



# 2020 Ward Boundary Review

City of Vaughan

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Discussion Paper

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# 1. Background

The City of Vaughan has retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., ICA Associates, Dr. Robert J. Williams and Dr. Zachary Spicer, hereinafter referred to as the Consultant Team, to conduct a comprehensive and independent Ward Boundary Review.

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare the City of Vaughan Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative. In this Discussion Paper we take the first step in this process by presenting the guiding principles for the review, provide an overview of the context and setting for the review and provide an initial assessment of Vaughan's current ward system.

This review is premised on the legitimate democratic expectation that municipal representation in Vaughan will be effective, equitable, and an accurate reflection of the contemporary distribution of communities and people across the municipality.

# 2. Setting

The City of Vaughan was established under provincial legislation at the beginning of 1972 as a lower-tier municipality in the Regional Municipality of York. The new municipality was originally called the Town of Vaughan, but it achieved City status in 1991. The present municipality is an amalgamation of portions of the Townships of King and Vaughan and the Village of Woodbridge. As part of the amalgamation, the former police villages of Maple and Thornhill were dissolved.

Vaughan is currently governed by a nine-member Council, composed of a Mayor, three Local and Regional Councillors, and five Local Councillors. Vaughan's Mayor and Local and Regional Councillors sit on both the Regional Municipality of York and Vaughan Councils. Although the municipality began with all members of Council elected at-large, a ward system was established in 1985. The configuration was modified in an Ontario Municipal Board (O.M.B.) order in 1994, from three wards electing a total of five Councillors to five wards each electing one Councillor. A by-law following a staff-run ward boundary review was appealed to the O.M.B. in 2009. The current ward boundaries date from the 2009 Board order. Some minor boundary changes were approved before the 2000 and 2006 municipal elections.



The number and distribution of Councillors representing local municipalities on the Regional Council is determined through a process established in the *Municipal Act, 2001*, s. 218. In 2020, York Regional Council approved the addition of a fourth Local and Regional Councillor from the City of Vaughan, a change that would be in effect for the 2022 municipal election.

There are three basic and inter-connected components of an electoral system that lower-tier municipalities in Ontario such as Vaughan can address under existing provincial legislation:

- a) the size of the Council of a local municipality (referred to as “the composition of council” in the *Municipal Act, 2001*, s. 217 (1));
- b) the method of election for Councillors that may be “by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards” (*Municipal Act, 2001*, s. 217 (1) 4); and
- c) assuming that Council will be elected by wards, the actual ward configuration, including the number of wards, the number of Councillors to be elected in each ward (what may be termed the ward magnitude) and the boundaries of the wards (as implied in the *Municipal Act, 2001*, s. 222 (1)).

As noted, the wards in which Local Councillors are elected in Vaughan have remained unchanged since 2009. In 2016, an independent ward boundary review was conducted but the recommendations reconfiguring certain wards stemming from the review were ultimately not accepted by Council. Over the past decade, Vaughan’s population has grown by almost 30% from 238,900 in 2006 to 306,200 in 2016, a growth of 67,300 persons.<sup>1</sup> This growth has not been proportionate throughout the municipality, meaning that the population distribution between the existing wards is not equitable. Vaughan’s ward boundaries are overdue for review.

### 3. Parameters for an Electoral Review

This section will deal with matters to be addressed in an electoral review, using the three legislated powers listed above. First of all, it is important to note that Council has

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from Statistics Canada Census Profiles, 2006 and 2016. Excludes the Net Census undercount.



the authority to decline to make changes to any or all of these features of its electoral structure and indeed is under no obligation to consider them – even in response to a petition submitted by electors related to wards (*Municipal Act, 2001*, s. 223).<sup>1</sup>

The intention of this review is to provide information to assist Council in making determinations about whether to change some existing electoral arrangements and the alternatives open to it. Any decisions resulting from points a) and b) in section 2 above will shape the second phase of this review (section 2 c) above).

### **3.1 “The Composition of Council”**

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Despite the long history of municipal institutions in Ontario, the premises and practices used for determining the overall composition of councils has never been satisfactorily or definitively addressed, either in legislation or regulation. There are no clear principles at play, no “standards,” and no formulas to apply. Each municipality has its own history, its own traditions and its own attributes. Furthermore, there is no established timetable to require that municipal councils review the continuing validity of the number of places at the council table.

