



WHY IS TORONTO DRAWING NEW WARD BOUNDARIES?

Ward Population Background Brief

Revised, July 2015

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WHY IS TORONTO DRAWING NEW WARD BOUNDARIES?

Toronto has been managed by an elected Council based on wards since early in the last century, and necessarily has a long history of adjusting ward boundaries to reflect population growth and the physical development of the City. In 1997, the 28 wards existing in the six former municipalities were used to elect the first Council of 56 representatives (2 per ward) to govern the first term of amalgamated Toronto. Since these wards had not been adjusted since direct election to Metro Council was introduced, these boundaries were reviewed, and the size of Council reduced to 44 representatives, for the election in 2000. Five elections later, these boundaries are still in effect.

This research paper looks at the dynamics of population change and the effects these changes can have on the principle of effective representation. Reviewing the boundaries of electoral districts is something that all levels of government undertake to ensure that electors in different parts of the city, or province, have an equivalent influence through their democratic franchise. This review of Toronto's ward boundaries is limited to the addressing effective representation such that electors across Toronto will have equivalent influence on public affairs through the ballot box. This project will not look at other issues that have been raised in public discourse such as:

- Voter eligibility;
- How Councillors are chosen – e.g. ranked ballot
- Governance issues; or
- How Council operates

Toronto has grown considerably since 2000, with the population increasing from 2.48 million in the 2001 Census to 2.61 million in the 2011 Census. Notably, as the City is fully built out to its municipal boundaries, much of this growth has been due to intensification as Toronto's fabric has redeveloped again and again. Given the stable nature of Toronto's low scale neighbourhoods and the direction to protect them given through the Official Plan, development has been focused in key areas of the City. This is most readily noticed in Downtown where population has grown by 29% since 2001. In fact, since 2000 when the current wards were adopted there have been over 171,000 new housing units built across Toronto; that is more than the entire housing stock of Brampton or London, Ontario, and almost as much housing as exists in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Furthermore, the City will continue to grow as there are over 132,000 residential units proposed to be built over the next 10 to 15 years.

A general principle of equal representation is to design electoral districts with roughly equal populations. As Toronto has grown, the equity of representative democracy across wards has changed as some wards now have considerably higher populations, and some lower, than the average ward population. Under the City of Toronto Act, Toronto City Council has the authority to make changes to ward boundaries through the passage of a by-law. Given the population growth that has taken place since 2000, Council has initiated this current review of ward boundaries, recognizing that the growing imbalance is not conducive to effective representation for the residents of Toronto. Table 1 illustrates how the gap between the least populous ward and the most populous ward has grown over time. There has been an 8% increase in the average ward population to 2014. If the ward boundaries are not



adjusted, population projections prepared by Toronto City Planning indicate that the average ward population could grow by 31% by the year 2031.

Table 1: Population counts and future projections for the City of Toronto and current wards.

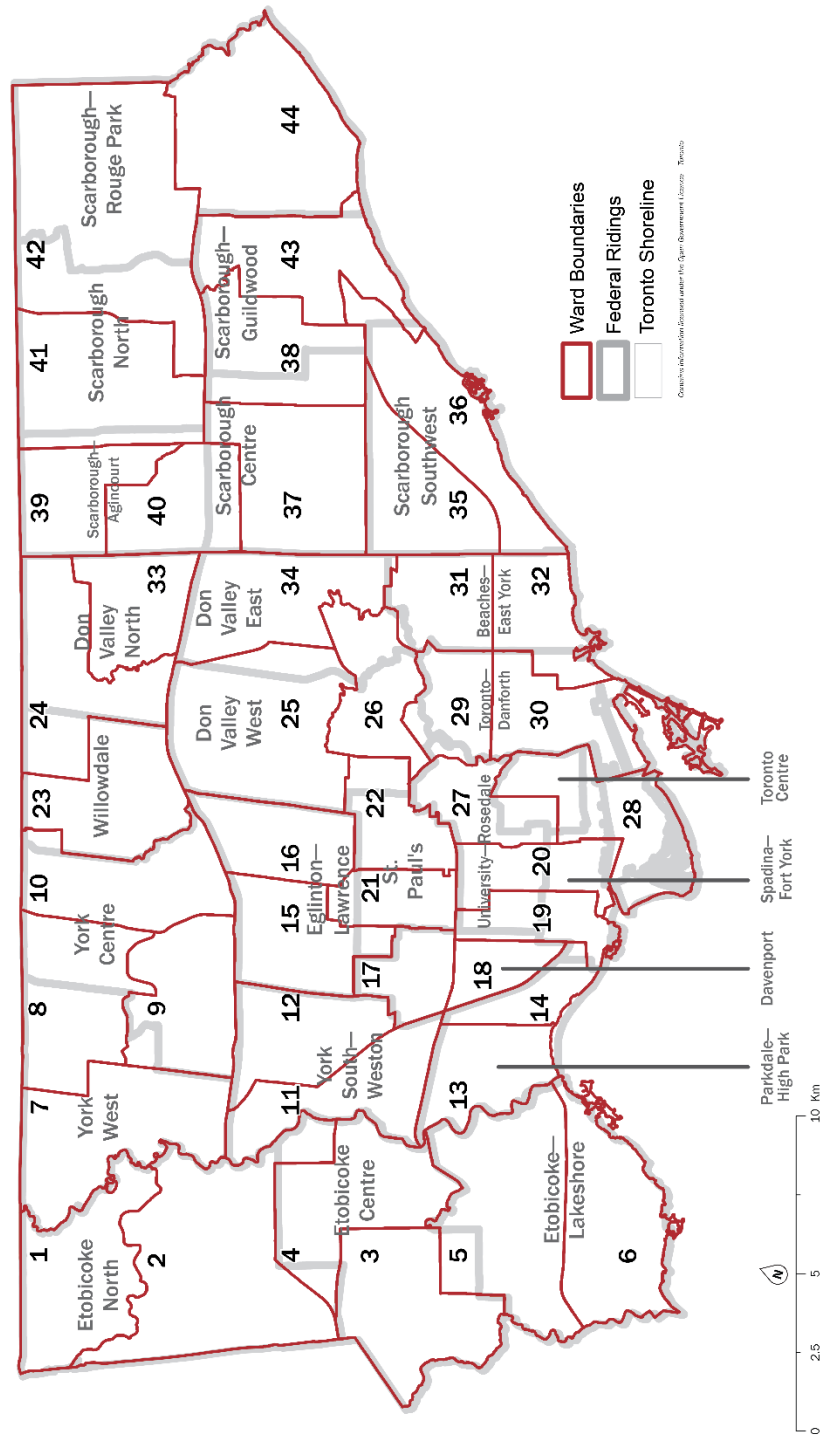
Year	Total Population	Minimum Ward Population	Maximum Ward Population	Average Ward Population
2001	2,481,420	46,960	66,835	56,396
2006	2,503,345	44,850	79,520	56,894
2011	2,701,560	44,935	88,435	61,399
2014	2,798,255	44,404	94,597	63,596
2018	2,913,665	44,245	109,447	66,220
2022	2,997,198	44,142	121,105	68,118
2026	3,082,930	44,265	129,992	70,067
2030	3,172,218	44,412	138,489	72,096

