



2024/2025 Ward Boundary Review

Township of Severn

Preliminary Options Report

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1. Background

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

The primary purpose of the study is to prepare Severn Council to make decisions on whether to maintain the existing electoral structure or to adopt an alternative. This report provides a set of alternative ward boundary designs that have been created based upon preliminary research and the first round of public consultation with the residents of Severn.

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

2. Study Objective

The project has several key objectives:

- Develop a clear understanding of the present electoral system, including its origins and operations as a system of representation;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the present electoral system on the basis of guiding principles adopted for the study;
- Develop and conduct an appropriate consultation process in accordance with Severn's public engagement practices to ensure community support for the review and its outcome;
- Prepare population projections for the development and evaluation of alternative electoral structures for the 2026 and 2030 municipal elections; and
- Deliver a report that will set out recommended alternative council ward boundaries and related council structures to ensure effective and equitable electoral arrangements for Severn, based on the principles identified.

In November 2024, the Consultant Team prepared Discussion Papers that set out:

- The parameters and purpose for the review;
- The basic electoral arrangements in Severn;



- Council's legislative authority to modify electoral arrangements in the Township; and
- An initial assessment of the Township's current ward boundary system.

Discussion Paper D provided a set of guiding principles that will inform the study and the work of the Consultant Team, as follows:

- Representation by population (Population Parity);
- Consideration of current and future population trends (Population Trends);
- Consideration of physical and natural boundaries (Physical and Natural Boundaries); and
- Consideration of communities of interest (Communities of Interest).

Taken together, these principles will contribute to achieving the over-arching principle of effective representation.

Each principle is described in detail in Discussion Paper D and can be found through the Township's project page.^[1]

It should be noted that the preliminary evaluation of the existing system found in Discussion Paper E did not account for the Seasonal Population that has been estimated at 6,550 in 2025.^[2] Seasonal Population figures have been considered in the revisited existing evaluation and preliminary options found within this report.

The purpose of this Preliminary Options Report is to provide:

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

[1] <https://severn.ca/wbr>

[2] 2024 Development Charges Background Study, Township of Severn, June 28, 2024.



3. Project Structure and Timeline

Council adopted the terms of reference for the W.B.R. and issued an RFP for the project in August 2024. Work completed to date includes:

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

Interviews with staff and Council, and meetings with the Clerk's office and other staff concerning this study, were mostly conducted virtually.

4. Existing Electoral Structure

The Township of Severn was incorporated on January 1, 1994, under the *County of Simcoe Act, 1993* as an amalgamated municipality within the restructured County of Simcoe. The municipality is an amalgamation of the former Village of Coldwater, the Townships of Orillia and Matchedash and portions of Tay and the former Medonte Townships.

Severn municipal council is comprised of seven (7) members, including the mayor (elected at-large) and deputy mayor (elected at-large) who serve on both the Township and Simcoe County Council, and five (5) local councillors, elected in five wards.

Severn's original post-amalgamation ward boundaries were initially developed by a staff committee drawn from the municipalities involved in the amalgamation and were approved by the pre-amalgamation municipalities. Although the proposed wards attempted to "balance" the electorate "equally among wards," a ward boundary review conducted by Watson and Associates in 2016 determined that by that time the wards were not balanced in population and that the ward with the largest population was also the largest geographic area. A revised five-ward system accepted by Council ahead of the 2018 municipal election remains in place and is the subject of this review.

Since the present wards were adopted nine years ago the population of the Township has increased by about 10% to 22,536, almost exactly the population forecast in the 2016 ward boundary review. While the population of the wards is better balanced than in the pre-2016 configuration, a periodic review now is appropriate to accommodate the



growth expected over the next decade rather than waiting until the change has occurred. This approach is consistent with the “population trends” guiding principles for the W.B.R. and has been upheld by the Ontario Land Tribunal as valid. Aligning Council representation with the distribution of population may require an adjustment in some or all of the wards.

One further observation is important: in the evaluation that follows, and the alternative options presented for consideration, the population figures include both permanent and seasonal residents. The former (found in Discussion Paper D) is drawn from only the 2021 Census while the latter is an estimate determined by accounting for the additional Seasonal Population (estimated at 6,500) not captured within the 2021 Census. A review of the Census and seasonal populations are presented in Table 5-1 for 2021.

The inclusion of both groups is based on the fact that while the *Municipal Elections Act* states that a person “may only have one residence at a time” (information captured in the Census), if that person is “the owner or tenant of land in another municipality” and is otherwise entitled to vote, that same person is entitled to be an elector in that other local municipality. In other words, when it comes to having the right to participate in local elections and electing a representative to speak and vote on their behalf, the two groups are indistinguishable and need to be counted in designing the electoral system. It is for this reason that seasonal residents who meet the legislative eligibility rules are reflected in population figures used in this W.B.R.

In Severn Township, seasonal residents are a significant proportion of the overall population but are not distributed evenly across the five wards. This pattern has an impact on the communities of interest found in certain wards and may have implications for the workload of individual councillors, features of the system of representation that will be implicit in the evaluations that follow.

5. Existing Population and Forecast Growth in the Township of Severn

As previously discussed, a basic premise of representative democracy in Canada is the notion that the geographic areas used to elect a representative should be reasonably balanced with one another in terms of population. Accordingly, a detailed population estimate for the Township of Severn, including its constituent wards and communities, was prepared to allow evaluation of the existing ward structure and subsequent



alternatives in terms of representation by population in the current year (2025). Population figures presented throughout this report include both populations captured by Census and, additionally, the seasonal population that is not captured through Census enumeration.

The Township of Severn is forecast to experience population growth over the next decade and beyond. For this reason, it is important that this study assess representation by population for both existing and future year populations. In accordance with the study terms of reference, the analysis considered representation of population over the next two municipal elections through to 2036. A population and housing forecast for the Township for the 2025 to 2036 period, consistent with the 2024 Development Charges Background Study, was determined, and the results of this analysis are discussed below.

5.1 Existing Population and Structure

As mentioned, this study needs to look at the existing (both Census and seasonal populations) as well as future populations. A 2025 population estimate was derived by utilizing the 2021 Census and a review of building permit activity from 2021 through 2024, with an assumed six-month lag from issuance to occupancy. Severn's estimated 2025 population is 22,540 and includes the net Census undercount and seasonal populations. ^[3] Seasonal populations, calculated with an average of 3.58 persons per unit (P.P.U), estimated a population of approximately 6,500 in 2021. A further breakdown of the 2021 population distribution, including seasonal is presented in Table 5-1 and the Township's 2025 total population is presented by existing ward structure in Table 5-2. Ward 1, which includes a significant seasonal population (approximately 2,950) and covers a large portion of the pre-amalgamation Matchedash Township, has the highest population of all present wards at 5,058, while Ward 5, which includes the Washago settlement area and extensive seasonal residential areas along the Severn River, has the smallest population at 3,978, for a difference of over 1,000 between the smallest and largest wards.

^[3] The net Census undercount is an adjustment to the permanent population to account for the net number of persons who are missed (i.e. over-coverage less under-coverage) during enumeration and is estimated at approximately 3.0%.



Table 5-1
Township of Severn
2021 Population by Ward

Ward	2021 Census Population (A)	2021 Seasonal Population (B)	2021 Total Population ((A*Census Undercount) + B)
Ward 1	1,798	2,939	4,792
Ward 2	3,343	269	3,713
Ward 3	4,542	261	4,941
Ward 4	2,894	1,189	4,171
Ward 5	1,999	1,840	3,900
Total	14,576	6,498	21,517

[1] Population includes Census undercount of approximately 3.0% and seasonal population estimated at 6,500 for 2021.

Note: Numbers may not add precisely due to rounding.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.

Table 5-2
Township of Severn
2025 Population by Ward

Ward	Area (sq. km)	2025 Total Population ^[1]	Population variance
Ward 1	198.6	5,058	1.12
Ward 2	161.8	4,010	0.89
Ward 3	53.2	4,913	1.09
Ward 4	19.4	4,576	1.02
Ward 5	130.0	3,978	0.88
Total/Average	563.0	22,536	4,507

[1] Population includes Census undercount of approximately 3.0% and seasonal population estimated at 6,550 for 2025.

Note: Numbers may not add precisely due to rounding.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.



5.2 Forecast Population Growth, 2025 to 2036

The Township of Severn is part of Simcoe County, which is home to both year-round residents, but also a large seasonal community. The growth across the Township is expected to increase over the next decade with populations expected reach over 24,100 by 2036 (including both seasonal and the net Census Undercount). Growth, however, is not anticipated to develop evenly across the Township or within the wards but will be directed to the already well-established settlement areas like Westshore.

The Consultant Team has prepared population growth metrics for the 2025 to 2036 period, guided by local, county and provincial growth targets and policy objectives, along with a comprehensive review of opportunities to accommodate future residential growth through future plans of residential development, and intensification potential. Anticipated population growth over the 2025 to 2036 period was identified on a sub-geographic unit (S.G.U.) level.