The *Municipal Act, 2001* establishes the minimum size for the council of a local municipality in Ontario as five, “one of whom shall be the head of council” who must be elected by general vote (s. 217 (1) 1 and (1) 3). There are no references to a maximum or to an “appropriate” size associated with, for example, the population of the municipality. This absence contrasts with the provisions of regulations issued under the *Education Act* (O. Reg. 412/00) which include a detailed formula to determine both the number of trustees and their distribution across each school board’s area of jurisdiction before each regular municipal election.

As a result, the composition of local councils in Ontario varies widely and can be unconventional. Vaughan Council is composed of nine members, four above the minimum of five, a configuration that matches the composition of the councils in municipalities such as Aurora, Bradford West Gwillimbury and Gravenhurst. At the

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<sup>1</sup> Note that by-laws in relation to council composition (s. 217) are not open to appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) (formerly known as the Ontario Municipal Board or O.M.B.).



same time, Vaughan's Council is smaller than those elected in places such as Brockville, Cornwall, Halton Hills, Huron East, Kingston and North Bay.

Two components of Vaughan Council are outside the control of the municipality: there must be a "head of council" elected by general vote (as mentioned previously) and three (soon four) other members also serve on York Regional Council. From this perspective, four (soon five) of the members of Vaughan Council are elected to participate in governing two municipalities since the Mayor is, in the classic Ontario regional government model, both the head of council in Vaughan and also one of the municipality's representatives on York Regional Council.

This leaves five Local Councillors whose duties are devoted exclusively to governing the City. The number of these Councillors has not changed since the present municipality was created in 1971; however, the population of the municipality has grown substantially. Prior to the 2018 election, the 2016 Statistics Canada Census estimated that each Local Councillor represented an average of over 60,600 residents and that is expected to continue to climb by 2030.

Examining the composition of Vaughan's Council is not within the scope of this review. The status quo is the default "solution"; however, endorsing the status quo is an option, as much as would be a decision to elect any number of Local Councillors. The status quo therefore requires a rationale rather than simply being accepted because it is familiar. The optimal size of a Council for Vaughan depends on the purpose and role Council is expected to play as a decision-making and representative body.

### **Effective Political Management**

A certain number of elected representatives are required to carry out the essential governmental functions of a municipality. The workload of representatives varies with each individual councillor. Part will be driven by the personal preferences and commitment of individual councillors, but a large element is a result of the range of responsibilities that the municipality provides. How much material must members of council review and understand before participating effectively in Council decision-making? How much constituency casework is directed to Councillors? What committees, agencies or other bodies do Councillors participate in or chair? The size of the Council has an impact on the amount of time Councillors can allocate to such formal duties and to casework, as well as to their personal, family, and non-political obligations.



Also, is compensation and support consistent with that expectation? Is this reasonable if the number of constituents has grown, thereby impinging on the potential workload of Councillors?

## **Effective Representation**

The heart of “effective representation” (to be discussed more fully in relation to the guiding principles for a ward system) is the conviction that councillors must be able to maintain contact with constituents. Logically, the larger the council, the smaller the individual ward and the more likely the representative can maintain such contact. Conversely, the smaller the council, the larger the ward, and the greater the challenge to deliver such representation successfully.

As noted earlier, each Local Councillor in Vaughan is, in theory, elected to represent the constituents in their ward. Between elections, however, members of council must not only engage with residents but with community, business and neighbourhood groups (and others) located in the ward and in some cases across the entire City. Does the present Council composition have an impact on the capacity of Councillors to act as an intermediary between residents and the City? Note: this is not a comment on the performance of incumbent Councillors, but rather a question about the reasonable expectations associated with being an elected representative in this configuration.

Another aspect of representation relates to what will be referred to as “coherence”: wards are designed to represent communities of interest within the City (again, to be discussed more fully in relation to the guiding principles for a ward system). Ideally, wards will include a grouping of well-defined neighbourhoods and districts that are as similar as possible. A ward system built around five Local Councillors will of necessity include a larger and more diverse collection of neighbourhoods in each ward than a system built around a larger number of wards and Local Councillors. In the present wards, the capacity of distinctive communities of interest to be effectively represented may be hampered.

## **Accountability**

Municipal councillors are not only “political managers” of the municipal corporation but are accountable for their decisions through an election. An effective democratic electoral system should provide voters with an adequate range of opportunities to select municipal legislators: if, as the adage has it, municipal government is “closest to the



people,” the number of representatives subject to public accountability for their actions is a key indicator of how close or remote the council is to the community.

### **Other Considerations**

- At present, a majority decision of Council requires five votes.
- With a fourth Local and Regional Councillor being added shortly, half the members of Vaughan Council will serve on two municipal Councils, possibly reducing the time they can devote to governing the City itself.
- Council size can impact the degree of debate and discussion and ensure that diverse perspectives are heard before decisions are taken.

