



Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Final Recommendations Report

December 09, 2024



Executive Summary

In July 2024, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent engaged StrategyCorp Inc. to conduct a Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review (the “Review”), with the purpose of ensuring that Chatham-Kent’ ward boundaries and Council structure continue to provide “effective representation” for all residents.

This Report outlines the findings and recommendations of Phase Two of StrategyCorp’s work including:

- Stakeholder feedback and how it was used to evaluate and revise the draft ward boundary maps presented (the “Options”);
- Final evaluations on whether the Options deliver “Effective Representation”; and
- Ward boundary recommendations for a Council of 13, 15, and 18, and an overall preferred option.

Over the course of phase one and phase two, there were over 650 instances of stakeholder engagement (i.e. participation in meetings, email, surveys) and through them all it became clear that there were many diverse perspectives to consider. Several themes stood out, however:

- Strong interest in achieving appropriate fairness through voter parity
- Strong interest in reducing the size of Council
- Strong interest in ensuring appropriate rural and agricultural representation
- Concern about the uneven allocation of councillors to wards (i.e. 6 to Ward 6 – Chatham)
- Willingness to be flexible and open minded to various options...of which there were many to consider.

At Council’s instruction, StrategyCorp developed options, and presented them to the public for comment. Participant feedback was largely positive but yielded valuable input for improvement that would align with the Principles of “Effective Representation”.

Key insights included:

- Wallaceburg should not be divided, if possible, even if it requires two councillors or a larger area to maintain appropriate parity relative to other wards
- While Chatham should no longer have 6 councillors in a single ward, it should not be divided into six or more wards, as doing so splits up existing neighbourhoods; and
- The Thames River should be used as a boundary in the County wherever possible.

To incorporate this feedback, StrategyCorp developed revised options that would meet the requirements of “effective representation” as applied to Chatham-Kent. A summary of these recommendations is presented in the table below:

Table of Recommendations				
Council Size	Recommended Ward Boundaries	Passes the “Effective Representation” Test	For Map See Pg.	StrategyCorp Recommendation
13 (12+1)	Option 13B-V2 (revised)	YES	20	Preferred
15 (14+1)	Option 15C-V2 (revised)	YES	22	Acceptable
18 (17+1)	Option 18A	YES	24	Acceptable

In our view, while each of the preferred options involves tradeoffs, we believe that each are acceptable, preferable to the status quo, and would pass the “Effective Representation” test. Key finds are:

- **Voter Parity:** Each of the preferred options fall well within acceptable ranges for parity in 2024, 2026, and 2030.
- **Communities, Boundaries & Communication:** All the recommended options effectively consider communities and diversity of interest; physical and natural features; and means of communication and accessibility. Option 13B-V2 is slightly preferable to both Options 15C-V2 and 18A.
- **Overall Effective Representation:** Each of the preferred options deliver effective representation and improve on the parity between Chatham and county wards. Options 13B-V2 and 15C-V2 are both preferred over 18A as they reduce the variation in councillors per ward.
- **Council Size:** As discussed in our Interim Report (September 23/2024) Chatham-Kent is an outlier among Ontario municipalities with its 18-member Council. We would recommend that Council take this opportunity in its history to reduce its size to 13, and continue its evolution from the amalgamation of 1996.

While **any of the three recommended options would deliver improved effective representation** for the residents of Chatham-Kent, **StrategyCorp prefers option 13B-V2** as it would:

- **deliver effective representation**, having regard to
 - Parity today
 - Parity in 2026 and 2030, and
 - Boundaries that respect community of interest, prominent physical features and patterns of transportation and communication
- that is **superior to the status quo** and the other options considered, and
- that would enable a **reduction in the size of council**.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Part 1: Project Overview	4
Introduction.....	4
The Review Process.....	4
Part 2: The Design of the Draft Ward Boundaries, Public Feedback & Recommendations for Improvement	6
The Design Considerations that Shaped the Draft Ward Boundaries.....	6
Feedback on the Draft Ward Boundaries.....	7
Applying Stakeholder Feedback to Ward Boundary Options	11
Part 3: Council Composition & Ward Boundary Recommendations	12
Council of 13.....	12
Council of 15.....	13
Council of 18.....	14
Overall Recommendations.....	15
Schedule A: Evaluation of All Options	18
The “Effective Representation” Test Framework	19
Recommended Draft Ward Option 13B-V2 (Revised).....	20
Recommended Draft Ward Option 15C-V2 (Revised).....	22
Recommended Draft Ward Option 18A.....	24
Draft Ward Option 15A	26
Draft Ward Option 15B.....	28
Draft Ward Option 15C.....	30
Draft Ward Option 15D (New)	32
Draft Ward Option 13A	34
Draft Ward Option 13B.....	36
Draft Ward Option 13C.....	38
Appendix I – Terms of Reference	40
Appendix II – Summary of Public Survey	43
Engagement Demographic Information and Analysis	43
Appendix III - Evolution of Population Estimates	46

Part 1: Project Overview

Introduction

At its February 26, 2024, Council meeting, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent passed a motion to retain a third-party consultant to conduct a Council Structure and Ward Boundary Review (the “Review”). Following an open procurement process, the Municipality retained StrategyCorp Inc. to conduct the Review in July 2024.

The goal of this Review is to ensure that Chatham-Kent’s ward boundaries, electoral structure, and Council structure continue to provide a system of “effective representation” for all residents.

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 complete motion from Council approving this Review, the complete scope of ward defined in the Request for Proposal, and a full description of the guiding principles of this review can be found in Appendix I.

The Review Process

Phase One

First Interim Report: On September 23rd, 2024, StrategyCorp concluded Phase 1 by presenting its first Interim Report to Council which included:

- An evaluation of Chatham-Kent’s existing council structure and ward boundaries;
- A summary of consultation feedback from the first round of public and council consultations; and
- Recommendations to narrow the scope for investigation in Phase 2.

Council accepted StrategyCorp’s recommendation to narrow the scope of the review down to:

- Evaluate ward boundary configurations for a Council of 13 and 15 elected members, as well as improved “status quo” of 18; and
- Reject Options for electing councillors or a permanent deputy mayor at-large.

The full Interim Report can be accessed on the Municipality’s Let’sTalkChatham-Kent site [here](#).

Phase Two

Draft Ward Boundary Options Report: On November 4th, StrategyCorp presented its initial draft ward boundary map options to Council prior to making them available to the public for comment. The Report included:

- Seven draft ward boundary map options:
 - Three for a Council of 13
 - Three for a Council of 15; and
 - One for a Council of 18.
- A high-level overview of the design considerations for each option; and
- Preliminary evaluations of population data for each option.

Council approved the maps with only one amendment to Option 15A.

The full Draft Ward Boundary Options Report can be accessed on the Municipality's Let'sTalkChatham-Kent site [here](#).

Second Round of Public Consultation: StrategyCorp facilitated public consultations on the amended draft ward boundary map options presented in the Draft Ward Boundary Options Report. This included:

- **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 November 14th and November 25th, 2024 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 50 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 November 11th to November 29th, 2024. The survey received 285 responses. A summary of survey participation is summarized in Appendix II.

Part 2: The Design of the Draft Ward Boundaries, Public Feedback & Recommendations for Improvement

The Design Considerations that Shaped the Draft Ward Boundaries

The seven draft options were based on design considerations chosen to give effect to the Principle of Effective Representation as applied to the specific needs of Chatham-Kent.

To do this, we asked Council and participants how they thought the principles of Effective Representation applied to the “on-the-ground” realities of Chatham-Kent?

- For example, if natural boundaries matter in ward design, which natural boundaries matter in Chatham-Kent?

What we heard, and our analysis of it, was discussed in the Draft Ward Boundary Options Report from November 4th.

Public review of the drafts gave us a second opportunity to hear feedback on what matters to participants. We used that feedback to either validate, or in some cases, to adjust the design parameters.

In the pages below, we report on:

- i. **The Considerations** that were used to create the seven draft options
- ii. **Feedback:** Public and stakeholder feedback on the options
- iii. **The Result:** How the feedback on the options has evolved our understanding of the design considerations and how to best apply the “Effective Representation” test to Chatham-Kent.
- iv. Applied the revised considerations to evaluate and revise the Options.

Feedback on the Draft Ward Boundaries

Consideration #1: Design boundaries that preserve both distinct rural / agricultural and urban representation by including distinct “Chatham” and “Kent” wards defined by a new “Greater Chatham” boundary to reflect the practical boundaries of Chatham-Kent’s urban population.

Feedback: Generally, participants agreed that the proposed “practical” Chatham boundary addressed weaknesses of the status quo and:

- properly brought urban residents out of predominantly rural wards and into Chatham, which would better reflect their community of interest.
- addressed the spillover of suburban residents into rural/agricultural wards, which might have undermined the community of interest of the rural/agricultural wards.
- provided effective representation for rural/agricultural residents.

Result: No changes were made to this consideration. The proposed practical boundary for Chatham promotes effective representation and is used in all options presented.

- Some participants expressed interest in “mixed representation” wards. This approach, sometimes referred to as the “pie model” would deliberately combine both rural and urban populations in each ward. The hope of “mixed representation” wards, is to encourage an “all-of-Chatham-Kent” perspective, rather than reinforcing “us and them” attitudes between agricultural, rural or urban-focused representatives.
- Based on general practice in ward design, and our analysis of the application of this approach to Chatham-Kent, we do not recommend it, as it would tend to undermine effective representation of rural/agricultural areas, by dividing them and distributing them among wards dominated by urban residents.

Consideration #2: Design boundaries to better achieve parity between “Chatham” and “Kent” wards by tying the proportion of councillors from Chatham wards to the proportion of residents in Chatham.

Feedback: As we discussed in the previous reports, Chatham residents are underrepresented relative to their share of the population by the existing ward boundaries.

- Most participants accepted the necessity that population parity should determine the balance between Chatham and county wards. Nevertheless, some expressed the opinion that Chatham should have less representation.

Result: No changes were made to this consideration. This consideration is driven by the principle of voter parity and overall “effective representation”. In each of the recommended options presented, Chatham wards have between 41-43% of the total councillors elected by ward, representing ~44% of Chatham-Kent’s total population today and through 2030.

- It was noted by some that the Mayor – who has frequently been elected from the Chatham area – should count towards Chatham’s “proportion” of councillors. By rule, the

Mayor, who is elected at large by the entire Municipality is not considered in these calculations of Council parity.

Consideration #3: Design boundaries that avoid dividing communities (e.g., Dresden, Blenheim, Ridgetown, Wheatley, and Tilbury, among many other distinct communities), or where mathematically impractical (i.e. in Wallaceburg), split them evenly to reduce possible voter dilution.

Feedback: Most participants were satisfied with the ward boundaries as they related to smaller communities in the County (i.e., with <6,000 residents).

- **Wallaceburg:** Several of the seven options presented divided Wallaceburg. Many participants expressed a preference to keep Wallaceburg as one ward.
 - The Sydenham River was not deemed to be an appropriate boundary.
 - Participants generally agreed it would be preferable to keep Wallaceburg as one ward, even if it meant including a larger geographic area, or having two councillors per ward to achieve voter parity.
- **Chatham:** Six of the options sub-divided Chatham into wards. (Only the 18-Member option preserved Chatham as one ward with 7 councillors.) Participants shared many different perspectives:
 - **Keep electing councillors at-large within Chatham:** A few expressed concern around dividing Chatham into wards at all, preferring the existing “at-large” system for electing Chatham’s councillors.
 - **No more at-large in Chatham:** More common was the view that Chatham should not continue to have 7 councillors elected in one ward, thinking it blurred accountability, lacked fairness relative to other wards, and undermined the electoral process (Some asked, “how strong a preference might a voter have for the 7th councillor they had to elect?”).
 - **Move to one per ward:** Some wanted the accountability of “one per ward” and were prepared to live with the boundaries that would be dictated by necessities of balancing parity and managing appropriate features as boundaries.
 - **Avoid “too many/too small” or “artificial” wards in Chatham:** Some wanted to avoid dividing Chatham into too many wards, preferring a smaller number of wards and two councillors per ward. Some wanted to avoid dividing existing neighborhoods.
 - **Alternative suggestions for boundaries:** Some suggested Chatham is most easily divided into quadrants, with more grid-like north-south and east-west divisions than “pie-shaped” ones used in the initial options presented.

Result: To reflect this feedback, we have amended the design consideration as follows: “Design wards that avoid dividing communities.” As a practical matter, to achieve this, while addressing other aspects of effective representation, it means working to create:

- a smaller number of larger wards; and,
- potentially with more than one councillor, as appropriate to ensure parity.