Table 5-3
Township of Severn
2036 Population by Ward

Ward	Area (sq. km)	2036 Total Population ^[1]	Population variance
Ward 1	198.6	5,084	1.05
Ward 2	161.8	4,140	0.86
Ward 3	53.2	5,406	1.12
Ward 4	19.4	5,514	1.14
Ward 5	130.0	3,958	0.82
Total/Average	563.0	24,102	4,820

^[1] Population includes Census undercount of approximately 3.0% and seasonal population estimated at 6,600 for 2036.

Note: Numbers may not add precisely due to rounding.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.



6. Public Consultation

The first phase of the W.B.R. incorporated a public engagement component that was delivered both virtually and in-person and designed to:

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

Two in-person consultation sessions were conducted on November 21, 2024. The Consultant Team's display boards and other information about the review can be found on the Township's website (also seen in Appendix B): <https://severn.ca/wbr>.

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

- Existing ward structure – What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current ward structure?
- Guiding principles – Which guiding principles should be given the greatest priority in the development of ward boundaries?

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

7. What We Heard

To promote public engagement in the W.B.R., the Township of Severn created a project web page for all documents necessary to give residents an informed voice. All subsequent communications could then direct people to that page, through social media and other forms of outreach. Members of the public were able to visit the site, read up on context, download a background report and, most importantly, they were urged to



complete a survey. The Township also prepared a whiteboard-style explainer video describing the overall process of the W.B.R.

The public survey was a key tool for collecting input from as many residents as possible and gave some of the best high-level insight into the views and perspectives of Severn's residents. The level of participation in the survey was fairly low, with 71 people responding to some or all questions; the detailed summary of these results can be found in Appendix A. The survey results tended to confirm what earlier research had begun to indicate:

- The majority of respondents (95.77%) reside in Severn year-round, while 1.41% reside in Severn for part of the year (seasonally).
- According to the 2021 census population excluding seasonal population, three of the Township's five wards were outside the acceptable range of population variance with one ward having almost 2.5 times the population of another ward. Respondents were split regarding whether they think it is reasonable for the wards to have such differences with 49.09% believing that is not acceptable. Meanwhile, 36.36% thought it was reasonable, and 14.55% were unsure.
- A little over half of respondents (58.18%) believe that the ward boundaries capture their community, while 25.45% believe that the ward boundaries do not capture their community, and 16.36% did not know.
- Most importantly for the next phase of the project, people prioritized representation by population (32.73%) as the most important guiding principle. Consideration of future population trends and community of interests were both second highest prioritized guiding principles at 25.45%. Physical and natural boundaries were least prioritized by respondents at 16.36%.

The survey also included several questions that were not multiple choice and, instead, were open-ended, giving respondents the opportunity to submit longer, written responses about issues they considered important. In total, 26 respondents gave their views on what they regard as the strengths of the existing ward system, and 32 respondents shared views on its weaknesses. There were two major recurrent themes that arose in these responses. First, respondents gave mixed opinions regarding communities of interest. Some respondents asserted that they believe that communities of interest are well represented in the current ward system, while others thought that the existing wards are splitting up communities. Third, respondents voiced concern about the growth they've experienced in recent years and will continue to, highlighting the

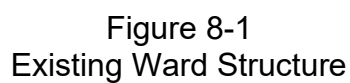


importance of the consideration of future population trends guiding principle in the creation of alternative ward configurations.

8. Evaluation of Existing Ward Structure

A preliminary evaluation of the existing ward structure included in Discussion Paper E addressed the wards in terms of the guiding principles and only considered the 2021 Census population. For reference, the current wards are presented in Figure 8-1. The survey conducted as part of the initial phase of public consultation asked respondents to assess the current wards in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. These responses add depth to that initial assessment.

This section revisits that evaluation, integrating information received during consultation, the inclusion of seasonal population and addressing certain challenges identified in parts of the existing ward system.





8.1 Representation by Population

One of the basic premises of representative democracy in Canada is the belief that the geographic areas used to elect a representative should be reasonably balanced with one another in terms of population. This is the concept of representation by population (“rep by pop”) or “one person, one vote” – where the vote of any one person carries roughly the same weight as that of any other person. In some places (such as parts of the United States) this principle of voter parity is enforced rigorously – almost to the exclusion of any other factor – so that there is no noticeable variation in the population of electoral units within a particular jurisdiction.

In the Carter decision, ^[4] however, the majority of the Supreme Court understood that Canadian electoral law has never been driven by the need to achieve “full parity” in the population of electoral divisions. The Court concluded that some degree of variation from parity (“relative parity”) may be justified and, at times, even necessary “on the grounds of practical impossibility or the provision of more effective representation.”

Since there are variations in the densities and character of communities and neighbourhoods across Severn, the guiding principles make clear that some flexibility in applying the principle of representation by population is acceptable. That is, the concept of “equitable” (that is, fair) representation – not necessarily “equal” representation – is legitimate, although the closer the population of the wards is to parity, the more the entire design can be assessed as successful.

As a working premise, a range of variation of 25% above or below the optimal (average) ward population will be considered acceptable. This is a rather generous range of tolerance from parity, but in the absence of any guidance in the *Municipal Act, 2001* or provincial regulations, it is based on long-standing parameters for the federal redistribution process. The goal in any case will be to reduce the range of variation among the wards as much as possible.

Moreover, in the Consultant Team’s opinion, developing wards within a narrower range of population variation would make the successful achievement of the other recognized guiding principles difficult.

^[4] Reference re: Provincial Electoral Boundaries (Saskatchewan) [1991] 2 S.C.R.



The degree of parity in each ward will be determined through the calculation of what will be called an “optimal” ward population in Severn, a figure computed by dividing the population by the number of wards in the Township. The total population of a ward will be considered “optimal” when it falls within 5% above or below that number (indicated in green). A ward population would be considered within the acceptable population range if it is between 5% and 25% of the “optimum” population (noted in pink). Populations that are above or below 25% of the “optimal” population are considered outside the acceptable range (noted in red). It is important to remember that as the overall population changes, the “optimal” population size of a ward will also change.

An example of these ranges is provided for Severn’s five-ward system for the 2025 and 2035 populations (including seasonal population) and shown below in Table 81.

Table 8-1
Township of Severn
Optimal Range for a Five-Ward System

Symbol	Description	Variance	2025 Population Range	2035 Population Range
OR+	Outside Range - High	25% and above	>5,634	>6,025
O+	Above Optimal but Acceptable	5% to 25%	4,733-5,634	5,062-6,025
O	Optimal Population Range	+/- 5%	4,282 – 4,732	4,579-5,061
O-	Below Optimal but Acceptable	-5% to -25%	4,281-3,380	4,819-3,615
OR-	Outside Range - Low	-25% and below	<3,379	<3,614

Based upon the figure calculated for the Township’s overall 2025 population (22,536) and a five-ward system, the optimal population would be 4,507. In 2035, the Township’s forecast population is 24,102 and the optimal ward population would be 4,820.



Table 8-2
Township of Severn
Estimated Population by Existing Ward, 2025

Ward	2025 Total Population	2025 Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	5,058	1.12	O+
Ward 2	4,010	0.89	O-
Ward 3	4,913	1.09	O+
Ward 4	4,576	1.02	O
Ward 5	3,978	0.88	O-
Township-wide	22,536	-	-
Optimal Population	4,507	-	-

Note: Numbers have been rounded. Numbers include seasonal population.
Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.

Population data suggests that one of the five present wards is at the optimal point but the other four are within the acceptable range of variation. Based upon this empirical evidence, the present wards adhere to the representation by population principle.

8.2 Consideration of Current and Future Population Trends

As noted in section 5.2, Severn is expected to experience a population increase of approximately 1,500 over the next decade. Much of this growth is anticipated to be directed around the Westshore community, located in the present Ward 4 and near the boundary with the City of Orillia (in the present Ward 3).

This principle is directed towards maintaining a balance through subsequent municipal elections. It is generally not practical to change electoral boundaries for every election; hence, the wards designed in 2025 will seek to accommodate anticipated changes in the size and distribution of the population and electors at least over the next two elections in 2026 and 2030.

As in the previous population principle, the goal is to design a system that will comprise wards that are generally in equilibrium to one another as growth takes place. The concept of an optimal ward size (with an associated range of variation) will be used to



assess the success of the individual wards and the overall configuration, making use of a population and housing forecast for Severn and its communities for the 2025 to 2036 period.

Table 8-3
Township of Severn
Existing Wards' 2025 and 2036 Population Distribution

Ward Number	2025 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2036 Total Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	5,058	1.12	O+	5,084	1.05	O+
Ward 2	4,010	0.89	O-	4,140	0.86	O-
Ward 3	4,913	1.09	O+	5,406	1.12	O+
Ward 4	4,576	1.02	O	5,514	1.14	O+
Ward 5	3,978	0.88	O-	3,958	0.82	O-
Total	22,536	-	-	24,102	-	-
Average	4,507	-	-	4,820	-	-

Total Population includes permanent and seasonal population. Seasonal populations are calculated with an average of 3.7 persons per unit (P.P.U).