The legislative authority to determine the number of Councillors (*Municipal Act, 2001*, s. 217) rests with the municipal Council and is distinct from the determination of the method by which they are to be elected. However, as mentioned previously, this is outside the scope of this current review.

## **3.2 The Method of Election for Members of Council**

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As in the previous discussion, the *Municipal Act, 2001* offers no guidance on the question of whether a municipality should elect its Councillors “by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards.” In addition, there is no consistency across Ontario municipalities: some municipalities with small populations use wards (such as the Townships of Zorra (population 8,000) and Georgian Bay (permanent population 2,300)) while some municipalities with larger populations (such as Niagara Falls (85,000) and Sarnia (75,000)) do not. A handful use a mixed ward-general vote system (most notably Thunder Bay) as permitted under the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

The municipality originally used an at-large system and later adopted a ward system in 1985. The wards in which Councillors are elected in Vaughan have remained unchanged since 2009. This is the status quo – the default “solution” – that was originally ordered by the O.M.B. Again, the status quo requires a rationale rather than simply being accepted because it is familiar.

There is no definitively “better” system; rather, there is a system that best matches contemporary Vaughan. For example:



A general vote system would be most appropriate if . . .	A ward system would be most appropriate if . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vaughan is (or should be) considered one political community.</li><li>• Councillors are expected to place the well-being of the entire City ahead of the well-being of its particular parts.</li><li>• members of the public are prepared to approach any Councillor for assistance.</li><li>• electors want more choices.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vaughan is composed of a number of distinctive political communities.</li><li>• Councillors should be mindful of the impact of City-wide decisions on particular communities within the municipality.</li><li>• members of the public prefer to approach a Councillor who has some connection to their neighbourhood or community.</li><li>• electors want clear choices.</li></ul>

It is primarily because of the presence of several distinct and/or historically important settlements and neighbourhoods in Vaughan such as Woodbridge, Vellore, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple, Nashville, and Thornhill that this review should proceed on the supposition that Vaughan’s Council will continue to be elected in wards as a way to ensure that the voices of the City’s particular localities are found around the Council table. At the same time, it should be noted that there are more of these identifiable communities than there are wards.

Of course, if the alternative of dissolving the wards to elect the Local Councillors is widely supported in the public consultations, the Consultant Team would share that information with Council along with the reasons why residents support it.

### **3.3 Guiding Principles to Design Wards**

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Vaughan Council has established guiding principles and other directions for this electoral review and the reason is simple: provincial legislation is silent on the matters that could be considered by a municipality when establishing or modifying its electoral system. There are some precedents that can be gathered from a review of best practices and successful electoral reviews in other Ontario municipalities and cases previously heard by the O.M.B. (now LPAT) that may be applicable, but a review of



electoral arrangements in Vaughan should be based on Vaughan's own circumstances and objectives.

Vaughan's ward boundary review will be guided by the following principles:

- Representation by population;
- Consideration of current and future population trends;
- Consideration of physical and natural boundaries;
- Consideration of communities of interest; and
- Effective representation.

### **Representation by Population**

Voters should be equally represented, and wards should have reasonably equal population totals. Voter parity should be the goal of ward boundary reviews.

Population size variances of between plus or minus 25 percent are generally accepted as the maximum variance to achieve voter parity. The principle is intended to ensure that residents have comparable access to their elected representative and that the workload of these representatives is relatively balanced.

NOTE: This principle is based on the total population of the municipality not the number of electors, a distinction upheld in several O.M.B. decisions.

### **Consideration of Current and Future Population Trends**

Ward boundary reviews should consider future changes in ward population. Being mindful of anticipated population trends will ensure that a ward and its residents are neither advantaged, nor disadvantaged because of development activity throughout the City. Ward boundary reviews should take into consideration anticipated changes in population for a period of twelve years, or three elections.

Where possible, reliable and accurate data will be used to generate current and future population projections, including but not limited to Census data, approved building permits, approved development proposals, and estimated population growth.



## **Consideration of Physical and Natural Boundaries**

Ward boundaries will be drawn impartially and with consideration to using distinct physical and geographic features. Physical features should be leveraged as they create pre-existing boundaries which naturally divide City residents and may facilitate the effective representation of the ward's residents.

Where possible, physical and natural features should be used to define ward boundaries including but not limited to arterial roads, highways, creeks, railway lines, and hydro corridors. Where possible, the preferred boundaries should follow straight lines, have few turns, and be easily identifiable.

