



Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Interim Report

September 23, 2024



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Executive Summary

The Purpose of this Review

The original designers of Chatham-Kent’s council structure and ward system created an innovative solution to a complex problem of representation in a challenging political environment, characterized by disruptive change. It has proven to be durable, and after more than twenty-five years, it still has many supporters. Yet, the task of any Review such as this is to match the Council structure and wards to the needs of the day, and to reflect the realities of growth on communities of interest.

Accordingly, this Review considers:

- **The size and structure of Council** – i.e., the number of councillors on Council and the potential role of an elected Deputy Mayor.
- **How councillors are elected** – i.e., whether councillors are elected by ward, at-large, or some combination of the two, and how many councillors are elected per ward.
- **The electoral ward boundaries** – i.e., how well the Municipality’s current ward boundaries deliver “effective representation” and new options to re-draw boundaries.

The purpose of this Interim Report is to provide an update on progress and findings so far and to seek guidance on the deliverables for the next phase of the project. It is divided into five parts.

1. **Part One** describes the Review’s scope and process and guiding principles.
2. **Part Two** describes the history and current ward boundaries, and recent electoral participation levels of Chatham-Kent.
3. **Part Three** considers the Size and Structure of Council. Based on feedback from participants, a review of comparable municipalities, and our own analysis, we conclude that the Final Report should include a manageable, “short list” of options for consideration by Council, including:

- 3.1. A status quo option, and options that would reduce the size of Council, as summarized in the table below:

Council Size	Composition	Result
18	Mayor + 17	Status Quo
17	Mayor + 16	Reduce 1 Council Position
15	Mayor + 14	Reduce 3 Council Positions
13	Mayor + 12	Reduce 5 Council Positions

- 3.2. Options **Not** Recommended: Based on our findings so far, we recommend against the further consideration of options that would:

- 3.2.1. Increase the size of council.

- 3.2.2. Decrease the size of council below 13 (12 + Mayor).
- 3.2.3. Move from elections by ward to elections at-large.
- 3.2.4. Create a deputy mayor position, elected at-large.

4. **Part Four reports current and forecast populations of the existing ward boundaries and reviews them from the perspective of “effective representation.”**

4.1. Based on our review of the current and forecast population data, and feedback from participants, we conclude that if there were no changes to the existing Council size, the existing ward structure, with minor modifications, could continue to be a viable option.

- When viewed through the lens of voter parity, the existing wards can deliver acceptable, but not optimal, mathematical parity for the 2026 and 2030 elections.
- When viewed through the lens of communities of interest, there are neighbourhoods where the effects of growth have undermined the ability of existing ward boundaries to deliver effective representation. These include the boundaries of:
 - Ward 2 - Ward 6
 - Ward 4 - Ward 6
 - Ward 4 - Ward 5

4.2. We conclude that that Final Report should include:

- 4.2.1. Options to address the modification of existing wards as described in 1(b) and;
- 4.2.2. Options to create new ward boundaries capable of giving effect to the Council sizes modeled per recommendation 3.2.

5. **Part Five reports on next steps.**

The next phase of this project will include:

Project Milestones	Date
Present Draft Ward Bounday Maps to Council for Comment	Nov 4th, 2024
Facilitate Public Consultation on Draft Ward Boundary Maps	Nov 2024
Present the Final Report and Recommendations to Council for consideration	Dec 16th, 2024

StrategyCorp will continue to work with Municipal staff to provide updates via the Let’s Talk Chatham-Kent Project page and C-K’s other regular communication channels.

Part 1: Project Overview

Introduction

In July 2024, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent retained **StrategyCorp Inc. to conduct a Council Structure and Ward Boundary Review (the “Review”)**.

The Review was approved by Chatham-Kent Council, at its February 26, 2024, Council meeting, where it passed the following motion:

“Therefore, be it resolved that Chatham-Kent Council invite a third-party consultant, funded by Strategic Reserves, to conduct a review of:

- 1. The existing size of Council membership to decrease the size of Council, providing various options and;*
- 2. The review should include consideration of respecting communities of interest, and options to ensure both rural and urban voices are represented and included in each ward, as well as other potential options taking into account community consultation and best practices.”*

In the Request for Proposal Document, the scope of work was further defined as follows:

- *Provide options for changes to Council composition and options for how Council representatives are elected, if deemed appropriate*
- *Provide options for re-alignment of the existing wards and /or for a change in the number of wards, if deemed appropriate, through the application of the following principles:*
 - *to consider representation and the overriding principle of effective representation” as outlined by the Supreme Court of Canada and applied by the courts and Local Planning Tribunal in developing ward boundary options.*
 - *To consider present and future population trends (growth), communities of interest physical and natural boundaries.*
 - *To consider key municipality policies in the development of ward boundary options including the municipalities official plan.¹*
- *Develop a ward structure that will accommodate growth, and population shifts for a minimum of two municipal elections (2026 and 2030) and beyond, if feasible.*

¹ Chatham Kent RFP # R24-211, at page 28.

Statutory Authority

Ontario law gives municipalities a significant degree of flexibility to pick their own ward and council structure. The *Municipal Act* gives councils discretion to set:

- The number of members of Council (*Municipal Act, 2001, s. 217 (1)*);
- The method of election for Councillors, which may be “by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards” (*Municipal Act, 2001, s. 217*); and
- The ward configuration, including the number of wards, the number of Councillors to be elected in each ward and the boundaries of the wards (*Municipal Act, 2001, s. 222 (1)*).

Overview of the Review Process

This project has two phases:

- Phase One: Preliminary Evaluation and Report to Council.
- Phase Two: Develop Options and Report to Council with Recommendations

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on progress so far.
- Deliver Recommendations on how to narrow the range of options to a manageable scope.
- Given the scale and complexity of the task there is an almost infinite range of options than could be considered. This report recommends the most promising areas for review and seeks guidance on any other options that Council may wish to be able to consider in the Final Report, which is scheduled for December 2024.

Phase One: Preliminary Evaluation

During the first phase of engagement, StrategyCorp:

- Reviewed Chatham-Kent documents and data,
- Informed residents about the process,
- Provided opportunity for stakeholders and the public to comment on the current structure and ward boundaries, and

In preparing this Interim Report we have:

- **Documentary review:** We reviewed Chatham-Kent data, population forecasts, and previous ward boundary review material provided by the Municipality.
- **Stakeholder interviews:** One-on-one interviews with Chatham-Kent’s Mayor, Council

and members of the senior staff.²

- **Digital information resources:** Information about the Review was posted on Chatham-Kent's, "Let's Talk Chatham-Kent" website.
- **In-Person Public Meetings:** Two hybrid in-person and online consultation meetings were held on August 22nd and August 28th at the John D. Bradley Convention Centre in Chatham. Advance public notice was provided via the normal communications channels of the Municipality. Meetings were live streamed to accommodate both in-person and virtual participation. Approximately 42 residents attended these meetings in-person or virtually.
- **Online Public Survey:** A public engagement survey was posted on the Municipality's, "Let's Talk Chatham-Kent" Website from August 22nd to September 13th, 2024. The survey received **344** completed responses. A summary of the participation through the survey and public meetings is available in Appendix V.

A Note on Online Public Surveys:

An Online Public Survey should NOT be mistaken for a Scientific Opinion Poll. Given that respondents were self-selecting, the online public survey results should not be misconstrued as a representative sample of the public or a quantitative public opinion poll of the population of Chatham-Kent. Such a poll would have been different in that it would have required a randomly selected group of participants, chosen using methods to model Chatham-Kent demographics.

As a result, where we have reported on the numerical outcomes, it should be taken as a report on the opinions of those who participated but NOT as statistically representative of broader public opinion.

Feedback collected through these events and the survey provided qualitative insights into the opinions of participants, which were very helpful identifying issues for us to consider in the preparation of the Interim Report.

² Throughout, anonymous quotations from stakeholder interviews faithfully record the meaning they wanted to convey but may have been edited for brevity and content.

Guiding Principles of this Review the Principles of “Effective Representation”

As noted above, this Review is guided by the principle of “effective representation” as outlined by the Supreme Court of Canada and applied by the Courts, the OMB and its successor Tribunals.

The principle of effective representation was set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Reference Re Provincial Electoral Boundaries (Saskatchewan)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158 (*Carter*),³ the leading authority for evaluating electoral systems in Canada.

The issue in *Carter* was whether a difference in population between provincial ridings in Saskatchewan infringed the right to vote protected by section 3 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the Charter).

In *Carter*, the Supreme Court held that the purpose of the right to vote enshrined in the Charter is not “equality of voting power” but the right to “effective representation.”

Effective representative is the right to be “represented in government,” where “representation” entails both the right to a voice in the deliberations of government (the legislative role of elected representatives) and the right to bring your concerns to your representative (the ombudsman role of elected representatives).

Effective representation begins with voter parity, the idea that all votes should have equal weight and, as a result, the number of people living in each ward should be similar. According to the Supreme Court:

A system which dilutes one citizen's vote unduly as compared with another citizen's vote runs the risk of providing inadequate representation to the citizen whose vote is diluted. The legislative power of the citizen whose vote is diluted will be reduced, as may be access to and assistance from his or her representative. The result will be uneven and unfair representation.

While parity is of “prime importance,” the Supreme Court held that it is “not the only factor to be taken into account in ensuring effective representation:”

Notwithstanding the fact that the value of a citizen's vote should not be unduly diluted, it is a practical fact that effective representation often cannot be achieved without considering countervailing factors.

The Supreme Court provided a non-exhaustive list of factors that should be considered, including geography (natural and manmade), community history, community interests (such as

³ *Carter* is available online here: <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>.

urban and rural), minority representation and population growth. These factors allow the population of wards to vary to some extent.

It is generally accepted, that wards should not vary in population by more than 25% from the average, unless there is a good reason to depart from this having regard to overall effective representation.

When defining effective representation as the right protected by the Charter, the Supreme Court of Canada noted that the relative parity of voting power was a prime, but not an exclusive, condition of effective representation.

One thing is clear though. While maintaining relative parity is important, both now and in the future, it is not the only factor. As one Ontario Tribunal put it, “ward design is not just a purely mathematical exercise.”

Departure from mathematical parity should be avoided and minimized but may be justified where the other factors set out above combine to justify the departure to achieve overall effective representation.

In other words, effective representation is a balance. The Supreme Court rejected the “one person – one vote” approach in favour of a more nuanced approach that balances voter parity with a number of other factors to ensure “legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic.”

The principle of effective representation has been interpreted and applied in a long line of Ontario Municipal Board cases dealing specifically with ward boundary and council structure issues.⁴ They have subsequently been restated and refined in more recent cases such as *Hamilton*⁵.

⁴ See, for example, *Teno v. Lakeshore (Town)*, (2005), 51 O.M.B.R. 473 and *Osgoode Rural Communities Association et al. v. Ottawa (City)* [2003] Decision/Order 0605.

⁵ [Dobrucki v Hamilton \(City\)](#), 2017 CanLII 85763 (ON LPAT).

Ward Boundary Review Evaluation Framework

To evaluate the Municipality's current ward boundaries and future alternatives, we will use the following Evaluation Framework drawn from the Review's Terms of Reference and the principles of Effective Representation.

Each factor is described below. They include:

Meets Test of Effective Representation? <u>YES</u> / <u>NO</u>	
1. Parity of Wards: Current Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wards should have relatively equal populations relative to the number of representatives for each ward. Subject to (6), it is generally accepted, that wards should not vary in population by more than 25% from the average. 	
2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider population projections to maintain parity in the future. In this review, we have been directed to consider parity in the 2026 and 2030 elections. 	
3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ward boundaries should be drawn around recognized settlement areas, traditional neighbourhoods and community groupings – not through them. 	
4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration will be given to using natural and man-made features as ward boundaries while keeping wards compact and easy to understand. 	
5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration will be given to grouping existing neighbourhoods into wards that reflect current transportation and communication patterns. 	
6. The Overriding Principle of "Effective Representation"	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While voter parity should be considered of "prime importance," a degree of variation is acceptable when taken into consideration with the other principles as they relate to a municipality's unique characteristics. 	

Part 2: Chatham-Kent's Current Council and Ward Structure

Chatham-Kent is a diverse, single-tier municipality in southwestern Ontario, less than 50 kilometers from the United States border. As an amalgamated community, Chatham-Kent includes urban centres such as Chatham and Wallaceburg, as well as numerous rural, suburban, and agricultural communities across 2,458 square kilometers.

The current day Municipality of Chatham-Kent was created in 1998. The area through the amalgamation of the City of Chatham and numerous smaller local governments within the County of Kent. Chatham-Kent went from being 23 distinct municipalities with over 100 local representatives to a single municipality with 17 Councillors and one Mayor. This re-structuring of local governments had numerous implications on the “new” Chatham-Kent’s representation model, election structures, taxation systems, and ward boundaries.

As is common in many Ontario communities, the reality of governing in Chatham-Kent has been a complex mix of preserving previous municipal arrangements while embracing its amalgamated reality. To this day, Chatham-Kent reflects vestigial features of its pre-amalgamated self. The best example of this is the 3,000 local property tax classes that continue across the municipality. These classes were created to preserve aspects of pre-amalgamation cost allocation. Detailed information on the tax area ratings resulting from amalgamation and their implications are detailed in the Municipality’s Report to Council titled “*Tax Rate Modernization – Area Charges*”⁶.

Previous Ward Boundary Reviews

Chatham-Kent has conducted three previous reviews of the Municipality’s ward boundaries since they were first set in 1998, but changes were never adopted by Council, leaving the ward boundaries unchanged since amalgamation.

Additional details on the recommendations and outcomes of the Municipality’s previous ward boundary reviews can be found in the Municipality’s Reports to Council titled, “*Corporate Review Committee – Final Report (2008)*”⁷, “*Chatham-Kent Community Governance Task Force – Final Report (2010)*”⁸ and “*Examine Ward Boundaries (2015)*”⁹.