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.

These forecasts show that the general pattern of population distribution present in 2025 is largely maintained in 2036, but in some respects is slightly worse (primarily the gap between the wards with the largest and smallest populations). Over the next decade, growth will likely be concentrated in two areas (the present Wards 3 and 4) with only marginal population changes forecast in the other wards. This could result in a ward configuration where two of the smaller wards have population of approximately 4,000 or less and two of the larger wards could have populations approaching 5,500 or more. All wards continue to be in the acceptable range of population variance in this projected population growth scenario.

The Consultant Team has revisited the original evaluation of the existing system from what was presented in Discussion Paper E to include seasonal and population growth figures, as presented in Figure 8-2. When the current system is evaluated against the total population, that is including seasonal populations, both the *Representation by Population* and *Population and Electoral Trends* principles have been upgraded to an evaluation of Largely Successful. When evaluating these principles against only the



permanent populations (excluding seasonal) they had received an evaluation of not satisfying those two principles as presented in Discussion Paper E.

8.3 Consideration of Physical and Natural Features

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

The present ward boundary lines in Severn were drawn to reflect the existing road connections between the settlement areas within the Township. One notable physical feature is Highway 11 which divides the Lake Couchiching communities from those inland in three of the wards but is not used as a ward boundary in the current configuration. Based on our consultations it is not accepted as an impediment to the connections between the lakefront and inland communities.

Ward boundaries in Severn largely meet this principle.

8.4 Consideration of Communities of Interest

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

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

Wards should have a “natural” feel to those that live within them, meaning that they should have established internal communication and transportation linkages and boundaries should be drawn taking existing connections into consideration. This is done



to avoid creating wards that combine communities with dissimilar interests and no obvious patterns of interaction.

Severn several identifiable communities of interest of varying sizes and types such as Coldwater, Washago, Port Severn, Marchmont and Fesserton plus many waterfront seasonal groupings along the Severn River and Lake Couchiching. In the latter case, many seasonal properties are rapidly being converted to permanent dwellings.

The initial generalization presented in Discussion paper E is that in terms of community of interest in Severn, two wards clearly meet this principle. Ward 4 is largely based on the Westshore community while Ward 3 includes Marchmont and Ardtrea, although the surrounding area in that ward is a mixture of rural, commercial and other interests. The other wards are larger geographic areas and overall are more sparsely settled and are more difficult to consider “coherent” even though in each case there are plausible communities included in each ward.

Overall, the current configuration with only five wards can be considered largely successful in meeting the principle.

8.5 Effective Representation

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

Effective representation is not based on the performance of incumbent councillors. It is, rather, a concept that is premised on serving 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. The expectation should be that the wards support the capacity of councillors to represent their constituents, rather than hinder councillors performing those responsibilities. Are the individual wards plausible and coherent units of representation? Are they drawn in such a way that representatives can readily play the role expected of them? Do they provide equitable (that is, fair) access to councillors for all residents of the municipality?



In Severn, there are different relationships between constituents and councillors in terms of present and future population distributions and community groupings. Specifically, one councillor has nearly 1,100 more constituents to serve (and represent) as another and that gap is forecast to expand to 1,500 by 2036. The present configuration embeds a dilution of the votes cast by certain electors compared to others and weakens the democratic expectation that when the five councillors decide on a matter before them each vote is cast on behalf of a relatively equal number of residents.

However, while there is disparity amongst the largest and smallest wards, the wards do all fall within an acceptable range of variation and are largely successful in meeting the guiding principles relative to representation by population. In addition, most of the ward boundaries are largely coherent and attempt to keep historical communities and centres intact.

The existing boundaries fall short of completely meeting this over-arching principle, but the present wards are largely successful in ensuring effective voter representation.

Overview: 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. It is our understanding of existing case law that deviations from the specific principles can be justified by other criteria drawn from the Carter decision in a manner that is more supportive of effective representation.

While the assessment of the Consultant Team is not that the present ward system in Severn is notably defective or indefensible, adjustments to the present wards can more successfully address the forecast population changes over the next two election cycles and can provide some alternative configurations for discussion and consideration.



Figure 8-2
Township of Severn
Present Severn Ward Configuration Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle? ^[1]	Comment
Representation by Population	Largely Successful	One ward is at the optimal point and no ward exceeds the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Population and Electoral Trends	Largely Successful	Population growth will not overcome the population disparity between wards, but all wards remain in the acceptable range of variance.
Geographical and Topographical features	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are regular and visible lines although Hwy 11 divides three wards.
Community or Diversity of Interests	Largely Successful	The wards address this principle successfully despite the complex geography of the Township.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Population disparities amongst some wards could hinder the achievement of effective voter representation over time but the guiding principles in most cases are largely successful.

Note: Evaluation of the existing ward system has been revisited following the first round of engagement and includes evaluations of populations based on total population (including both seasonal and the net Census Undercount).

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



9. Alternative Ward Boundary Options

The evaluation of the current ward system in Severn suggests that there are some shortcomings when evaluated against the guiding principles for this review. Council could still choose to retain the status quo by turning down all recommended options for an alternative ward configuration. That decision, however, could result in a petition submitted under section 223 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

If Council decides to change the ward boundary system, what would alternatives look like? The Consultant Team has prepared five preliminary options for consideration at this stage of the W.B.R. Keeping the identifiable communities of interest intact, creating wards with roughly equal populations, and providing for effective representation throughout Severn poses a challenge, given the large geography and uneven population distribution across the Township as outlined above and in Table 8-3.

9.1 Preliminary Option 1A – Minimal Change

This first option can be considered a “minimal change” option since it preserves key features of the existing wards but achieves a better population distribution ahead of the 2026 municipal election and out to 2036.

In this option, the proposed Ward 1 covers a larger area than the present Ward 1 and includes a high proportion of seasonal residents. The population is slightly smaller in 2025 and remains stable to 2036 when it is considered “optimal.” The proposed ward 2 is aligned more north-south than the present Ward 2 and includes both Coldwater and Fesserton, taking the population to the optimal point in the short term but staying with the range of variation in 2036. The proposed Ward 3 is smaller both in area and population and is the only ward with an “optimal” population figure in both 2025 and 2036. The major change in the proposed Ward 4 is reminiscent of the pre-2016 ward system since it would be aligned between Highway 11 and Lake Couchiching, rather than crossing the Highway to include Ardtrea and the Lake St. George areas. Although it is the ward that is forecast to experience the greatest population growth, it still remains within the acceptable range of variation in 2036. The proposed Ward 5 is anchored by Washago and includes much of the pre-amalgamation Orillia Township. The population in 2025 is at the optimal point and is forecast to decline slightly by 2036.



This Option offers a more successful population distribution for 2025 (three wards at the optimal point) and 2036 (two wards at the optimal point), while in the current system only one ward is at the optimal point in 2025 and none in 2036. On the opposite side, communities around Menoke Beach and Happyland are divided by the proposed Ward 3-4 boundary.

This option provides familiarity to residents, retains some of the existing ward characteristics that work well, while addressing some of the issues raised in the evaluation. Population distribution is successful in the short term and addresses change reasonably well in the longer term.

An evaluation of Preliminary Option 1A against the guiding principles can be found in Figure 9-2.

Table 9-1
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 1A – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2025 Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2036 Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	4,929	1.09	O+	5,031	1.04	O
Ward 2	4,372	0.97	O	4,491	0.93	O-
Ward 3	4,402	0.98	O	4,620	0.96	O
Ward 4	4,182	0.93	O-	5,437	1.13	O+
Ward 5	4,651	1.03	O	4,524	0.94	O-
Total	22,536	-	-	24,102	-	-
Average	4,507	-	-	4,820	-	-

Total Population includes permanent and seasonal population. Seasonal populations are calculated with an average of 3.7 persons per unit (P.P.U).

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.