## **Consideration of Communities of Interest**

The Carter decision recognizes that the protection of communities of interest may justifiably override the principle of voter parity where the inclusion of a community of interest will lead to a system that is more representative of the City's diversity. The Court did not define what constitutes a community of interest; however, it has been leveraged in O.M.B. appeals to recognize historical settlement patterns or existing communities and to represent social, historical, economic, religious, linguistic, or political groups.

Existing communities of interest and neighbourhoods within the municipality should not be fragmented. Where possible, existing and future communities of interest should not be divided between multiple wards.

## **Effective Representation**

When defining effective representation as the right protected by the Charter, the Supreme Court of Canada<sup>1</sup> noted that the relative parity of voting power was a prime, but not an exclusive, condition of effective representation. Deviations can be justified where the consideration of other factors, such as geography, community history, community interests and minority representation would result in a legislative body that was more representative of Canada's diversity. According to the Court, considering all these factors provides effective representation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Reference re Provincial Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991], known as the Carter decision.



The specific principles are all subject to the overriding principle of “effective representation” as enunciated by the Supreme Court so as to provide meaningful on-going representation after the election.

It may be necessary to place a higher priority on principles other than population parity (such as protecting a community of interest) to create plausible and coherent electoral areas that better contribute to “effective representation” than electoral areas that are only equal in population.

## **Summary**

No ward design is likely to meet all the principles in their entirety; however, the best designs maximize adherence to the principles, especially in relation to representation by population and effective representation. Any deviation from the specific principles must be justified by other Carter decision criteria in a manner that is more supportive of effective representation.

### **3.4 Is a Ward Boundary Review Necessary?**

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The objective of a ward boundary review is to conduct a comprehensive review of Vaughan’s electoral arrangements to develop an effective and equitable system of representation. By their nature, electoral maps inevitably have a limited lifespan since they are intended to capture the distribution of the municipality’s population at a specific time. As the population grows and is redistributed within the municipality, the “fit” is less plausible.

Vaughan’s present ward design has been in place since 2009. Since that time, Vaughan’s population has grown by more than 10%. This growth has not been evenly spread across the City resulting in some population disparity amongst wards. As Vaughan changes, so must the electoral arrangements, more so when there are perceptible and inequitable discrepancies in the population of existing wards.

A necessary step in a ward boundary review is to assess the extent to which the existing wards meet the guiding principles for a ward system approved by Council (see previous section). The status quo will therefore be subject to the same “tests” as any alternative designs (population parity, recognition of communities of interest, the



incorporation of natural boundaries and the capacity to maintain population parity over time) to identify strengths and weaknesses.

The claim that residents are “familiar with” certain arrangements and that change may be disruptive (since new ward boundaries may cause confusion among electors, for example) are often the main defenses of the status quo. While some aspects of the current wards may continue to be valid, ward boundaries are, as just noted, actually temporary groupings of a set of communities and neighbourhoods for the purpose of electing municipal representatives. Prolonging their use for the sake of “convenience” or leaving them unexamined because of indifference in the face of demonstrable weaknesses is not justifiable.

### **3.5 A Consultation Process**

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Before 2006, the *Municipal Act, 2001* required a Council to hold a public meeting before adopting a by-law to modify its ward boundaries. Today that is no longer a legislated requirement, but a municipal electoral system must be subject to a public consultation process to ensure the legitimacy of the recommendations placed before Council. This expectation has been affirmed in a number of O.M.B. decisions.

The Consultant Team is committed to undertaking public engagement activities under Vaughan’s established protocols and policies. The goal is both informing residents about the review (including the key factors that are being considered) and gathering informed evaluations from residents about the existing system and alternative designs. In the light of public health restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, however, public engagement activities have been modified into virtual events. Details of the process are found at: [www.vaughan.ca/wardboundary](http://www.vaughan.ca/wardboundary)

The initial public engagement sessions are intended to inform the public on the ward boundary review process, the composition of council, and the guiding principles adopted for the project. Those who participate will have an opportunity to provide input on potential changes to the arrangements for electing Council and the priority to be attached to the various guiding principles.

It is important to be clear that a ward boundary review is not a popularity contest to see which alternative “wins” and that the integrity of the review and the recommendations made to Council are not inherently compromised if the consultants draw a different



conclusion than those supported by community participants or even if there is a low level of public participation in the consultations.