⁶ Chatham-Kent, Staff Report to Council (Nov 12, 2020), [RTC035 - Tax Rate Modernization](#)

⁷ Chatham-Kent, Corporate Review Committee Report to Council (April 7, 2008), Final Report

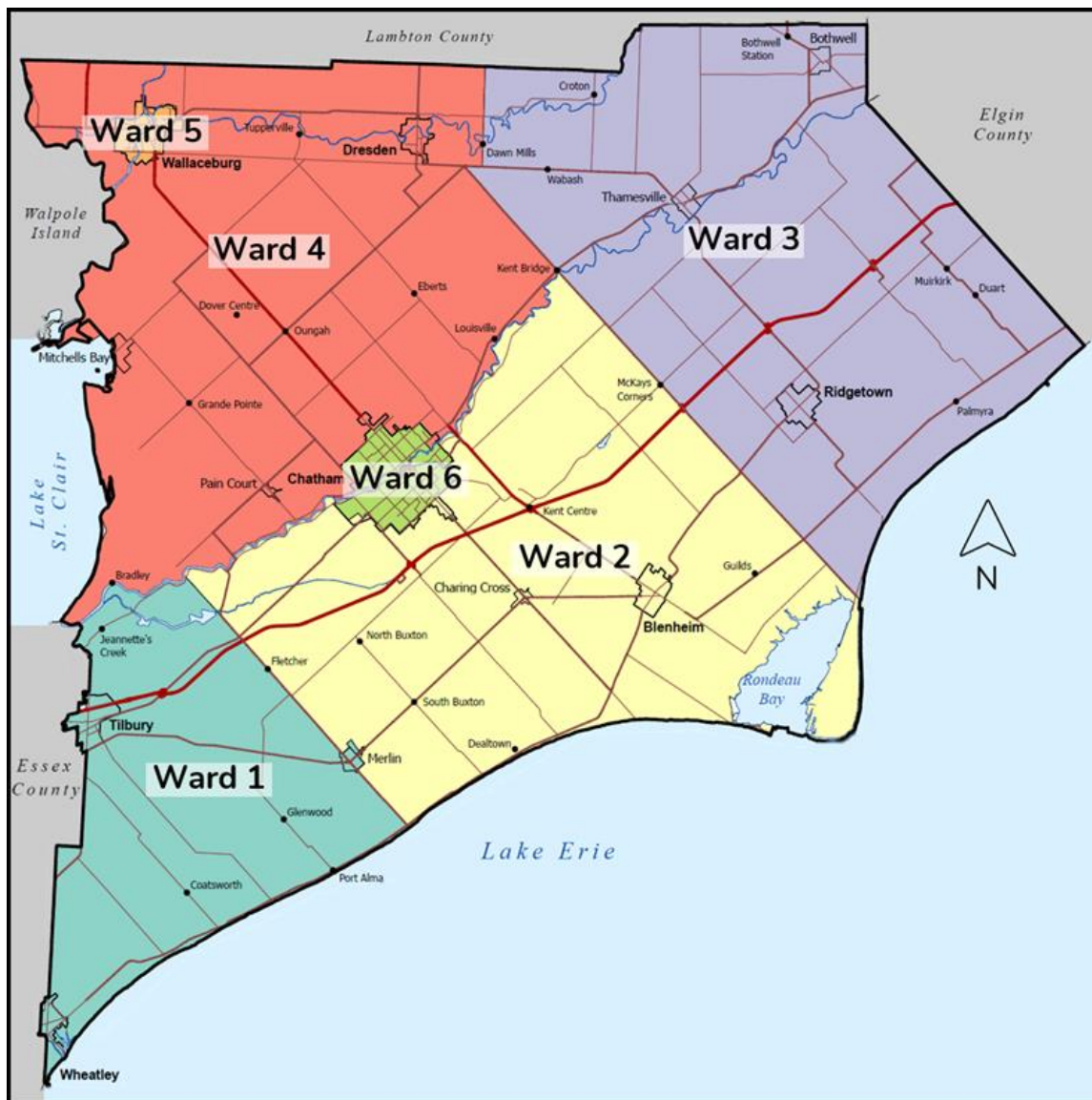
⁸ Chatham-Kent, Community Governance Task Force Report to Council (April 2010), Final Report

⁹ Chatham-Kent, Staff Report to Council (Sept 25, 2015), Examine Ward Boundaries – Information Report

Chatham-Kent's Current Council and Election Structures

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Council currently has 18 members, one (1) Mayor who is elected at-large by the entire Municipality, and 17 Councillors elected by ward including:

- Two Councillors from Ward 1 – West Kent;
- Three Councillors from Ward 2– South Kent;
- Two Councillors from Ward 3 – East Kent;
- Two Councillors from Ward 4 – North Kent;
- Two Councillors from Ward 5 – Wallaceburg; and
- Six (6) Councillors from Ward 6 – Chatham.



Chatham Kent's Current Ward Boundary Map

Recent Electoral History: Participation in Chatham Kent's Elections

Chatham-Kent's Recent Electoral Participation Trends are Comparable to Provincial Norms

Participation in elections can provide some indication of the overall health of a local democracy. We reviewed:

- Recent **voter participation in elections**
- Rates of **incumbency, acclamation and turnover among councillors**

Dissatisfaction with Council Structures and Wards can contribute to disengagement, and result in poor results in both subject areas.

In Chatham-Kent, both voter and candidate participation appear to be in line with provincial norms, suggesting that structure and ward boundaries are not contributing to problems of that sort.

Recent Voter Participation statistics are comparable to provincial norms.

The overall voter turnout in Chatham-Kent in recent elections is presented in the table to the right.

There has been a significant decrease in voter turnout in Chatham-Kent (15% decrease) between the 2018 and 2022 elections.¹⁰ This was greater than the provincial average. It appears to be explained, however, by the character of the elections themselves. In 2018 in Ward 5, and a much less hotly contested mayoral race, both of which tend to reduce campaign activity, and therefore interest and engagement in the election.¹¹ Overall decline in public participation due to the lingering effects of COVID-19 may also have been a factor.

Voter Turnout in Chatham-Kent

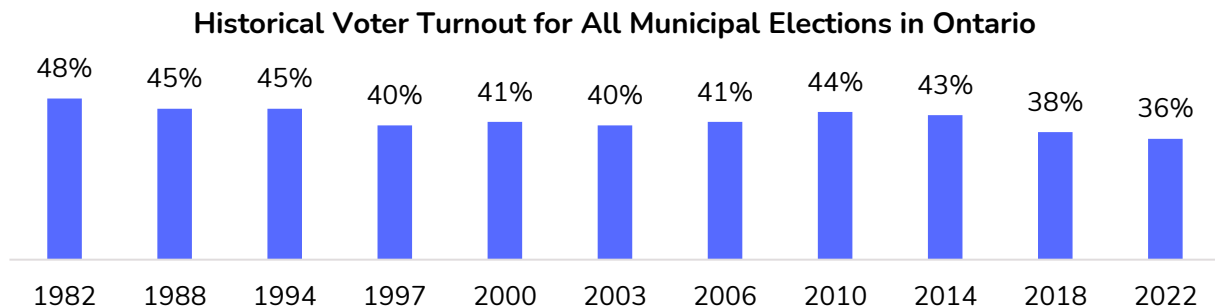
Year	Chatham-Kent Turnout	Average Provincial Turnout
2022	30.56%	36%
2018	45.44%	38%
2014	42.11%	43%

(Source: Chatham-Kent Election Summary Results, 2014, 2018, 2022 & Association of Municipalities of Ontario)

¹⁰ Municipality of Chatham-Kent: [2014 Election Results Summary](#); [2018 Election Results Summary](#); [2022 Election Results Summary](#)

¹¹ *Ibid.* According to the above-cited records, in the 2018 mayoralty election, where Mayor Canniff was elected with 45% of the vote there were 34,722 votes cast. In the 2022 election, where Mayor Canniff was elected with 72% of the vote, there were only 24,546 votes cast.

The chart below shows historical voter turnout for all municipal elections. In different elections, Chatham-Kent has been both above and below the provincial average. As illustrated in the graph below, average voter participation across the province in the 2022 municipal elections was 36% (based on 385 municipalities that conducted direct elections and provided voter turnout information), a decrease of ~2% since 2018 when average voter turnout was 38%.



Source: Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

Overall, it appears that Chatham-Kent has enjoyed an active local democracy, with levels of participation that are generally consistent with participation in other municipalities across the province.

For the purposes of this review, our interim conclusion is that there is no evidence that the current structure of Council and Wards is a deterrent to participation in elections by the voting public. Given the relatively solid record of voter turn out, it would appear to be either neutral or positive.

Rates of incumbency, Acclamations, and Turnover are comparable to provincial norms

A high rate of acclamation is generally considered a bad sign in a local democracy. Similarly, turnover in Council is considered a healthy sign of engagement, although success by incumbents is not in and of itself a bad sign.

In 2022, Chatham-Kent generally had healthy competition among candidates, reasonably low levels of acclamation, and slightly above average rates of incumbency on Council.

The chart below illustrates the rates of competition, incumbency, and acclamation for candidates running in the 2022 elections across Ontario's 417 municipalities.¹²

¹² [AMO, 2022](#)

**2022 Rates of Competition, Acclamation, and Incumbency
for Municipal Election Candidates in Ontario**

	Incumbent (Same Office)		Incumbent (New Office)		New Candidate		Total #
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Acclaimed	388	22%	46	13%	119	3%	553
Elected	1,046	58%	161	46%	1,076	26%	2,283
Unsuccessful	357	20%	143	41%	2,989	71%	3,489
Total	1,791		350		4,184		6,325

(Source: AMO, 2022)

- **Acclamations:** In 2022, Chatham-Kent had two (2) acclamations out of 17 elected Councillors representing a rate of acclamation of 12%. Both acclaimed Councillors were elected for Ward 5 – Wallaceburg. This was below the provincial rate of acclamation for 2022 which was 19% of all elected officials (22% for candidates for the same office, and 13% for candidates for a new office).
- **Competition:** Outside of the Ward 5, Chatham-Kent generally had health competition for the remaining seats on Council:
 - **Mayor:** 3 candidates for 1 seat
 - **Ward 1:** 4 candidates for 2 seats
 - **Ward 2:** 5 candidates for 3 seats
 - **Ward 3:** 5 candidates for 2 seats
 - **Ward 4:** 8 candidates for 2 seats
 - **Ward 5:** 2 candidates for 2 seats (*acclaimed*)
 - **Ward 6:** 16 candidates for 6 seats
- **Incumbency:** In Chatham-Kent in 2022, 13 of 15 incumbents (87%) who ran for re-election to Council were successful, slightly higher than the provincial average incumbency rate of ~80% for both elected and acclaimed candidates.

Overall, Chatham-Kent's rates of acclamation, incumbency, and turnover are in line with provincial averages and do not indicate any major issues with the Municipality's existing electoral structures.

Part 3: Council Structure

This section of the report considers:

1. The size of council (i.e., the number of elected representatives);
2. How councillors are elected (wards, at-large or a combination of both systems);
3. How many wards and councillors per ward (if a ward system is chosen); and
4. Direct election of a deputy mayor.

1. The Size of Council

The Municipal Act

Section 217 of the *Municipal Act* authorizes a municipality to “change the composition” of its council subject to a minimum council size of five members, including the head of council (the mayor).

The Act gives no guidance on:

- The maximum size of Council.
- Similarly, it is silent on an appropriate number of councillors per resident. Across Ontario the number of councillors per resident ranges from one Councillor per thousand residents to one Councillor for almost a hundred thousand residents, in large communities like Toronto and Mississauga.

Municipalities are free to choose a size that fits their unique circumstances.

The terms of reference for this review do not specify that there should be no preconceived notions about the size of Council and that all options (increase, maintain or decrease) should be considered and reviewed.

Form Follows Function

The optimal size of a Council for Chatham-Kent depends on the purpose and role Council is expected to play as a decision-making and representative body.

The most important design feature is always “form follows function,” meaning that Council needs to be designed to ensure that it is capable of delivering on its assigned functions.

Under the *Municipal Act*, it is the role of members of Council to:

- oversee the overall strategic needs of the community,
- manage the needs of the ward,
- provide oversight on financial governance and accountability,
- deliver on provincially mandated responsibilities.

To achieve these ends, a Municipality may consider a number of factors to determine its Council size including Councillor workload, cost, and governance.

What municipalities are appropriate comparable municipalities for Chatham-Kent?

Good question. Chatham-Kent is a single tier municipality, which resulted from a county scale amalgamation.

- From a “function” point of view, it is appropriately compared to other single tier municipalities.
- Given that it delivers the suite of services that are typically delivered by lower tiers, they are also comparable to some degree, as that is where residents expect “local representation on local matters.”
- From a size and history and service delivery point of view, it is also appropriately compared to County governments.

So, we compared it to counties, single tiers and lower tiers. We found that on each comparison, Chatham-Kent has a large Council.

Population: Compared to Lower and Single Tier Municipalities with Similar Populations, Chatham-Kent has a large Council

The amalgamation Municipalities often consider council size in similar municipalities as a relevant guide when reviewing the size of their councils.

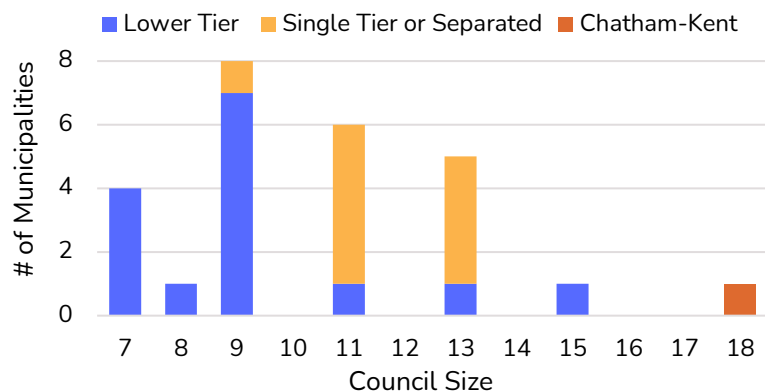
For context, this chart shows the size of Councils for 26 lower-tier, single-tier, or separated Municipalities in Ontario with Populations between 70,000-220,000.¹³

As we discussed above, Chatham-Kent’s current estimated population is just over 117,000.

As you can see, of the 26 in this sample:

- The most common size of council was 9 members (8/26); followed by 11 members

Number of Councillors for 26 Ontario Municipalities with Populations between 70,000-220,000



(Source: Association of Ontario Municipalities)

¹³ AMOpen: <https://www.amo.on.ca/size-municipal-council-and-population>

(6/26), and 13 members (5/26).

- The majority of lower tier municipalities (12/15) have 9 or fewer members of Council.
- The majority of single tier or separated municipalities (9/11) have 11 or 13 members of Council.
- Chatham-Kent is one of only two municipalities in this population range with 13 or more members of Council. In fact, the only other single tier or separated municipalities with more members of Council than Chatham-Kent are the Cities of Ottawa and Toronto.

Geographic Area: Comparing Chatham-Kent to single and lower-tier municipalities of similar land area, Chatham-Kent has a large Council.

Chatham-Kent is big. It has a land area of almost 2,500 km². It follows that the burden of representing such a large area may require a “larger than usual” Council.

The average land area of the municipalities included above is 170 km² and 1,090 km² for lower-tier and single-tier or separated municipalities, respectively.

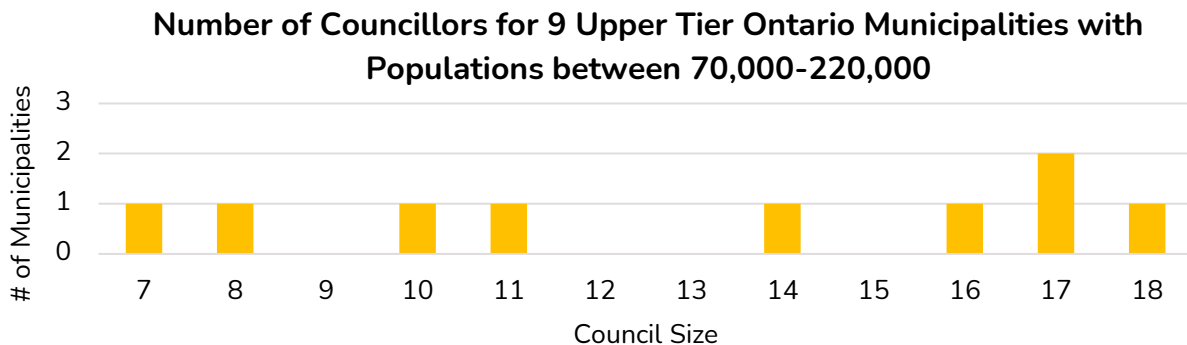
	Chatham Kent	Kawartha Lakes	Greater Sudbury
Population	117,180	75,423	161,531
No. of Councillors	17	9	13

The only two comparator municipalities examined here larger than 2,000 km² are:

- 1) The City of Kawartha Lakes with a census population of 75,423, which has 9 councillors, and
- 2) The City of Greater Sudbury with a census population of 161,531, which has 13 councillors.

