This page was exported from - Caledon Citizen
Export date: Thu Mar 28 13:08:23 2024 / +0000 GMT

Ward options get down into the details

By ROB PAUL

Local Journalism

Initiative Reporter

The last time there was a ward boundary review in Caledon was 1994, and although not mandated, it is recommended to have a review every three elections. In 1994 the population of Caledon was around 39,000 while today it is projected over 75,000 and is expected to increase to over 108,000 by 2031.

With the continued growth of the community and an update to the ward boundaries needed, a consultant team from Watson and Associates led by Jack Ammendolia and Josh Valenti, along with retired University of Waterloo professor Dr. Robert Williams were tasked with providing the Town of Caledon with a couple of options.

?These wards have not been reviewed for over 25 years, there is a lot of change that goes on and we have to recognize that the community needs to be prepared to make a change,? said Williams.

The consultant team has come up with five different options and has been holding virtual open houses for Caledon residents to get a better idea of what the ward boundary options are and to ask questions and provide feedback and comments on preferred options.

There's also an online survey available on the town website for resident to provide input on the ward boundary review (www.caledon.ca/en/government/ward-boundary-review.aspx).

Option 1 is a four-ward design (Caledon is currently split into five wards) which has similar characteristics to the existing wards with Mayfield West contained within its own ward. The 2021 populations within each ward in Option 1 are 18,380 in Ward 1, 14,830 in Ward 2, 13,470 in Ward 3, and 28,780 in Ward 4.

?In this example, Bolton and Mayfield still continue to be in one ward and Caledon East still has some relationship with the existing Ward 4, but this time more in the southern half because Ward 1 actually comes across and takes over the northern part of the existing Ward 4,? said Ammendolia. ?From a population parity, it's not perfect, but it's much better than what we're looking at with the existing system. We see that in 2021, most of the wards are in or close to the optimal range. Ward 4 that contains the existing Bolton urban area is above that optimal range, but we see as Caledon grows out, that ward starts to come in range.

?Three of the four wards are within optimal range, or pretty close. Ward 1 is a little low, but the nature of the ward being a little more rural, we can live with that tradeoff. Ward 3 is the Mayfield ward?There's extreme growth occurring in that ward in Mayfield West right now and one of the questions is, how do we deal with it? And, in this option, because of that growth, it gets a little outside of that optimal range.?

?In this four-ward model, we have three major urban centres with Mayfield West, Bolton, and Caledon East,? said Williams. ?That basically is the current structure of the municipality; these are each centred in a ward, leaving the northern more rural part outside. It's only one of the four wards that doesn't have a significant growth element to it. But what does happen is that northern rural ward essentially joins large parts of the former township of Caledon and the former township of Albion.?

The second option provided by the consultants is also a four-ward design that's focused on communities of interest and will have Caledon East remain associated with the existing Ward 4 community. The population within Option 2 are 14,360 in Ward 1, 15,800 in Ward 2, 15,180 in Ward 3, and 30,050 in Ward 4, but the ward populations are projected to grow out of parity by 2031 in option two.

?In Option 1 we tried to keep Bolton and Mayfield West as contained as possible,? Ammendolia said. ?In Option 2, they're still contained within one ward, but it starts to look at that peripheral rural area surrounding that urban zone. In this option when we look at Ward 1 it's still fairly large and rural, but is actually contained to the western part of the municipality and more similar to what it looks like now, but comes further down south, practically to Mayfield West. Caledon East still has some association with the existing Ward 4. Where in Option 1, that association was more with the southern half, in this option it's more with the northern half. For population parity, it's pretty good with the exception of Ward 4, but as the area grows out we start to lose some of the population parity. With the growth of the urban areas, it will start to push us outside of the optimal population parity. It hits a lot of things, but the population parity isn't as balanced as in Option 1.?

Added Williams: ?What we're looking at here is providing some room to grow around Mayfield West and Bolton. This version keeps the old distinction between Caledon and Albion and preserves a bit of that traditional relationship, but the problem is with only four wards and two of the area's growing significantly, it's hard to hit all of the principles we've been asked to consider.?

With the way Council is currently set up, a four-ward system is optimal, but because having less wards can make population parity more difficult, the consultants provided different ward design options.