One important consequence of conducting an effective and independent review is that residents will be well-informed about the conduct of the entire review and should be satisfied with its integrity and with the decision eventually reached by Council. As a result, there should be no incentive to appeal a by-law to LPAT under s. 222 (4) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.



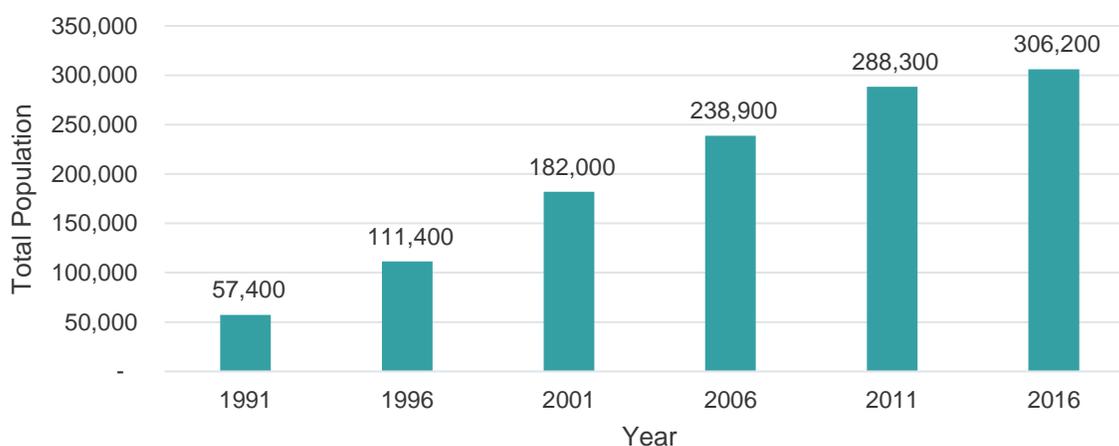
## 4. Population and Growth Trends

### 4.1 Existing Population

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Since the adoption of the current ward boundaries in 2009 the City has experienced significant population growth and is expected to continue to experience growth over the next 10 years and beyond. In 2009, the population of Vaughan was estimated to be approximately 270,000<sup>1</sup> and by 2016 Statistics Canada reported the population of Vaughan at 306,230 persons (excluding the Census Undercount<sup>2</sup>), a growth of approximately 13%. Historical populations can be seen in Figure 1: Historical Population, 2001-2016

Figure 1: Historical Population, 2001-2016



Statistics Canada Census Populations, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

The City of Vaughan was the fastest-growing municipality in Canada between 1996 and 2006 with its population increasing by approximately 80% during this time period and has grown by over 430% from 1991-2016.

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<sup>1</sup> 2009 Ward Boundary Review.

<sup>2</sup> The Net Census Undercount is an adjustment to the population to account for the net number of persons who are missed (i.e. over-coverage less under-coverage) during enumeration.



## 4.2 Forecast Population Growth 2021 to 2031

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The Consultant Team working on this review will prepare a population forecast extending out 3 electoral periods from 2021 to 2031. This review will look at historical building activity from 2016 through 2020 to develop a 2021 base population estimate by community and at a sub geographic unit (S.G.U.). The Consultant Team will review active development applications, site plans of subdivisions and intensification opportunities within the City to help inform and prepare accurate and credible population estimates.

The City of Vaughan's current Official Plan (OP) (2010) estimates that the population will reach approximately 416,600 by 2031. More recently (2015), the York Region developed population forecast and estimated the City of Vaughan to reach 412,000 (York Region Preferred Growth Scenario), 4,600 less than that of the current OP.

Currently the City and the Region are currently reviewing and updating both the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and Vaughan's local OP, which may identify new growth through 2031.

## 5. Preliminary Evaluation of the Status Quo

Whether or not a ward system can be considered successful involves evaluating how well it provides "fair and effective representation for all constituents." Before using the guiding principles to develop alternatives to the current system, then, it is appropriate to apply the same guiding principles to the current system to determine whether it is actually still viable and, if not, what shortcomings need to be considered in designing alternatives.

### **Representation by Population**

One goal of this review is to design a system of representation that achieves relative parity in the population of the wards now, with some degree of variation acceptable in light of population densities and demographic factors across the City. The indicator of success in a ward design is the extent to which all the individual wards approach an "optimal" size. Based on the City's overall 2016 population (315,400) and a five-ward system, the optimal population size for a ward would be 63,080.