Figure 9-1
Preliminary Option 1A

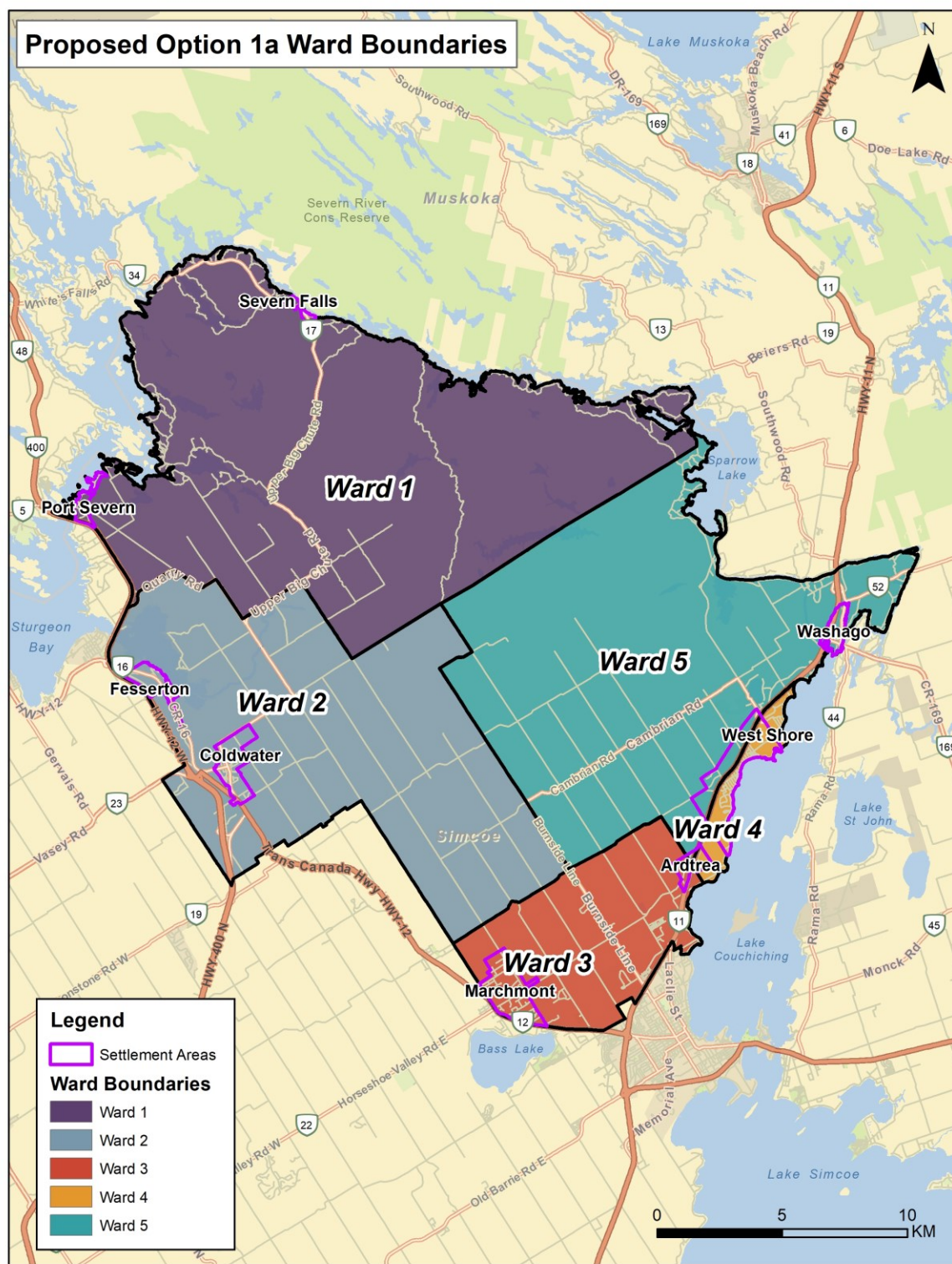




Figure 9-2
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 1A – Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with three within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$) of the average population.
Population and Electoral Trends	Yes	Population growth within Severn will not result in wards falling outside the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation. Two wards remain within the $\pm 5\%$ range of variation.
Geographical and Topographical features	Largely Successful	Boundaries are clear and/or visible lines. Highway 11 used as Ward 4-5 boundary.
Community or Diversity of Interests	Largely Successful	The wards contain plausible groupings of settlements and/or neighbourhoods.
Effective Representation	Yes	Future population changes and community groupings support effective representation.

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

9.2 Preliminary Option 1B – Minimal Change

This second option can also be considered a “minimal change” option since it preserves key features of the existing wards but achieves a better population distribution ahead of the 2026 municipal election and out to 2036.

In this option, the proposed Ward 1 covers a smaller area than the present Ward 1 and includes a high proportion of seasonal residents. The population is slightly smaller than in Option 1A in 2025 and remains stable to 2036 but in both years it is considered “optimal.” The proposed Ward 2 replicates the current Ward 2 except for adding an area



from the present Ward 3 south of Warminster Road down to Division Road between Fairgrounds Road and Burnside Line, leaving the proposed Ward 3 in a “U” shape. The result is that both proposed wards are at the optimal point in 2025. The proposed Ward 3 remains in the optimal population range in 2036 but the proposed Ward 2 drops slightly below the optimal point despite a modest population change.

The proposed Ward 4 is like the present Ward 4 except for a small area in the northeast corner that is allocated to the proposed Ward 5. Despite this loss of area, the proposed Ward 4 is forecast to be at the optimal point in 2036. As well, the boundary between the proposed Wards 1 and 5 is drawn largely along Upper Big Chute Road rather than using Swift Rapids Road as in the current system. The two proposed wards are both forecast to be at the optimal point by 2036.

Overall, the markers used as boundaries are straightforward and recognizable, although the proposed Ward 2-Ward 3 line is unconventional.

As noted, Preliminary Option 1B is broadly similar to Option 1A even though the boundaries of all the wards change. The communities of interest are in plausible – and in some cases historic - groupings.

Like Option 1A, Table 9-2 indicates that three wards in Option 1B fall within the optimal population ranges identified in 2025 and increases to four at the optimal point in 2036, meaning that the design successfully addresses population growth. An evaluation of Preliminary Option 1B against the guiding principles can be found in Figure 9-4.



Table 9-2
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 1B – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2025 Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2036 Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	4,593	1.02	O	4,624	0.96	O
Ward 2	4,400	0.98	O	4,502	0.93	O-
Ward 3	4,524	1.00	O	5,044	1.05	O
Ward 4	4,025	0.89	O-	4,981	1.03	O
Ward 5	4,994	1.11	O+	4,951	1.03	O
Total	22,536	-	-	24,102	-	-
Average	4,507	-	-	4,820	-	-

Total Population includes permanent and seasonal population. Seasonal populations are calculated with an average of 3.7 persons per unit (P.P.U).

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.