ALIGNMENT WITH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

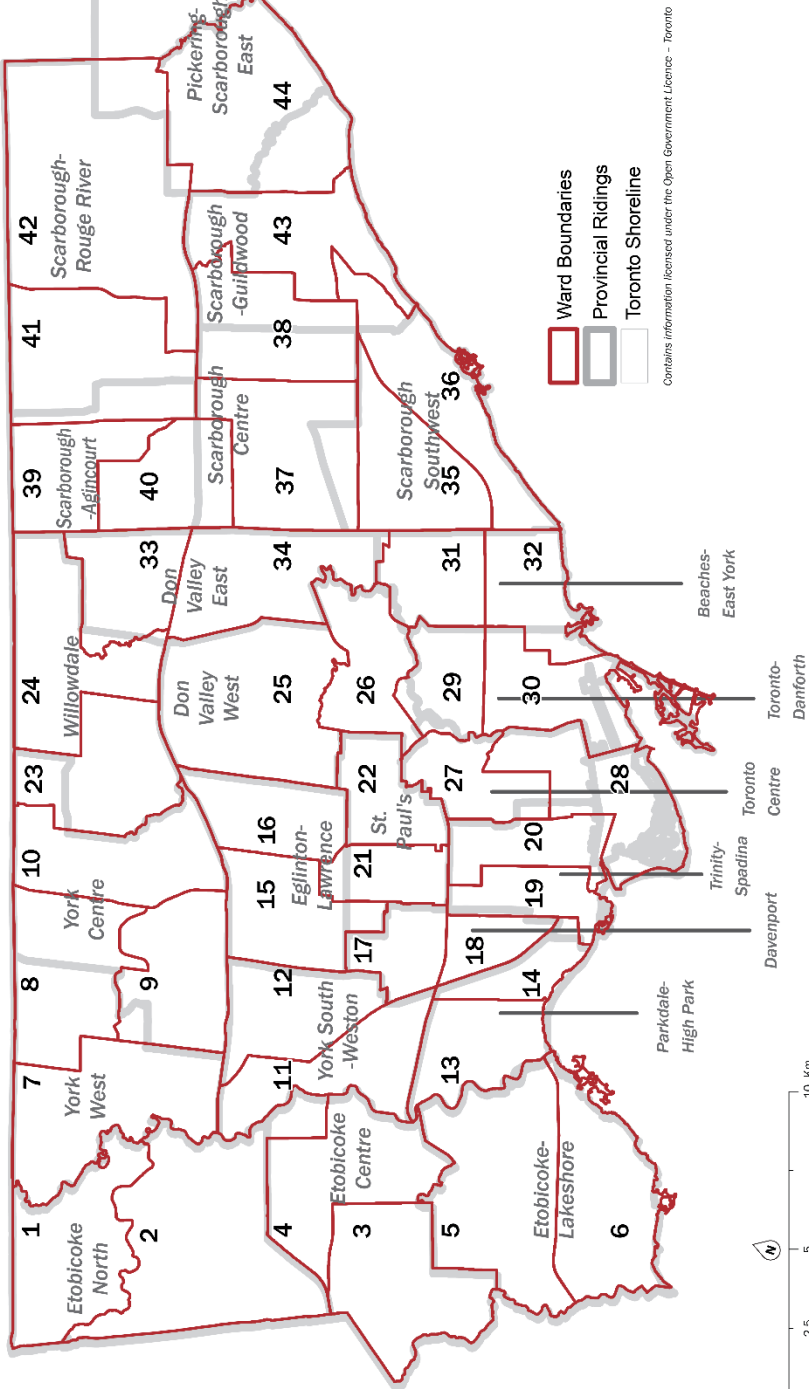
Toronto is represented by 22 members in the provincial legislature and will be represented by 25 federal members of Parliament as of the next federal election. With 44 wards, each Councillor represents roughly one-half the population of his or her provincial or federal counterpart. As Maps 1 and 2 show, Toronto's ward boundaries do not currently align with federal or provincial electoral district boundaries: nor are they required to. There is no statutory requirement or guidance that suggests that wards should have some relationship with those electoral districts. Map 1 illustrates how the current ward boundaries compare with the new federal electoral ridings that will be in effect for the next federal election, while Map 2 overlays the current ward boundaries with the provincial electoral districts used during the provincial election of 2014.

As Toronto's wards share the names of the provincial ridings, one might think that there is a standard relationship between the wards and the provincial ridings such that their boundaries are coterminous. However, Map 2 shows that, while this may have been one organizing concept at the outset of the last ward boundary review, clearly other factors were taken into account in settling on the final boundaries. The current exercise of determining ward boundaries for future elections is not taking any of the current federal or provincial boundaries as a starting point. A broad based consultation program will canvas opinions of Toronto residents to determine options for consideration.

MAP 1: TORONTO WARDS OVERLAID ON FEDERAL RIDINGS, 2014



MAP 2: TORONTO WARDS OVERLAID ON PROVINCIAL RIDINGS, 2014



GROWTH HAS INFLUENCED “EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION”

Since Toronto’s current ward boundaries were established in 2000, a number of municipal ward boundary exercises have been undertaken across Ontario and across the country. Some attempts to delineate ward boundaries have been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board and to the courts. This litigation has resulted in the establishment of a number of parameters which should be followed in any new ward boundary review.