Optimal size can be understood as a mid-point on a scale where the term “optimal” (O) describes a ward with a population within 5% on either side of the calculated optimal size. The classification “below/above optimal” (O+ or O-) is applied to a ward with a population between 6% and 25% on either side of the optimal size. A ward that is labelled “outside the range” (OR+ or OR-) indicates that its population is greater than 25% above or below the optimal ward size. The adoption of a 25% maximum variation is based on federal redistribution legislation but is widely used in municipalities like Vaughan where there are both higher density urban concentrations as well as many smaller settlements and rural territory where significant residential development is expected in the future.

As illustrated in Figure 2: Population by Ward, the 2016 population data, including the Census undercount, suggests that all wards are within the 25% optimal range, however none of the wards can be classified as “optimal” ( $\pm 5\%$ ).

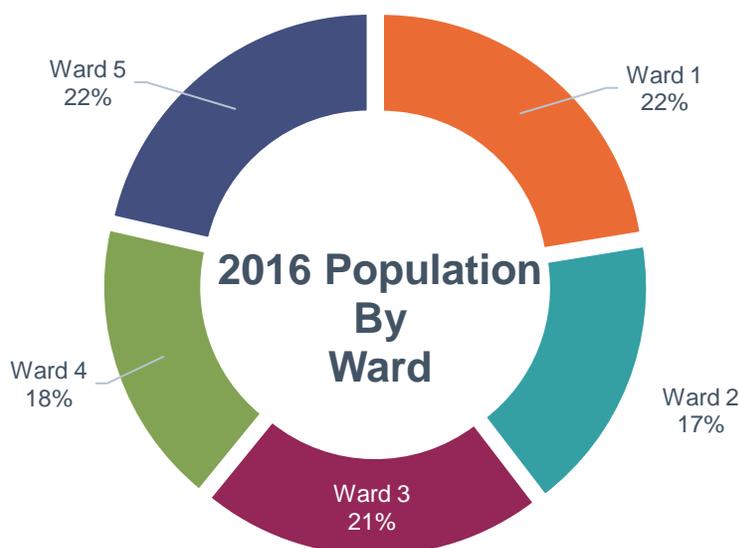
Figure 2: Population by Ward

Ward #	2016 Population <sup>1</sup>	Share	Variance	Optimal Range
<b>Existing Wards</b>				
Ward 1	70,700	22%	1.12	O+
Ward 2	54,200	17%	0.86	O-
Ward 3	67,100	21%	1.06	O+
Ward 4	55,800	18%	0.88	O-
Ward 5	67,600	21%	1.07	O+
<b>Total</b>	<b>315,400</b>			
<b>Average</b>	<b>63,080</b>			

Source: Adapted from 2016 Census and Traffic Zone level population data provided by the City of Vaughan.

<sup>1</sup> Includes census undercount of approximately 3%

Note: Numbers have been rounded.



Source: Adapted from 2016 Census and Traffic Zone level population data provided by the City of Vaughan.

### Consideration of Current and Future Population Trends

The population in the present wards is reasonably well-balanced despite the significant overall growth since they were established. However, Vaughan will continue to grow substantially over the next decade (see section 4.2).

One particularly large growth area will be the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre in the present Ward 4. This area is located at the intersection of Highway 7 and Jane Street, northeast of Highway 400 and Highway 407. In 2017, Toronto's Line 1 subway was extended and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre station was finally operational. This pivotal rapid transit link to Toronto has already led to substantial growth in the area. A host of developments are planned for this area over the next decade which should substantially increase the population

The present equilibrium among the wards, however, could be disrupted by the forecast population growth in the present Ward 1, already the ward with the largest population. Despite forecast growth in the present Ward 2, it will likely fall closer to the lower range of variation. In basic terms, the population growth trend in Vaughan will not correct the present moderate imbalance in population but will increase to the point where the gap between the smallest and largest wards could be quite significant. For example, when looking at 2016 populations, Ward 1 is within 12% of the ward population average and



Ward 2 within 14%, however the absolute population difference between those two wards is more than 16,000.

### **Consideration of Physical and Natural Boundaries**

Much of Vaughan is urbanized, with smaller rural pockets in the north. There is little agricultural land to still speak of. Much of these rural areas are firmly contained within Ward 1; however, fast growing areas, such as Maple and Kleinburg, are also located in the same ward.

The most significant physical boundary within the City is Highway 400, which effectively bisects the municipality. Through initial interviews, the Consultant Team has learned that communities on the west (Woodbridge, Kleinburg) and east (Maple, Concord, Thornhill) of the highway tend to have little interaction with each other. The highway creates a physical barrier that is recognized by the current boundaries of Wards 3 and 4, which also effectively separates Woodbridge from Concord. Highway 400, however, also separates Maple from Kleinburg, the two major population centres in Ward 1. The two communities have little interaction with each other, despite being in the same ward.

