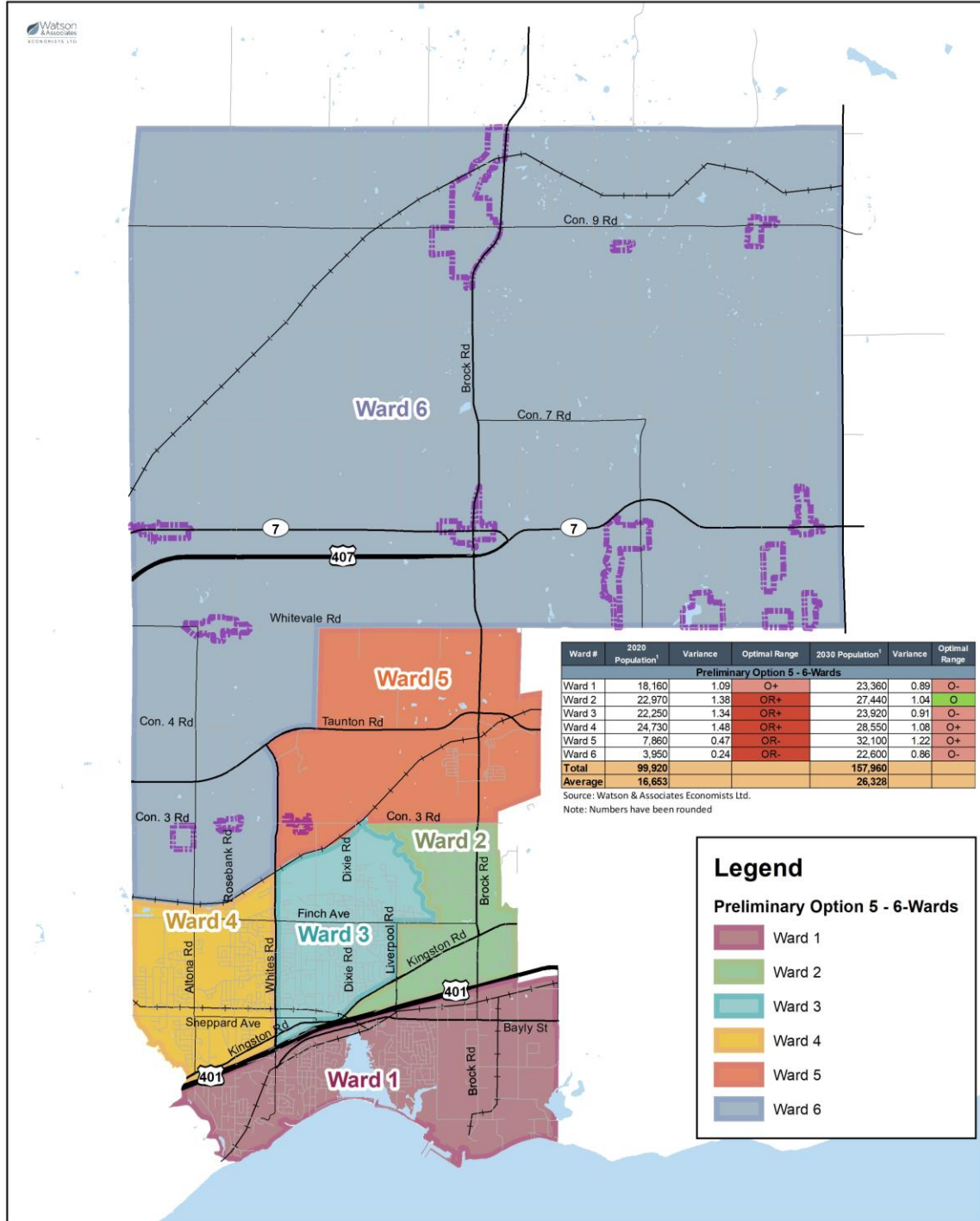




Table 8-5: Preliminary Option 5 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 5 - 6-Wards						
Ward 1	18,160	1.09	O+	23,360	0.89	O-
Ward 2	22,970	1.38	OR+	27,440	1.04	O
Ward 3	22,250	1.34	OR+	23,920	0.91	O-
Ward 4	24,730	1.48	OR+	28,550	1.08	O+
Ward 5	7,860	0.47	OR-	32,100	1.22	O+
Ward 6	3,950	0.24	OR-	22,600	0.86	O-
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	16,653			26,327		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-11: Preliminary Option 5 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	No	Only one proposed ward is within the acceptable range of variation.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Yes	Urban neighbourhoods are in plausible and coherent groupings; Seaton and rural areas in their own wards.
Current and Future Population Trends	Yes	One proposed ward is in optimal range; others are within the acceptable range of variation.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Clean and recognizable features serve as boundaries.
Effective Representation	Largely successful	Effective representation is achieved for 2030 but is less successful in the shorter term.