Comparing Chatham-Kent to upper-tier municipalities, Chatham-Kent has a large Council.

Single and lower tier municipalities perform a different function than upper tier municipalities, particularly as it relates to local representation to members of the public, but for comparisons sake, we also compared Chatham-Kent with upper tier municipalities to assess the relationship between number of Council members and land area.



County Governments with Populations between 70,000 and 220,000¹⁴

Municipality	Total Pop.	# of Council Members	Type of Municipality	Elections	Land Area (km2)
County of Middlesex	71,551	11	Upper Tier	By Ward	2,821
County of Northumberland	85,103	7	Upper Tier	By Ward	1,905
County of Renfrew	88,072	17	Upper Tier	Mayors	7,645
United Counties of Prescott & Russell	89,333	8	Upper Tier	Mayors	2,004
County of Wellington	90,932	16	Upper Tier	Mayors / By Ward	2,665
County of Grey	93,830	18	Upper Tier	Mayors	4,514
County of Oxford	110,862	10	Upper Tier	Mayors / By Ward	2,037
County of Lambton	123,399	17	Upper Tier	Mayors / by Ward	3,000
County of Essex	181,530	14	Upper Tier	Mayors	3,664

Stakeholder Interview Input on Council Size

Councillors provided two distinct opinions on the size of Council; that Council currently has the right size and that the size of Council needs to be reduced. Below is a sample of what we heard.

Stakeholder Input
<p>Council is much too large....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>“It is overwhelming.”</i> ▶ <i>“I think we are too large. It makes it difficult to make decisions, meetings go to long.”</i> ▶ <i>“Council is too big, its double the size it should be. In affect I would keep a ward system and cut everything in half.”</i> ▶ <i>“There is the ability to still represent your community. I reviewed the handy chart you had – sometimes the size is a lot different – but the comparators are a lot similar and have 7-13.”</i> <p>Council is somewhat too large.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>“Its probably a little too large, barrier to efficient and effective meetings. We have over representation in some areas.”</i>

¹⁴ AMOpen: <https://www.amo.on.ca/size-municipal-council-and-population>

- ▶ *"Going on the data its pretty clear we have more than others of our size."*
- ▶ *"We should downsize for the best governance model."*
- ▶ *"Just too many of us."*
- ▶ *"Hopefully there is a sense that we could drop the size of Council."*
- ▶ *"I don't really care where the wards are unless we shrink council. Its more about how we shrink the size of council and do the wards still make sense."*

Council is the right size...

- ▶ *"I feel our numbers are fine because we need that many to cover the diversity of Chatham-Kent."*
- ▶ *"What we have is sufficient. Definitely not more but our geography is big."*
- ▶ *"Its nice because you have more views. More worry sometimes is the smaller municipalities with few Councillors, you're not getting as many ideas."*
- ▶ *"The status quo does work for me right now, not because its optimal but all the municipality is trying to do is the best they can."*
- ▶ *"I think it's working but there are challenges I understand why for such a massive area why we have different representation."*
- ▶ *"What we have is sufficient. Definitely not more but our geography is big."*
- ▶ *"18 isn't necessarily too many."*

Benefits of more than one councillor per ward

- ▶ *"Let's say you cut down the number of Councillors, me and you could hate each other and then you get no representation."*

[There were no stakeholders who advocated for increasing the size of Council.]

Public Input on Council Size

Survey and public consultation participants were asked their opinion on Council size.

We consulted on four preliminary concepts for the size of Council:

New Council Size
Maintain the size of Council (17 + Mayor)
Increase the size of Council
Decrease the size of Council
I don't know/I don't have an opinion

Survey respondent’s preferences on changing the size of Council.

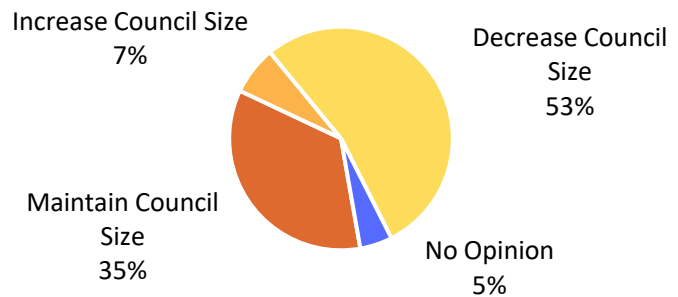
Just over half of the survey respondents said that their preference would be to decrease the size of Council and around 61% of respondents indicated they would be satisfied with a decrease in the size of Council.

Below is a sample of comments that we heard on the current or desired size of Council. Most comments reflected one of two sentiments; that the size of council should be reduced or that the current size of Council is adequate. For those who felt that the size of council should be reduced; concerns about being too large to be efficient, long Council meetings and over representation of some areas were cited as reasons for reducing the size.

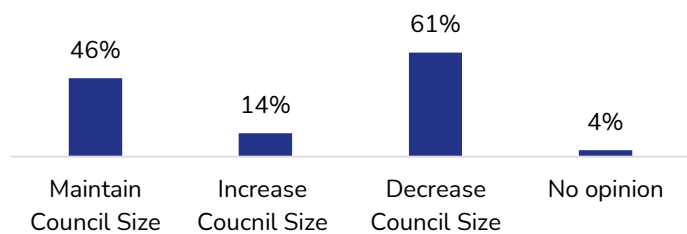
For those who felt that the size should remain the same sentiments including diversity of viewpoints on Council, loss of rural voices if reducing the size and representation of unique communities were all cited as reasons to keep the current model.

Some respondents also stressed that it is important for representatives to have an understanding of both rural and urban voices.

Survey Respondant's Preferred Method of Election for Councillors



Percentage of survey respondents who indicated they would be satisfied with each option



Public Comments	
Maintain the size of Council.	
▶	<i>“Being a Councillor is a real commitment and I would not like less representation. I often watch the replays of meetings, and the Council is professional, diverse and thoughtful.”</i>
▶	<i>“My concern with decrease would be that there is even less councillors from the rural communities. Unless there are cuts to the 6 in Chatham, I would not support a decrease.”</i>
▶	<i>“I believe that the current size of Council works. There is good representation of our community.”</i>
Increase the size of Council.	
▶	<i>“An increase in the size of Council will allow more residents to feel that they are being</i>

heard and represented.”

- ▶ *“Increase the size of Council for the smaller communities! We don't get a big enough voice. Our services and support lack compared to the bigger communities.”*

Decrease the size of Council.

- ▶ *“Way too many Councillors for size of our city. We are not Toronto.”*
- ▶ *“I feel that it would be in the best interest of Chatham-Kent to reduce the size of Council and pay councillors more because they are doing more work. I also believe that the Mayor and Council should have more power.”*
- ▶ *“Be in line with other similar size municipalities. Based on the data should be reduced in number of Councillors.”*
- ▶ *“Council should be smaller, or the wards should be smaller. Make the city of Chatham 4 different wards, NW, SW, NE, SE. Chatham should get a proportionate number of councillors to their part of the population.” 18 is simply too many for effective Council meetings. Also don't like even numbers. I think 9 or 11 would be ideal (including mayor).*
- ▶ *“18 is simply too many for effective Council meetings. Also don't like even number. I think 9 or 11 would be ideal (including mayor).”*
- ▶ *“Currently, the council size is too large. It takes too long for all the members of council to be heard on every issue at every meeting. There is no need for the group to be this large.”*

Quality of Governance

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Governance

- ▶ *[I would prefer] “Fewer but good voices at the table, I think the taxpayer would be represented more efficiently.”*
- ▶ *“Generally, we get to the same decision, but we can get there for different reasons.”*
- ▶ *“The younger generation doesn't hold pre-amalgamation towns. They were too young to know the townships at the time. I hope future is taken into consideration with the council decision.”*
- ▶ *“Overall, they try to act in the best interest of Chatham-Kent, but it doesn't always happen. There are some councillors who won't vote for anything in Chatham.”*

Representative Public Comments on Governance

- ▶ *“The absolute size of Council (number of councillors) is less important than ensuring representation by population. Right now, some residents are over-represented (mostly rural areas), and some are under-represented (mostly urban areas).”*
- ▶ *“Council should have both urban and rural areas as part of their representation.”*
- ▶ *“My big concern is the loss of representation I would really appreciate if we get compared to our counties because we are closer to that.”*

- ▶ *“Far too much of us and them at Council since amalgamation, ward adjustment needs to happen.”*
- ▶ *“I want what’s best for the municipality as a whole. It’s not that big that you can commute. It splits Chatham in half and forces the candidates to go to the other towns. I’ve thought about it a lot, it forces us to think about Chatham-Kent as a whole.”*

Councillor Workload

One consideration in assessing the size of Council is the appropriateness of the workload carried by members of Council. In Chatham-Kent, Councillor is considered a part-time position.

There are a variety of factors that influence Councillor workload, many of which do not relate to structure, but to culture, demand for service, or personal style.

- **The quantity and pace of Council and Committee meetings:** It is often said that “many hands make light work.” In thinking about the work of a Council, having more councillors can make it easier to populate committees. The alternative is also true. The smaller the Council, the greater the demand and burden to serve on committees. Yet, there is a considerable body of literature related to governance and decision-making that points out that when it comes to effective and efficient decision-making, bigger is not necessarily better or more efficient.¹⁵
- **The needs of the ward for participation in events:** The public deserves and expects their elected officials to be present and visible. There need to be enough hours in the day to meet this expectation.
- **The demand for casework by constituents:** Rapidly growing municipalities may face a greater burden on development files than low growth or established wards.
- **The policy of the municipality towards casework:** Some municipalities tolerate “in the weeds” engagement in problem solving by councillors. Other have protocols which transfer constituency work from the councillor to staff as quickly and smoothly as possible.

¹⁵ “Companies have also learned to keep meetings as small as possible. Our research highlights what we think of as the Rule of Seven: every person added to a decision-making group over seven reduces decision effectiveness by 10 percent. If you take this rule to its logical conclusion, a group of 17 or more rarely makes any decisions. Of course, a larger group may sometimes be necessary to ensure buy-in. But organizations trying to make important decisions should limit the size of the group as much as they can.” Michael Mankins and Jenny Davis-Peccoud, “Decision-focused meetings”, Bain & Company (Boston: June 7, 2011); found at: <https://www.bain.com/insights/decision-insights-9-decision-focused-meetings/>

- **Style of each Councillor:** No matter what structure is chosen, it is important to remember that political representation is an art, not a science. How each approaches the task to serving on Council is a deeply personal matter.

We heard different views about workload during our stakeholder interviews. We heard both that the workload was too heavy and that it was appropriate given the number of Councillors.

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Councillor Workload

Workload is Appropriate...

- ▶ *“Some Councillors have different perceptions of the expectations that the communities have [suggesting that] community events are crazy commitments. We would probably be doing these things even if we weren’t Councillors.”*
- ▶ *“Because of my knowledge and expertise over the years, it can make things easier.”*
- ▶ *“I do everything I need to do. There are some Councillors that do absolutely nothing, other Councillors carry the heavy load.”*
- ▶ *“Realistically the workload is about 25 hours a week, which is about the optimal level.”*
- ▶ *“You would lose the young professional Councillors if you increased the workload significantly.”*

Workload is Heavy...

- ▶ *“It’s a heavy load for a part time job. Basically, working full-time hours.”*
- ▶ *“I can’t speak for other members of Council, but it’s almost a full-time job depending on the agenda.”*
- ▶ *“I have these communities who are more demanding, so your time goes there.”*

It depends on the Councillor....

- ▶ *“Councillors can put in the amount of effort they want.”*
- ▶ *“Yes, they fit in the role; some do a fair bit of work; some just show up and don’t read.”*
- ▶ *“Some wards for instance require more communication and constituency work.”*
- ▶ *“Councillors decide how much they want to do.”*
- ▶ *“Workload is dependent on the council agenda.”*
- ▶ *“Even on Council now there are Councillors that go to everything and nothing.”*

Not about workload, its about the size of Council

Status quo helps with workload...

- ▶ *“Like having 17 councillors, it spreads out the workload.”*
- ▶ *“With two Councillors, we can split up the workload.”*
- ▶ *“When there was only 1 Councillor for her ward it was very overwhelming, (due to illness), when there where a number of significant issues (flooding, explosion in Wheatly, etc.) “*

Reduce...

- ▶ *“Don’t mind the meetings going to long, there are just too many of us.”*
- ▶ *“No issue to moving down to a lower number and distributing work down too.”*

- ▶ *“One thing I will say – personal opinion and taxpayers – I do like the idea of reducing the size of Council and making the position a full-time position.”*

Many Councillors said that the workload is really dependent on the prioritizes of the individual Councillor; that the amount of community events, committee work and time with constituents varies greatly across the group. Some said that this would be the case regardless of whether there were changes to the Council size.

A few Councillors said that the workload and time commitment was heavy due to the amount of driving they did across their large wards to get to different community events. Others said that having a second person representing the ward helps to balance the workload and support the different constituency groups.

Some Councillors said that the workload was manageable and that it fluctuates at times but that they feel they are able to achieve the expectations of being a Councillor in a part time capacity. Others said that they felt that the size of Council could be reduced, and it wouldn't impact the current workload.

The Benefits of an Uneven Number on Council

We note that the Mayor and Council of Chatham-Kent add up to 18, an even number. While we have not been told that there have been incidents of “hung” decisions, arising from this even number, it is generally considered to be a best practice to have an uneven number. If there is to be a change in the size of Council, we recommend that it steer towards an uneven number to address this potential flaw.

Cost Impacts of Council Size

Council Pay structure was last amended on February 7th, 2020, based on recommendations from the Citizen Review Committee on Council Remuneration to set the total base budget honorarium to \$39,409 per councillor for the 2022-2026 term of council. Additionally, Councillor related expenses include a pooled benefits charge that included the costs of Canada Pension and Employer Health Tax, as well as expenses for things like office equipment, travel, training, car allowances, etc.

The average cost per Councillor in 2023 is summarized below:

Honorariums	Honorarium Related Benefits	Office Equipment	Travel, Training, Car Allowances, etc.	Total Average Cost per Councillor
\$ 39,409	\$ 2,666	\$ 957	\$ 2,449	\$ 45,481

(Source: Chatham-Kent 2023 Statement of Remuneration & Expenses for Elected and Appointed Officials)

For the purposes of this Review, it is reasonable to assume a budget **\$46,000 per councillor**.

This represents approximately 0.02% on the total 2023 Municipal Levy, or 0.01% of the total 2023 budget for the Municipality.

Findings on the size of Council:

We draw the following observations.