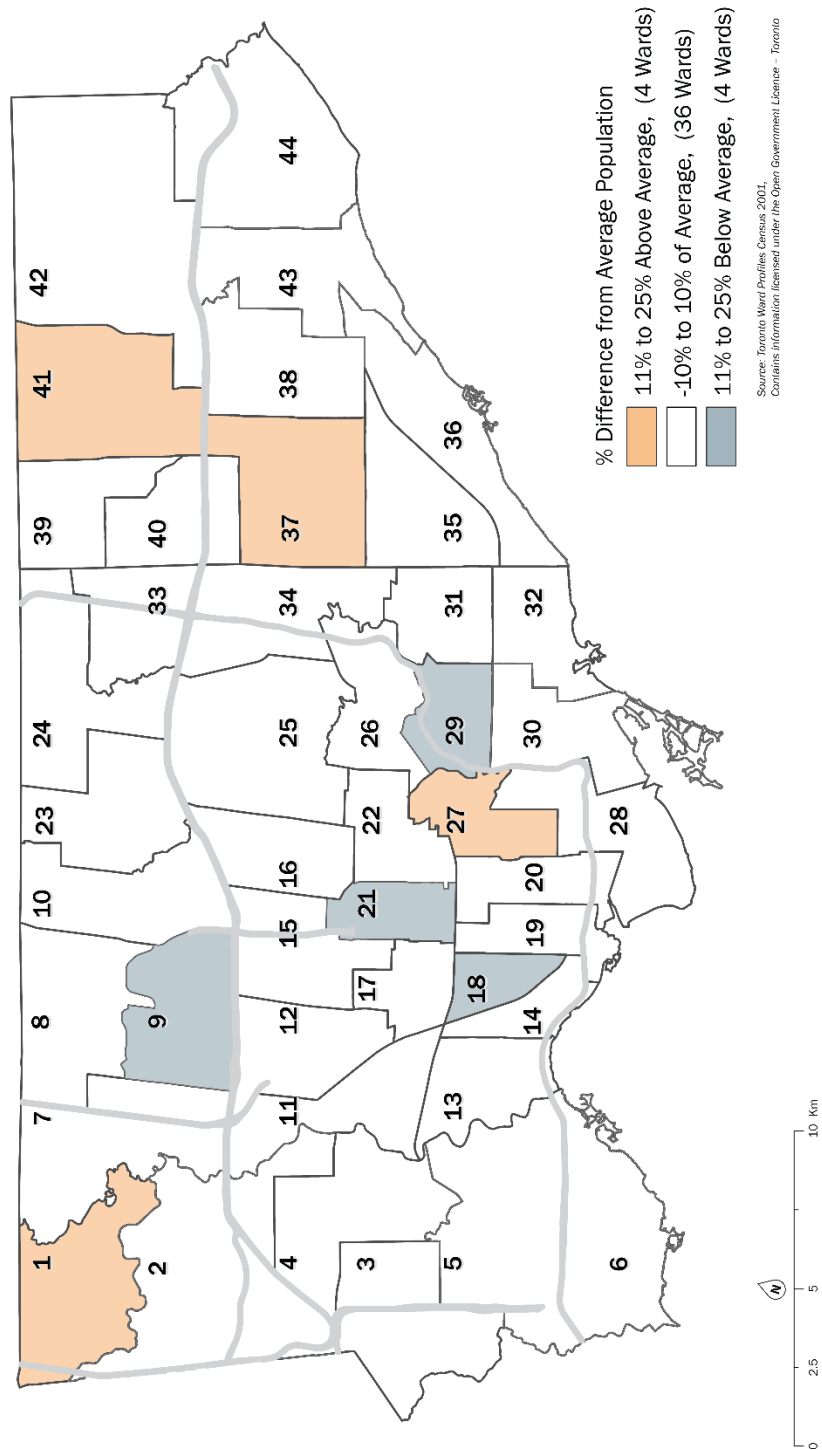
While the City of Toronto Act sets out the statutory requirements for enacting boundaries, through appeals, the Supreme Court of Canada has established “effective representation” as the fundamental principle to be adhered to when considering new ward boundaries. While reflecting voter parity and major physical features as traditional inputs, the Supreme Court acknowledges other factors that may come into play in determining effective representation. These factors can include geography, ward history, communities of interest and minority representation.¹

The Ontario Municipal Board has determined that any individual ward population, as a rule, should not deviate from the average population across all wards by more than plus or minus 25% save for exceptional circumstances involving major communities of interest.

Toronto’s current wards were established generally respecting the principles of voter parity by minimizing the degree of variation from the average ward size at that time, as well as considering major physical features and community input. Using the 2001 Census as a benchmark, the average ward population at that time was 56,400 for a population of 2,481,000. Only eight wards had populations that were more than 10% above the average ward population, or greater than 10% below the average, as can be seen on Map 3.

¹ Reference re: Prov. [Sask], [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158