Figure 9-3
Preliminary Option 1B

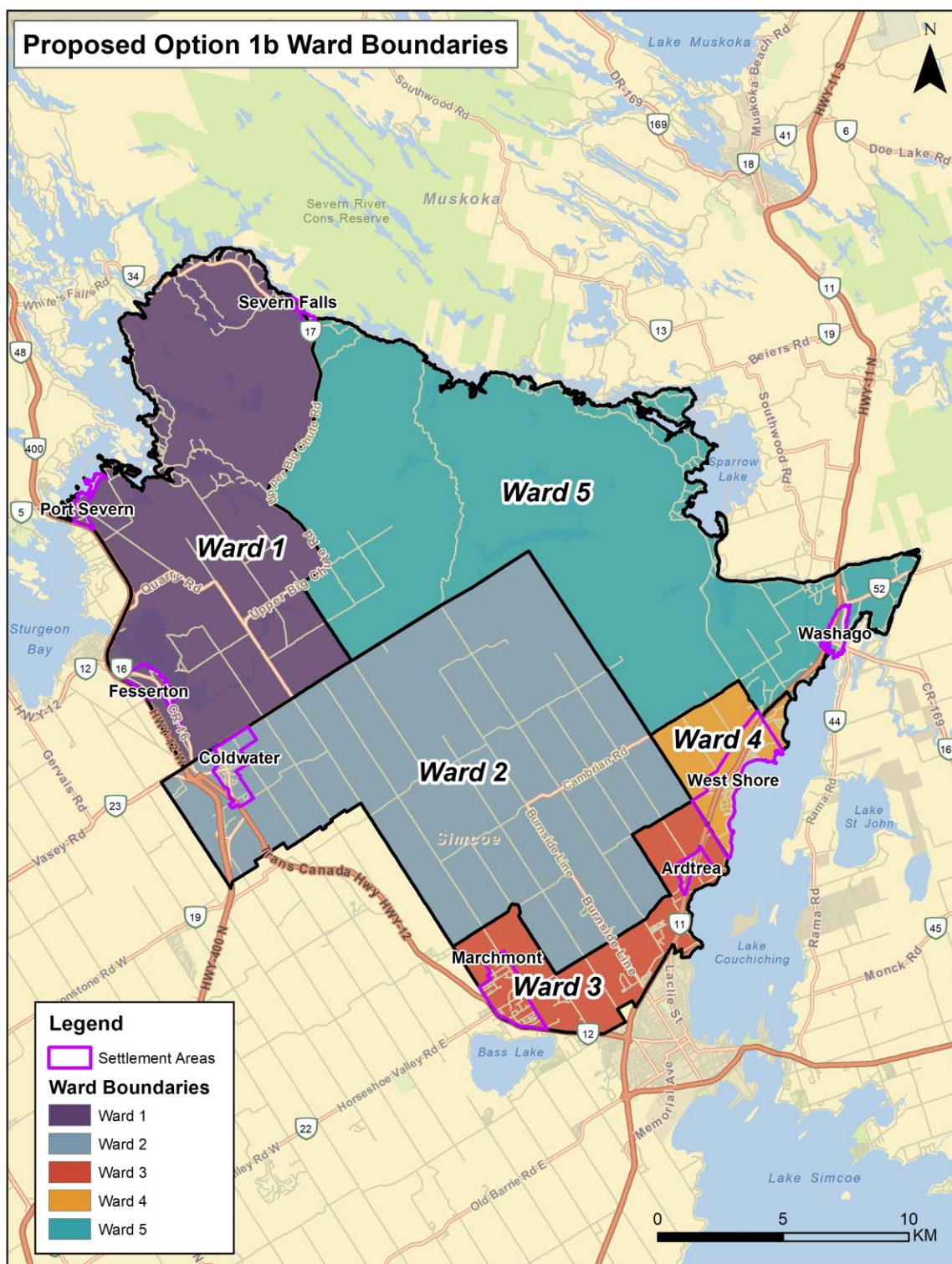




Figure 9-4
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 1B - Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with three of the five wards within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$) of the average population.
Population and Electoral Trends	Yes	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with four of the five wards within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$) of the average population.
Geographical and Topographical features	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are clear and/or visible lines.
Community or Diversity of Interests	Largely Successful	The wards each contain plausible groupings of settlements and/or neighbourhoods.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Future population balance is offset by the wide variation in the geographic size of the wards. This combination hinders the achievement of complete effective representation.

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



9.3 Preliminary Option 2 – Community of Interest

Preliminary Option 2 largely replicates Preliminary Option 1B; the major change is the extension of the proposed Ward 4 along Lake Couchiching to include both the Westshore community and the Washago settlement area. Removing Washago from the Ward 5 proposed in Preliminary Option 1B means the shoreline community is in two wards not three. The proposed Ward 5 is exclusively oriented to Severn River and inland territory residents rather than one combining some Lake Couchiching residents with them. In this sense the Option has a stronger claim to reflect the identifiable communities of interest in Severn Township.

The important consequence of this change is to increase the imbalance between the proposed Wards 4 and 5 (a forecast gap of about 1,450 in 2026 becomes approximately 2,500 in 2036) and to move the population of the proposed Ward 4 (forecast to be the major growth area in Severn) outside the 25% range of variation.

Preliminary Option 2 is mostly successful at meeting the guiding principles being considered in this C.C.W.B.R. However, it is likely to have limitations in the longer-term, if population projections are realized. There may need to be a re-drawing of Wards 2, 3 and 4 to account for future residential developments. An evaluation against the guiding principles is presented in Figure 9-6.

Table 9-3
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 2 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2025 Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2036 Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	4,593	1.02	O	4,624	0.96	O
Ward 2	4,400	0.98	O	4,502	0.93	O-
Ward 3	4,524	1.00	O	5,044	1.05	O
Ward 4	5,238	1.16	O+	6,212	1.29	OR+
Ward 5	3,782	0.84	O-	3,720	0.77	O-
Total	22,536	-	-	24,102	-	-
Average	4,507	-	-	4,820	-	-

Total Population includes permanent and seasonal population. Seasonal populations are calculated with an average of 3.7 persons per unit (P.P.U).

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.

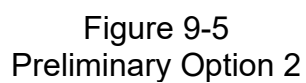




Figure 9-6
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 2 – Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Largely Successful	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation with three of the five wards within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$) of the average population.
Population and Electoral Trends	Partially Successful	Population growth creates large imbalance between the proposed Wards 4 & 5; the two wards fall outside the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Geographical and Topographical features	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are clear and/or visible lines.
Community or Diversity of Interests	Largely Successful	The wards each contain plausible groupings of settlements and/or neighbourhoods.
Effective Representation	Partially Successful	This Option maintains communities of interest but with a wide variation in the geographic size and population of the wards

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

9.4 Preliminary Option 3 – 2036 Population Parity

This Option looks to achieve population parity in both 2025 and 2036 through modest changes to the present ward boundaries. The focus is on achieving almost perfect population parity in 2036. In Preliminary Option 3, Washago is included in the proposed Ward 5, as in the current system and Options 1A and 1B. The Westshore area is aligned between Highway 11 and Lake Couchiching (as in Preliminary Option 1A) and



minor boundary modifications are proposed for the remaining three wards that resemble changes proposed in other Preliminary Options.

Population parity in 2025 is successfully achieved with all wards within the 10% of the optimal point but 2036 is exceptional, with all the five wards falling within $\pm 5\%$ of the optimal population. The trade-off to achieve long term parity is a map featuring two Wards that include large geographic areas (proposed Wards 2 and 5), although they are somewhat similar to the wards covering that part of the Township in the current system.

Preliminary Option 3 successfully meets the guiding principles being considered in this W.B.R., resulting in effective representation. An evaluation against the guiding principles is presented in Figure 9-8.

Table 9-4
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 3 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2025 Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2036 Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	4,726	1.05	O	4,748	0.99	O
Ward 2	4,678	1.04	O	4,761	0.99	O
Ward 3	4,246	0.94	O-	4,786	0.99	O
Ward 4	4,055	0.90	O-	5,011	1.04	O
Ward 5	4,832	1.07	O+	4,797	1.00	O
Total	22,536	-	-	24,102	-	-
Average	4,507	-	-	4,820	-	-

Total Population includes permanent and seasonal population. Seasonal populations are calculated with an average of 3.7 persons per unit (P.P.U).

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.



Figure 9-7
Preliminary Option 3

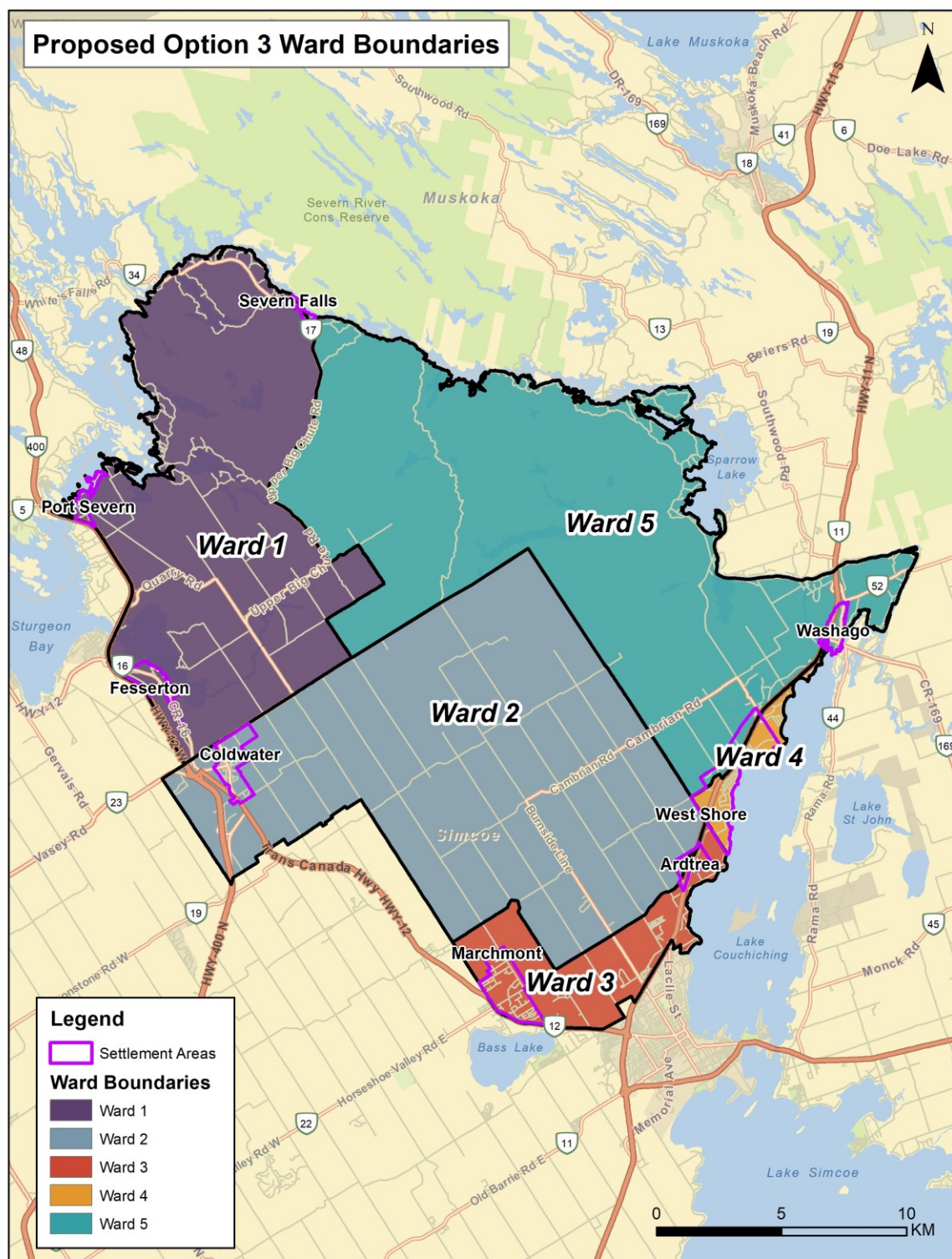




Figure 9-8
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 3 – Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Yes	All wards are within $\pm 10\%$ range of optimal, with two of the five wards within the optimal range ($\pm 5\%$) of the average population.
Population and Electoral Trends	Yes	Population growth within Severn settlement is distributed so that all wards are within the $\pm 5\%$ range of variation.
Geographical and Topographical features	Largely Successful	Other than the boundary between proposed wards 2 & 3, boundaries are clear and/or visible lines.
Community or Diversity of Interests	Largely Successful	The wards contain plausible groupings of settlements and/or neighbourhoods.
Effective Representation	Yes	Strong population parity in 2025 and 2036 result in the achievement of effective representation.