- Based on whatever comparator you might choose to use, Chatham-Kent's Council is on the large end of the range.
- Based on population alone, Chatham-Kent could get by with fewer Councillors and have an appropriate population/Councillor ratio that is well within provincial norms.
- The best arguments for having a Council size on the upper end of the range are:
 - Land area: The scale of the land area to serve.
 - Public expectation: The history and expectations of the public that certain communities of interest would continue to have representation.
- The “real” cost of a large Council is in way it can undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making. Similarly, the benefit of a more streamlined Council is in the way that it can help achieve a more efficient and effective Council.
- The “real” cost of a large Council should not be thought in terms of compensation costs. While we believe to our core that every public dollar is important, at \$46k per Councillor, compensation costs are not material to the overall cost of local government if they are necessary to meet public expectations of representation and contribute to a strong local democracy. Similarly, if Chatham-Kent reduces the size of its Council, it is probable that compensation savings on Council seats will be offset to some degree by the need to invest more in staff resources to manage the burden of constituency-type work.

Some have pointed out that the burden of serving on Council already approaches 25 hours per week, and that reducing Council might drive that up, to the point that it makes it impossible for anyone other than a retired person to undertake the work on a part-time basis.

In our view, this is a legitimate concern and argues against excessive reduction in Council size. In our experience it is common for part-time Councillors to effectively represent ward populations of 5-10,000 on a part time basis.

Chatham-Kent's Councillors are considered to be part-time. Some have pointed out that if work loads were to approach full time, it would be necessary to compensate Councillors accordingly.

- At present, only a relatively few municipalities have full-time Councillors. At this time in Chatham-Kent's growth, we would not recommend any change that would require Councillors to be considered full-time, but reductions in the number of Council members might entail a change in the way that they approach the task and are supported by staff in constituency work.

2. The Method of Election

The Request for Proposal specified that the Review should consider the current ward system and an at-large system. A hybrid combination of the two is also technically possible. Indeed, while Chatham-Kent has a ward system, it is argued below that with six Councillors elected in Ward 6, it functions as a hybrid “at-large within a ward system” at present.

Section 222 of the *Municipal Act* authorizes a municipality to “divide or redivide the municipality into wards” or “dissolve the existing wards” in favour of an at-large system.

Other than the head of Council (Mayor), who must be elected at-large, Council members can be elected at-large or by wards or through any combination of at-large and wards.

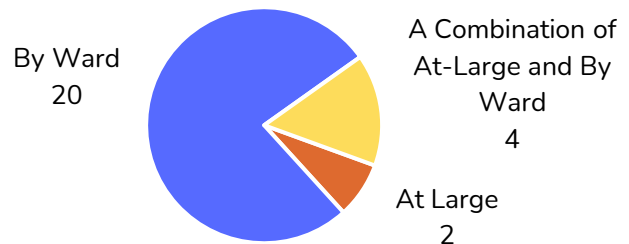
Municipalities have discretion to determine whether to use a ward or an at-large system or a combination of the two. Like Council size, the *Municipal Act* provides no criteria to guide a municipality’s decision making under section 222.

Municipal Comparators

Of the same 26 Ontario Municipalities¹⁶ from AMOpen with populations between 70,000 and 220,000.

- 20 use a ward system;
- 2 use an at-large system;
- 4 use a combination of wards and at-large systems.

Method of Election for Councillors in 26 Ontario Municipalities with Populations between 70,000 -220,000



Considerations from the Literature

While the *Municipal Act* does not provide guidance for a municipality about which electoral system to use, the literature surrounding council structure usually points to a number of “pros and cons” associated with ward and at-large systems. These pros and cons are useful to consider in which system might better serve Chatham-Kent.

It is also important to remember that the *Municipal Act* contains broad discretion on this question for a reason: municipalities are unique, and the benefits associated with a particular electoral system in one municipality may not apply in the same way in a different municipality.

¹⁶ See Appendix II for comprehensive list of Single Tier, Lower Tier and Upper Tier comparators.

System	Potential Advantages	Potential Disadvantages
By ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May ensure representation from diverse areas/communities of interest (rural v. urban). • Voters may be more likely to know candidates. • Simplified election process for voters because there is a shorter list of candidates. • Election campaigns are less expensive and time consuming for candidates. • May create a more efficient division of responsibilities among Councillors, allowing for focus on sub-areas of the municipality. • Councillors may be more likely to be accessible and knowledgeable about local issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors may be less likely to have a broader, municipality-wide view. • May perpetuate and/or accentuate differences and divisions (such as attachment to pre-amalgamation communities). • Voters have less choice/flexibility (they can only vote for candidates in their ward). • Greater likelihood of acclamations. • Population changes can lead to unequal workloads for Councillors. • There is no guarantee in a diverse community that a Councillor elected in a local ward will share an affinity with local residents.
At-large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well organized but geographically diffuse interest groups may be able to elect a representative by supporting an at-large Councillor. • Councillors may be more likely to have a broader, municipality-wide view. • May promote attachment to the municipality as a whole. • Electors can vote for all candidates (greater choice and flexibility). • Residents can approach all Councillors with their concerns. • May reduce likelihood of acclamations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a large council, a large number of candidates may be overwhelming or confusing to voters. (How deeply held or informed is one's 17th choice for Council?). • Councillors may not be familiar with area-specific issues and residents may prefer being able to talk to "one of their own." • Risk that one area may dominate. • Councillors may not reflect all areas/communities of interest (rural v. urban). • Elections may be more costly and time consuming for candidates (which may discourage new entrants). • May create a greater advantage for incumbents due to barriers to entry to the field. • May lead to duplication of Councillor efforts or "champion shopping."

Most stakeholders preferred a ward-based system. We heard repeatedly that there are distinct

areas of Chatham-Kent where maintaining representation by ward is important. Some indicated that they were interested in learning more about an at-large system and others expressed interest in a combined system.

Council Input on Method of Election

Representative Stakeholder Comments on the Method of Election

Ward System

- ▶ “[The ward system] is necessary in Chatham-Kent because of the context. If it was at-large, all Councillors would be from Chatham.”
- ▶ “I think the ward system is exactly how it needs to be.”
- ▶ “Unless we move to full time positions [for Councillors], Chatham-Kent is too geographically large to move to at-large. You would spend a lot of time just driving around.”
- ▶ “Chatham-Kent is a unicorn – very urban and very rural – I don’t know if I would like the at-large.”
- ▶ “I think the ward system best represents Chatham-Kent. I would be concerned, and our rural Councillors would also be concerned it would turn Chatham too urban.”
- ▶ “Definitely keep the ward system – in an at large – how do you protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority?”
- ▶ “I like the ward system.”
- ▶ “I definitely think there should be wards and representation for the wards.”

At-Large System

- ▶ “[My] personal standpoint is that acting for the whole community is good but doesn’t think the community would like that, given the risk of losing rural representation on council.”
- ▶ “A lot of the younger generation doesn’t not know what ward they live in, at large makes sense for our future in terms of Chatham-Kent.”
- ▶ “I’d like to know more about that, and I think it fits with the at large (the pie option).”

Combined Ward-At-Large System

- ▶ “Probably a combination system, historical attachment for the old pre amalgamation communities is used to justify the hyper localization. Using the justification that they couldn’t possibly understand others is politically convenient.”
- ▶ “A system where you made Mayor at large, 4 or 5 at-large Councillors and then 4 or 5 by ward.”

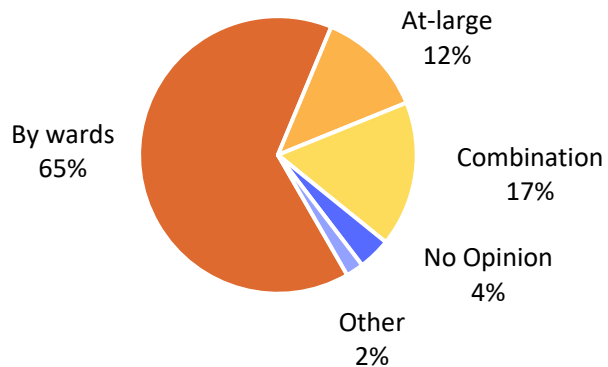
Public Input on Method of Election

Survey participants were consulted on the follow three options for the method of election:

Councillor Election Method	Description
By wards (status quo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors are elected to represent a part of the Municipality, called a “ward.” Chatham-Kent is currently divided into six wards, with varying numbers of Councillors depending on population size.
At-large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just like the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Councillors may be elected by voters across the entire municipality, without wards.
A combination of at-large and ward systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities may use a combination of at-large and ward systems.

Approximately 64.6% or two thirds of survey respondents said that their preferred method of election was by ward (status quo). Similar to Councillors, about small percentage was interested in a combined by ward and at-large system and an even smaller percentage was interested in an at-large method of election.

Survey Respondent's Preferred Method of Election for Councillors



Representative Public Comments on how Councillors should be Elected

By ward system....

- ▶ “Ward representation is preferred because this ensures that there is representation from all areas of the Municipality instead of being centralized from one or two areas which may otherwise see certain areas of CK go unrepresented.”
- ▶ “It is important for the Councillor to have knowledge of the segment of the community that she/he represents and also to be accessible to the constituents, therefore, each ward deserves representation.”
- ▶ “Definitely need representatives to be elected by ward. We already have too many people making decisions for our community who are not affected by the consequences

of these decisions.”

At-large system.

- ▶ *“Councillors already vote for all out of ward issues so the election process should be done at large by the entire municipality to prevent elections based on solely on popularity or political connections.”*
- ▶ *“It has been 26 years since Chatham-Kent was amalgamated. It is time to think what is best for Chatham-Kent not what is best for my town or city or village etc.”*

Combined...

- ▶ *“1 Councillor elected by ward and 6 Councillors at large to equal 12 total.”*

Cost Considerations for Election Methods

The costs associated with running a campaign by ward or at large has two main considerations:

- The overall expenditure on elections; and
- Accessibility of the electoral process to individuals who want to be involved.

The chart (right) summarizes the campaign expenses for all candidates who ran successfully for office in the 2022 election.

The costs of running a winning election by ward ranged from a low of \$400 to a high of \$9,771, both in ward 6. The costs of running at-large ranged for both successful and unsuccessful candidates from \$808 to \$9,545.

It is well understood that campaign spending does not necessarily equate to electoral success. The perceived need to spend can be a barrier to entering a race, however. This could have the effect of favouring incumbents with accumulated name recognition.

Average Election Costs by Ward and At-Large

Election	Average Spend
Mayor (At-Large)	\$9,544.81
Ward 1	\$3,504.38
Ward 2	\$4,398.45
Ward 3	\$2,764.85
Ward 4	\$5,263.67
Ward 5	\$ 0 (Acclamation)
Ward 6	\$4,928.49

(Source: Municipality of Chatham-Kent)

Findings regarding Method of Election

While some arguments were made in support of at-large system, the preponderance of opinion supported a continuation of a ward-based system.

We agree and would be concerned that an at-large system would only function with a significantly reduced Council, as 17 “at large” vote would be unlikely to be meaningfully cast.

We would propose winding up consideration of “at-large” at this time and focus on optimization of a ward-based system.

3. The Number of Wards and Number of Councillors per Ward

The third major decision is:

- The numbers of wards; and
- The number of Councillors per ward.

The authority to make this decision is in Section 222 of the *Municipal Act* authorizes a municipality to “divide or redivide the municipality into wards.” The Act does not prescribe rules about how this must be done.

Accordingly, it is permissible for a Council to:

- assign any number of Councillors per ward.
- assign a different number of Councillors to different wards.

In making decisions in this regard, the best guidance again falls back to giving effect to the principles of “Effective Representation.”

It is interesting to note that the decisions on these two factors tend to be:

- dependent on preferences about Council size, and
- influenced by the demographic and geographic realities that go into ward design.

Decisions about number of wards and Councillors per ward are important in their own right, but they are also enablers of addressing other priorities.

Municipal Comparator Analysis on Number of Councillors by Ward

StrategyCorp identified all lower-tier, single-tier, and separated Ontario municipalities with Councils of at least 8 Members with a ward-based election system (73 total incl. Chatham-Kent).

- **80% (58/73) of those municipalities elect equal numbers of representatives per ward.** This includes municipalities that elect one or more than one Councillor per ward and including regional Councillors.
- **21% (15/75) of those municipalities elect different numbers of Councillors per ward.**
 - 14% (10/73) of those municipalities elect different numbers of Councillors per ward but the number of Councillors per ward varies no more than 1 Councillor per ward (i.e., 1 or 2 Councillors, 2 or 3 Councillors or 3 or 4 Councillors per

ward¹⁷).

- 7% (5/73) of those municipalities elect different numbers of Councillors per ward where the number of Councillors per ward varies by more than 1 Councillor per ward (i.e., 1 or 3 Councillors¹⁸, 1 or 4 Councillors¹⁹, 2 or 6 Councillors²⁰, 1, 2, 4, and 5 Councillors per ward²¹, and Chatham-Kent's 2, 3 or 6 Councillors per ward).

Very few municipalities elect different numbers of Councillors per ward, and even fewer have wards that vary by more than one Councillor per ward. This would indicate that Chatham-Kent's ward-based election method with differing numbers of Councillors per ward is extremely rare.

In effect, Chatham-Kent's structure of electing 6 Councillors in Ward 6 (Chatham) creates a mini "at-large" system within Chatham that is different from all the other wards in the former County of Kent where each ward elects 2 or 3 Councillors.

Stakeholder Input on Number of Councillors per Ward

Representative Stakeholder Comments on How Many Councillors Per Ward
<p>Prefer 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ "2 Councillors per ward is nice to give people choice when reaching out to someone." ▶ "I would not want to see a "1 ward, 1 Councillor" model." ▶ "I like the 2 per ward system." <p>Prefer 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ "I would support more wards to reduce constituency sizes. I don't want to deter young professionals from running." ▶ "Cutting back the number is necessary but how its done, maybe its broken up differently." ▶ "I'm open to more wards – North Kent goes into two wards – and you get one Councillor for each." <p>Status Quo</p>

¹⁷ This includes Huntsville who are unique in that they elect five councillors across six wards, three wards electing one Councillor each and the remaining three wards voting together to elect two Councillors.

¹⁸ Town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands

¹⁹ City of Timmins

²⁰ City of Belleville

²¹ City of Quinte West

- ▶ “Status quo on different number of Councillors is working but there is an issue with distribution of rural v urban representatives.”

Alternative Options

- ▶ “Maybe that means 7 Chatham Councillors and 3 South Kent, making sure that everyone’s votes do count.”
- ▶ “System is horrible right now.”
- ▶ “As long as you can keep multiple Councillors [in each] ward, not a strong preference on number of Councillors.”

Public Input on Number of Councillors by Ward

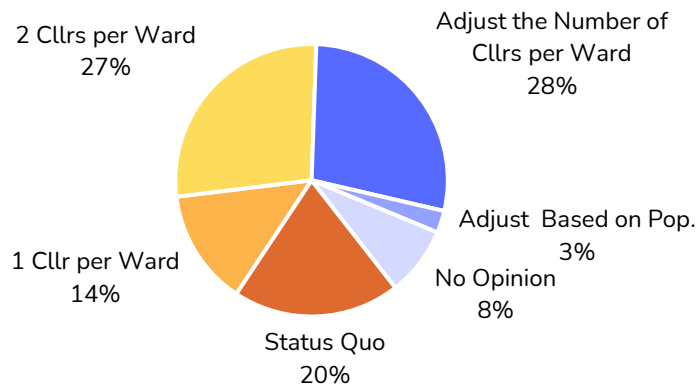
StrategyCorp also consulted the public on what the preferred number of Councillors would be within a ward system. Survey respondents were consulted on six options for the preferred number of Councillors in a ward system outlined in the chart shown right.