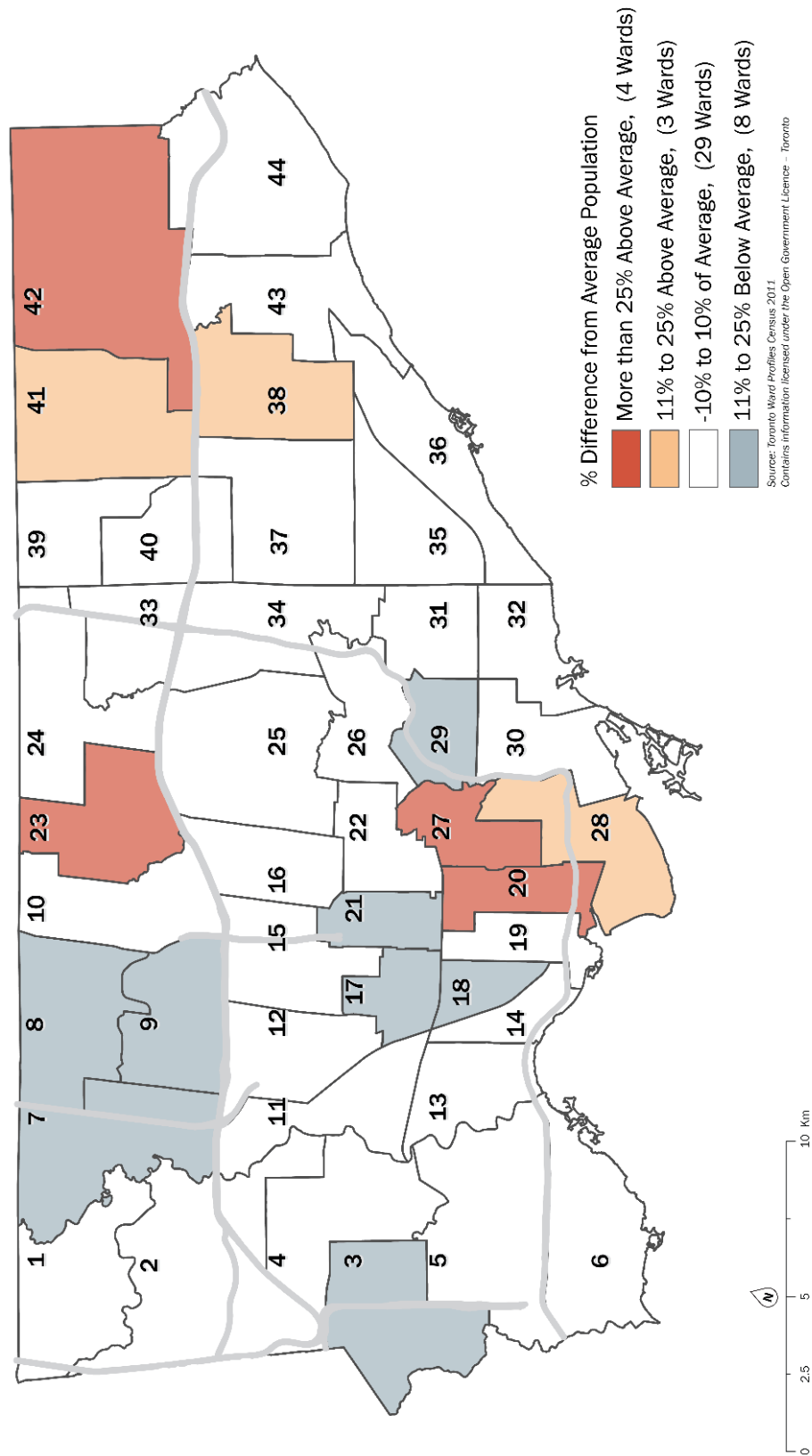
MAP 3: TORONTO WARDS ABOVE AND BELOW AVERAGE POPULATION, 2001



From 2001 to 2006 Toronto's total population did not increase by a substantial amount. A rise of under 1% yielded a total population of 2,503,000 with an average ward size of 56,890 residents. This growth of just under 22,000 was surpassed by the growth from 2006 to 2011 of 111,740. The 2011 total population of 2,615,000 represented considerable growth of 4.46% over 2006 and 5.39% over 2001. The average population of the 44 wards was 59,430 in 2011.

By 2011, 15 wards varied from the average by more than +/- 10%, while 4 wards had populations more than 25% above the average. Map 4 reveals that the four wards exhibiting the largest variation from the average were located in high growth areas in Downtown, North York Centre and north-east Scarborough.

MAP 4: TORONTO WARDS ABOVE AND BELOW AVERAGE POPULATION, 2011



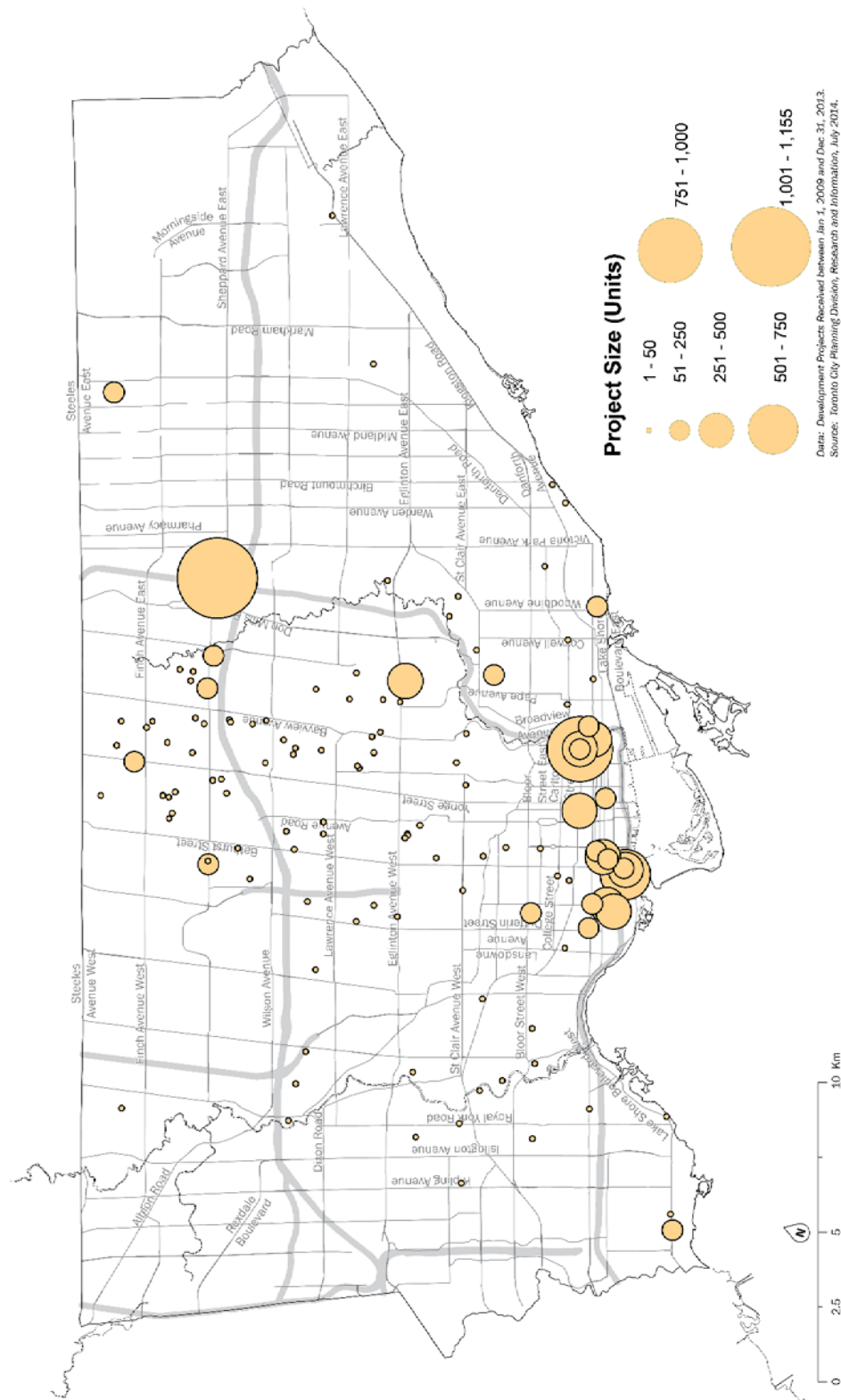
Statistics Canada prepares annual population estimates for major urban areas. Toronto's population for 2013 is estimated at 2,771,770, yielding an average ward population of 62,995. Map 5 illustrates the location of major residential development that has taken place since 2011. Over the past few years this magnitude and locational concentration of development has continued.