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

9.5 Preliminary Option 4 – Balanced

This Preliminary Option is notable for the proposed configuration in the former Township of Orillia with two wards aligned on a north-south axis south of Mount Stephen Road to the southern Township boundary. That is, the proposed Ward 2 runs along the western municipal boundary in such a way as to include both the Coldwater and Marchmont settlement areas in the same ward while the proposed Ward 3 includes the present



Ward 3 plus most the territory in the present Ward 2 north of Warminster Road. Minor adjustments to the boundaries of the present Wards 1 and 5 are proposed, specifically moving the boundary from Swift Rapids Road to a line based largely on Upper Big Chute Road.

Preliminary Option 4 achieves strong population parity in both 2025 and 2036 with all wards within the defined range of variation. The proposed boundaries are clear and, in most instances, familiar from the current maps.

Preliminary Option 4 is largely successfully at meeting effective representation since it was created to meet the full set of the guiding principles being considered in this W.B.R. rather than placing a priority on one principle over the others. An evaluation against the guiding principles is presented in Figure 9-10.

Table 9-5
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 4 – Population by Proposed Ward

Ward Number	2025 Population	Variance	Optimal Range	2035 Population	Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	5,058	1.12	O+	5,084	1.05	O+
Ward 2	4,806	1.07	O+	5,046	1.05	O
Ward 3	4,117	0.91	O-	4,500	0.93	O-
Ward 4	4,576	1.02	O	5,514	1.14	O+
Ward 5	3,978	0.88	O-	3,958	0.82	O-
Total	22,536	-	-	24,102	-	-
Average	4,507	-	-	4,820	-	-

Total Population includes permanent and seasonal population. Seasonal populations are calculated with an average of 3.7 persons per unit (P.P.U).

Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2025.



Figure 9-10
Township of Severn
Preliminary Option 4 – Evaluation Summary

Principle	Does the Current Ward Structure Meet the Respective Principle?	Comment
Representation by Population	Largely Successful	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Population and Electoral Trends	Largely Successful	All wards are within the $\pm 25\%$ range of variation.
Geographical and Topographical features	Largely Successful	Most boundaries are clear and/or visible lines. The boundary between the proposed Wards 2 and 3 is novel.
Community or Diversity of Interests	Largely Successful	Three wards contain plausible groupings of settlements and/or neighbourhoods. Proposed Ward 2 has two historic population centres.
Effective Representation	Largely Successful	Strong population parity in 2025 and 2036 contribute to the achievement of effective representation.

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



9.6 Evaluation Summary

In the Discussion Papers and earlier in this paper it has been established that the current ward boundary system in Severn does not provide for effective representation. The Consultant Team, therefore, recommends that changes would better accommodate growth within the Township and protect communities of interest.

The Preliminary Options provided in this report provide a spectrum of potential alternatives. Recognizing the strengths of the existing system, two options provide minimal changes but allows for better accommodation of the guiding principles and recognition of how the Township has grown and developed since the last W.B.R.

Other Preliminary Options propose more innovative, but varied, responses to the shortcomings in the current system. Each offers a ward configuration that is designed to achieve more effective representation than the current system and is successful in doing so.

A summary evaluation of the options is provided in Figure 9-11.

.



Figure 9-11
Township of Severn
Preliminary Options – Evaluation Summary

Preliminary Option	Representation by Population	Population and Electoral Trends	Geographical and Topographical features	Community or Diversity of Interests	Effective Representation
Existing System	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful
1A	Yes	Yes	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Yes
1B	Yes	Yes	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful
2	Largely Successful	Partially Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Partially Successful
3	Yes	Yes	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Yes
4	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful	Largely Successful

Levels of evaluation for how the Guiding Principles are met





10. Further Considerations

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

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

The purpose of this report is to stimulate discussions in Severn and encourage residents to consider their preferred ward boundary configurations for the Township. The options included are deliberately called “preliminary” since much of the next phase of this review involves gathering the perspectives of residents on these alternatives.



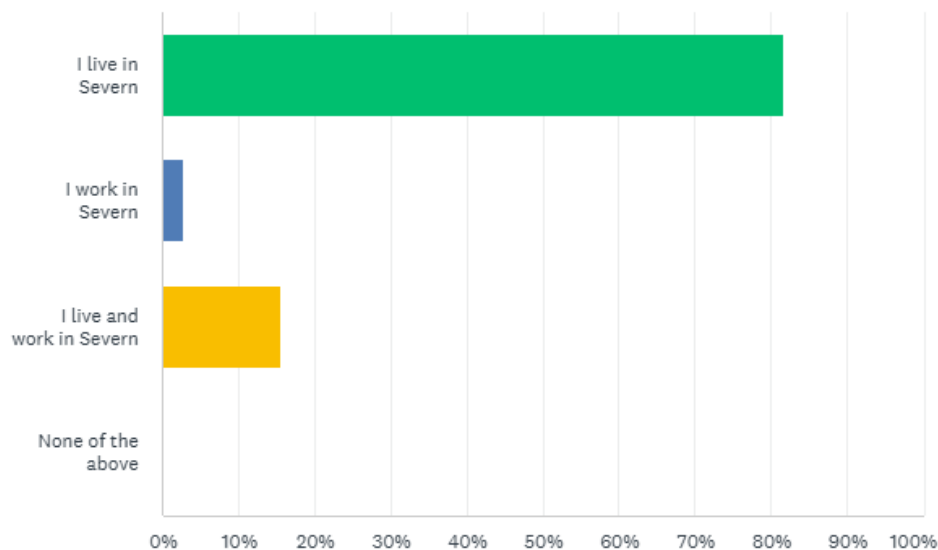
Appendix A

Survey Results



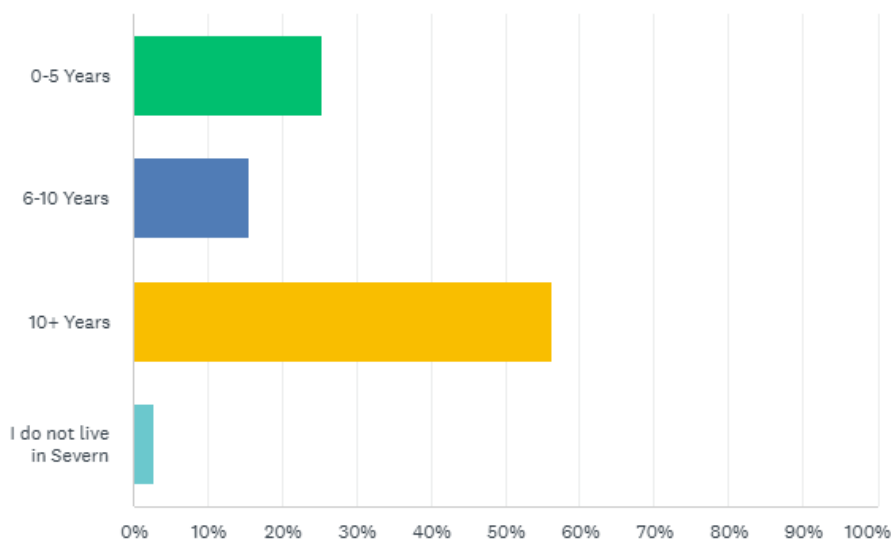
What best describes you?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 0



How long have you lived in Severn?