The two responses that respondents chose most frequently were first, adjust the number of Councillors per ward (28%), followed by 2 Councillors per ward with each ward the same (27%) and the status quo option received 20% of the support from respondents.

Options for Public Consultation on Preferred number of Councillors per Ward

Number of Councillors Per Ward
The same way they are now (i.e., two in Ward 1; three in Ward 2; two in Ward 3; two in Ward 4; two in Ward 5; six in Ward 6)
1 Councillor per ward (each ward the same)
2 Councillors per ward (each ward the same)
Adjust the number of Councillors per ward
Adjust the number of Councillors per ward based on population
I don't know/I don't have an opinion

Survey Respondant's Preferences for Number of Councillors by Ward System



Findings

Councillors per ward: The opinions and perspectives reported above speak for themselves and reflect a legitimate range of opinion.

We note that the use of more than 1 Councillor per ward was thought of as a positive when it was 2 or 3 per ward.

By contrast, the allocation of 6 councillors to ward 6 was described as both a positive and a negative:

- A negative in the sense that it creates too many councillors responsible for the same territory - a de facto at-large election within a ward; and
- A positive in that it promotes a unified perspective on managing the Chatham as “one place.”

Number of Wards: The number of wards is not a subject that people gave us a lot of direct input on, other than the opinions why we should or should not consider dividing ward 6.

The two main drivers that could force a general redesign of the ward boundaries are either:

- Change in the size of Council, and
- Need to adjust boundaries to achieve numerical parity for equality of representation.

In ward design, it is helpful to be flexible about the number of wards when trying to align population numbers with locational community of interest.

Recognizing that there are views to the contrary, we believe it is worth modeling for Council’s consideration a version of ward six that is divided into multiple wards with 1 or two Councillors each.

The original designers of the ward system created an innovative solution to a complex problem. It has proven to be durable, and after more than twenty years, it still has many supporters.

Given the practical challenges of matching population to community of interest, we recommend that Council take a “wait and see” position on:

- The number of wards, and
- The number of Councillors per ward, and review options that use variations on council members per ward to optimize “effective representation.”

4. Direct Election of a Deputy Mayor

Some municipalities choose to have a Deputy Mayor position that is elected at-large by the community. An elected Deputy Mayor position can create opportunities for people to gain experience representing the entire community.

However, the cost of campaigning is expensive as it's similar to a mayoral campaign in terms of effort required. It can also create a perception of two tiers of council.

Some municipalities in Ontario that have an elected Deputy Mayor include the Town of Newmarket and the City of Richmond Hill.

Some municipalities also choose to have a rotating Deputy Mayor role where Council elects a Deputy Mayor from within the ward Councillor's cohort. This role is more ceremonial in nature. A few municipalities that have this model include the City of Barrie and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Currently, Chatham-Kent they use a rotating Deputy Mayor model.

Representative Stakeholder Comments on the Deputy Mayor

Status Quo

- ▶ *"I like the status quo, the current rotating system."*
- ▶ *"A Deputy Mayor is not needed, but if so, it should be at-large."*
- ▶ *"I don't think that is necessary. We have a rotating "acting Mayor" role."*
- ▶ *"Haven't had any issues, so not sure why'd we need it."*
- ▶ *"Its all about the personality of the Mayor. No."*
- ▶ *"In different – I feel like I have strong feelings about the size and ward boundaries but nothing in terms of deputy."*
- ▶ *"I would like status quo, rotating like were doing now makes more sense."*
- ▶ *"I don't think we should have a Deputy Mayor at all – a Mayor is good enough – if we do that its another full-time person and the cost analysis would be different."*

Maybe

- ▶ *"Our current Mayor is busy all the time, if he had someone, he could work with... also Mayor's tend to get a lot of abuse from the public."*
- ▶ *"We could. It might help with the perception; second person elected at large and help with rural-urban divide."*
- ▶ *"I do see some potential benefits of a Deputy Mayor for Chatham-Kent."*
- ▶ *"Not strongly opinionated; somewhat in favour."*

Yes

- ▶ *"I would like to see a Deputy Mayor; I've spoken to other councillors."*
- ▶ *"I did like the idea of a Deputy Mayor; it's a big job."*

Findings Re Deputy Mayor Position

We did not encounter a lot of strong opinion on a designated Deputy Mayor position, one way or the other. To the degree we did it, a majority of participants were opposed.

We are concerned that creating one “at-large” council position may not be beneficial to the operation of Council. We are also concerned about the scale of the at-large election given the geography of Chatham Kent.

We would propose winding up consideration of a Deputy Mayor position at this time and maintain the status quo.

Chapter 3: Summary of Conclusions

Based on feedback from participants, a review of comparable municipalities, and our own analysis, we conclude that the Final Report: should include a manageable, “short list” of options for consideration by Council, including:

3.1. A status quo option, and options that would reduce the size of Council, as summarized in the table below:

Council Size	Composition	Result
18	Mayor + 17	Status Quo
17	Mayor + 16	Reduce 1 Council Position
15	Mayor + 14	Reduce 3 Council Positions
13	Mayor + 12	Reduce 5 Council Positions

3.2. Options **Not** Recommended: Based on our findings so far, we recommend against the further consideration of options that would:

- 3.2.1. Increase the size of council.
- 3.2.2. Decrease the size of council below 13 (12 + Mayor).
- 3.2.3. Move from elections by ward to elections at-large.
- 3.2.4. Create a deputy mayor position, elected at-large.

Part 4. Evaluating Chatham-Kent's Current Ward Boundaries for Voter Parity

Voter Parity

An assessment of voter parity requires us to consider the population of Chatham-Kent and its distribution across the six wards, both for the 2026 and the 2030 municipal elections.

Chatham-Kent's Estimated 2024 Population for Boundary Review Purposes

The 2024 population numbers form the baseline of our calculations.

For many reasons, population is constantly changing, both in terms of numbers, and location of residence. For this reason, any calculations should be considered estimates.

StatCan estimated the 2024 population to be 112,080, using its methodology to calculate permanent population.

StatCan figures are a "gold standard," but they have different parameters than those required of a ward boundary review. For a ward boundary review, it is necessary to consider the permanent population as estimated by StatCan, but also several other categories of residents who are not included in the StatCan calculation. These include:

- seasonal residents,
- students living in on-campus residences,
- temporary foreign workers, and
- international mobility program participants.²²

When these groups are added in, Chatham-Kent's 2024 population is estimated to be 117,780.

These estimates have been refined over the course of the Review and may be subject to further refinement through the process if, and as, further data arises. A complete description of the methodology used to determine these estimates is available in Appendix I.

Estimating Population by Ward

²² Kingston (City) By-law 2013-83, Re, 2013 CarswellOnt 15531, 17 M.P.L.R. (5th) 331 (O.M.B.).

The following chart allocates the 2024 population estimates by ward.

Chatham-Kent's 2024 Estimated Population by Ward

(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(H)
Ward	No. of Cllr	Total Ward Pop.	Ward Share of Population	Ward Share of Councillors	Pop. per Cllr by Ward	Variance from Quotient** (%)
(1) West Kent	2	12,310	11%	12%	6,155	-11% "over-represented"
(2) South Kent	3	19,450	17%	18%	6,483	-6% "over-represented"
(3) East Kent	2	12,710	11%	12%	6,355	-8% "over-represented"
(4) North Kent	2	14,540	12%	12%	7,270	+5% "under-represented"
(5) Wallaceburg	2	11,270	10%	12%	5,635	-18% "over-represented"
(6) Chatham	6	46,900	40%	35%	7,817	+13% "under-represented"
TOTALS / QUOTIENT	17	117,780	100%*		6,893	

* Percentages may not add up to precisely 100% due to rounding

** The quotient is measured by dividing the total population by the total number of Councillors elected by ward.

The Existing Ward structure does not violate acceptable ranges of parity.

Column (H) in the chart above indicates that while two of Chatham-Kent's wards depart from parity by more than 10%, they do not exceed the +/-25% maximum permitted variance from voter parity as defined by the effective representation test (the "25% test"). Accordingly, we conclude that from the perspective of parity, the existing ward boundaries remain an acceptable option.

A different lens shows that the Chatham Urban Area is under-represented.

As discussed above, Chatham-Kent has a unique Council structure, with 6 Councillors elected in ward 6, compared to 2 or 3 Councillors in the other wards.

Viewed from the perspective of the "25% test," the variance is permissible.

A comparison of the relative share of population/ward (Column D) to the share of councillors/ward (Column E) shows:

- Wards 1 through 5 each have a share of Councillors/ward that is equal to or over their share of population (by up to 2%)
- Ward 6 (Chatham) has a share of Councillors/ward that is 5% less than its total portion of the population.

Findings: In 2024, Ward 6 is at least somewhat under-represented. While the extent of under-representation is not so great as to be in violation of the "effective representation" test, it is worth exploring ways to improve this under-representation in the next stage of this review using alternative models of Councillors per ward, and ward boundaries.

Projected Population Growth

In the terms of reference, we were directed to design wards that could accommodate projected growth through the 2026 and 2030 municipal elections.

StrategyCorp worked with Chatham-Kent's staff to estimate current and future population growth as well as anticipate where that growth is expected to occur. These growth forecasts are outlined in the table below.

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Avg Pop / Cllr	Ward Pop	Variance from Avg Pop / Cllr	Ward Pop	Variance from Avg Pop / Cllr
(1) West Kent	2	12,310	-11%	12,457	-11%	12,621	-11%
(2) South Kent	3	19,450	-6%	19,535	-7%	19,630	-8%
(3) East Kent	2	12,710	-8%	12,718	-9%	12,726	-10%
(4) North Kent	2	14,540	+5%	14,610	+5%	14,687	+4%
(5) Wallaceburg	2	11,270	-18%	11,363	-19%	11,449	-19%
(6) Chatham	6	46,900	+13%	48,032	+15%	49,292	+16%
TOTAL	17	117,180	6,893	118,715	6,983	120,407	7,083

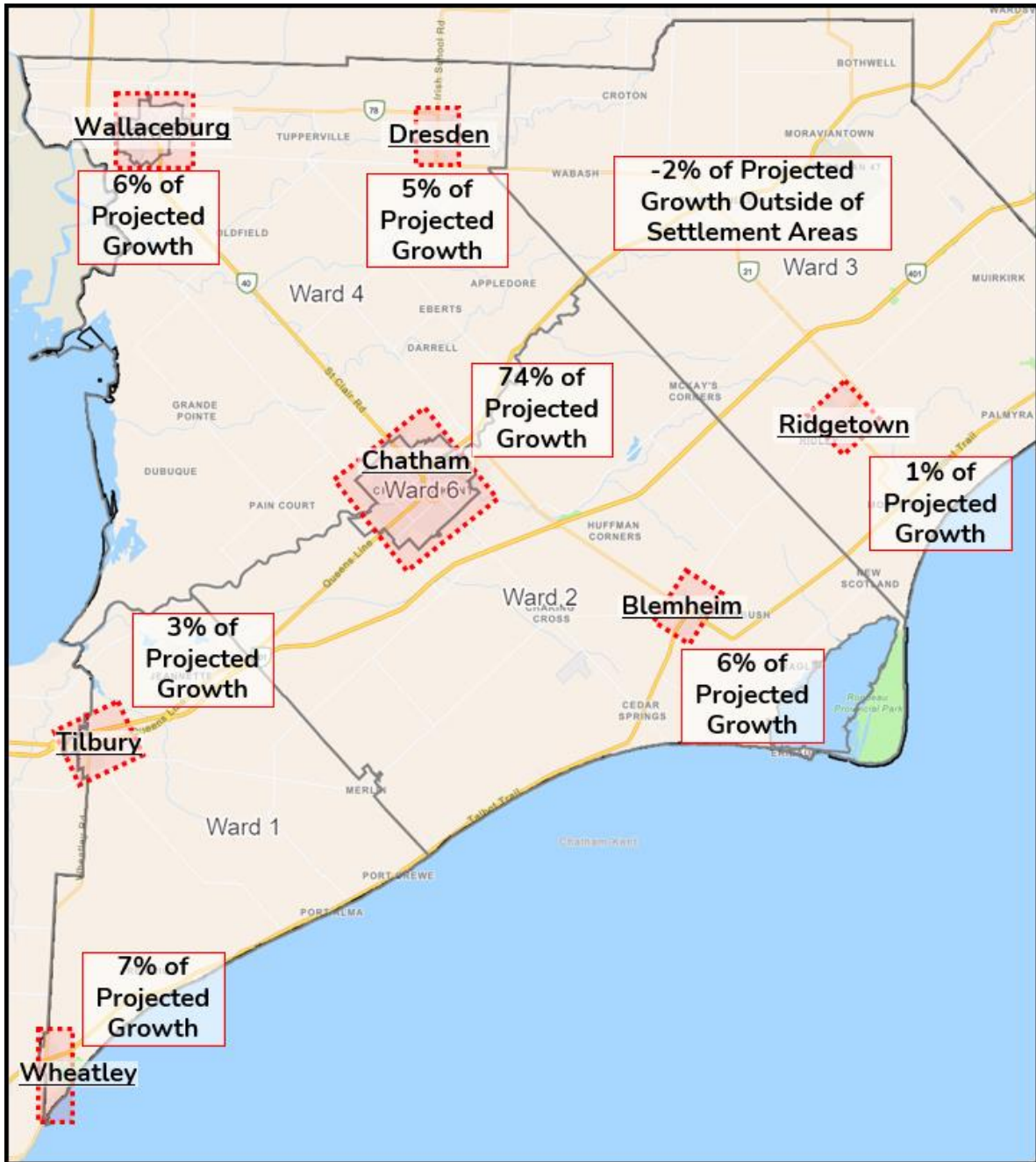
Specific annual projections for various settlement areas are available in Appendix III.

Chatham-Kent's 2030 population is expected to be approximately 120,400 people, an increase of 2.9% from 2024, or approximately 3,244 people. This represents an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.48% from 2024 to 2030.

The following map outlines how anticipated growth is forecast to be distributed across the Municipality:

- About three quarters (~74%) of the anticipated growth is expected to occur in Ward 6 (Chatham),
- Ward 1 (West Kent) will see the second largest proportion of anticipated growth (~10%), concentrated in Wheatley and to a lesser extent in Tilbury.
- Wards 2 (South Kent), 4 (North Kent), and 5 (Wallaceburg), will each see ~5-6% of all anticipated growth, (collectively 15%) concentrated in the established settlement areas of Blenheim, Dresden, and Wallaceburg, respectively.
- Ward 3 (East Kent) is anticipated to have the lowest increase in population, with only 1% of anticipated growth occurring in Ridgetown.

Findings: By 2030, it is forecast that the relative parity of Ward 6 will have further declined relative to Wards 2, 3 and 5. The extent of under-representation would still be tolerable under the "25% test," but it would not be considered optimal. There are opportunities to improve the voter parity through alternative models.



Distribution of anticipated population growth for 2024-2030

Summary of Findings on Existing Ward Boundaries

A summary of our findings on the existing ward boundaries is set out below.