As a consequence of this feedback and change:

- each of the recommended options now include a single ward for Wallaceburg with two councillors.
- the recommended options for 15 and 15 wards have been redrawn to reduce the total number of wards in Chatham, with one or two councillors each as appropriate to achieve parity, to avoid dividing established neighbourhoods, and follow more grid-like boundaries.

Consideration #4: Design boundaries that are easy to understand by using recognizable boundaries including major transportation arteries (e.g., the 401 or rail corridors), natural features (e.g., the Thames or Sydenham Rivers), or previously understood ward boundaries, and by grouping communities based on their affinity to one another (e.g., Blenheim and Erieau, or Dresden and Bothwell).

Feedback: Some participants preferred the Thames River to the 401 as the boundary between north and south Kent, as it is both:

- well understood by residents, and
- a practical barrier to movement between communities (due to the relatively few bridges).

Some participants also criticized Options with many one-councillor wards as more confusing than options with a smaller number of two-councillor wards, even when they were divided by prominent physical and natural features or landmarks.

Result: This consideration remains unchanged. However, specific feedback on the application of this consideration (i.e. how communities in the county relate to each other north and south of the river), was tested in newly designed options.

As a consequence of this feedback, the Thames River has been used as boundary in:

- all of Option 13B-V2
- west of Chatham in Option 15C-V2
- north of ward 1 in Option 18A

Consideration #5: Design boundaries that reduce variation in councillors per ward by standardizing or limiting the variation in number of councillors per ward to only one or two councillors per ward.

Feedback: Opinion on the preferred number of councillors per ward was divided.

- Some participants criticized the status quo with six councillors in ward 6 and 3 in ward 2, preferring no more than 1 or 2 councillors per ward, and more wards.
- Some saw the benefit of having up to two councillors per ward to improve resident

access and better manage councillor workload.

- Some had a strong preference for only one councillor per ward, although most acknowledged that achieving a uniform number of councillors per ward is less important than not dividing Wallaceburg.

Result: Amended to remove the preference for a standard number of councillors per ward.

As a consequence of this feedback, all newly designed and preferred options for a reduced council size include wards with one or two councillors per ward depending on its population, character, and boundaries.

Consideration #6: Design wards that are not excessively large geographically.

Feedback: Some stressed that the burden of travel time within the ward was both a significant barrier to running for office and effectively serving constituents. Interestingly, while councillors were cautious about increasing the size of wards, they did not highlight major concerns about travel distances within Chatham-Kent's existing ward boundaries.

Result: The "effective representation" test includes the design of "compact ward". Based on the large size of Chatham-Kent, and the feedback received, we evaluated "end-to-end" travel time within wards for each option.

As a consequence of this feedback, a benchmark travel time of 40 minutes was used to evaluate the geographic size of wards of all preferred option based on the current travel times within Chatham-Kent's existing wards.

Applying Stakeholder Feedback to Ward Boundary Options

Based on feedback and evaluation of the presented ward boundary options using the revised consideration for defining “effective representation” in Chatham-Kent, StrategyCorp:

- Re-evaluated the seven Options presented to Council on November 4th; and
- Generated two revised Options (13B-V2 and 15C-V2); and
- Generated one new Option (15D).

Detailed evaluations for all the Options is presented in Schedule A. A summary of the findings is outlined in the table below.

Table of Options								
Council Size / ID	Description	Mayor	Cllrs	Chatham		Kent		Passes “Effective Representation” Test
				Cllrs	Wards	Cllrs	Wards	
Options for a Council of 18								
18A	Updated Status Quo	1	17	7	7	10	5	YES
Options for Council of 15								
15A*	1 Cllr per ward	1	14	6	6	8	8	NO
15B	2 Cllr per ward in Kent / 1 Cllr per ward in Chatham	1	14	6	6	8	4	YES
15C	2 per ward	1	14	6	3	8	4	YES
15C-V2 (revised)	Modified 15C with new Chatham wards	1	14	6	3	8	4	YES
15D (new)	1 or 2 per ward – using the Thames as a boundary in the County	1	14	6	3	8	7	NO
Options for a Council of 13								
13A	1 per ward	1	12	5	5	7	7	NO
13B	1 per ward alternative	1	12	5	5	7	7	YES
13B-V2 (revised)	Modified 13B with new Wallaceburg and Chatham wards	1	12	5	3	7	6	YES
13C	1 or 2 per ward in Kent / 1 Cllr per ward in Chatham	1	12	5	5	7	4	NO

*Option 15A was slightly amended following the Draft Ward Boundary Options Report but before seeking public comment. The version evaluated in this report is the amended one presented to the public.

Part 3: Council Composition & Ward Boundary Recommendations

Based on the principles of Effective Representation, and the design considerations that apply them to the realities of Chatham-Kent's geography and settlement patterns, StrategyCorp has developed recommended ward boundary alignments for Councils of 13, 15 and 18, as set out in the following table:

Table of Recommendations			
Council Size	Recommended Ward Boundaries	Passes the "Effective Representation" Test	StrategyCorp Recommendation
13 (12+1)	Option 13B-V2 (revised)	YES	Preferred
15 (14+1)	Option 15C-V2 (revised)	YES	Acceptable
18 (17+1)	Option 18A	YES	Acceptable

Council of 13

Option 13B-V2 is recommended should Council decide to adopt a Council of 13. Option 13B-V2 is a modified version of Option 13B.

Option 13B had the **following strengths:**

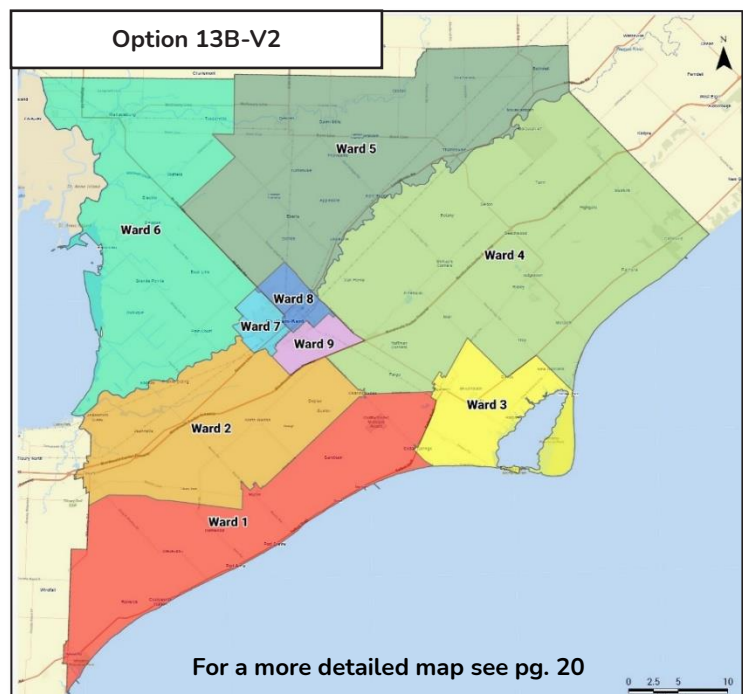
- ✓ Achieved reduced council size of 13;
- ✓ Results in effective county wards by using Thames River as a boundary; and
- ✓ County wards are designed around significant communities.

The revisions to 13B included:

- ✓ Combining northern county wards and adjusting boundaries to keep Wallaceburg as one ward with two councillors – rather than dividing it;
- ✓ Reducing the number of wards in Chatham from five to three with 1 or 2 councillors each to avoid splitting existing neighbourhoods; and
- ✓ Adjusting wards 1, 2 and 3 to improve population parity in ward 2 from -21% to -14%.

Some trade off's for Option 13B-V2:

- One ward with sub-optimal population variances in 2024 and 2026 and two wards in 2030;



- Some boundaries are a less clear/more confusing to keep communities together; and
- Ward 1 is quite large with a travel time of ~45 minutes from east-to-west, for one councillor.
- While ward 6 keeps Wallaceburg intact, to do so requires adding in significant adjacent rural area.

13B-V2: Draft Ward Populations and Variance

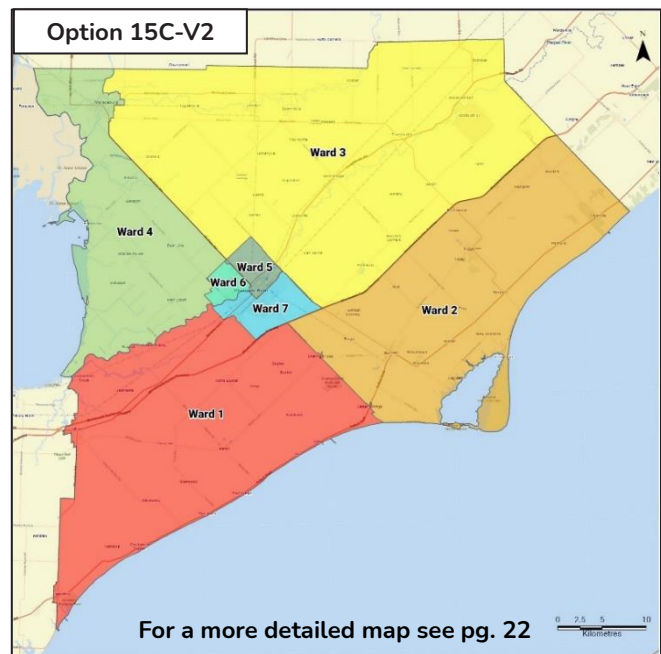
Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance	Ward Pop	Variance	Ward Pop	Variance
(1)	1	8,864	-9%	8,969	-9%	9,086	-9%
(2)	1	8,378	-14%	8,419	-14%	8,465	-15%
(3)	1	10,191	+5%	10,280	+5%	10,380	+4%
(4)	1	9,515	-2%	9,525	-3%	9,536	-4%
(5)	1	10,601	+9%	10,675	+9%	10,757	+8%
(6)	2	17,728	-9%	17,816	-9%	17,913	-10%
(7)	2	21,421	+10%	22,028	+12%	22,705	+14%
(8)	2	19,478	0%	19,841	+1%	20,245	+1%
(9)	1	10,300	+6%	10,458	+6%	10,633	+7%
12+1		116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Council of 15

Option 15C-V2 is recommended should Council decide to adopt a Council size of 15. Option 15C-V2 is a modified version of Option 15C.

Option 15C had the following strengths:

- ✓ Achieved reduced council size of 15;
- ✓ Achieves optimal parity among all wards in 2024 and only one ward at sub-optimal parity in 2026 and 2032;
- ✓ Leverages straightforward boundaries in the county including the Thames River and Highway 401;
- ✓ Preserves Wallaceburg as a single ward; and
- ✓ Limits the division of Chatham into 3 wards.



The revisions to 15C included:

- ✓ Adjusting the ward boundaries in Chatham to use more grid-like boundaries including the Thames River, Park Ave, and St. Clair St.

Some trade off's for Option 15C-V2:

- One county ward is bisected by the Thames River.

15C-V2 – Draft Ward Populations and Variance

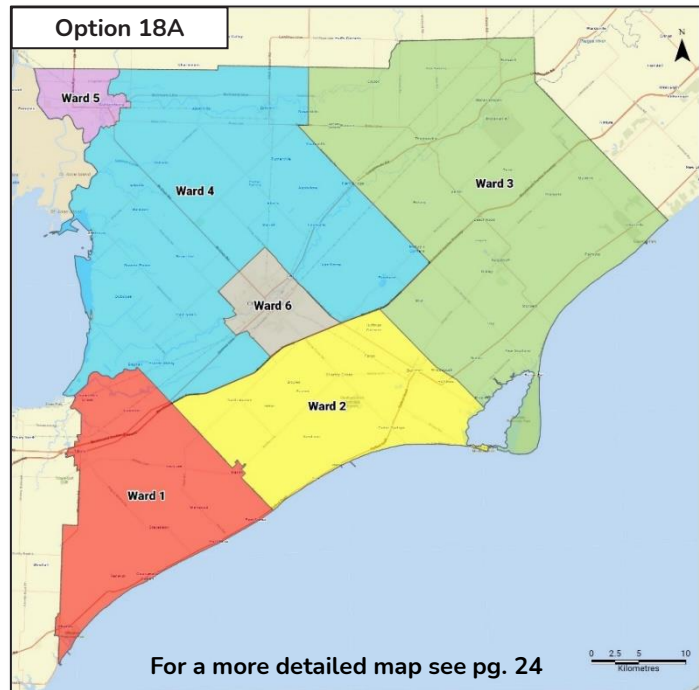
Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance	Ward Pop	Variance	Ward Pop	Variance
(1)	2	16,656	0%	16,803	0%	16,966	-1%
(2)	2	17,607	+6%	17,708	+5%	17,820	+4%
(3)	2	14,609	-12%	14,680	-13%	14,759	-14%
(4)	2	16,405	-1%	16,494	-2%	16,593	-3%
(5)	2	16,981	+2%	17,309	+3%	17,675	+3%
(6)	2	16,301	-2%	16,648	-1%	17,034	0%
(7)	2	17,917	+8%	18,370	+9%	18,874	+10%
	14+1	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Council of 18

Option 18A is recommended should Council decide to maintain its current council size of 18. No changes were made to this Option based on feedback received.