To understand how well the current ward system serves voter parity, Map 6 illustrates how much the estimated population for each ward for the 2014 election varies from the overall City average ward population. Generally, ward boundary reviews evaluate this relationship by looking at the following range of difference:

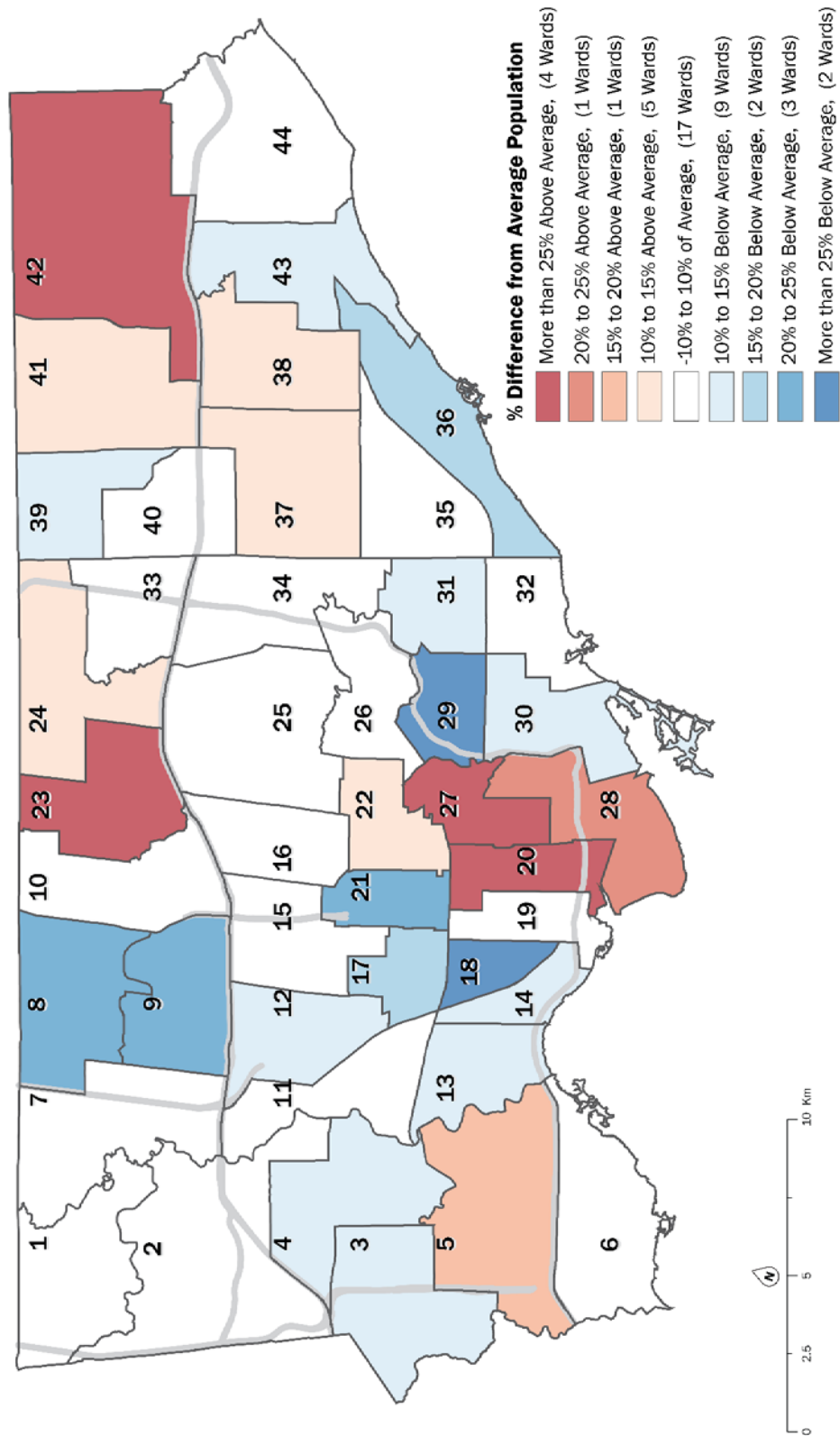
- **Range 1** plus or minus 10% of the city-wide average ward population;
- **Range 2** 10% to 15% above the city-wide average;
- **Range 3** 10% to 15% below the city-wide average;
- **Range 4** 15% to 20% above the city-wide average;
- **Range 5** 15% to 20% below the city-wide average;
- **Range 6** 20% to 25% above the city-wide average;
- **Range 7** 20% to 25% below the city-wide average;
- **Range 8** 25% or more above the city-wide average; and
- **Range 9** 25% or more below the city-wide average.