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current wards deliver an acceptable degree of parity today. Chatham is under-represented relative to its overall population. Through a change in the size of Council/redesign of the ward boundaries it may be possible to address this. 	The status quo is an option, It is worth modeling alternatives that could address the under representation of the Chatham urban area.
2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current wards are forecast to continue to deliver on acceptable levels of parity in the future 	Same as above
3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are issues relating to community of interest: Rural wards concerned about being dominated by residents that are actually urban in nature. Due to growth since the wards were first created, some: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> urban residents do not feel adequately represented by rural wards, rural residents are concerned about their wards being “swamped” by urban interests as Wallaceburg and Chatham urban boundaries expand into Wards 4 and 2 	Amendments to ward boundaries to reflect actual growth would be beneficial
4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current wards appear to respect Natural Features; the Thames River is an appropriate boundary 	OK
5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current wards reasonably reflect this 	OK
6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”	
<p>On balance, the existing boundaries are within acceptable limits on parity, but they are not strong on community of interest due to growth along the urban fringes of Wallaceburg and Chatham.</p> <p>Alternative should model both major changes resulting from a change to the size of council, and minor boundary modifications to address community of interest issues.</p>	

Chapter 4: Summary of Conclusions

- 4.1. Based on our review of the current and forecast population data, and feedback from participants, we conclude that if there were no changes to the existing Council size, the existing ward structure, with minor modifications, could continue to be a viable option.
- 4.2. When viewed through the lens of voter parity, the existing wards can deliver acceptable, but not optimal, mathematical parity for the 2026 and 2030 elections.
- 4.3. When viewed through the lens of communities of interest, there are neighbourhoods where the effects of growth have undermined the ability of existing ward boundaries to deliver effective representation. These include the boundaries of:
 - 4.3.1.1.1. Ward 2 - Ward 6
 - 4.3.1.1.2. Ward 4 - Ward 6
 - 4.3.1.1.3. Ward 4 - Ward 5
- 4.3.2. We conclude that that Final Report should include:
- 4.3.3. Options to address the modification of existing wards as described in 1(b) and;
- 4.3.4. Options to create new ward boundaries capable of giving effect to the Council sizes modeled per recommendation 3.2.

Part 5: Next Steps

The next step would be to develop the options as described above.

During the consultation process, we asked for and received feedback on potential design considerations. That feedback is summarized in Appendix VI and would be an input to the design process.

We anticipate reporting on the schedule set out below:

Project Milestones	Date
Present Draft Ward Boundary Maps to Council for Comment	Nov 4 th , 2024
Facilitate Public Consultation on Draft Ward Boundary Maps	Nov 2024
Present the Final Report and Recommendations to Council for consideration	Dec 16 th , 2024

At each stage of this review StrategyCorp will continue to work with Municipal staff to provide updates via the Let's Talk Chatham-Kent Project page²³ and through the Municipality's other regular communication channels.

²³ [Let's Talk Chatham-Kent - Ward Boundary Review](#)

Appendix I: 2024 Population Estimates

Methodology

As part of the Chatham-Kent Ward Boundary Review project, population estimates by ward were prepared for 2024. These estimates take into consideration both permanent and seasonal residents, including students living in on-campus residences, temporary foreign workers, and international mobility program participants. These population groups must all be considered to ensure new ward boundaries provide an effective and equitable system of representation for all residents of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

In what follows, the methodology to estimate the populations of these groups is provided.

Permanent Residents

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent provided the Consultant Team with Statistics Canada (2022) and Ontario Ministry of Finance (2023) population projection data for the period of 2022 to 2046. These projections are provided at the census division level of geography. For the Chatham-Kent census division region, the projected population is 112,080 in 2024.

Per the 2021 Census of Population, the enumerated population of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent was reported to be 103,988. The distribution of this population was spatially analyzed at the dissemination area level of geography. Ward boundaries were overlaid on the dissemination areas to calculate the municipality's population share by ward.

Population share by ward was assumed to be generally consistent between 2021 and 2024. Subsequently, the calculated 2021 population shares by ward were utilized to inform 2024 population estimates by ward due to the high-level nature of the analysis. Population estimates were rounded to the nearest 10 and are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: 2024 Permanent Resident Population Estimates by Ward, Chatham-Kent, ON.

Ward	Name	% Share of 2021 Population	2024 Estimated Population	2024 Estimated Population Rounded to Nearest 10
1	West Kent	10.61	11,888	11,890
2	South Kent	15.46	17,329	17,330
3	East Kent	10.39	11,642	11,640
4	North Kent	12.43	13,935	13,940
5	Wallaceburg	9.82	11,005	11,000
6	Chatham	41.29	46,282	46,280
TOTAL		100	112,080	112,080

Note: For the 2021 Census of Population, Statistics Canada reported a net undercoverage rate of 4.1% for the Province of Ontario. The undercoverage rate is the percentage of people missed less those enumerated more than once. Estimates of the population living on incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements are included in the net undercoverage rate (Statistics Canada, 2023).

As it is unknown whether the projected population for Chatham-Kent, as estimated by Statistics Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Finance, has been adjusted for undercoverage, therefore no adjustments were made for undercoverage.

Seasonal Residents

Seasonal resident population estimates were calculated utilizing Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) data. For the purposes of the estimate, the number of seasonal properties within each ward were identified then multiplied by the average household size of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to project the number of seasonal residents. Per Statistics Canada, the average household size across the municipality is 2.3.

In total, 1,098 seasonal residences were identified (Table 2). Properties with the following property codes within the MPAC dataset were considered a “seasonal” residence:

- 242: Managed Forests – Seasonal Residence (1 Property)
- 243: Managed Forests – Seasonal Residence on Water (0 Properties)
- 363: Housekeeping Cottage (2 Properties)
- 364: Housekeeping Cottage (0 Properties)
- 383: Bed and Breakfast (5 Properties)
- 385: Time Share (0 Properties)
- 386: Time Share (0 Properties)
- 391: Seasonal Dwelling (760 Properties)
- 392: Seasonal Dwelling (87 Properties)
- 395: Seasonal Dwelling (243 Properties)

Table 2: 2024 Seasonal Resident Population Estimates by MPAC Property Code.

MPAC Property Code	Number of Properties	Average Household Size Multiplier	2024 Estimated Seasonal Resident Population
242	1	2.3	2.3
363	2	2.3	4.6
383	5	2.3	11.5
391	760	2.3	1748.0
392	87	2.3	200.1
395	243	2.3	558.9
TOTAL	1098	2.3	2525.4

The estimated number of seasonal residents in Chatham-Kent in 2024 is 2525. The MPAC data was then analyzed spatially, with ward boundaries overlaid on the seasonal property sites, to calculate the seasonal resident population by ward (Table 3).

Table 3: 2024 Seasonal Resident Population Estimates by Ward, Chatham-Kent, ON.

Ward	Number of Properties	2024 Estimated Seasonal Resident Population	% Share of 2024 Estimated Seasonal Resident Population
1	108	248.4	9.84
2	813	1869.9	74.04
3	73	167.9	6.65
4	103	236.9	9.38
5	0	0	0.00
6	1	2.3	0.09
TOTAL	1098	2525.4	100

Students

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is home to two large institutions: St. Clair College's Chatham Campus in Ward 6, and The University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus in Ward 3. These institutions provide a space for learning for hundreds of students each year and offer a small number of on-campus residence accommodations. Students living in on-campus residences are an important consideration for population estimates.

[Per St. Clair College](#), the Chatham Campus has an on-campus townhouse-style residence that houses 48 students. In March 2024, the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus residence, Steckley Hall, was [reported](#) to house approximately 180 students (Table 4).

For the purposes of these estimates, only on-campus housing units were added to individual ward populations. Domestic student totals were excluded to avoid possible double counting from the permanent population. International student populations were not used in these estimates due to the challenges posed by spatially assigning international students to individual wards and in anticipating year-over-year policy changes that might impact annual international student visas.

This leaves roughly 1,400 of the students unaccounted for, of which approximately 1,000 would be going to school in Chatham (Ward 1), and approximately 380 would be going to school in Ridgetown (Ward 3). We do not have access to data that can allow us to accurately pinpoint their residences. However, it totals this amount to less than 1% of the population and given that the largest parity tension is between Ward 6 (Chatham) and the rural wards, it is probable that these numbers offset to some degree. In any case, they are not material to the conclusions. There are not enough to overcome the over-representation of Ward 3, and there are not enough to take under-representation over the permissible 25% variance specified by the "effective representation" test.

Table 4: St. Clair College and the University of Guelph Student Populations.

	St. Clair College, Chatham Campus	University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus
Ward	6	3
Domestic Students*	658	550

International Students*	422	10
On-Campus Residence	Chatham Campus Townhouse	Steckley Hall
On-Campus Residence Beds	48	180

* Data provided by Jason Stubitz, Coordinator, CAP - Workforce Planning and Research, Community Culture & Connections, Chief Administrative Office, Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

Temporary Foreign Workers and International Mobility Program Participants

Population estimates for temporary foreign workers and international mobility program participants were linked to places of work. Migrant worker data was provided by Chatham-Kent in the form of three “cleaned” datasets, one each for Q1, Q2, and Q3, sourced from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. From January to October 2023, there were 2,335 valid work permit holders in Chatham-Kent, of which 1,775 were temporary foreign workers with a labour market impact assessment (LMIA) and 560 were international mobility program participants.

The three “cleaned” datasets were joined into a single dataset and reviewed. Workplaces outside the Municipality of Chatham-Kent boundary and those for which an address could not be verified, were removed from the analysis. Of note, the full address of workplace locations was not provided, however the town or city the workplace is located in was identified. Based on workplace location information, a ward was assigned to each employer with approved positions for migrant workers.

The total number of approved positions for migrant workers for Q1 to Q3 was calculated by ward, in addition to each ward’s share of the total number of approved positions. The dataset only accounted for 1,253 positions, whereas Chatham-Kent reported a total of 2,335 valid work permit holders between January to October 2023. As such, a significant amount of data on the workplace locations of temporary foreign workers and international mobility program participants is missing, including that for Q4. The 1,253 positions represent a “sample” of the total workers.

Each ward’s share of the total number of approved positions was utilized to calculate the projected number of work permit holders that would be incorporated into 2024 population estimates. It was assumed that the total number of migrant workers would be generally consistent between 2023 and 2024 and that the distribution of the “sample” across wards was a good representation of the greater migrant worker population (2,335 persons) and could be utilized to inform the population’s estimate (Table 5).

Table 5: 2024 Temporary Foreign Workers and International Mobility Program Participants Population Estimates by Ward, Chatham-Kent, ON.

Ward	Total Number of Approved Positions from Q1 to Q3, 2023	% Share of Approved Positions based on Available Data	2024 Estimated Number of Work Permit Holders
1	93	7.42	173.3
2	134	10.69	249.7

3	385	30.73	717.5
4	199	15.88	370.8
5	140	11.17	260.9
6	302	24.10	562.8
TOTAL	1253	100	2335

Note: Q4 data on temporary foreign workers and international mobility program participants was not received and not included in the population estimate.

2024 Ward Population Estimates

The 2024 ward population estimates take into consideration both permanent and seasonal residents, including students living in on-campus residences, temporary foreign workers, and international mobility program participants. The estimate is informed by a variety of resources including but not limited to: Statistics Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Finance, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada.

Table 6: Estimated 2024 Population by Ward for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, ON.

Ward	Share of 2021 Pop.	2024 Est. Pop.	2024 Est. Seasonal Residents	2024 Est. On-Campus Residence Beds	2024 Est. No. of Work Permit Holders*		2024 Total Est. Pop.	Share of 2024 Total Est. Pop.	2024 Total Est. Pop. Rounded to the Nearest 10
1	10.61 %	11,888	248	0	173		12,309	10.51%	12,310
2	15.46 %	17,329	1,870	0	250		19,448	16.60%	19,450
3	10.39 %	11,642	168	180	717		12,707	10.85%	12,710
4	12.43 %	13,935	237	0	371		14,543	12.41%	14,540
5	9.82%	11,005	0	0	261		11,266	9.62%	11,270
6	41.29 %	46,282	2	48	563		46,895	40.02%	46,900
Total	100%	112,080	2,525	228	2,335	117,168	100%	117,180	

* Q4 data on temporary foreign workers and international mobility program participants was not received and not included in the population estimate.

Note: Count values rounded up to the nearest whole number

Appendix II: Complete List of Comparator Lower Tier, Single Tier, and Separated Municipalities with Populations between 70,000 and 220,000

Municipality	Total Pop.	No. of Council Members	Type of Municipality	Elections	Land Area (km ²)
City of Sarnia	71,594	9	Lower Tier	At Large	163
City of Sault Ste. Marie	73,368	11	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	223
City of Kawartha Lakes	75,423	9	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	3,084
City of Peterborough	81,032	11	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	64
Town of Newmarket	84,224	9	Lower Tier	By Ward	38
City of Niagara Falls	88,071	9	Lower Tier	At Large	209
City of Pickering	91,771	7	Lower Tier	By Ward	232
Municipality of Clarington	92,013	7	Lower Tier	By Ward	611
City of Brantford	97,496	11	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	99
Municipality of Chatham-Kent	101,647	18	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	2,458
City of Waterloo	104,986	8	Lower Tier	By Ward	64
City of Thunder Bay	107,909	13	Single Tier or Separated	A Combination of At-Large and By Ward	448
Town of Milton	110,128	9	Lower Tier	By Ward	36
Town of Ajax	119,677	7	Lower Tier	By Ward	67
City of Kingston	123,798	13	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	451
Town of Whitby	128,377	9	Lower Tier	A Combination of At-Large and By Ward	147
City of Cambridge	129,920	9	Lower Tier	By Ward	113
City of Guelph	131,794	13	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	87
City of St. Catharines	133,113	13	Lower Tier	A Combination of At-Large and By Ward	96
City of Barrie	141,434	11	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	99
City of Oshawa	159,458	11	Lower Tier	By Ward	146
City of Greater Sudbury	161,531	13	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	3,228
City of Burlington	183,314	7	Lower Tier	By Ward	186
Town of Oakville	193,832	15	Lower Tier	By Ward	139
City of Richmond Hill	195,022	9	Lower Tier	A Combination of At-Large and By Ward	101
City of Windsor	217,188	11	Single Tier or Separated	By Ward	146

(Source: Association of Ontario Municipalities and individual Municipal websites)

Appendix III: Annual Population Forecasts by Settlement Area

Year	Total Pop.	YoY Pop. Increase / Share of Increase	Blenheim	Chatham	Dresden	Ridgetown	Tilbury	Wallaceburg	Wheatley	Outside Primary Centres
			6%	73%	5%	1%	3%	6%	7%	-2%
2024	112,080									
2025	112,993	913	55	666	46	9	27	55	64	-18
2026	113,630	637	38	465	32	6	19	38	45	-13
2027	114,012	382	23	279	19	4	11	23	27	-8
2028	114,446	434	26	317	22	4	13	26	30	-9
2029	114,894	448	27	327	22	4	13	27	31	-9
2030	115,357	463	28	338	23	5	14	28	32	-9
Totals		3,277	197	2,392	164	33	98	197	229	-66

(Source: Municipality of Chatham Kent and Ontario Ministry of Finance)

Appendix IV: Ward Summaries

Ward 1 – West Kent

Ward 1 or “West Kent” is the furthest west of the wards. It is a primarily rural and agricultural ward, with two (2) primary urban settlement areas (Tilbury and Wheatley), as well as the secondary urban settlement area (Merlin).



- **Number of Councillors:** Two (2)
- **2024 Population:** 12,310
- **2024 Population Share:** 11%
- **Population per Councillor:** 6,155
- **Variance from average population per Councillor:** 738 fewer residents or 11% “over-represented”.
- **Anticipated Growth:** Ward 1 is anticipated to grow 2.5% from 2024, with growth concentrated in Wheatley and to a lesser extent Tilbury.