Option 18A has the following strengths when compared to Chatham-Kent's existing ward boundaries:

- ✓ Improves parity among all wards;
- ✓ Addresses inadequacy of Chatham representation on council;
- ✓ Includes "stranded" urban neighborhoods within the boundaries of their affiliated communities (i.e. Chatham and Wallaceburg); and
- ✓ Uses simple boundaries that residents are either already familiar with or follow more recognizable features.



Some trade off's for Option 18A:

- It does not reduce the size of Council;
- It preserves the asymmetry of ward 6 relative to other wards, by allocating 7 councillors, compared to 2 in other wards;

- Wards 3 and 4 are bisected by the Thames River; and
- It slightly increases travel times in Ward 3.

18A – Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance	Ward Pop	Variance	Ward Pop	Variance
(1)	2	12,706	-7%	12,855	-7%	13,023	-8%
(2)	2	12,736	-7%	12,824	-8%	12,923	-8%
(3)	2	14,058	+3%	14,066	+1%	14,075	0%
(4)	2	13,314	-3%	13,382	-4%	13,459	-4%
(5)	2	12,512	-9%	12,604	-9%	12,707	-10%
(6)	7	51,151	+7%	52,278	+8%	53,535	+9%
	17+8	116,476	6,852	118,011	6,942	119,721	7,042

Overall Recommendations

Each of the Options outlined would pass the “Effective Representation” test. However, they are not all equally preferred.

Voter Parity: Each of the preferred options fall well within acceptable ranges for parity in 2024, 2026, and 2030.

- Option 18A provides for variances well within optimal ranges 2024, 2026, and 2030.
- Option 15C-V2 provides for variances within optimal ranges in 2024, with one ward just outside optimal variances in 2026 and 2030.
- Option 13B-V2 contains only one ward just outside optimal variance in 2024 and 2026, and two outside optimal variances in 2030.

Communities, Boundaries & Communication: All the recommended options effectively consider communities and diversity of interest; physical and natural features; and means of communication and accessibility. Option 13B-V2 is slightly preferable to both Options 15C-V2 and 18A.

- Option 13B-V2 effectively uses the Thames River to divide county wards and creates manageably sized wards around existing communities.
- Option 15C-V2 creates one ward bisected by the Thames River and creates larger but still manageable wards by grouping existing communities together.
- Option 18A creates two wards that are bisected by Thames River and creates larger but still manageable wards by grouping existing communities together.

Overall Effective Representation: Each of the preferred options deliver effective representation and improve on the parity between Chatham and county wards. Options 13B-V2 and 15C-V2 are both preferred as they reduce the variation in councillors per ward.

- Options 13B-V2 and 15C-V2 reduce variation in councillors per ward to 1:2
- Option 18A increase the variation in councillors per ward to 2:7
- The status quo variation in councillors per ward is 3:6

Council Size: As previously discussed in our Interim Report (September 23/2024) Chatham-Kent is an outlier among Ontario municipalities with its 18 members of Council. We would recommend that Council, take this opportunity in its history to reduce its size of 13, and continue its evolution from the amalgamation of 1996.

While **any of the three recommended options would deliver improved effective representation** for the residents of Chatham-Kent, **StrategyCorp prefers option 13B-V2** as it can deliver on a reduced council size while delivering effective representation that is superior to the status quo and the other options considered.

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Schedule A: Evaluation of All Options

This section includes the detailed evaluations of the draft ward boundary options considered in this Report. It includes the seven options presented during the public consultation, as well as the one new and two revised maps that were developed and evaluated based on stakeholder feedback. While six of the ten Options presented pass the “Effective Representation” Test, StrategyCorp has recommended one Option for each size of Council evaluated (13, 15 & 18). Our recommendations are details in Part 3 of this Report.

The evaluation of each option is summarized in the table below:

Table of Options								
Recommended Options								
Council Size / ID	Description	Mayor	Cllrs	Chatham		Kent		Passes “Effective Representation” Test
				Cllrs	Wards	Cllrs	Wards	
13B-V2 (revised)	Modified 13B with new Wallaceburg and Chatham wards	1	12	5	3	7	6	YES (preferred option)
15C-V2 (revised)	Modified 15C with new Chatham wards	1	14	6	3	8	4	YES
18A	Updated Status Quo	1	17	7	7	10	5	YES
Other Options for a Council of 15								
15A*	1 Cllr per ward	1	14	6	6	8	8	NO
15B	2 Cllr per ward in Kent / 1 Cllr per ward in Chatham	1	14	6	6	8	4	YES
15C	2 per ward	1	14	6	3	8	4	YES
15D (new)	1 or 2 per ward – using the Thames as a boundary in the County	1	14	6	3	8	7	NO
Other Options for a Council of 13								
13A	1 per ward	1	12	5	5	7	7	NO
13B	1 per ward alternative	1	12	5	5	7	7	YES
13C	1 or 2 per ward in Kent / 1 Cllr per ward in Chatham	1	12	5	5	7	4	NO

*Option 15A was slightly amended following the Draft Ward Boundary Options Report but before seeking public comment. The version evaluated in this report is the amended one presented to the public.

For each map evaluated, this section includes:

- i. A detailed map of the Municipality and a close up of Chatham;
- ii. Ward population data for 2024, 2026 and 2030, as well as variance from the quotient; (the detailed methodology to determine population estimates for each option is described in Appendix III.)
- iii. A sample of stakeholder feedback; and
- iv. A completed evaluation framework for delivering “Effective Representation”.

The “Effective Representation” Test Framework

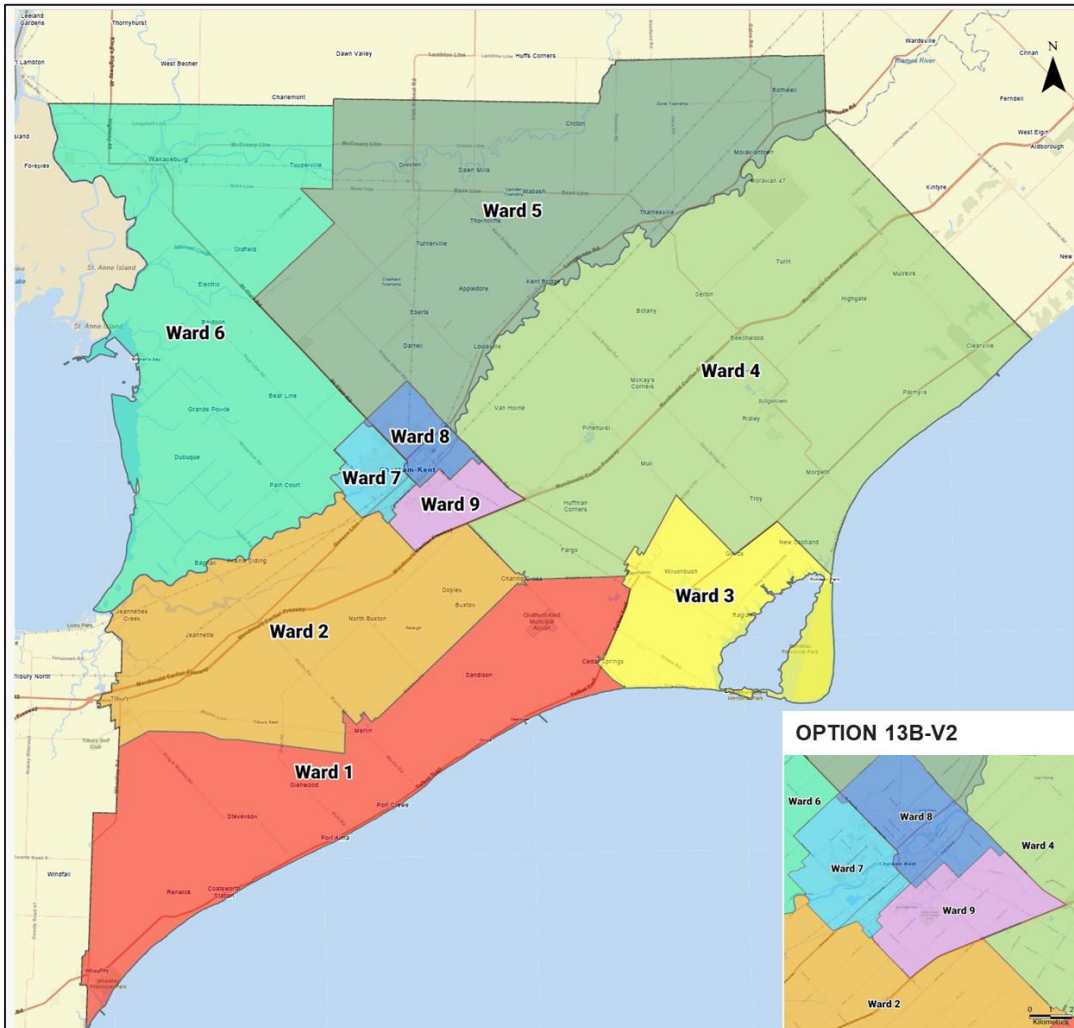
This evaluation framework includes the same considerations used to evaluate the current ward boundaries drawn from the Review’s Terms of Reference and the principles of “Effective Representation” in the Interim Report, as well as the specific considerations for each Principle that were further defined in Part 2 of this Report.

For each draft ward boundary map, we have provided commentary on the strengths **(in black)** and weakness **(in red)** according to each of the principles in this framework. StrategyCorp’s final assessment on whether each map meets the overall test for “effective representation” is highlighted in yellow at the bottom of the table.

Effective Representation Evaluation Framework	
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. 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. Ward boundaries should preserve both rural / agricultural and urban representation on Council. Wallaceburg should not be divided Chatham’s neighbourhoods and subdivisions should not be divided
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 easy to understand. Ward boundaries in the county should be drawn along the Thames River wherever possible.
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. Ward boundaries should be designed to keep wards compact and limit travel time within wards.
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. Chatham should have a number of councillors proportionate to the number of residents in Chatham. Variation in the number of councillors elected per ward should be reduced.
Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?	
YES / NO	

Recommended Draft Ward Option 13B-V2 (Revised)

The option consists of 10 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 13, where 1 or 2 Councillors would be elected per ward. Boundaries were adjusted to improve voter parity in ward 2 and Chatham and Wallaceburg boundaries have been modified based on feedback for consultations.