MAP 5: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS COMPLETED MAY 2011-DEC 2013



MAP 6: TORONTO WARDS VARIANCE BY CURRENT WARD, 2014



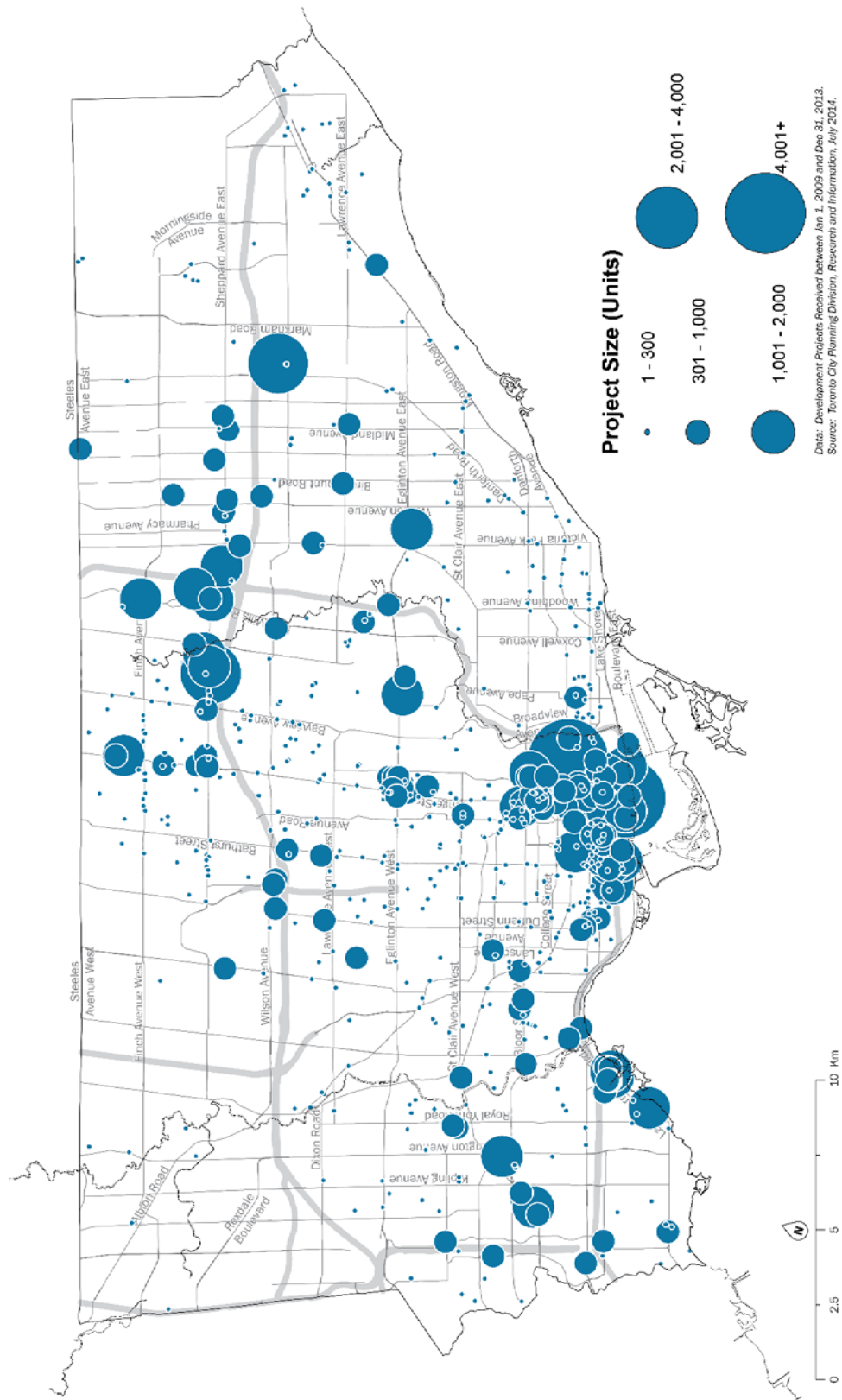
AND THE CITY WILL CONTINUE TO GROW

As of year-end 2013, 132,100 residential units were still in the development pipeline; either under review or approved but not yet built.² Map 7 illustrates the location of these major residential projects. While the distribution indicates that much of this new development is clustered in focused areas across the City, as prescribed by the Official Plan, demographic change in established neighbourhoods will also continue, and as the overall average ward population grows, even those wards with little new development could demonstrate significant variance outside an acceptable range for future municipal elections.

² Profile Toronto: How Does the City Grow? Toronto City Planning, July 2014



MAP 7: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CURRENT PIPELINE



Data: Development Projects Received between Jan 1, 2009 and Dec 31, 2013.
Source: Toronto City Planning Division, Research and Information, July 2014.

POTENTIAL VARIANCE IN VOTER PARITY

In 2006, the Ontario Government adopted the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) under the authority of the Places to Grow Act, 2005. The Growth Plan assigned forecasts of population and employment for all regional and single-tier municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan estimated that Toronto's population in 2031 would be 3.08 million. The legislation calls on all municipalities to put in place policies to accommodate this growth outlook and municipalities amended their Official Plans to come into conformity with the Growth Plan. Toronto's Official Plan, approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 2006, incorporated this population target as guidance for planning policy.

In 2013, the Province amended the Growth Plan, updating the growth outlook to 2031 and extending the planning period with population and employment forecasts to 2041. Toronto is now expected to grow to 3.19 million by 2031. This is the target population that the City must plan to accommodate through the current Official Plan Review. The Research and Information Unit of the City Planning Division prepared population projections to serve as base information for infrastructure planning. These projections are based on demographic trends observed up to the 2011 Census as well as known development potential. By employing the Growth Plan amended outlook for the City of 3.19 million as a control total for modeling, these projections are the best estimate of how population growth, or decline, might play out across the City.