Other than Ward 1, the existing wards largely reflect natural geographic boundaries.

### **Consideration of Communities of Interest**

Electoral districts in Canada are not traditionally considered to be merely arithmetic divisions of the electorate designed to achieve parity of voting power. Rather, they are part of a system “which gives due weight to voter parity but admits other considerations where necessary” (Carter decision, page 35). One of the customary other considerations is “community of interest.” The rationale is that electoral districts should, as far as possible, be cohesive units and areas with common interests related to representation.

In the municipal context, “community of interest” is frequently linked to “neighbourhoods” since the neighbourhood is the most identifiable geographic point in most people’s lives; it is where they live. More importantly, the responsibilities of the municipality are also closely associated with where people live: roads and their maintenance, the utilities that are connected to or associated with their dwelling, and the myriad of social, cultural, environmental, and recreational services are often based on residential communities. Even municipal taxation is inextricably linked to one’s dwelling.



Identifying such communities of interest recognizes that geographic location brings shared perspectives that should be reflected in the municipal representational process.

In most municipalities there are more communities of interest or neighbourhoods than there are electoral districts, so wards will of necessity have to be created by grouping together such building blocks for the purposes of representation. This principle addresses two perspectives: what is divided by ward boundaries and what is joined together. Alternative ward configurations will therefore be assessed in terms of how successfully they separate or aggregate certain communities of interest into plausible units of representation. The first priority is that communities ought not to be divided internally; as a rule, lines are drawn around communities, not through them. Secondly, as far as possible wards should group together communities with common interests.

Vaughan is a diverse community that is home to several identifying neighbourhoods and communities. Of these, five can rightfully be considered major communities of interests within the City: Concord, Kleinburg, Maple, Thornhill, and Woodbridge. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre might also be considered a community of interest once the area reaches maturity. Woodbridge is a sizeable community of interest and is largely contained within Wards 2 and 3. Kleinburg and Maple are both within Ward 1, although there is little connection or affinity between the communities since they are some distance from one another. Concord includes extensive employment lands and is mostly contained within Ward 4. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is also located in Ward 4. Ward 5 contains most of Thornhill, although parts of the community are outside Vaughan's municipal boundaries and other parts of Thornhill were placed in Ward 4 as a result of the 2009 O.M.B. order. Thus, the Concord, Thornhill, and Maple communities could be considered as lying outside a single ward. Because of the rapid growth within Vaughan, there are few clear, identifiable boundaries to these communities.

The current ward boundaries do not comfortably contain single, identifiable communities of interest, largely because of the size, growth, and influx of newcomers into many of these areas.

### **Effective Representation**

As noted earlier, effective representation is not based on the performance of incumbent Councillors. It is, rather, a concept that is premised on the on-going relationship between residents and elected officials – not just on the way the resident is “counted”