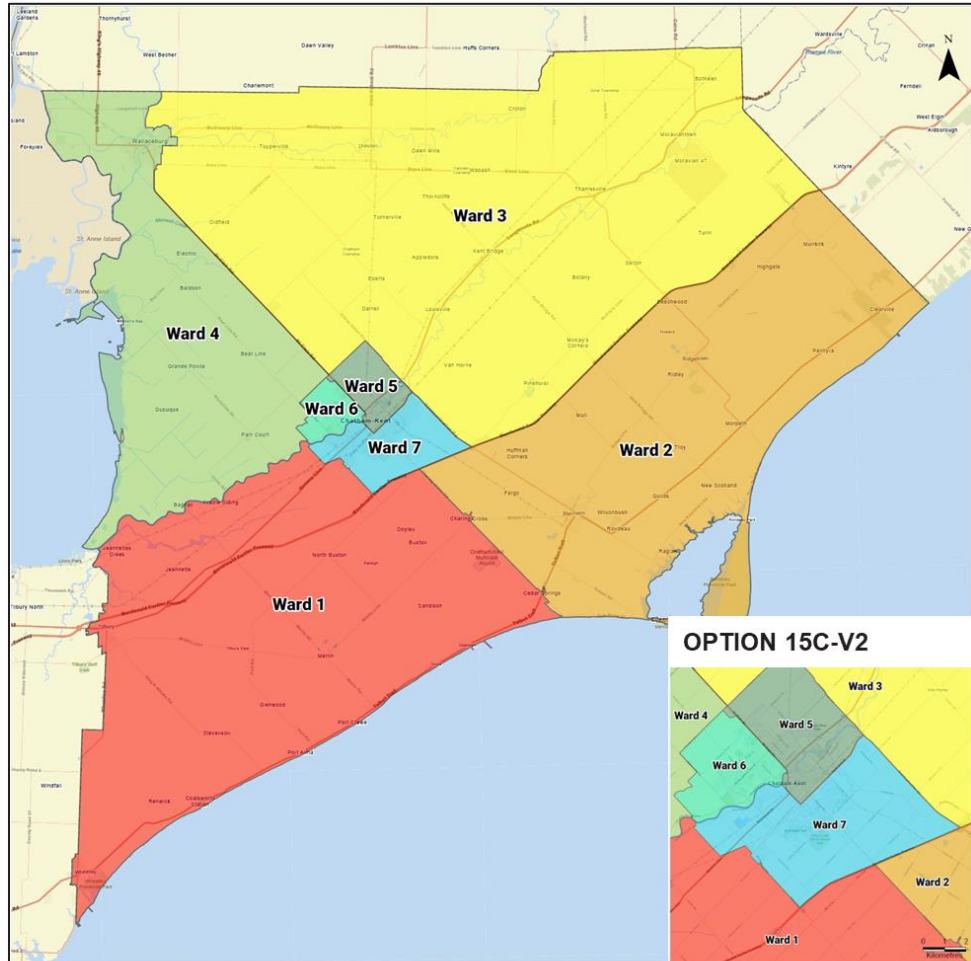
Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	1	8,864	-9%	8,969	-9%	9,086	-9%
(2)	1	8,378	-14%	8,419	-14%	8,465	-15%
(3)	1	10,191	+5%	10,280	+5%	10,380	+4%
(4)	1	9,515	-2%	9,525	-3%	9,536	-4%
(5)	1	10,601	+9%	10,675	+9%	10,757	+8%
(6)	2	17,728	-9%	17,816	-9%	17,913	-10%
(7)	2	21,421	+10%	22,028	+12%	22,705	+14%
(8)	2	19,478	0%	19,841	+1%	20,245	+1%
(9)	1	10,300	+6%	10,458	+6%	10,633	+7%
TOTAL/AVG	12	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Option 13B-V2 – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework	
1. Parity of Wards: Current Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Wards except Ward 2 achieve optimal parity. Ward 2 is only slightly sub-optimal at -14%.
2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2026 and 2030, most wards achieve optimal parity. In 2026 and 2030, ward 2 continues to be sub-optimal at -14/15%.
3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham. Creates functioning rural wards. Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward. Chatham is divided into three wards. All boundaries are designed to avoid splitting neighbourhoods or dividing them from their communities.
4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Thames River is used as a boundary for wards in the County. For the most part, all wards have intuitive boundaries, with the exception of wards 1 and 3, which are complicated by the challenge of keeping together related communities (such as Merlin, Blenheim, Charing Cross, and Cedar Springs.)
5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area in most cases. Ward 1 is large, with an east-west travel time of ~45 minutes with only one councillor.
7. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors). All wards have one or two councillors, reducing variation in councillors per ward from 3:6 to 1:2.
Meets the overall test for “effective representation?”	
YES	

Recommended Draft Ward Option 15C-V2 (Revised)

This is a revised version of Option 15C consisting of **7 wards** and with the Mayor would result in a **Council of 15**, where **2 Councillors would be elected per ward**. Chatham boundaries have been modified based on feedback for consultations.



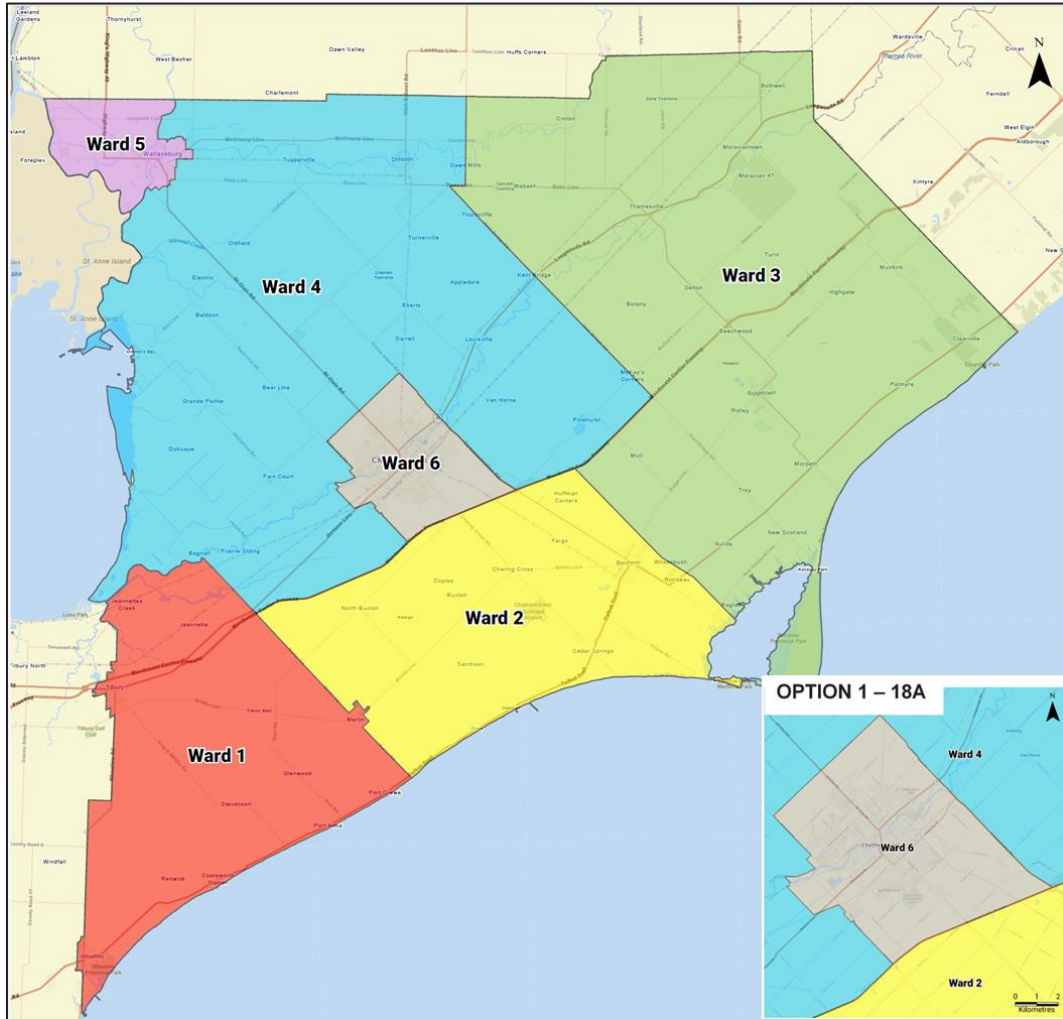
Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	CLRs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	2	16,656	0%	16,803	0%	16,966	-1%
(2)	2	17,607	+6%	17,708	+5%	17,820	+4%
(3)	2	14,609	-12%	14,680	-13%	14,759	-14%
(4)	2	16,405	-1%	16,494	-2%	16,593	-3%
(5)	2	16,981	+2%	17,309	+3%	17,675	+3%
(6)	2	16,301	-2%	16,648	-1%	17,034	0%
(7)	2	17,917	+8%	18,370	+9%	18,874	+10%
TOTAL/AVG	14	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Option 15C-V2 – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework	
1. Parity of Wards: Current Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All wards achieve optimal parity.
2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2026 and 2030, most wards achieve optimal parity. Ward 3 falls within the sub-optimal but acceptable range in 2026 and 2030.
3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham. Creates functioning rural wards. Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward. Chatham is divided into three wards. All boundaries are designed to avoid splitting neighbourhoods or dividing them from their communities.
4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The boundary between wards 1 and 4 leverages the Thames River. Ward boundaries are generally easy to understand and follow major highways or arterial roads including the 401. Ward 3 straddles the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.
5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area. Wards all have travel times of ~35 minutes or less. There are limited crossing opportunities of the Thames River in ward 3.
6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors). All wards have two councillors, eliminating all variation in councillors per ward.
Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?	
YES	

Recommended Draft Ward Option 18A

This option is Chatham-Kent’s updated Status Quo. The option consists of 6 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 18, where 2 Councillors are elected per ward in Kent and 7 councillors would be elected at-large in Chatham.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	2	12,706	-7%	12,855	-7%	13,023	-8%
(2)	2	12,736	-7%	12,824	-8%	12,923	-8%
(3)	2	14,058	+3%	14,066	+1%	14,075	0%
(4)	2	13,314	-3%	13,382	-4%	13,459	-4%
(5)	2	12,512	-9%	12,604	-9%	12,707	-10%
(6)	7	51,151	+7%	52,278	+8%	53,535	+9%
TOTAL	17	116,476	6,852	118,011	6,942	119,721	7,042

Option 18A – Summary of Participant Feedback*

Keep the status quo...

- ▶ “Keep the boundaries as they are. The existing ward boundaries are well within the acceptable population sizes for current and projected future growth.”
- ▶ “This should be the current Council structure. If the Council size does not decrease, this should be the preferred option to best reflect the community at large.”

Status quo is not working...

- ▶ “For over 25 years the current system has not been effective. The wards are not adequately proportioned or represented by population.”
- ▶ “18 Councillors is too many.”
- ▶ “Chatham-Kent should decrease council. There is no need for 17 councillors plus the Mayor.”
- ▶ “Each ward should have two councillors.”
- ▶ “Wallaceburg shouldn't be lumped into ward 4, country wards seem too large for fair representation.”

*The quotes presented above have been edited for clarity and brevity only.

Option 18A – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population

- With the addition of the additional councillor in Chatham, all wards achieve optimal parity.

2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population

- In 2026 and 2030, all wards achieve optimal parity.

3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.

- Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham.
- Creates functioning rural wards.
- Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward.
- All boundaries are designed to avoid splitting neighbourhoods or dividing them from their communities.

4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

- The Thames River is a boundary for ward 1.
- All wards are based on major highways or arterial roads including the 401.
- Two wards are bisected by the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.

5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility

- Wards generally follow the same layout and size of existing wards.
- Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area.
- Travel times are slightly increased in ward 3 and remain constant (although unimproved) in ward 4.
- Wards bisected by the river have limited crossing opportunities.

6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”

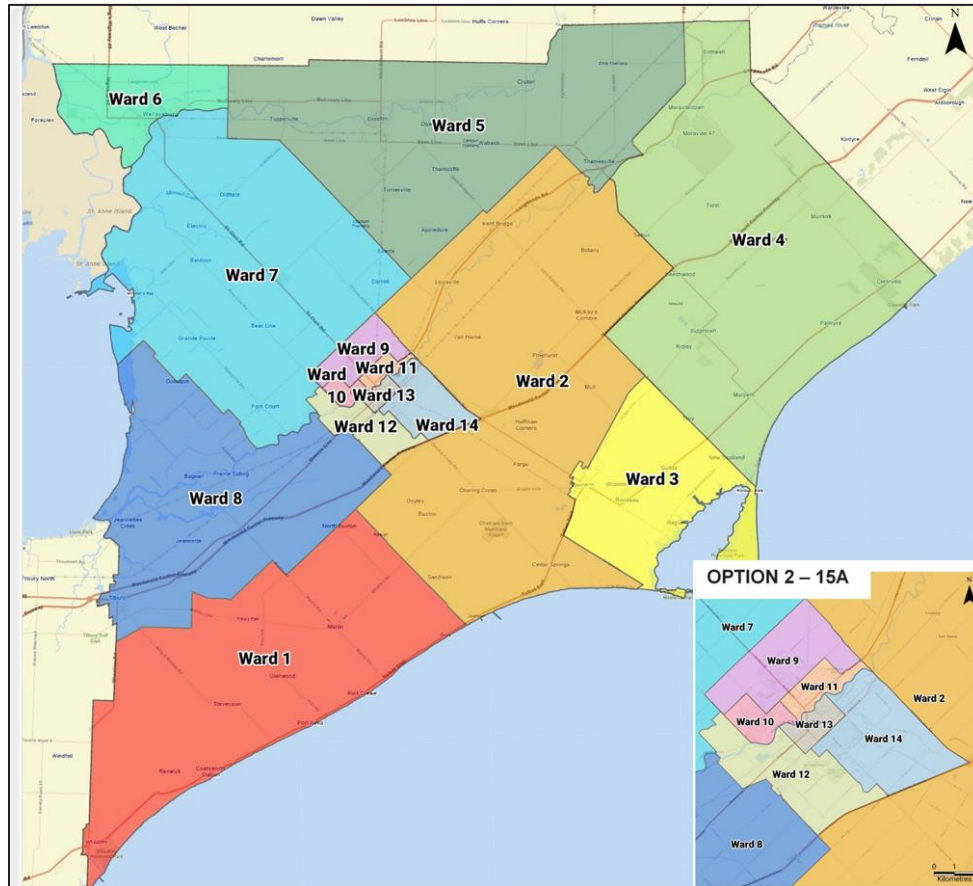
- Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (7 Chatham councillors).
- Increases variation in councillors per ward from 3:6 to 2:7.

Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?

YES

Draft Ward Option 15A

The option consists of 14 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 15, where 1 Councillor would be elected per ward. This option was revised to improve population parity following the Interim report. This is the version that was shared for consultation.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	1	7,637	-8%	7,741	-8%	7,857	-8%
(2)	1	8,123	-2%	8,118	-4%	8,113	-5%
(3)	1	9,201	+11%	9,290	+10%	9,390	+10%
(4)	1	8,061	-3%	8,073	-4%	8,086	-5%
(5)	1	7,422	-11%	7,497	-11%	7,581	-11%
(6)	1	8,979	+8%	9,048	+7%	9,125	+7%
(7)	1	8,502	+2%	8,522	+1%	8,544	0%
(8)	1	7,352	-12%	7,395	-12%	7,442	-13%
(9)	1	8,963	+8%	9,135	+8%	9,327	+9%
(10)	1	9,195	+11%	9,399	+12%	9,627	+13%
(11)	1	9,304	+12%	9,507	+13%	9,733	+14%
(12)	1	7,375	-11%	7,712	-9%	8,087	-5%
(13)	1	7,480	-10%	7,605	-10%	7,743	-9%
(14)	1	8,882	+7%	8,969	+6%	9,066	+6%
TOTAL/AVG	14	116,476	8,320	118,011	8,429	119,721	8,551

Option 15A – Summary of Participant Feedback

- ▶ “15A would provide adequate representation but the division by population could still be increased.”
- ▶ “This map warrants strong consideration, as it offers the benefit of one councillor per ward. This structure enhances clarity for residents, making it easier to identify the specific representative for each area and ensuring more direct and accountable communication with elected officials.”
- ▶ “This structure allows for both a reasonable population per Councillor as well as mitigating the geographic area that individual would represent.”
- ▶ “I feel 14 ward options is a little too much and overwhelming for just 1 Councillor.”
- ▶ “While this options respects representation by population, the negative impact is it splits communities, in particularly Wallaceburg. Better to have two Councillors elected in Wallaceburg within a larger geographic area that respects the representation by population, i.e., option 7C or 15C.”
- ▶ “Chatham has too many wards.....prefer the 3 wards in Chatham. Too many wards overall too. People are unsure of their wards with just 6 wards let alone 14.”

*The quotes presented have been edited for clarity and brevity only.

Option 15A – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population

- All wards achieve optimal parity.

2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population

- In 2026 and 2030, most wards achieve optimal parity.
- In 2026, ward 11 falls within the sub-optimal but acceptable range and wards 8, 10, and 11 fall within the sub-optimal but acceptable range in 2030.

3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.

- Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham.
- Creates functioning rural wards.
- Boundaries in the county are designed to avoid splitting existing communities.
- A number of historic neighbourhoods in Chatham are divided into different wards.

4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

- Wards in Chatham leverage the Thames River.
- Wards often do not follow clear lines or boundaries.
- Three wards are bisected by the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.

5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility

- Several wards retain existing travel times despite having fewer councillors per ward.
- A number of wards contain un-affiliated communities.
- Wards bisected by the river have limited crossing opportunities.

6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”

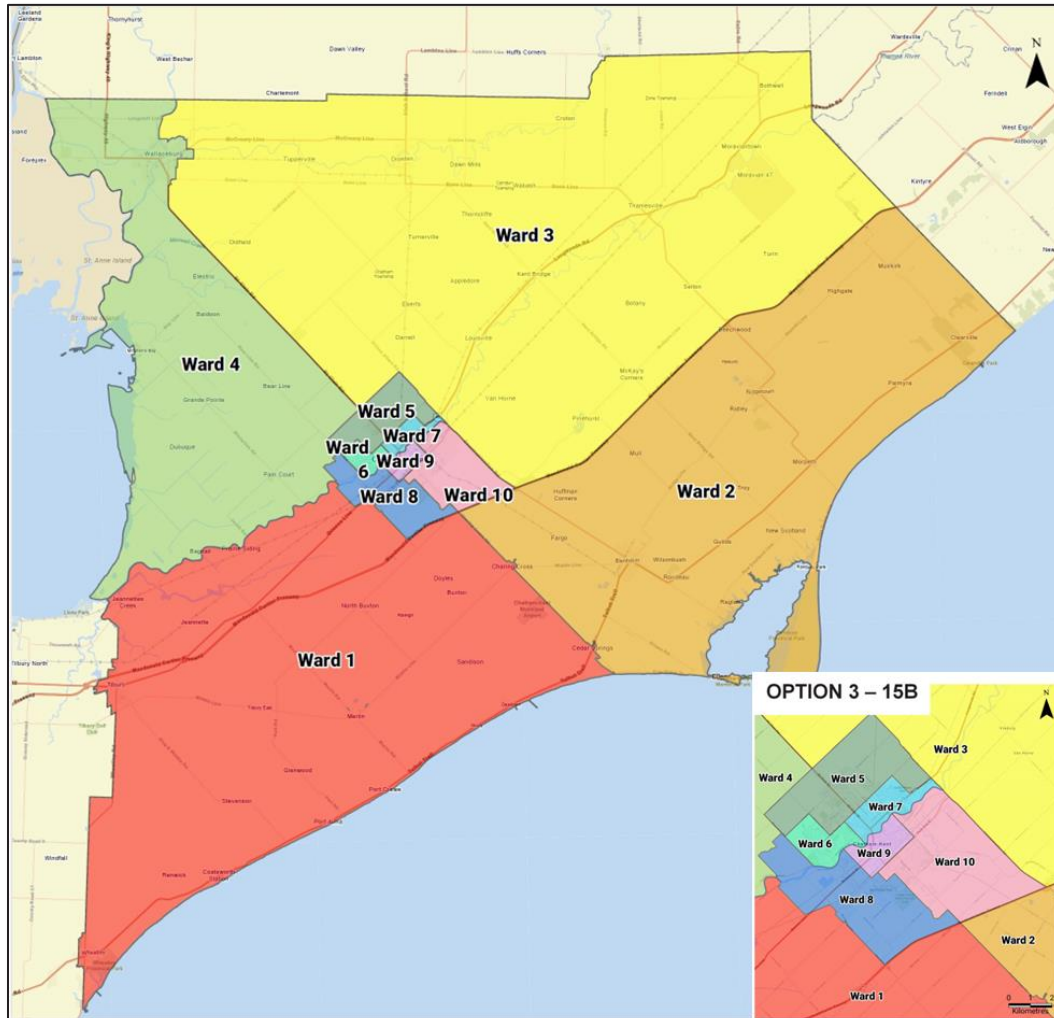
- Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors).
- All wards have one councillors, eliminating all variation in councillors per ward.

Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?

NO

Draft Ward Option 15B

The option consists of 10 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 15, where 2 Councillors are elected per ward in Kent and 1 councillor would be elected per ward in Chatham.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	2	16,656	0%	16,803	0%	16,966	-1%
(2)	2	17,607	+6%	17,708	+5%	17,820	+4%
(3)	2	14,609	-12%	14,680	-13%	14,759	-14%
(4)	2	16,405	-1%	16,494	-2%	16,593	-3%
(5)	1	8,963	+8%	9,135	+8%	9,327	+9%
(6)	1	9,195	+11%	9,399	+12%	9,627	+13%
(7)	1	9,304	+12%	9,507	+13%	9,733	+14%
(8)	1	7,375	-11%	7,712	-9%	8,087	-5%
(9)	1	7,480	-10%	7,605	-10%	7,743	-9%
(10)	1	8,882	+7%	8,969	+6%	9,066	+6%
TOTAL/AVG	14	116,476	8,320	118,011	8,429	119,721	8,552

Option 15B – Summary of Participant Feedback

- ▶ “I Like Chatham divided in wards.”
- ▶ “I think I prefer having Wallaceburg all in one ward, even if it dilutes the power of Ward 4's rural residents. Similar for Ward 2 with Erieau, Rondeau & Blenheim. Maybe keep Ward 2 & 4 with 2 Councillors, then split Ward 1 & 3?”
- ▶ “Some areas are just too geographically large.”
- ▶ “Ward 4 does not make sense, Wallaceburg and the remainder of Ward 4 are different, i.e. rural vs urban. Ward 4, excluding Wallaceburg has more in common with Dover and Ward 3.”

*The quotes presented have been edited for clarity and brevity only.

Option 15B – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population

- All wards achieve optimal parity.

2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population

- In 2026 and 2030, most wards achieve optimal parity.
- In 2026, wards 3 and 7 fall within the sub-optimal but acceptable range and wards 3, 6 and 7 fall within the sub-optimal but acceptable range in 2030.

3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.

- Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham.
- Creates functioning rural wards.
- Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward.
- **A number of neighbourhoods in Chatham are divided into different wards.**

4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

- Wards in and to the west of Chatham leverage the Thames River as a boundary.
- Ward boundaries are generally easy to understand and follow major highways or arterial roads including the 401.
- **Ward 3 is bisected by the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.**

5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility

- Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area.
- Wards all have travel times of 35 minutes or less.
- **There are limited crossing opportunities of the Thames River in ward 3.**

6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”

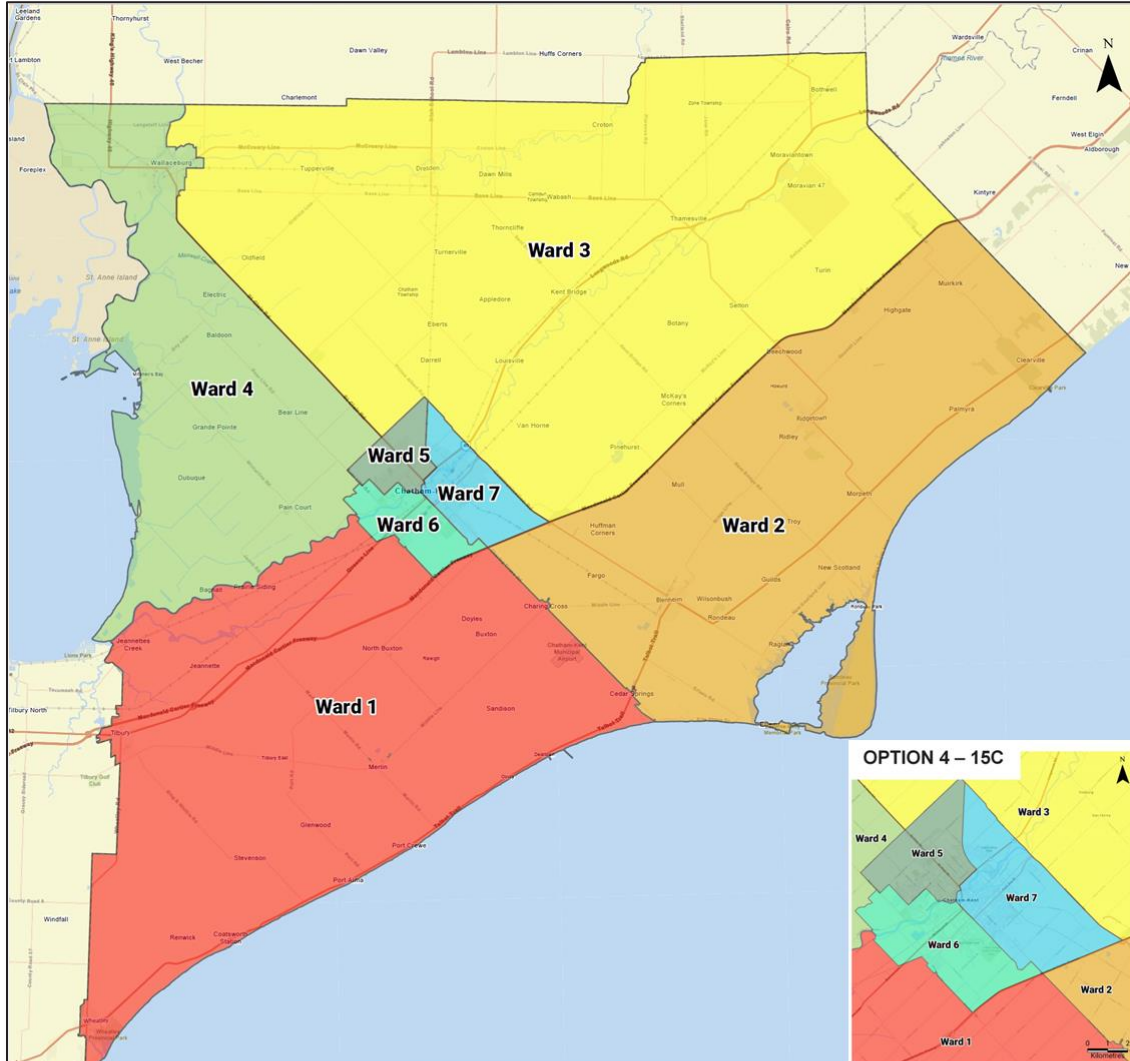
- Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors).
- All wards have one or two councillors, reducing variation in councillors per ward from 3:6 to 1:2.

Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?

YES

Draft Ward Option 15C

The option consists of 7 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 15, where 2 Councillors would be elected per ward.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	2	16,656	0%	16,803	0%	16,966	-1%
(2)	2	17,607	+6%	17,708	+5%	17,820	+4%
(3)	2	14,609	-12%	14,680	-13%	14,759	-14%
(4)	2	16,405	-1%	16,494	-2%	16,593	-3%
(5)	2	18,232	+10%	18,551	+10%	18,906	+11%
(6)	2	15,086	-9%	15,616	-7%	16,207	-5%
(7)	2	17,882	+7%	18,160	+8%	18,470	+8%
TOTAL/AVG	14	116,476	8,320	118,011	8,429	119,721	8,552

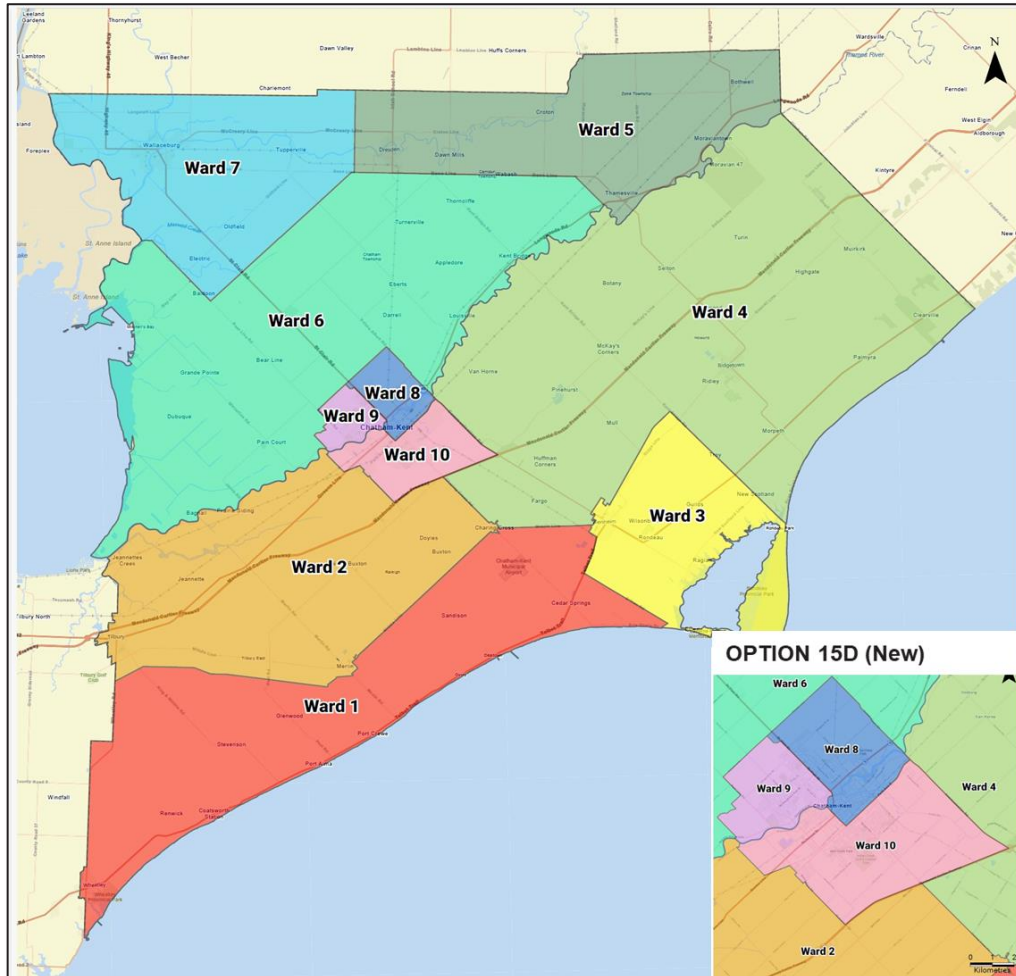
Option 15C – Summary of Participant Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>“This is the best option in my opinion with the exception that Charing Cross should remain in ward 2. Charing Cross most would shop, go to school, play sports in Blenheim and/or Chatham.”</i> ▶ <i>“I like that there are 2 councillors per ward. It gives a better option for representation and allows for diversity within the ward. It also allows two different individuals with different experiences behind them to give different perspectives.”</i> ▶ <i>“This would actually be the best option. Population is similar across the board and is manageable by all involved. It would be a ward more than I would like but in all fairness, this is better than having one councillor responsible for double what everyone else has.”</i> ▶ <i>“This map should be rejected for the same reasons that Option 13-15B should also be dismissed. By excluding Wallaceburg from dedicated representation and incorporating it into a larger ward, this structure diminishes the significance of our second-largest community. Wallaceburg deserves a focused voice in council, and this map fails to prioritize that need.”</i> ▶ <i>“Still too large to be an effective council! Significant variance for representation!”</i> ▶ <i>“Strongly opposed structure for Chatham proper, need to have 1 councillor per ward, and Wallaceburg issue remains.”</i>

**The quotes presented have been edited for clarity and brevity only.*

Option 15C – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework
1. Parity of Wards: Current Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All wards achieve optimal parity.
2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2026 and 2030, most wards achieve optimal parity. • Ward 3 falls within the sub-optimal but acceptable range in 2026 and 2030.
3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham. • Creates functioning rural wards. • Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward. • Chatham is divided into three wards. • Some neighbourhoods in Chatham are divided between wards or are grouped inappropriately.
4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boundary between wards 1 and 4 leverages the Thames River. • Ward boundaries are easy to understand and follow major highways or arterial roads (i.e., the 401). • Ward 3 is bisected by the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.
5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area. • Wards all have travel times of 35 minutes or less. • There are limited crossing opportunities of the Thames River in ward 3.
6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors). • All wards have two councillors, eliminating all variation in councillors per ward.
Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?
YES

Draft Ward Option 15D (New)

The option consists of **10 wards** and with the Mayor would result in a **Council of 15**, where **1 or 2 Councillors would be elected per ward**. This option was developed using the Thames River as a boundary between county wards while keeping Wallaceburg in a single ward.



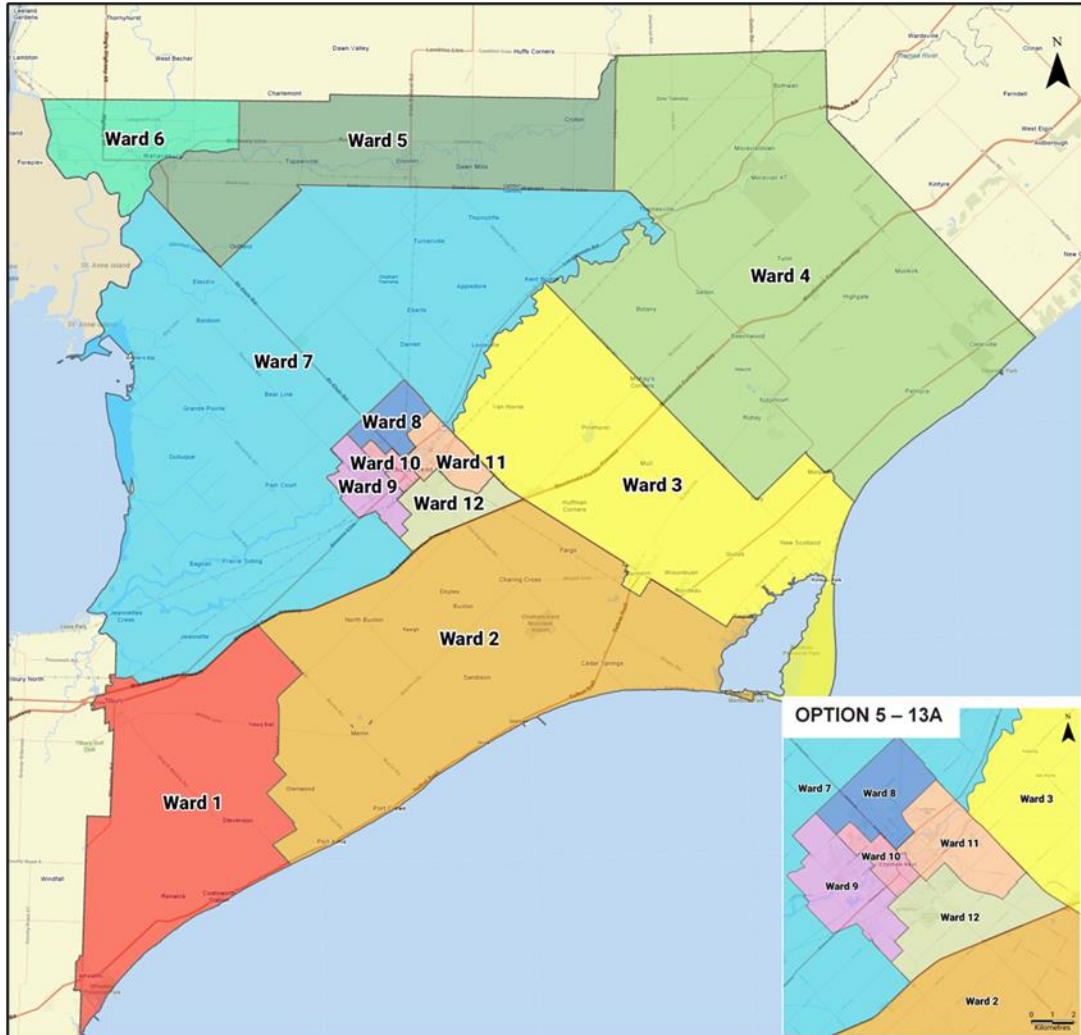
Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	1	9,335	+12%	9,439	+12%	9,556	+12%
(2)	1	9,123	+10%	9,164	+9%	9,210	+8%
(3)	1	9,201	+11%	9,290	+10%	9,390	+10%
(4)	1	9,289	+12%	9,300	+10%	9,311	+9%
(5)	1	7,005	-16%	7,081	-16%	7,166	-16%
(6)	1	7,033	-15%	7,029	-17%	7,024	-18%
(7)	2	14,291	-14%	14,381	-15%	14,481	-15%
(8)	2	16,981	+2%	17,309	+3%	17,675	+3%
(9)	2	16,301	-2%	16,648	-1%	17,034	0%
(10)	2	17,917	+8%	18,370	+9%	18,874	+10%
TOTAL/AVG	14	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Option 15D – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework	
1. Parity of Wards: Current Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three county wards north of the Thames River (Wards 5,6 and 7) begin in the sub-optimal range.
2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2026 and 2030, all three county wards north of the Thames River (Wards 5,6 and 7) continue to be in the sub-optimal range and get progressively worse.
3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham. Creates functioning rural wards. Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward. Chatham is divided into three wards. All boundaries are designed to avoid splitting neighbourhoods or dividing them from their communities.
4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Thames River is a boundary across the county wards. Ward boundaries are generally easy to understand and follow major highways or arterial roads including the 401.
5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area. Ward 1 and Ward 6 are large, with east-west travel times of ~45 minutes each in wards with only one councillor each.
6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors). All wards have one or two councillors, reducing variation in councillors per ward from 3:6 to 1:2.
Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?	
NO	

Draft Ward Option 13A

The option consists of 12 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 13, where 1 Councillor would be elected per ward.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	1	10,796	+11%	10,948	+11%	11,118	+11%
(2)	1	8,940	-8%	8,934	-9%	8,927	-11%
(3)	1	9,487	-2%	9,575	-3%	9,673	-3%
(4)	1	9,588	-1%	9,600	-2%	9,613	-4%
(5)	1	8,599	-11%	8,698	-12%	8,808	-12%
(6)	1	8,979	-7%	9,048	-8%	9,125	-9%
(7)	1	8,890	-8%	8,882	-10%	8,874	-11%
(8)	1	10,597	+9%	10,775	+10%	10,974	+10%
(9)	1	10,416	+7%	10,817	+10%	11,265	+13%
(10)	1	10,206	+5%	10,445	+6%	10,711	+7%
(11)	1	9,385	-3%	9,522	-3%	9,674	-3%
(12)	1	10,596	+9%	10,768	9%	10,959	+10%
TOTAL/AVG	12	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Option 13A – Summary of Participant Feedback

- ▶ “Better representation for all of Chatham-Kent. A better number of councillors.”
- ▶ “The division of the wards makes sense and one representative from each ward would be appropriate.”
- ▶ “We need less complexity in managing wards so less is better than increasing number to 12. Preference to have less wards and more than one Councillor per ward.”
- ▶ “13 Councillors including the Mayor is the best scenario. However, 13A will divide neighbourhoods in half. I do not support 13A as it will divide my neighbourhood near St. Agnes School in half. I support 13B because my neighbourhood stays intact.”
- ▶ “I like the county representation (except don't divide Wallaceburg using the Sydenham) give Wallaceburg two councillors if necessary but include the entire town.”