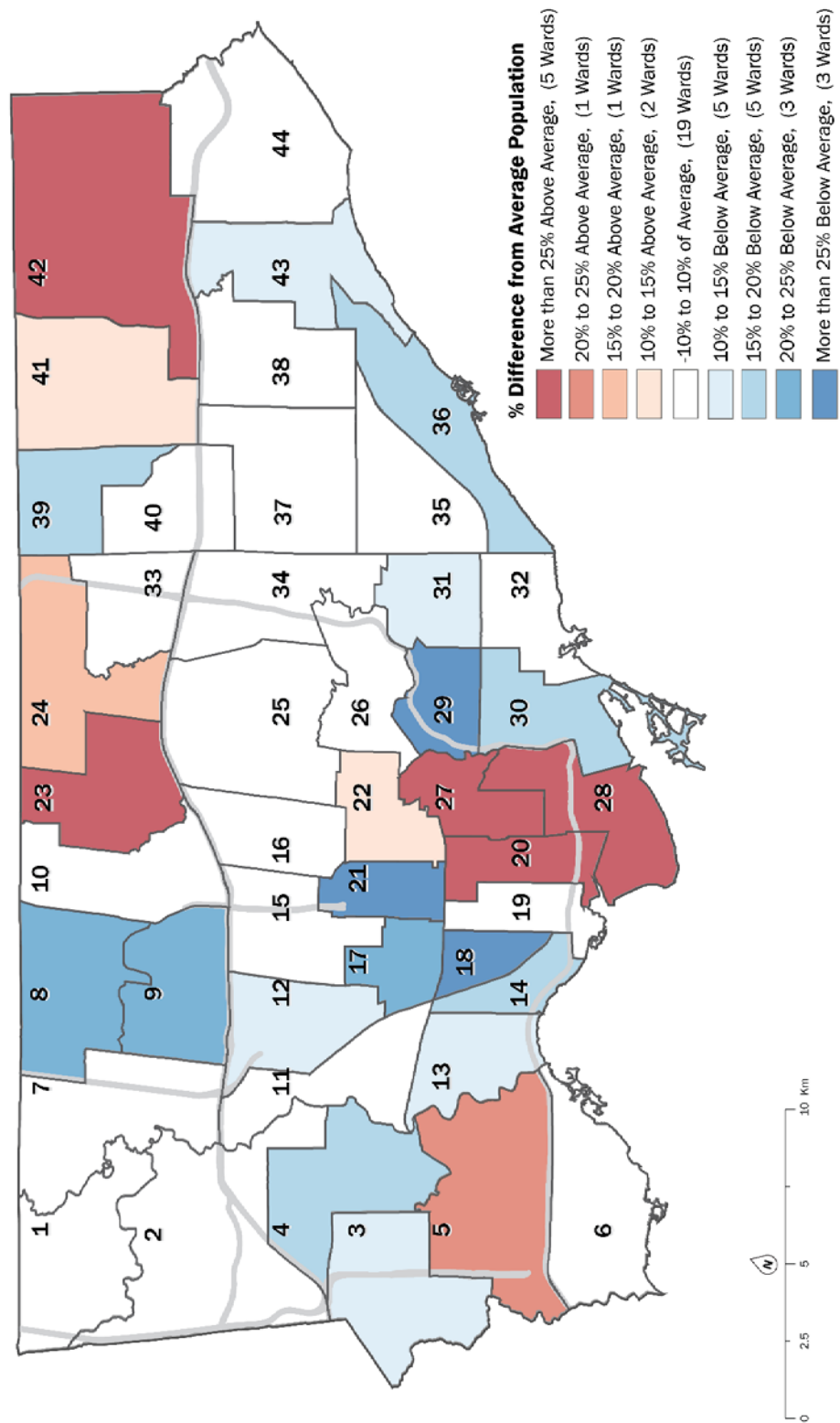
Maps 8, 9, 10 and 11 illustrate for each election year, the degree of potential variance from the city-wide average ward population, should the current set of ward boundaries remain in place for the next four municipal elections: 2018, 2022, 2026 and 2030.³ Table 2 documents the potential variance by ward for these future election years. Since Toronto is fully built-out with growth largely driven by redevelopment and infill, the geographic pattern of growth is similar for each future election year, but Table 1 demonstrates that the degree of variance continues to grow. Similarly, for wards that have experienced stable or declining population, as the City grows in total, their degree of variance below the city-wide average also continues to increase.

By 2026, the target election year for this exercise (Map 10), Toronto is anticipated to have a total population of about 3,082,930, and an average ward population of around 70,067. At that time, with the current ward system, only 17 wards would be within the ideal range of +/- 10%, with only 5 wards between 10% and 15% above or below the average.