?We're looking at this with four local councillors in a four-ward system, but now we're changing gears slightly to look at multiple ward options for a couple reasons,? said Ammendolia. ?As we started to look at the different issues like population growth to date [and] population growth that's expected, the different communities of interest, the three urban areas?one thing that became evident is that we think the two four-ward options are viable. But we realized if we considered more than four wards there might be other guiding principles we'd be able to achieve in a better way.

?There has been a change to the size of the Council and because of decisions made at Peel Region, the Municipality of Caledon now has two less Regional Councillors. While we looked at multiple wards because of the core principle issues, it became more of an issue to look at multiple wards because of this change in Council size.?

In the third option, rather than stick with the current five-ward system or the four-ward system in Option One and Two, the consultants have gone to six wards to have two additional local wards to maintain the existing Council size.

Option 3 also focuses on communities of interest like Option Two, but has Bolton split into two adds (north/south). The populations in option three are 13,070 in Ward 1, 8,300 in Ward 2, 14,060 in Ward 3, 9,920 in Ward 4, 10,000 in Ward 5, and 19,450 in Ward 6.

?This essentially gives two rural wards, so it's now two out of six instead of one out of four, like in the previous examples, which gives us a little more room to move,? said Williams. ?We're still recognizing that urban growth is transforming Caledon, but in this case, it's captured in four wards instead of three. Another distinction here is dealing with Bolton in two wards and this creates a distinction between the north and south to recognize where that concentration is at the present time.?

Added Ammendolia: ?The main theme of this option?in addition to the two additional wards?is really trying to focus on the various communities of interest that have been identified to us in Caledon. You still have some of the main urban areas as anchors in their wards?Mayfield West, Caledon East?and we saw in Option 1 and 2, in the 2021 populations any version that had Bolton contained in one ward was well over the population parity. This option tries to address those things.?

With Option 4A, the consultant have Caledon staying in a five-ward design with Bolton split into two wards (north/south) like in Option 3 and Mayfield West condensed within a ward south of Old School Road. This option is strong for the population parity with 15,040 in Ward 1, 15,780 in Ward 2, 18,170 in Ward 3, 11,480 in Ward 4, and 14,880 in Ward 5.

?Here we're still trying to address if we can do a better job balancing core pricinples addressing the reduction in the total council size in Caledon, but this way it's more of a compromise,? Ammendolia said. ?If six isn't palatable, can we increase by one ward and look at a five-ward system with five local councillors? Some similarities to Option 3 with Bolton in two wards and Mayfield West in one.

Ward 1 is a rural ward with Ward 2 anchored by Caledon East. You see from a population parity perspective that in 2021 it's all good, three of the five wards in this example are within five per cent. It's about as good as it gets in terms of population parity and we still recognize the communities of interest. We think it's a very well-balanced approach to hitting the core principles, except when we look at Ward 5 in the 2031 numbers, the population in that ward will be about 70 per cent higher than the average and that's because of the extreme growth in Mayfield West. Option 4A is about catching up?having not been reviewed in over 25 years?and brings you to where things are today.?

Finally, the Option 4B is similar to Option 4A with Bolton split into two wards (north/south) but adds a sixth ward and has Mayfield West split east/west along Highway 410. The idea behind it is that rather than go with Option 4A which could cause for another boundary review in five to 10 years as Mayfield West grows, it would give the municipality the ability to split Mayfield West when it hits a certain size.

This option is to help with population parity in 2031 and has a 2021 population split of 15,040 in Ward 1, 15,780 in Ward 2, 18,170 in Ward 3, 11,480 in Ward 4, 12.790 in Ward 5, and 2,200 in Ward 6.

?Option 4B is a little bit of out of the box thinking for us,? said Ammendolia. ?It really focuses on the issue with Mayfield West and similar to Bolton growing into two wards, we're presenting that same option for Mayfield West. This is exactly the same as 4A, but what it does is it simply divides the Mayfield West ward into two wards. What we're proposing is that it can be done by some sort of trigger, like when the population hits a certain number it triggers another councillor and the ward gets divided. It's really to be determined on how the municipality would do it, but it's really giving them an option if they don't want to do a ward boundary review again in a few years. It gives the ability to build off the five-ward option as population changes over the next five or 10 years.?