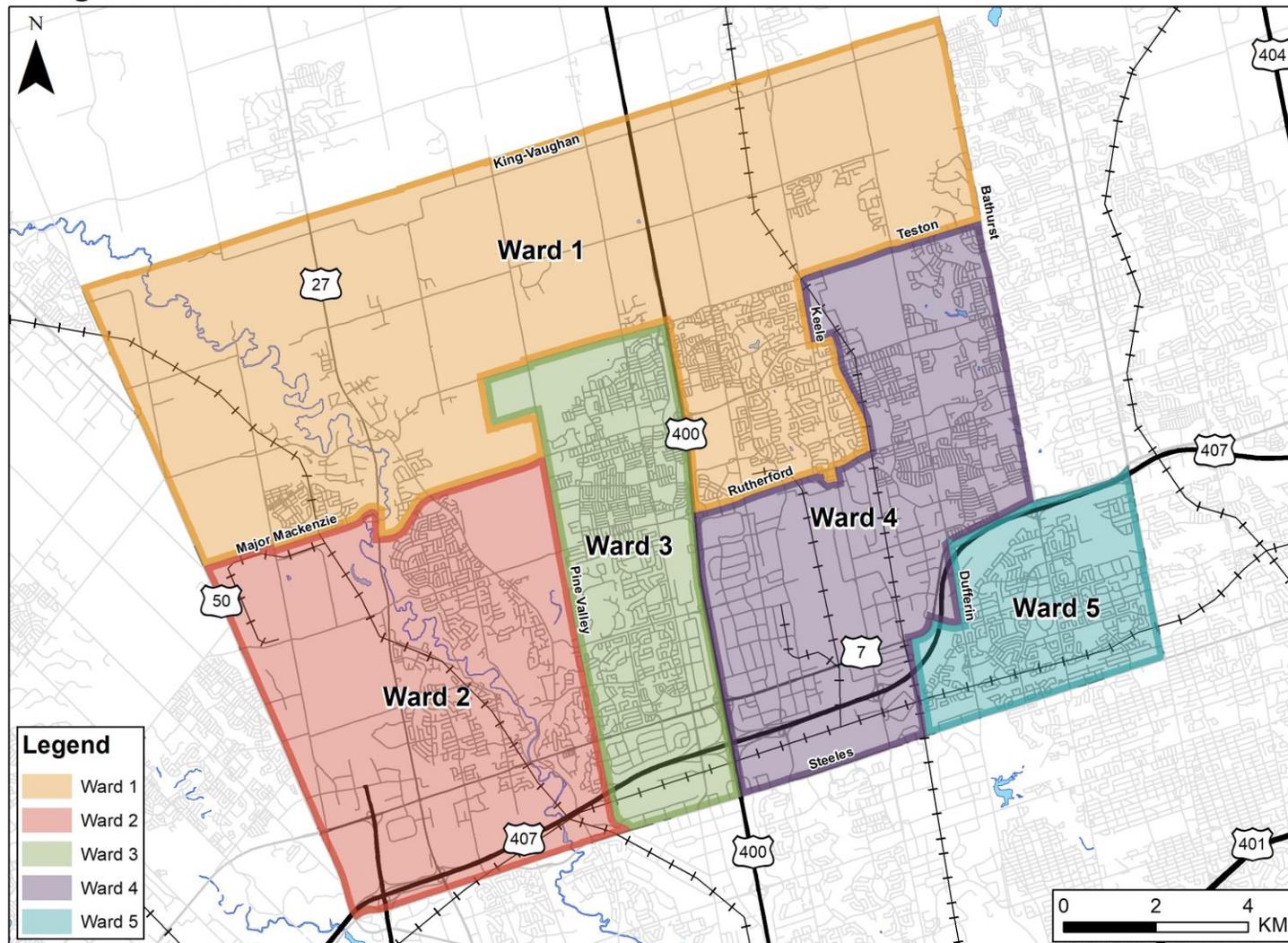
on election day, although that is an important component of a fair system of representation. Is each individual ward a plausible and coherent unit of representation? Are they drawn in such a way that representatives can readily play the role expected of them? Do they provide equitable (that is, fair) access to Local Councillors for all residents of the municipality?

The combination of accelerating population imbalances, the mix of neighbourhoods and communities within the wards, and the extreme range of population disparity between Ward 1 and the remaining wards in the southern portion of the City suggests that the present wards in Vaughan do not contribute to effective representation. Local Councillors have a significant workload because of the large populations in each ward. Without having Local and Regional Councillors attached to specific wards, there is little direct assistance in constituency work from them, outside of supporting residents on issues clearly regional in nature.



Figure 3: Existing Ward Map

### Vaughan Current Wards





## Summary

The current system fails in some regards to meet the ward boundary review principles and cannot be said to serve the residents of the City of Vaughan well.

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Somewhat successful	All wards are within the acceptable range of variation, although the difference between the largest and smallest is 16,800 people.
Current and Future Population Trends	Largely unsuccessful	Further information will be provided through the growth forecasting and allocation analysis. Preliminary analysis would suggest that most wards are in the optimal range (i.e., 25% variation) but few wards are optimal (i.e., 5% variation). Additionally, the population disparity between wards (Ward 1 & 2) will likely increase.
Physical and Natural Boundaries	Somewhat successful	Most markers used as boundaries of the wards are straightforward, although Hwy 400 bisects Ward 1.
Communities of Interest	No	Current ward boundaries do not comfortably contain single, identifiable communities of interest.
Effective Representation	Largely unsuccessful	Accelerating population imbalances, the mix of communities within the wards and the extreme range of population disparity hinder effective representation.



## 6. Preliminary Options

The combination of anticipated growth in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, as well as continued steady growth in Maple, Woodbridge and Thornhill calls for a thorough reconsideration of wards in Vaughan. There are, however, several ways to address this challenge, depending primarily on which of the guiding principles is given the greatest priority. The next step in this review is to seek contributions from residents about the strengths and weaknesses of the ward system and to gain some sense of which principles should be given priority in the design of a modified ward system.