Current and projected populations for Ward 1 are described in the chart below.

Year	2024		2026		2030	
	Ward 1	Municipality	Ward 1	Municipality	Ward 1	Municipality
Population	12,310	117,180	12,457	118,715	12,621	120,407
Share	11%		10%		10%	
Variance from Avg.	-11%	6,893 (average)	-11%	6,983 (average)	-11%	7,083 (average)
	-738 ppl		-755 ppl		-772 ppl	

Recommended Boundary Modifications to promote community of interest: None

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Ward 1 Boundaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ “Honestly, folks in Wheatley would never drive to Chatham for anything. They go to Leamington.” ▶ “Keep Merlin fully in Ward 1.”

Based on preliminary assessments and feedback from stakeholders, having regard to the principle of effective representation, the boundaries of Ward 1 do not pose any immediate problems that need to be addressed.

Ward 2 – South Kent

Ward 2 or “South Kent” is the central and southernmost ward. It is a primarily rural and agricultural ward but includes two (2) primary urban settlement areas (Blenheim and the southern most end of Chatham), as well as a secondary urban settlement area (Charing Cross) and several Hamlets (Cedar Springs, Raglan and Eriean).



- **Number of Councillors:** Three (3)
- **2024 Population:** 19,450
- **2024 Population Share:** 17%
- **Population per Councillor:** 6,483
- **Variance from average population per Councillor:** 410 fewer residents or 6% “over-represented”
- **Anticipated Growth:** Ward 2 is anticipated to grow 0.9% from 2024, with growth concentrated in Blenheim and continued growth on the south end of Chatham.

Current and projected populations for Ward 2 are described in the chart below.

Year	2024		2026		2030	
	Ward 2	Municipality	Ward 2	Municipality	Ward 2	Municipality
Population	19,450	117,180	19,535	118,715	19,630	120,407
Share	17%		16%		17%	
Variance from Avg.	-6%	6,893 (average)	-7%	6,983 (average)	-8%	7,083 (average)
	-410		-471		-539	

Recommended Boundary Modifications

- The boundary between Wards 2 and 6 (Chatham) include several “oddities” some of which have existing since the boundaries were drawn in 1998 (such as along Indian Creek Golf and Country Club shown right) and some that have formed due to continued growth and sprawl on the southern end of Chatham.

General Commentary

Ward 2 includes lands that are in the Chatham Urban Boundary that are slated for development. The expansion of “Chatham” residents into Ward 2 presents a potential issue as the diversity of interest in the ward expands to include rural, urban, suburban, and agricultural residents with diverse representation needs.

- Some residents from rural areas of Ward 2 are concerned that the rural character of Ward 2 may be undermined by what is essentially urban development on the north edge of the ward.
- Some residents in “next-to-Chatham” areas of Ward 2 would have stronger community of interest with Ward 6, or whatever ward represents the south end of Chatham.



Boundary between Ward 2 and 6 on Indian Creek Rd by the Indian Creek Golf and Country Club is an example of a growth-related modification.

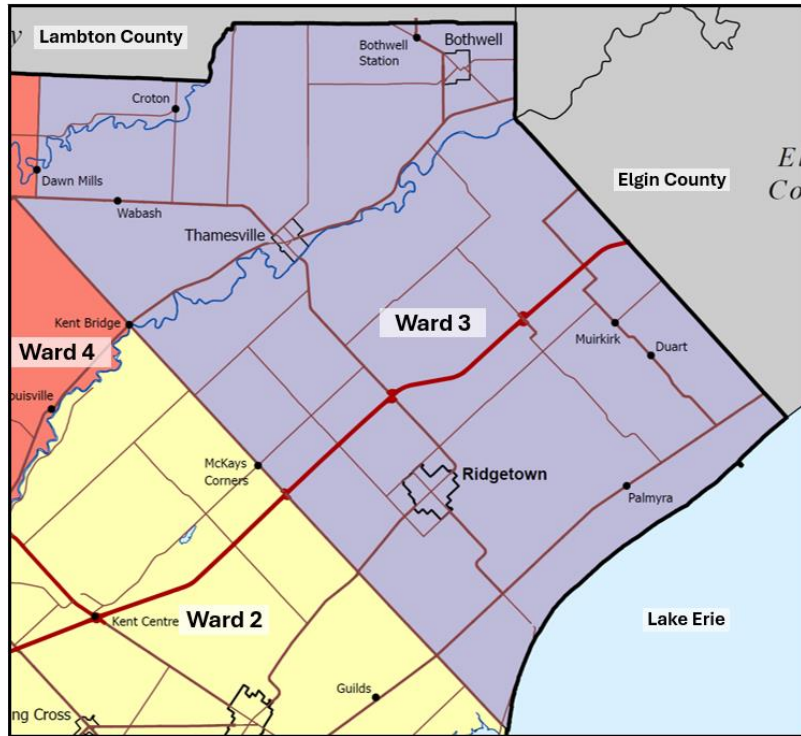
Representative Stakeholder Comments on Ward 2 Boundaries

- ▶ *“It is challenging to represent such diverse communities in one ward, given their different character and the legacy tax rates.”*
- ▶ *“Be careful to not reduce the size of council if it will create such a high burden or workload that it becomes impossible for anyone to serve who is not independently wealthy or retired.”*
- ▶ *“Chatham boundary should likely just go down to the 401.”*
- ▶ *“If you were to keep this model, Chatham has grown south and if you were [change it] ward 6 should extend to the 401 because of growth.”*
- ▶ *“The Eastlawn Rd neighbourhood, they think its crazy they’re not in Chatham, like they’re in Chatham.”*

Based on preliminary assessments and feedback from stakeholders, having regard to the principle of effective representation, the northern boundary of Ward 2 should be modified to reflect realities of growth since the boundary was first drawn.

Ward 3 – East Kent

Ward 3 or “East Kent” is the easternmost ward in the Municipality. It is a largely rural and agricultural ward but includes one (1) primary urban settlement area (Ridgetown), as well as two (2) secondary urban settlement areas (Thamesville and Bothwell) and Hamlets (Morpeth and Highgate).



- **Number of Councillors:** Two (2)
- **2024 Population:** 12,710
- **2024 Population Share:** 11%
- **Population per Councillor:** 6,355
- **Variance from average population per Councillor:** 538 fewer residents or 8% “over-represented”
- **Anticipated Growth:** Ward 3 is only anticipated to grow 0.1% from 2024, with growth concentrated in Ridgetown.

Current and projected populations for Ward 3 are described in the chart below.

Year	2024		2026		2030	
	Ward 3	Municipality	Ward 3	Municipality	Ward 3	Municipality
Population	12,710	117,180	12,718	118,715	12,726	120,407
Share	11%		11%			
Variance from Avg.	-8%	6,893 (average)	-9%	6,983 (average)	-10%	7,083 (average)
	-538		-624		-720	

Recommended Boundary Modifications to promote community of interest: None.

General Commentary:

- The Thames River is a potential dividing line for the ward. It was noted multiple times that people north of the river are considered one distinct group and the people south of the river are also considered one distinct group. We also heard that many people north of the river associate with (and would find community of interest with) Dresden which is in Ward 4.

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Ward 3 Boundaries

- ▶ *“In the North, many people associate with Dresden.”*
- ▶ *“It would be nice if they split it [ward 3] and put one representative on the north side of the river and one on the south side. It’s a big area.”*
- ▶ *“It takes about 40km or so to drive from the north end of Ward 3 to the south.”*

Based on preliminary assessments and feedback from stakeholders, having regard to the principle of effective representation, the boundaries of Ward 3 do not pose any immediate problems that need to be addressed.

Ward 4 – North Kent

Ward 4 or “North Kent” is the most northwesterly ward in the Municipality. It is a largely rural and agricultural ward but includes one (1) primary urban settlement area (Dresden), as well as two (2) secondary urban settlement areas (Mitchell’s Bay and Pain Court). It also houses a significant portion of Chatham-Kent’s Francophone population, primarily in the southwest of the ward.



- **Number of Councillors:** Two (2)
- **2024 Population:** 12,540
- **2024 Population Share:** 12%
- **Population per Councillor:** 7,270
- **Variance from average population per Councillor:** 377 more residents or 5% “under-represented”
- **Anticipated Growth:** Ward 4 is anticipated to grow 1.0% from 2024, with growth concentrated in Ridgetown.

Current and projected populations for Ward 4 are described in the chart below.

Year	2024		2026		2030	
	Ward 4	Municipality	Ward 4	Municipality	Ward 4	Municipality
Population	12,540	117,180	14,610	118,715	14,687	120,407
Share	12%		12%		12%	
Variance from Avg.	+5%	6,893 (average)	+5%	6,983 (average)	+4%	7,083 (average)
	+377		+322		+261	

Commentary on Ward 4 Boundaries

- We heard that Ward 5 growth is expanding into Ward 4 on Baseline West and then East.
- We also heard that there are two French communities, Grande Point and Pain Court, which should be kept together.
- The water communities should be kept together.
- The community near the northern boundary of Ward 4 probably orient more to There is also growth on the north boundary of Ward 6 that expands beyond the boundary into Ward 4. The growth expands north to Pioneer Line. St Clair Estates was also noted as an area that associates with Chatham.

Recommended Boundary Modifications to promote community of interest:

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Ward 4 Boundaries

Ward 4 and Ward 5 Boundaries

- ▶ *“Heading west on Dufferin Ave, people would say they are part of Wallaceburg”*
- ▶ *“I just feel that from their perspective [the people on baseline W just outside of the Wallaceburg boundary] that they would like to be more included in Wallaceburg so.”*
- ▶ *“Water communities need to stay together.”*

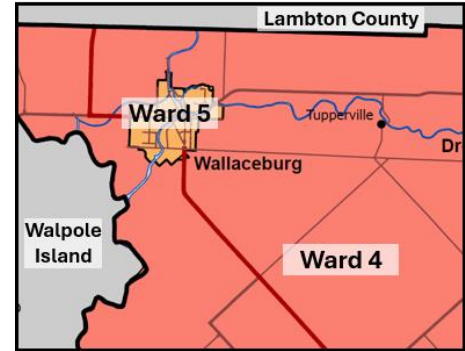
Ward 4 and Ward 6 Boundary

- ▶ *“So that is a major shopping hub like on both sides of 40 and then I anticipate that it's going to continue to grow and that is considered Ward 4, and it does seem kind of weird that it's in Ward 4.”*
- ▶ *“But I mean, we've got all of our major retail shopping out there and most people would think it's Ward 6, so. so, Hwy 40 and Gregory's right here.”*

-
- **The boundary of Ward 4-Ward 5 should be modified to reflect realities of growth since they were first drawn.**
 - **The boundary of Ward 4-Ward 6 should be modified to reflect realities of growth since the boundary with Chatham was first drawn.**
-

Ward 5 – Wallaceburg

Ward 5 or “Wallaceburg” is the northwest corner on the Municipality and surrounded on all sides by Ward 4. It is also the smallest ward geographically. It is a largely urban and suburban ward that closely follows the boundaries of the primary settlement area of Wallaceburg.



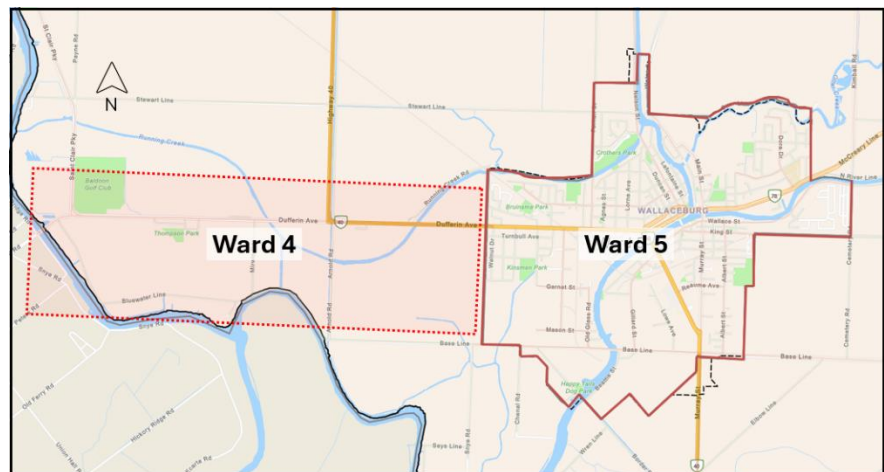
- **Number of Councillors:** Two (2)
- **2024 Population:** 11,270
- **2024 Population Share:** 10%
- **Population per Councillor:** 5,635
- **Variance from average population per Councillor:** 1,258 fewer residents or 18% “over-represented”.
- **Anticipated Growth:** Ward 5 is only anticipated to grow 1.6% from 2024.

Current and projected populations for Ward 5 are described in the chart below.

Year	2024		2026		2030	
	Ward 5	Municipality	Ward 5	Municipality	Ward 5	Municipality
Population	11,270	117,180	11,363	118,715	11,449	120,407
Share	10%		10%		10%	
Variance from Avg.	-18%	6,893 (average)	-19%	6,983 (average)	-19%	7,083 (average)
	-1,258		-1,302		-1,358	

Commentary on Ward 5 Boundaries

Ward 5 is considered to be an urban ward. Similar to Ward 4 commentary, we heard that for the west and east boundaries of Ward 5, growth has expanded beyond the boundary into Ward 4. People on these fringe boundaries consider themselves to be a part of Wallaceburg. Particularly on Baseline and Dufferin Ave. heading west.



Dufferin Ave on the west side of Wallaceburg has been identified as an area that should be adjusted to reflect the realities of growth

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Ward 5 Boundaries

Ward 4 and Ward 5 Boundaries (also discussed in Ward 4 section).

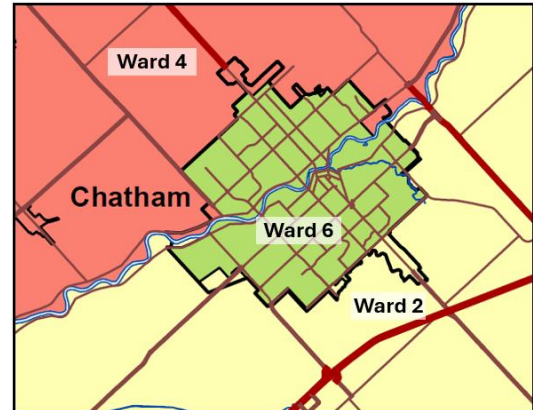
- ▶ *“As it stands right now a lot is captured as a community of Wallaceburg. Heading west on Dufferin Ave, people would say they are part of Wallaceburg”*
- ▶ *“I just feel that from their perspective [the people on baseline W just outside of the Wallaceburg boundary] that they would like to be more included in Wallaceburg so.”*
- ▶ *“Yes, the Dufferin area [heading west], Water Street heading north and the east side along the river, we have an extension [past the boundary] there.”*
- ▶ *“We have urban housing all the way around our boundaries.”*

Based on preliminary assessments and feedback from stakeholders, having regard to the principle of effective representation,

- The boundary of Ward 4-Ward 5 should be modified to reflect realities of growth since they were first drawn.

Ward 6 - Chatham

Ward 6 or “Chatham” is the most central ward in the Municipality just north of the 401 and bisected by the Thames River. It is an entirely urban and suburban ward that closely follows the boundaries of the primary settlement area of Chatham.