*The quotes presented have been edited for clarity and brevity only.

Option 13A – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population

- All wards achieve optimal parity.

2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population

- In 2026, all wards achieve optimal parity.
- In 2030, ward 9 just passes into the sub-optimal range.

3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.

- Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham.
- Creates functioning rural wards.
- Boundaries in the county are designed to avoid splitting existing communities.
- Divides Wallaceburg into 2 wards.
- A number of neighbourhoods in Chatham are divided into different wards.

4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

- The Thames River is a partial boundary for Ward 7.
- Most boundaries are based on major highways or arterial roads including the 401.
- Two wards are bisected by the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.
- Some boundaries do not follow clear lines or boundaries.

5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility

- Most communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area.
- Several wards retain existing travel times (i.e. up to 38 minutes in ward 7) despite having fewer councillors per ward.
- There are limited crossing opportunities of the Thames River in wards 4 and 7.

6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”

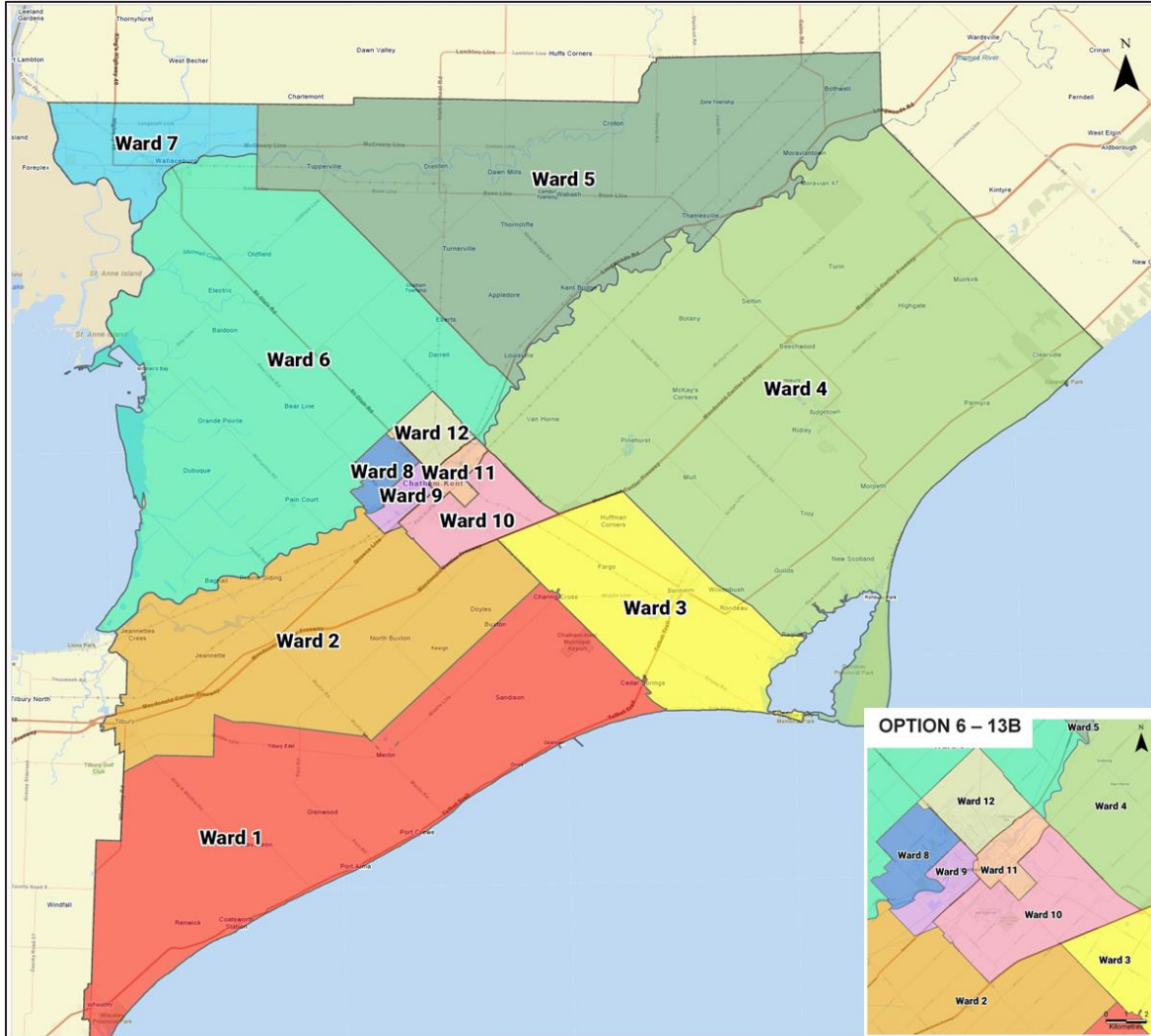
- Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors).
- All wards have one councillor, eliminating all variation in councillors per ward.

Meets the overall test for “effective representation”?

YES

Draft Ward Option 13B

The option consists of 12 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 13, where 1 Councillor would be elected per ward.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	1	8,983	-7%	9,087	-8%	9,202	-8%
(2)	1	7,674	-21%	7,716	-22%	7,763	-22%
(3)	1	9,457	-3%	9,548	-3%	9,649	-3%
(4)	1	10,834	12%	10,843	+10%	10,853	+9%
(5)	1	9,701	0%	9,775	-1%	9,858	-1%
(6)	1	9,649	-1%	9,667	-2%	9,688	-3%
(7)	1	8,979	-7%	9,048	-8%	9,125	-9%
(8)	1	10,093	+4%	10,338	+5%	10,610	+6%
(9)	1	9,843	+1%	10,107	+3%	10,401	+4%
(10)	1	10,358	+7%	10,642	+8%	10,958	+10%
(11)	1	10,475	+8%	10,625	+8%	10,793	+8%
(12)	1	10,431	+7%	10,615	+8%	10,820	+8%
TOTAL/AVG	12	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Option 13B – Summary of Participant Feedback

- ▶ “Most liked. Gives 12 wards with close to People Goals per ward. uses River boundaries for the Thames and Sydenham Rivers. Also uses the St. Clair river and Lake St. Clair & Lake Erie boundary.”
- ▶ “This is the best option 13B. Thank you for drawing these boundaries in Chatham Proper. In Chatham Proper 13B you keep neighbourhoods together.”
- ▶ “I believe this is the best option for fair representation in Ward 6 with neighbourhoods being represented.”
- ▶ “You do a really good job on 13B and 15A in protecting my neighbourhood – Chatham proper – north - I love that there is one councillor per ward.”
- ▶ “Chatham has too many wards...prefer the 3 wards in Chatham. Too many wards overall too. People are unsure of their wards with just 6 wards let alone 12.”

*The quotes presented have been edited for clarity and brevity only.

Option 13B – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population

- Most wards achieve optimal parity.
- **Ward 2 has quite sub-optimal population variances at -21%.**

2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population

- In 2026 and 2030, most wards achieve optimal parity.
- **In 2026 and 2030, Ward 2 continues to have sub-optimal variances at -22%.**

3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.

- Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham.
- Creates functioning rural wards.
- Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward.
- **A number of historic neighbourhoods in Chatham are divided into different wards.**

4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

- Wards in the county leverage the Thames River as a boundary and follow intuitive lines or boundaries.
- **Wards in Chatham often do not follow clear lines or boundaries.**

5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility

- Smaller communities and towns are linked appropriately to the relevant rural area.
- Wards all have travel times of ~30 minutes or less.

6. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”

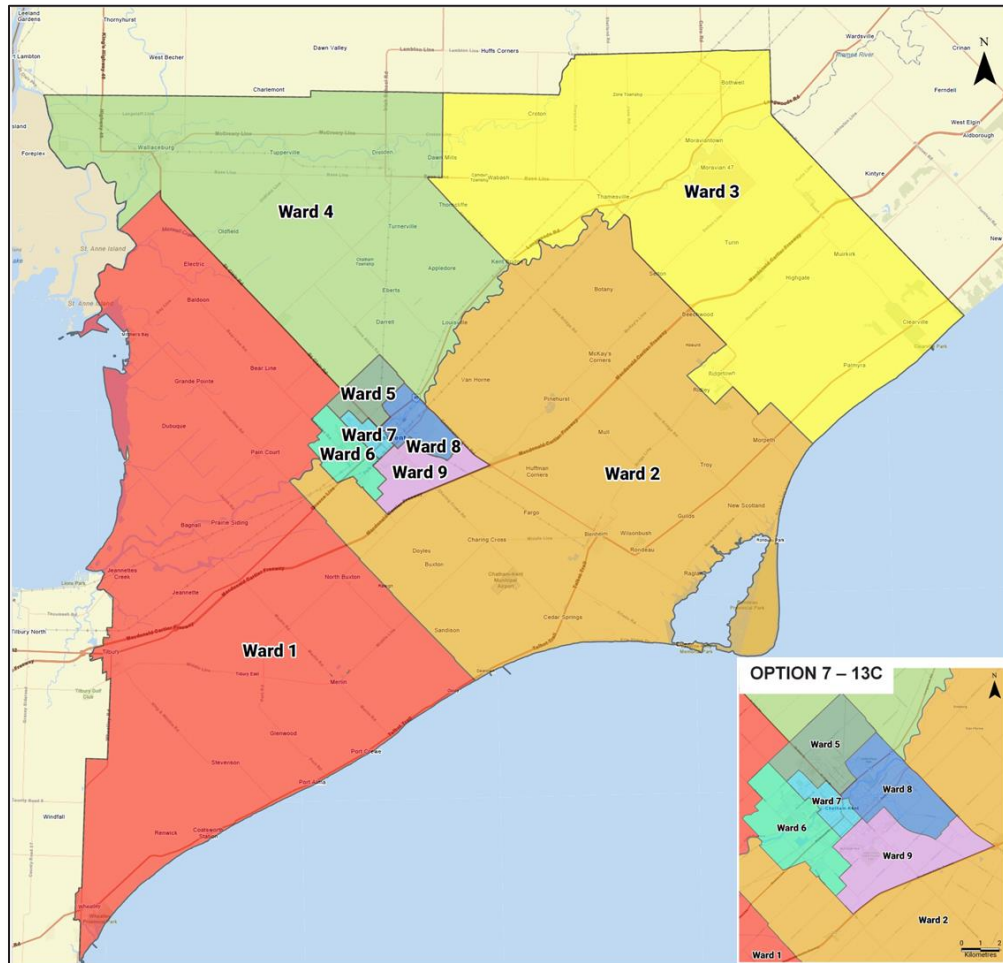
- Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors).
- All wards have two councillors, eliminating all variation in councillors per ward.

Meets the overall test for “effective representation?”

YES

Draft Ward Option 13C

The option consists of 9 wards and with the Mayor would result in a Council of 13, where 2 Councillors are elected per ward in ward 1,2 and 4. One Councillor would be elected per ward for all other wards.