Preliminary Option 6: Five-Ward Model

Figure 8-12: Preliminary Option 6

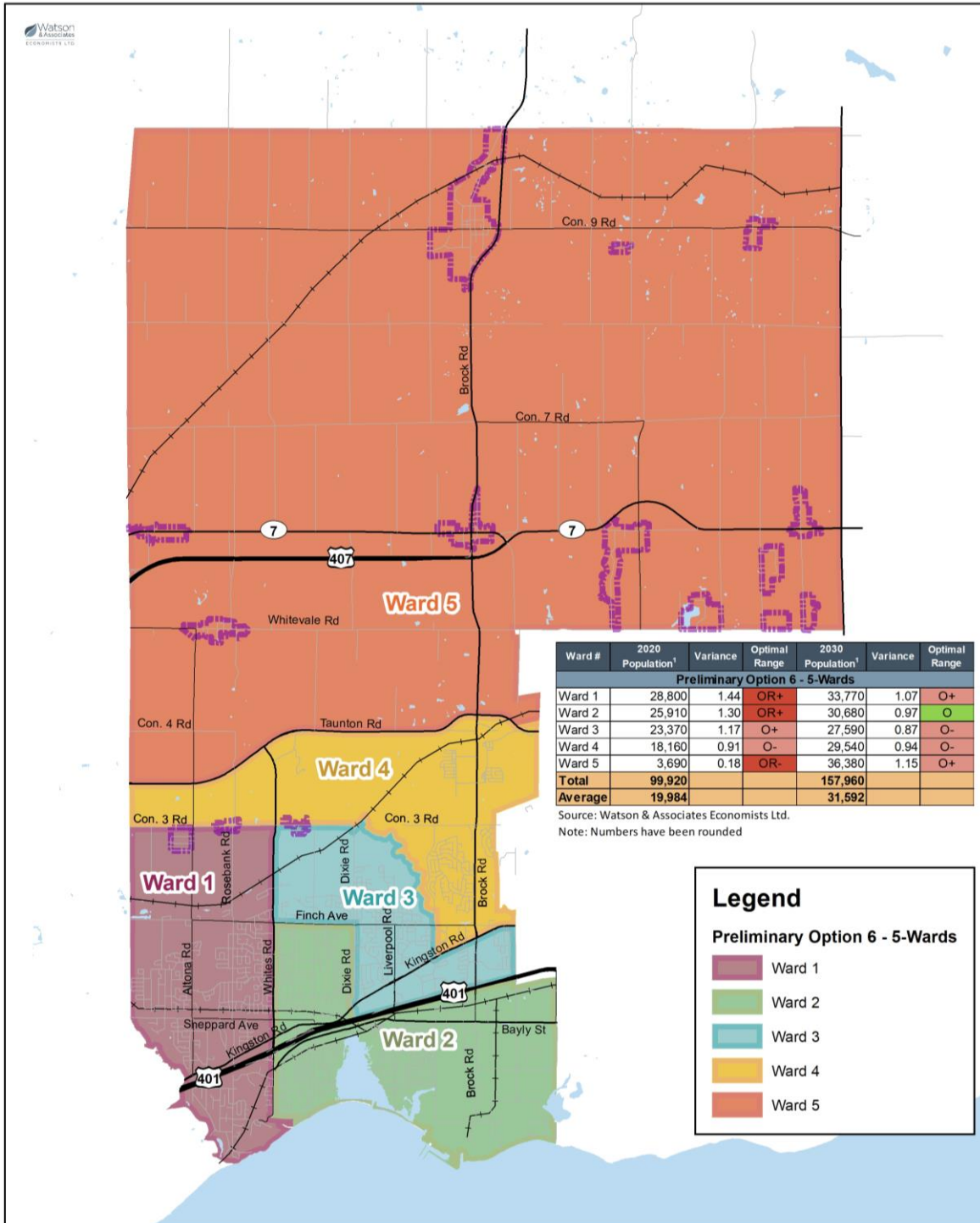




Table 8-6: Preliminary Option 6 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 6 - 5-Wards						
Ward 1	28,800	1.44	OR+	33,770	1.07	O+
Ward 2	25,910	1.30	OR+	30,680	0.97	O
Ward 3	23,370	1.17	O+	27,590	0.87	O-
Ward 4	18,160	0.91	O-	29,540	0.94	O-
Ward 5	3,690	0.18	OR-	36,380	1.15	O+
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	19,984			31,592		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-13: Preliminary Option 6 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	No	Only one proposed ward is within the acceptable range of variation.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Partially successful	Urban neighbourhoods are in four proposed wards south of Taunton Road; Seaton and rural areas are included in a single northern ward.
Current and Future Population Trends	Yes	One proposed ward is in optimal range; others are within the acceptable range of variation.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Largely successful	Proposed boundaries for Wards 2 and 3 are potentially confusing.
Effective Representation	Largely successful	Effective representation is achieved for 2030 but is less successful in the shorter term.