- **Number of Councillors:** Six (6)
- **2024 Population:** 45,900
- **2024 Population Share:** 40%
- **Population per Councillor:** 7,817
- **Variance from average population per Councillor:** 924 more residents or 13% “under-represented”.
- **Anticipated Growth:** Ward 6 is anticipated to grow 5.1% from 2024, with growth concentrated in the southwest and northwest of the ward.

Current and projected populations for Ward 6 are described in the chart below.

Year	2024		2026		2030	
	Ward 6	Municipality	Ward 6	Municipality	Ward 6	Municipality
Population	45,900	117,180	48,032	118,715	49,292	120,407
Share	40%		40%		42%	
Variance from Avg.	+13%	6,893 (average)	+15%	6,983 (average)	+16%	7,083 (average)
	+924 ppl		+1,022 ppl		+1,133 ppl	

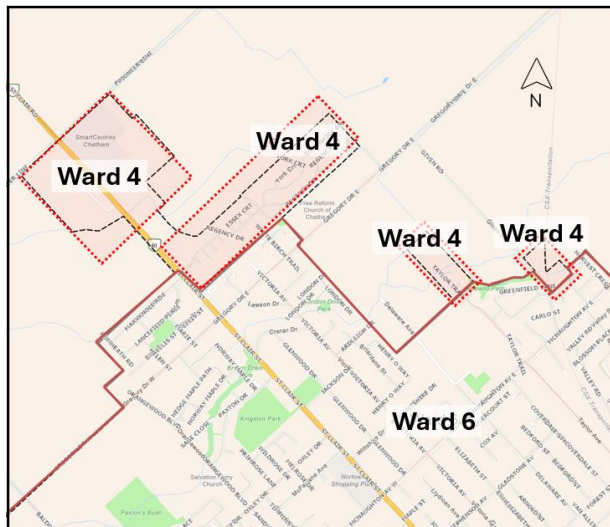
The parity test is met, insofar as the underrepresentation of residents in Chatham does not exceed 25%. When this is juxtaposed against the overrepresentation of Wallaceburg, the net is 31%. This is not optimal.

We note that the de facto “at-large” character of six representatives in Ward 6 provides many alternatives for personal access to local representatives.

But the cumulative effect of under-representation on Chatham residents means that it is under-represented: it has 40% of the population, but only 35% of the representatives. This would be further exacerbated if the entire urban boundary and population of Chatham were to be included in Ward 6 by transferring neighbourhoods outside the boundaries of existing ward 6 but in the urban growth boundary of Chatham.

Recommended Boundary Modifications to promote community of interest:

The Ward 6 boundaries were clearly designed to provide for “urban representation” and in particular for residents who identify as being from “Chatham”. However, there are several instances on all sides of this ward where “Chatham” residents are actually located in Ward 2 to the South (along Charing Cross Rd.) or Ward 4 to the North (around St. Clair Estates).



Boundary between Ward 6 and Ward 4 on St. Clair St.



Boundary between Ward 6 and Ward 4 on Charing Cross Rd.

This “spilling over” is due to the disparity between the ward boundary (shown in red in these examples) for Chatham and its urban settlement boundary for planning and development (shown with the black dotted line in these examples).

Representative Stakeholder Comments on Ward 6 Boundaries

- ▶ “But I mean, we’ve got all of our major retail shopping out there and most people would think it’s Ward 6.”
- ▶ “People generally refer to north and south Chatham on either side of the river.”
- ▶ “Chatham should go down to the 401.”
- ▶ “Chatham should go north to power centre/ Walmart.”
- ▶ “Chatham is a city; it should be its own ward.”
- ▶ “To pioneer line near the power centre and further north. There are apartment buildings are being built on those sites and have all Chatham services and transit.”
- ▶ “Community of Chatham is growing 1km in every direction.”
- ▶ “The cul-de-sac on Taylor Trail is split in half.”

Based on preliminary assessments and feedback from stakeholders, having regard to the principle of effective representation,

- The boundary of Ward 4-Ward 6 should be modified to reflect realities of growth since the boundary with Chatham was first drawn.
- The boundary of Ward 2-Ward 6 should be modified to reflect realities of growth since the boundary with Chatham was first drawn.

Chatham-Kent's Current Ward Boundary Map Overall

In considering the current boundaries, the majority of the comments focused on the boundaries of:

Ward 5 and 6 where growth has expanded past the ward boundary.

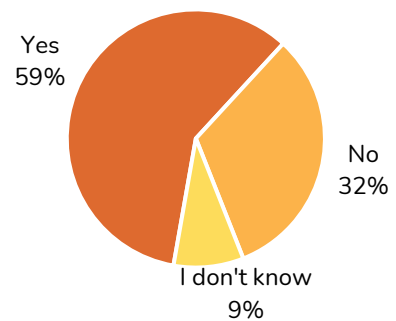
- In the case of Ward 5, we heard that growth is expanding East and West of Wallaceburg.
- For Ward 6, we heard that Chatham growth is expanding around all boundaries. But there was specifically focus on Chatham growth expanding North into Ward 4 and expanding South into Ward 2.
- Otherwise, there was limited comment on other changes that needed to be made to the current wards.

Summary of Public Feedback on Ward Boundaries Overall

Through the public consultation we heard a wide variety of comments on the existing ward system.

Overall, almost 60% of residents indicated they were satisfied with the boundaries of their ward. 32% of survey respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with the current boundaries. As discussed above, many of the comments we heard from the public focus on the fringe areas of the ward boundaries for Ward 6 and Ward 5.

Survey Respondent's overall satisfied with the current boundaries of thier wards



Representative Public Comments on Refining the Existing Boundaries Overall²⁴

- ▶ *“The wards need to be split better.”*
- ▶ *“Wards are outdated based on growth trends since 1998.”*
- ▶ *“Parts of my subdivision, which is in Chatham proper are not in Ward 6.”*
- ▶ *“Ward 5 - East and North of Wallaceburg should be part of Ward 5.”*
- ▶ *“Ward 6 should be expanded as anyone living within 5-10 km identifies as being from Chatham.”*
- ▶ *“As residential areas expand, I think boundaries should be adjusted to reflect the current urban areas. Example those living on Indian Creek Road maybe better represented by a Councillor in Ward 6 than a Councillor from Ward 4.”*
- ▶ *“Make wards more equal by moving the boundaries to similar population or km's.”*

Appendix V: Summary of Public Survey Engagement Demographic

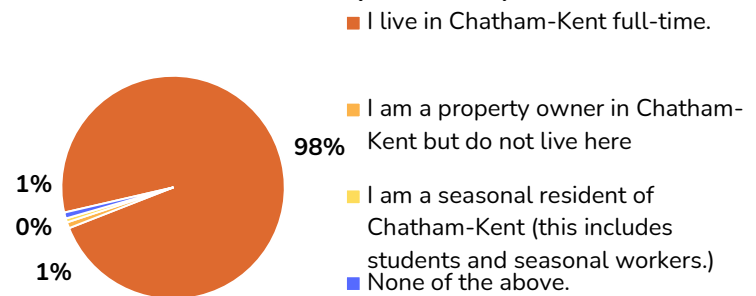
Public Engagement Survey

- Online Public Survey:** A public engagement survey was posted on the Municipality's, "Let's Talk Chatham-Kent" Website from August 22nd to September 13th, 2024. The survey received 344 completed responses. A summary of the participation through the survey and public meetings is available in Appendix V.

Respondents by Residency:

- 98%** of survey respondents live in Chatham-Kent full time. **1%** of survey respondents was a property owner in Chatham-Kent but does not live there. **1%** of survey respondents was a seasonal resident in Chatham-Kent.

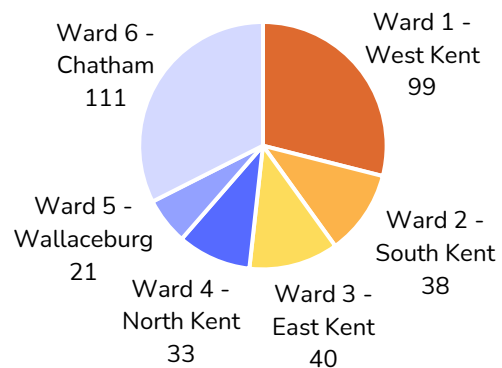
What description fits you?



Respondents by Ward:

- Ward 6 represented **32% of respondents**
- Ward 5 represented **6% of respondents**
- Ward 4 represented **10% of respondents**
- Ward 3 represented **12% of respondents**
- Ward 2 represented **11% of respondents**
- Ward 1 represented **29% of respondents**

What is your Ward?



Respondents by Community:

Q3. Chatham-Kent includes many communities, townships, hamlets, and neighbourhoods that residents identify with. What neighbourhood or community do you most identify with? (select all that apply).

Of the 101 communities listed on the survey, Chatham had the most respondents with 33.7%, followed by Tilbury with 15.2%. The detailed table with number of respondents by community, township, hamlet or neighbourhood is below.

Appendix VI: Input from the Process on the Design of the Future Ward Boundaries

The next step in the process will be the design of ward boundaries. This process will have regard to all the matters discussed above.

The following summarizes the advice that we have from the stakeholders and the community on considerations that should go into the design of ward boundaries.

Representative Stakeholder Comments on the Redesign of Ward Boundaries
<p>Increasing the number of Chatham Wards, Redefine the Rural Wards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>“I’m okay splitting up Chatham into 3 wards; making rural wards bigger and smaller. Need to keep up smaller and urban.”</i> ▶ <i>“If you split it into Chatham into 4. You’d go to Gibbon, the river, and St Clair.”</i> <p>Pie Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>“The pie shaped idea is not the worse idea, to have a bit of urban and rural.”</i> ▶ <i>“I always thought about doing a pie shape. Each ward goes out [from Chatham] and each ward has a rural person and a Chatham person.”</i> ▶ <i>“When I looked at the pie shaped ward structure, I see how that could be beneficial. Once you cut things up you run the risk of it being heavily geared towards Chatham, I don’t think the community would support that.”</i> ▶ <i>“Pie to split Chatham up into the different wards, take the bigger community in each and the divide it up and ward 5 either stay together.”</i> ▶ <i>“Lots of thought to the pie just adjusting the lines to how they live and how they identify. Cutting East Kent (Ward 3) in half and I think the lines definitely do have to move.”</i> <p>Other Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“It would be nice if they split it [Ward 3] and put one representative on the north side of the river and one on the south side. It’s a big area.”</i>

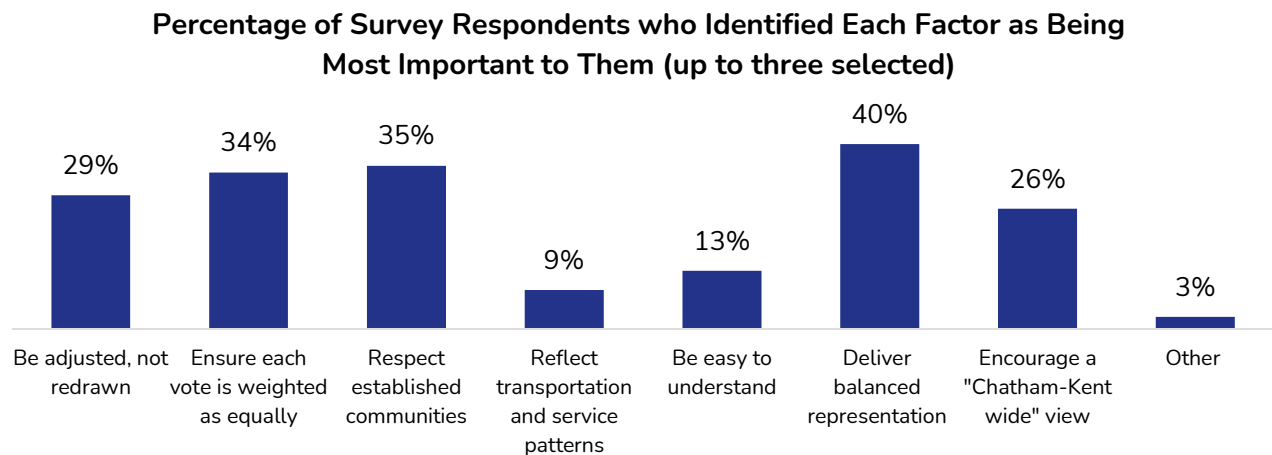
Comments from Public Survey on Design Priorities

Survey participants were asked to select the priorities they considered most important in designing ward boundaries. They were allowed to select as many options as they liked. Ensuring voting weight parity and respecting established communities were both selected by over half the participants.

Options for Public Survey on Ward Boundary Design Priorities

Priority	Description
Be adjusted, not redrawn	▶ No change for the sake of change.
Ensure each vote is weighted equally as possible	▶ Distribute population as equally as possible among wards, so all votes are approximately equal.
Respect established communities	▶ Not divide communities of interest or established neighbourhoods.
Reflect transportation and service patterns	▶ Respect how the patterns by which Chatham-Kent residents move around the community.
Be easy to understand	▶ Reflect obvious geographical features, like the Thames River or the 401 highway.
Continue to deliver rural representation	▶ Ensure adequate representation for the rural community
Encourage a “Chatham-Kent wide” view	▶ Wards should include a variety of geographies, neighbourhoods and perspectives

The following graph describes the three factors that are most important to each survey respondent.



Representative Public Comments on the Redesign of Wards

Split Chatham into more wards

- ▶ “Split Chatham 4 way straight up queen street and St Clair and use the river for the other boundary.”
- ▶ “Chatham should be subdivided into different wards to allow for more effective representation and easier elections. It would also allow the wards to be roughly equal in population (depending how they are drawn) to the population of the other wards.”

- ▶ *“Chatham should be broken down into three wards.”*
- ▶ *“Chatham should be divided into 5 wards and 5 wards in the county.1 Councillor per ward.”*
- ▶ *“Chatham ward 6 should have more definitive boundary representation i.e.; 2 Councillors for North Chatham and 2 Councillors for South Chatham etc.”*

Pie Model

- ▶ *“I think all Councillors should have a piece of Chatham and Kent.”*
- ▶ *“Divide Ward 6 into all other wards, otherwise eliminate Ward 6.”*

Other Ideas

- ▶ *“The 401 could be a north/ south division line in the municipality for outlying areas. Even if the city of Chatham was divided north/south and incorporated into the whole this way. Would this even thing out population wise?”*
- ▶ *“Make two wards – divide it at the Thames River – decide the number of councillors based on population. The people who have a real interest in these things turn out to vote.”*

Summary of Key Themes for Ward Redesign

- ▶ **Dividing Chatham into more wards:** We have heard several suggestions for dividing Chatham into more wards as part of redesign considerations for Ward boundaries. As highlighted above, both Representative Stakeholders and the Public had many different idea about how Chatham could be divided into different boundaries.
- ▶ **Pie Model:** We have heard a lot of commentary on the concept of the Pie Model which would divide Chatham-Kent like a pie with Chatham being the middle. Benefits of this model and concerns have both been raised and we will evaluate the model as part of the next phase of this project.
- ▶ **Dividing by Geographic or Man-Made Boundaries:** We have heard some commentary on creating new ward boundaries where the 401 or the Thames River is treated as a core dividing line to creating new boundaries. This will be taken into consideration as part of the next phase of this project.