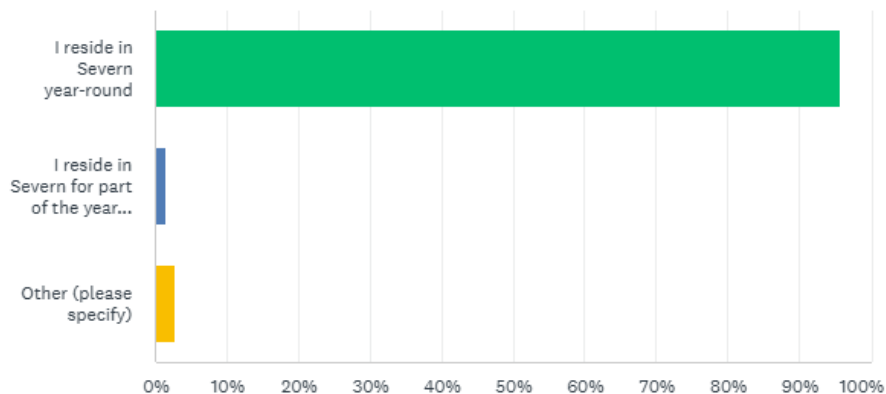
Answered: 71 Skipped: 0





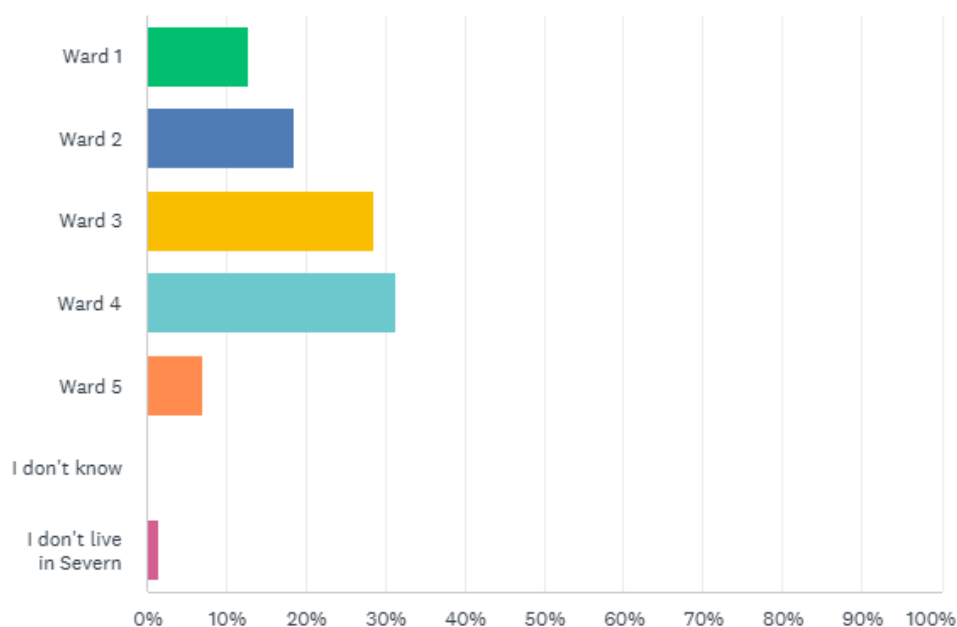
Do you reside in Severn year-round or for part of the year (seasonally)?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 0



Which ward do you live in?

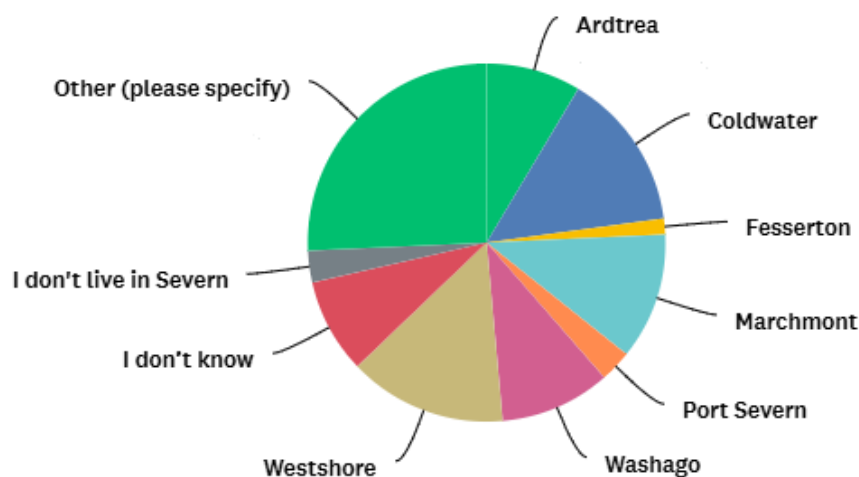
Answered: 70 Skipped: 1





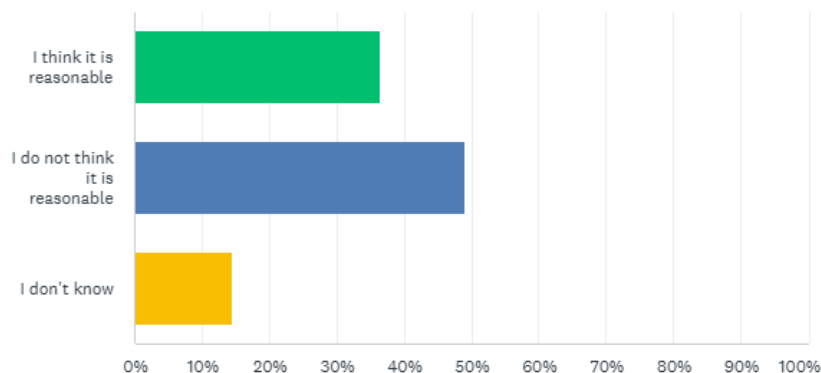
Which community in Severn do you live in?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 1



Three of the Township's five wards are outside the acceptable range of population variance with one ward having almost 2.5 times the population of another ward. Do you think it's reasonable to have wards with such differences?

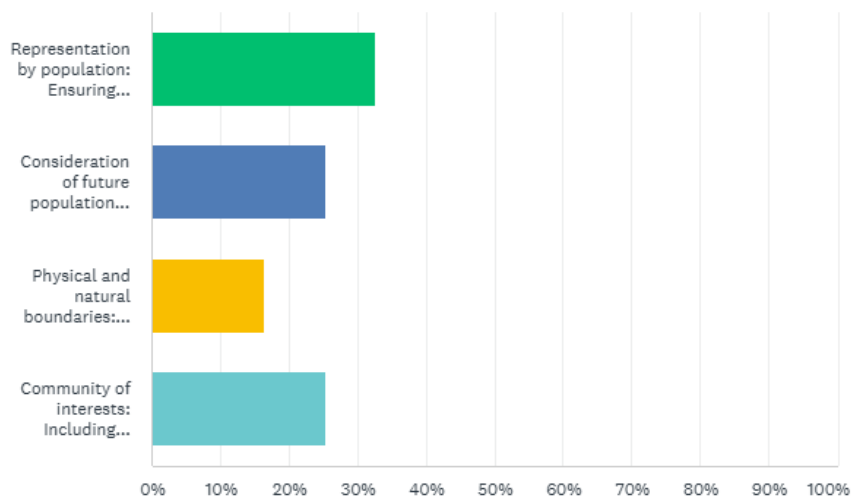
Answered: 55 Skipped: 16





Please indicate the ONE guiding principle that should be given the highest priority to ensure effective representation:

Answered: 55 Skipped: 16





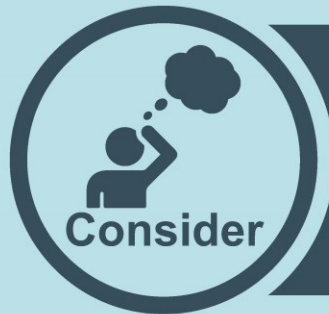
Appendix B

Public Consultation



WELCOME

Ward Boundary Review



Where should ward boundaries be drawn and why?

Township of Severn Ward Boundary Review

Process



Review
Current
System



Think about
the Guiding
Principles



What is the
Ideal
Outcome?



Provide
Feedback at
the Survey

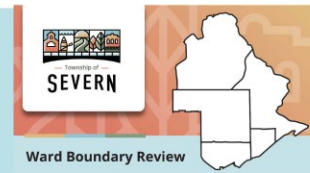


Please provide
your feedback:



Township of Severn 2024 Ward Boundary Review

www.severn.ca/wbr



Public Information Session Ward Boundary Review



We want to hear from you!



For more information, visit
<https://www.severn.ca/wbr>

**Watson
& Associates**
ECONOMISTS LTD.

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

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Township of Severn 2024 Ward Boundary Review

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Project Overview and Objectives

The Township of Severn has retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and Dr. Robert J. Williams to undertake the 2024 Ward Boundary Review.

The primary purpose of the review is to prepare Township Council to make decisions about whether to maintain the existing ward structure or to adopt an alternative arrangement.