Preliminary Option 7: Four-Ward Model

Figure 8-14: Preliminary Option 7

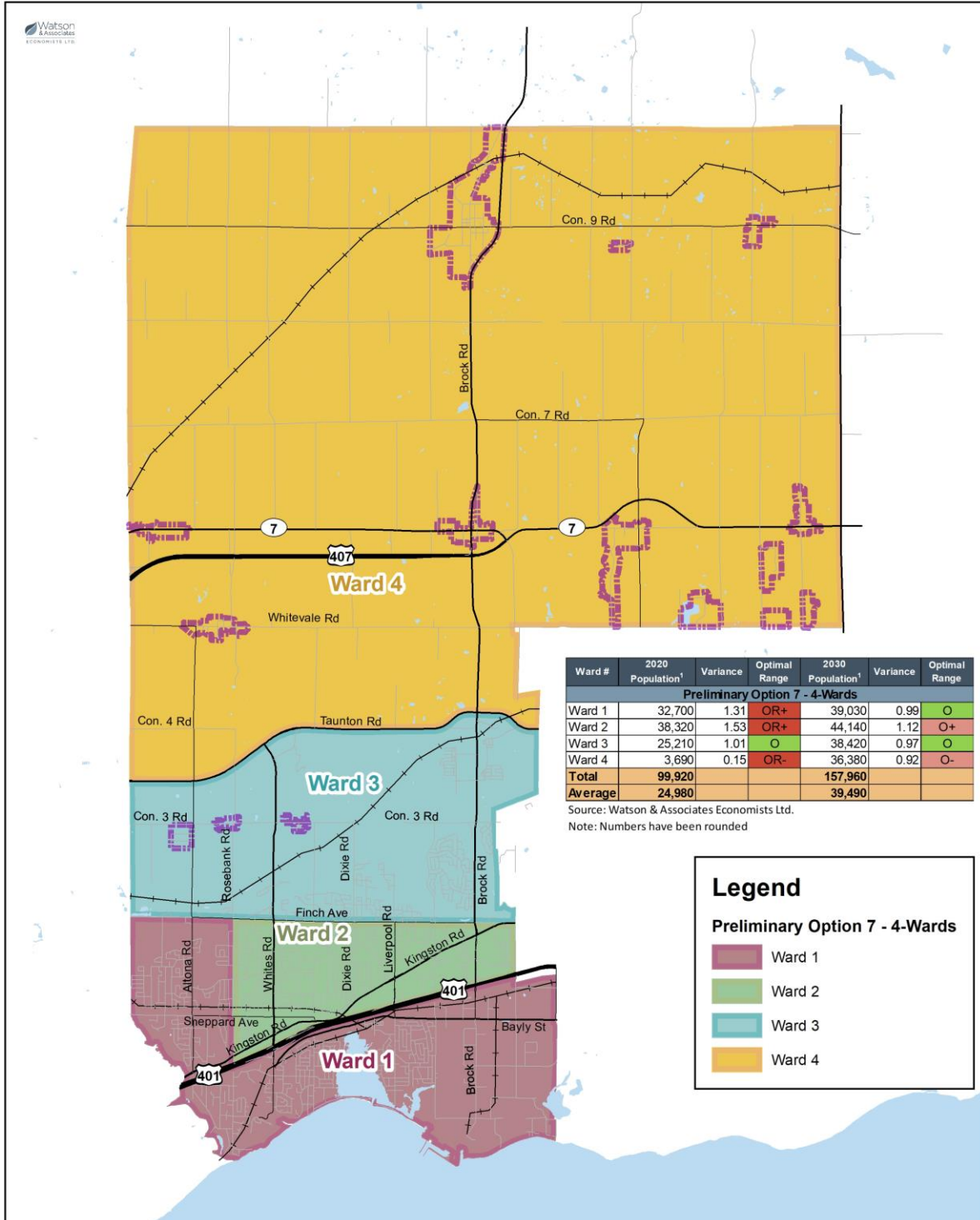




Table 8-7: Preliminary Option 7 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward #	2020 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range	2030 Population ¹	Variance	Optimal Range
Preliminary Option 7 - 4-Wards						
Ward 1	32,700	1.31	OR+	39,030	0.99	O
Ward 2	38,320	1.53	OR+	44,140	1.12	O+
Ward 3	25,210	1.01	O	38,420	0.97	O
Ward 4	3,690	0.15	OR-	36,380	0.92	O-
Total	99,920			157,960		
Average	24,980			39,490		

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Note: Numbers have been rounded

Figure 8-15: Preliminary Option 7 Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	No	Only one proposed ward is within the acceptable range of variation; proposed Ward 4 is difficult to justify in population terms.
Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Partially successful	Urban neighbourhoods are in three proposed wards south of Taunton Road; Seaton and rural areas are included in a single northern ward.
Current and Future Population Trends	Yes	Two proposed wards are in optimal range; two are within the acceptable range of variation.
Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Yes	Clean and recognizable features serve as boundaries.
Effective Representation	Largely successful	Effective representation is achieved for 2030 but is less successful in the shorter term.



8.1 Evaluation Summary

Figure 8-16: Preliminary Options – Evaluation Summary

Preliminary Option	Representation by Population	Protection of Communities of Interest and Neighbourhoods	Current and Future Population Trends	Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	Effective Representation
1	Partially successful	Partially successful	Largely successful	Yes	Partially successful
2	Yes	Partially successful	No	Largely successful	Largely successful
3	Partially successful	Partially successful	Largely successful	Yes	Largely successful
4	Partially successful	Partially successful	Yes	Yes	Largely successful
5	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Largely successful
6	No	Partially successful	Yes	Largely successful	Largely successful
7	No	Partially successful	Yes	Yes	Largely successful

Meet Requirements of Guiding Principle?

Yes	Largely successful	Partially successful	No
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Higher Rating

Lower Rating



8.2 Further Considerations

The options presented herein are preliminary; they reflect the application of the core principles for this review to the distribution of population and communities within Pickering.

Designing an electoral system that will deliver effective representation to such a diverse and growing community requires some accommodation: designs that put an emphasis on representation by population today can hinder fair representation for residents who will locate in the northern part of the City in the coming decade. Designs that place a priority on grouping selected urban neighbourhoods can result in the over-representation of those same communities around the Council table. Grouping several distinctive communities in the same ward may systematically reduce the voice of minorities, whether they be geographic, economic, or social.

The purpose of this report is to stimulate discussions in Pickering, to encourage residents to “think outside the box” of representation. The options included are deliberately called “preliminary” since the next step is to gather the perspectives of residents on these new approaches to electing the members of their municipal Council.