Draft Ward Populations and Variance

Ward	Cllrs / Ward	2024		2026		2030	
		Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient	Ward Pop	Variance from Quotient
(1)	2	18,084	-7%	18,230	-7%	18,392	-8%
(2)	2	17,284	-11%	17,368	-12%	17,461	-12%
(3)	1	10,028	+3%	10,040	+2%	10,054	+1%
(4)	2	19,880	+2%	20,046	+2%	20,231	+1%
(5)	1	10,597	+9%	10,775	+10%	10,974	+10%
(6)	1	10,416	+7%	10,817	+10%	11,265	+13%
(7)	1	10,206	+5%	10,445	+6%	10,711	+7%
(8)	1	9,385	-3%	9,522	-3%	9,674	-3%
(9)	1	10,596	+9%	10,768	+9%	10,959	+10%
TOTAL/AVG	12	116,476	9,706	118,011	9,834	119,721	9,977

Option 13C – Summary of Participant Feedback

- ▶ “I like 13C only because I'm concerned about Wallaceburg.” [being divided in two]
- ▶ “Wallaceburg kept together and distribution better for more representation on wards outside of Chatham.”
- ▶ “This map should be rejected. The wards are far too large geographically, particularly in the rural areas, and the inclusion of areas across the Thames River in ward 1 creates an unnecessarily sprawling district. Furthermore, leaving Wallaceburg without dedicated representation is a significant disservice to its residents, as it diminishes their ability to have their specific concerns and needs effectively addressed by a local councillor.”

*The quotes presented have been edited for clarity and brevity only.

Option 13C – Effective Representation Evaluation Framework

1. Parity of Wards: Current Population

- All wards achieve optimal parity.

2. Parity of Wards: Forecast Population

- In 2026 all wards achieve optimal parity.
- In 2030, Ward 6 is in the sub-optimal range.

3. Consideration of Community or Diversity of Interests.

- Aligns Chatham ward boundaries with the practical boundary of Chatham.
- Creates functioning rural wards.
- Keeps all of Wallaceburg as one ward.
- A number of historic neighbourhoods in Chatham are divided into different wards.

4. Consideration of Physical Features as Natural Boundaries

- The Thames River is a partial boundary for ward 2.
- Most boundaries are based on major highways or arterial roads.
- Two wards are bisected by the Thames River, which is a natural boundary.
- Some boundaries do not follow clear lines or boundaries.

5. Consideration of Means of Communication and Accessibility

- A number of wards contain un-affiliated communities.
- Travel times are significantly over 40 minutes in ward 1 and they remain significant in other wards.
- Wards bisected by the river have limited crossing opportunities.

7. The Overriding Principle of “Effective Representation”

- Improves parity between Chatham and Kent wards (6 Chatham councillors).
- All wards have one or two councillors, reducing variation in councillors per ward from 3:6 to 1:2.

Meets the overall test for “effective representation?”

NO

Appendix I – Terms of Reference

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.*

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

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),² the

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

² Carter is available online here: <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/766/index.do>.

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 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.³ They have subsequently been restated and refined in more recent cases such as *Hamilton*⁴.

³ 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.

⁴ [Dobrucki v Hamilton \(City\)](#), 2017 CanLII 85763 (ON LPAT).

Appendix II – Summary of Public Survey

Engagement Demographic Information and Analysis

A Note on Online Public Surveys:

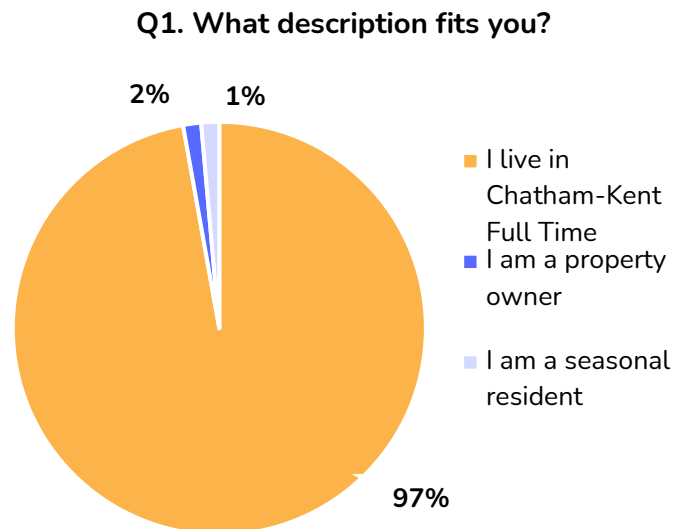
A public engagement survey was posted on the Municipality's, "Let's Talk Chatham-Kent" website from November 11th to November 29th, 2024. The public engagement survey was available online and provided a convenient mechanism for residents to get involved by providing their opinions and feedback. Physical copies of the survey were available upon request. The 285 complete responses provided qualitative insights into the opinions of participants, which were very helpful in the preparation of this Report. A small number of survey participants completed the survey more than once. Repeated responses were not counted as part of the 285 responses and were screened out of the data set that is analyzed below.

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.

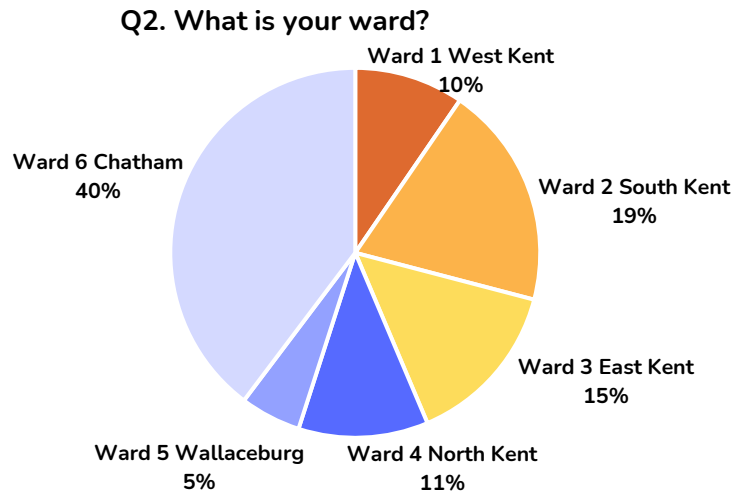
As a result, where we have reported on the numerical outcomes, it should be taken as a report on the opinions of those who participated but NOT as statistically representative of broader public opinion.

Respondents by Residency:

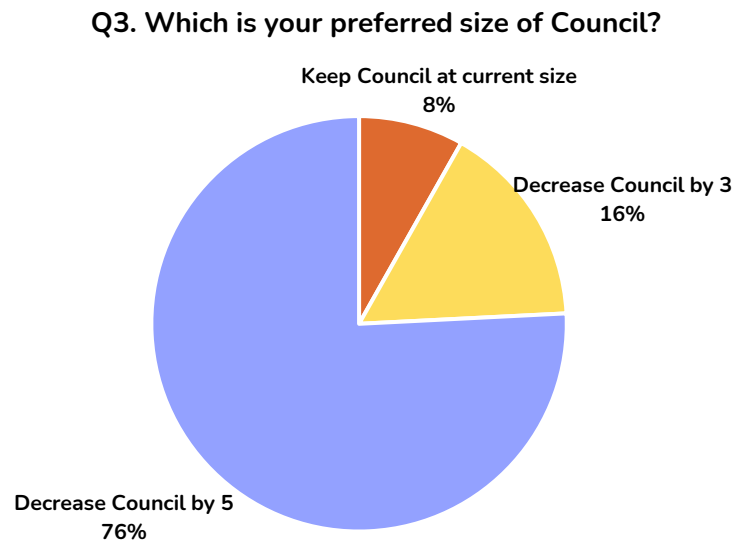
- **97%** of survey respondents live in Chatham-Kent full time. **2%** of survey respondents was a property owner in Chatham-Kent but does not live there. **1%** of survey respondents was a seasonal resident in Chatham-Kent



Respondents by Ward

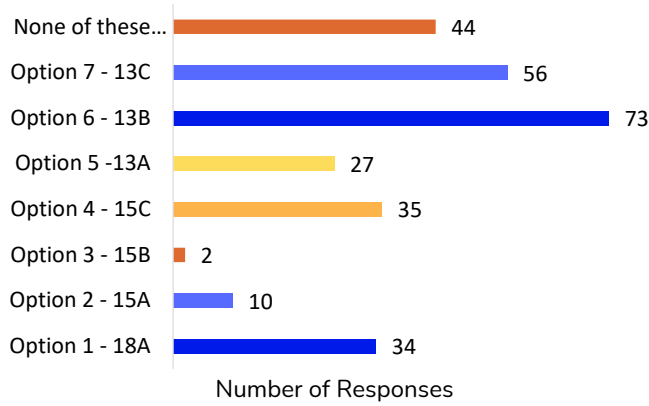


Preferences on Council Size

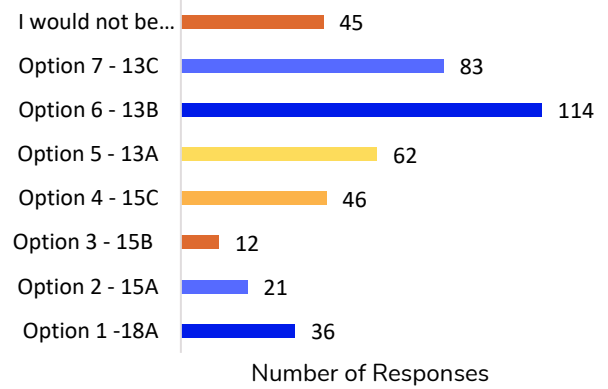


Preferences on the Draft Options⁵

Q11. What is your preferred option?

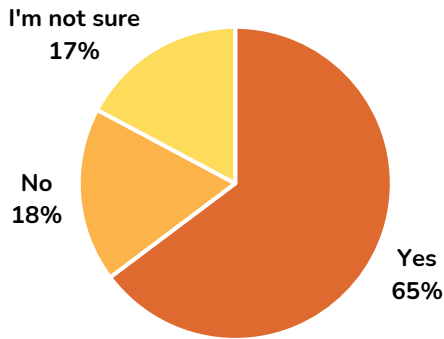


Q12. Select which options you are satisfied with.

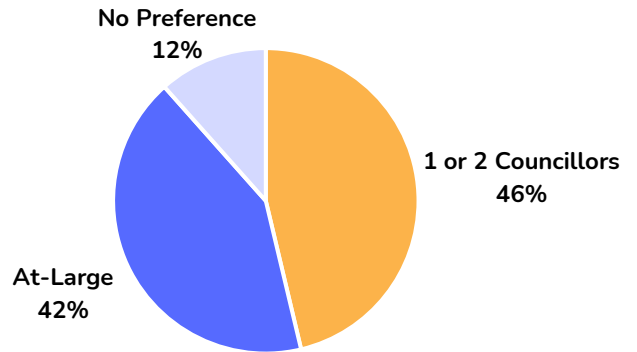


Preferences on Chatham

Q14. Are the new Chatham boundaries appropriate?



Q16. How would you prefer councillors in Chatham to be elected?



⁵ **Note for Q12.** The comments in the survey provided by those who selected that they would not be satisfied with any option was often due to a number of similar reasons including dissatisfaction with the total number of councillors, the number of councillors in Chatham, the out Chatham boundary, a preference for “mixed-representation” wards.

Appendix III - Evolution of Population Estimates

As part of the Chatham-Kent Ward Boundary Review project, population estimates by ward were prepared for 2024, 2026 and 2023. 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.

These estimates have been updated since the September 23rd Interim Report to generate a more granular model of Chatham-Kent's population distribution. The data sources have also been further refined.

The methodology for the population estimates in the September 23rd Interim Report is available in the Appendix of that Report.

For the estimates in the Draft Ward Boundary Options Report on November 4th and presented in this Report:

- Chatham-Kent was divided into ~150 “building blocks” using possible ward boundaries and respecting existing communities of interest.
- The population for each Block were determined by identifying all the dwellings in each Block and applying an average population per residence for each block based on statistical boundaries used by Statistics Canada (“Dissemination Area” or “DAs”) or the average household size for seasonal dwellings. This included using:
 - DA level population data from the 2021 census (Statistics Canada);
 - Forecasted population data from the Ontario Ministry of Finance and Chatham-Kent's Planning Department; and
 - Parcel data for relevant “Property Codes” (MPAC).

Temporary Foreign Workers

To estimate the number of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in each Block, the Municipality provided information for employers with positive Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs). Previously only Q1-Q3 2023 data was available. Q4 2023 and Q1 2024 data was added.

Workplace information for approved TFW along with the LMIA map (<https://lmiamap.ca/>) was used to assign approved positions to individual Blocks.

It is recognized that the true number of positions available, and by extension the current number migrant workers in Chatham-Kent, is likely higher than that indicated here as the dataset used has limitations. Further, forecasts for these populations may be impacted by future policy decisions by upper levels of government.