Key Objectives Include:

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

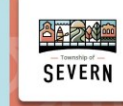
 Watson
& Associates
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Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

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Township of Severn 2024 Ward Boundary Review

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Ward Boundary Review



Existing Council Structure

Mayor

Head of Council



Head of Local Council
and serves on Simcoe
County Council

Elected At-Large

+

Deputy Mayor



Serves on Local Council
and Simcoe County
Council

Elected At-Large

+

Ward Councillors



One councillor elected
per ward (x5)

Elected in Wards

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

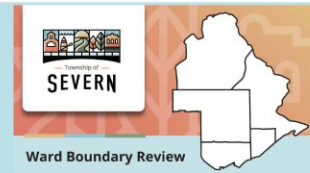
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Township of Severn 2024 Ward Boundary Review

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Population per Council Size Comparison

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Area (sq. km)	Council Members*	Persons per Member	Wards/ At-Large
Township of Adjala-Tosorontio	10,989	371.53	7	1,570	Wards
Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury	42,880	200.68	9	4,764	Wards
Township of Clearview	14,814	556.37	9	1,646	Wards
Town of Collingwood	24,811	33.15	9	2,757	At-Large
Township of Essa	22,970	279.92	5	4,594	Wards
Town of Innisfil	43,326	262.39	9	4,814	Wards
Town of Midland	17,817	35.33	9	1,980	At-Large
Town of New Tecumseth	43,948	273.87	10	4,395	Wards
Township of Oro-Medonte	23,017	585.42	7	3,288	Wards
Town of Penetanguishene	10,077	25.42	9	1,120	At-Large
Township of Ramara	10,377	414.94	7	1,482	Wards
Township of Severn	14,576	523.06	7	2,082	Wards
Township of Springwater	21,701	535.85	7	3,100	Wards
Township of Tay	11,091	137.86	7	1,584	Wards
Township of Tiny	12,966	335.05	5	2,593	At-Large
Town of Wasaga Beach	24,862	57.42	7	3,552	At-Large
Average	21,889	289	8	2,833	-

Council Members include head of Council.

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

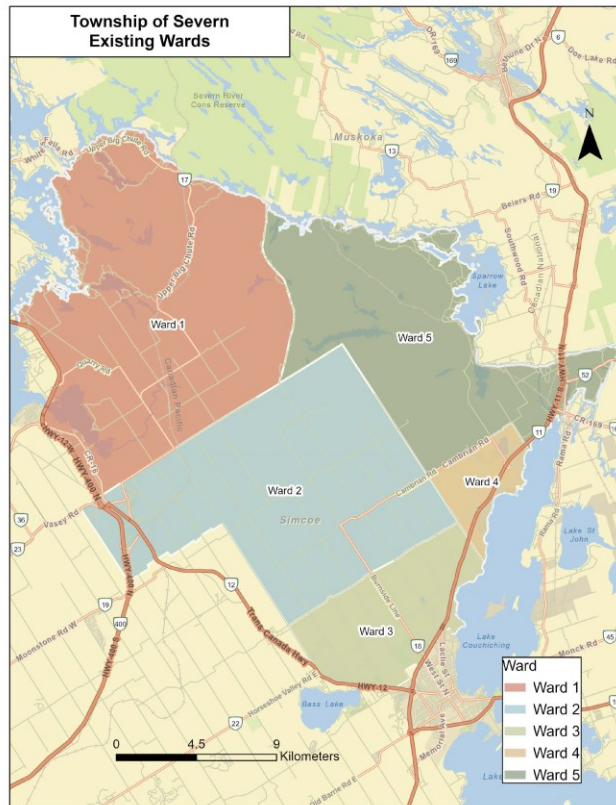
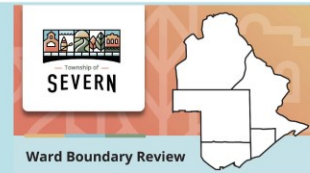
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Township of Severn 2024 Ward Boundary Review

www.severn.ca/wbr



Existing Ward Configuration

2021 Population by Ward

Ward	Area (SqKm)	2021		
		Population	Population Variance	Optimal Range
Ward 1	198.6	1,798	0.62	OR-
Ward 2	161.8	3,343	1.15	O+
Ward 3	53.2	4,542	1.56	OR+
Ward 4	19.4	2,894	0.99	O
Ward 5	130.0	1,999	0.69	OR-
Total/Average	563.0	14,576	2,915	

Note: Population does not include seasonal populations.

O	±5% of the Optimal (Average) Population
O-	±5%-25% of the Optimal (Average) Population
OR-	>±25% of the Optimal (Average) Population

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

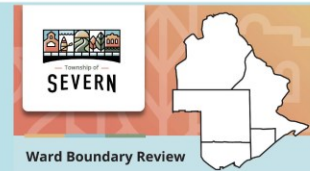
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Township of Severn 2024 Ward Boundary Review

www.severn.ca/wbr



Guiding Principles

The following principles will be used to evaluate the existing ward structure and subsequent alternative options:

-  **REPRESENTATION BY POPULATION**
Ensuring electors are comparatively represented on Council, giving an equal voice, which is understood to be within $\pm 25\%$ maximum deviation from the average ward population.
-  **CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE POPULATION TRENDS**
Including changes in population growth and development, aging communities, etc. (Population and Electoral Trends)
-  **PHYSICAL AND NATURAL BOUNDARIES**
Including changing the way in which manmade and natural features such as highways, railways, river valleys, and farmland shape the community. (Geographic and Topographic Features)
-  **COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST**
Including settlement patterns and existing historical communities in the context of the broader municipality. (Communities or Diversities of Interests)
-  **EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION**
The four articulated principles contribute to achieving the over-arching principle of effective representation.

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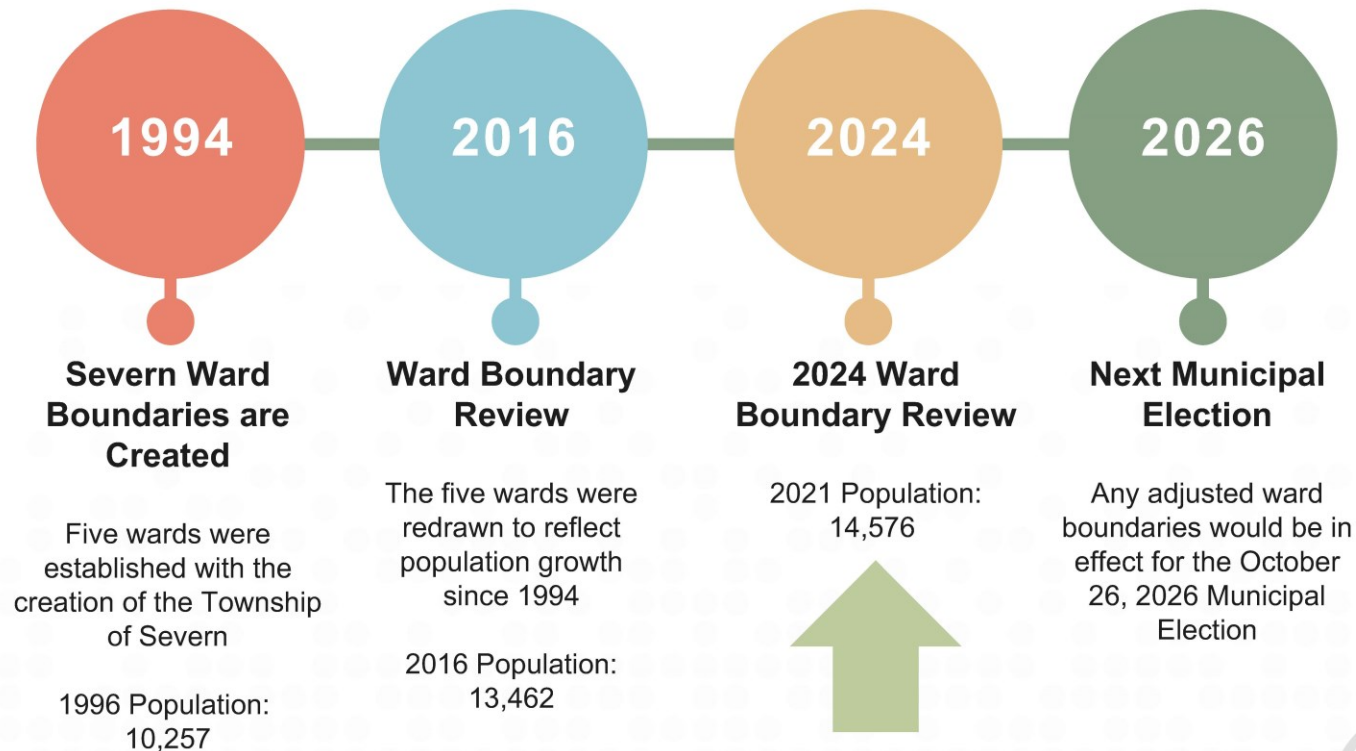
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Ward Boundary Review

Past and Present



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Legislative Framework

Ontario's *Municipal Act*, 2001 authorizes a local municipality to:

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

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

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

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