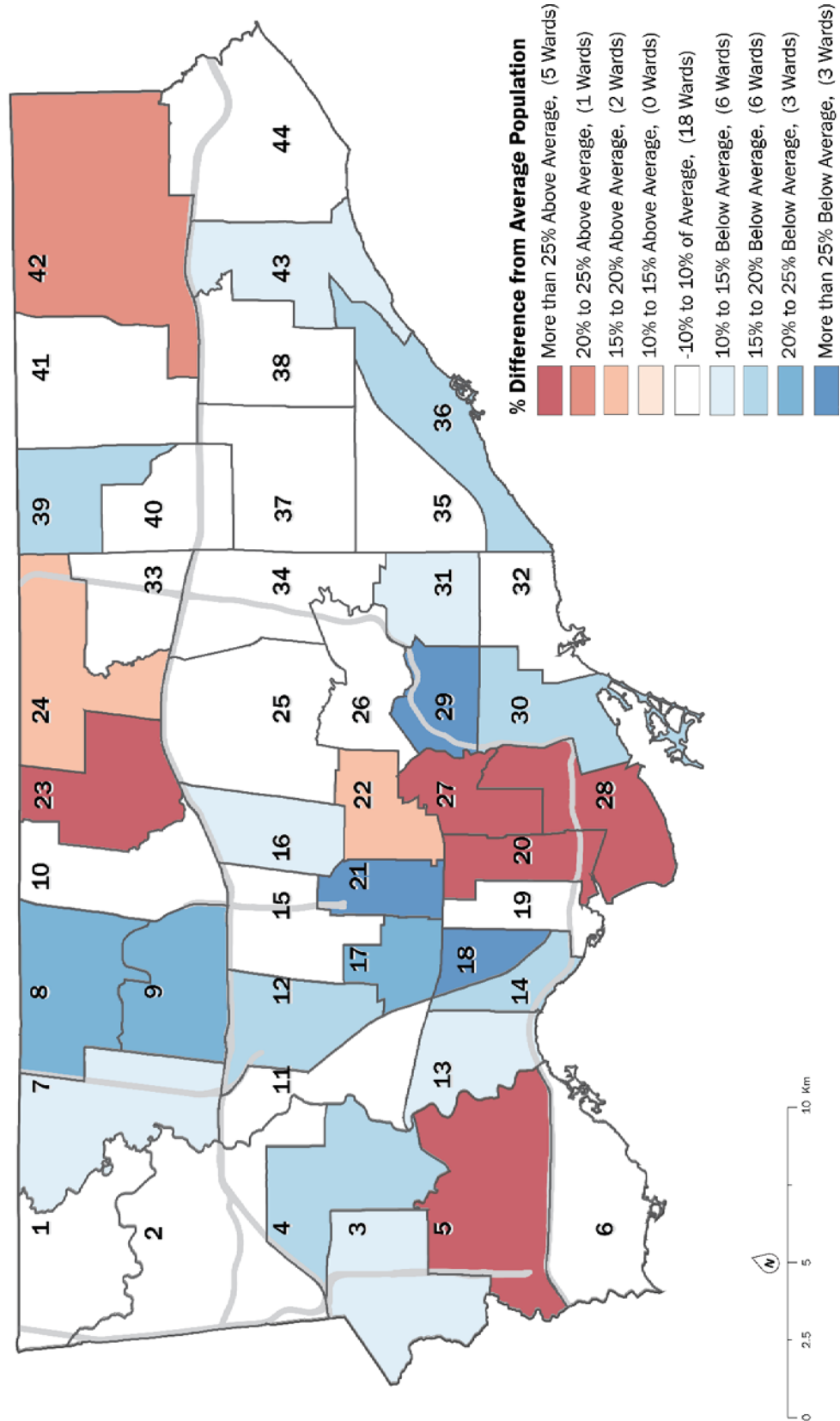
By the 2030 election (Map 11), only 15 wards would be within the ideal range of +/- 15% variance.

³ The City of Toronto population projections are based on Census data and hence project population and households for future Census years. The TWBR team have interpolated the growth pattern between successive Census horizon years to estimate the population for each future election year.

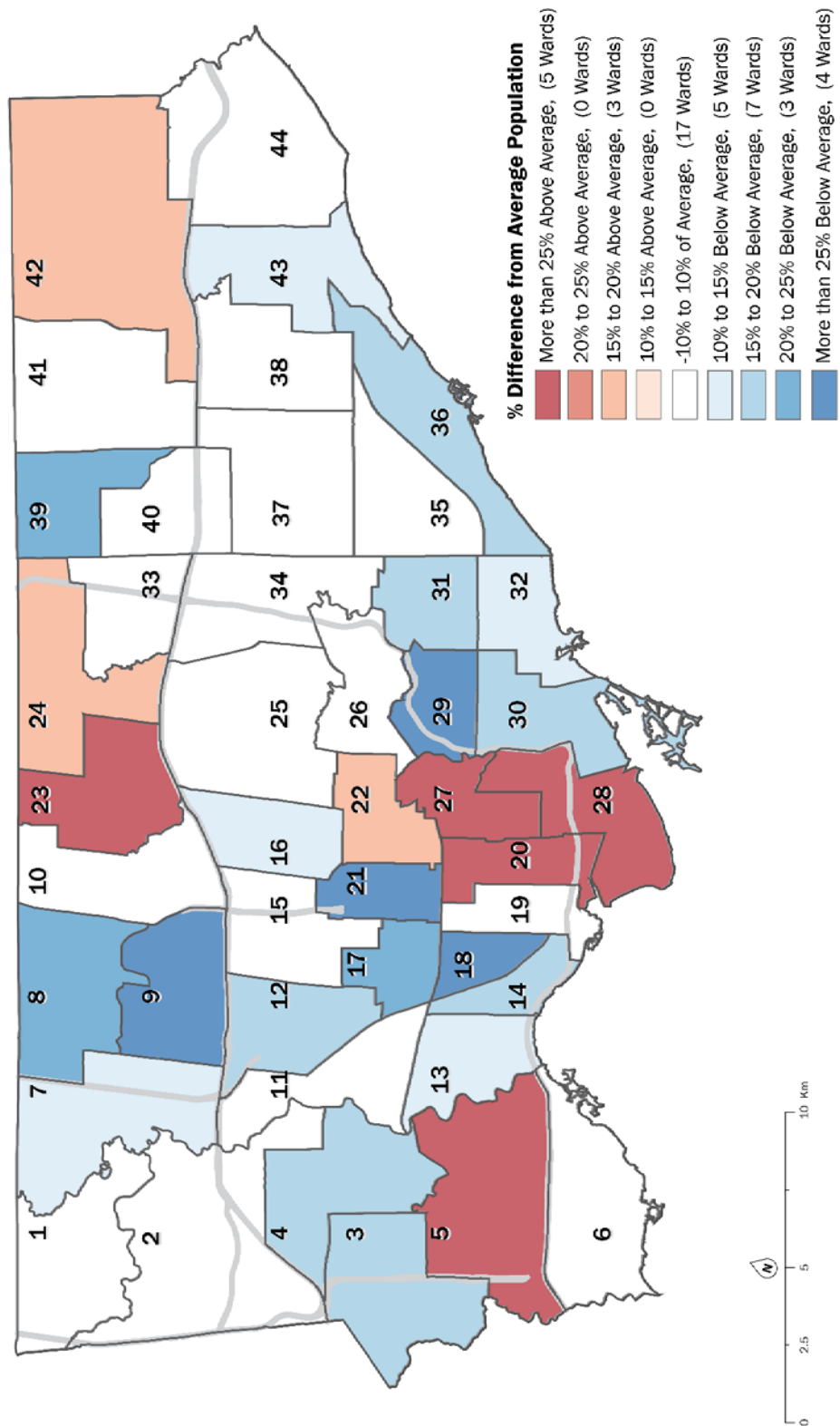
MAP 8: TORONTO WARDS VARIANCE BY CURRENT WARD, 2018



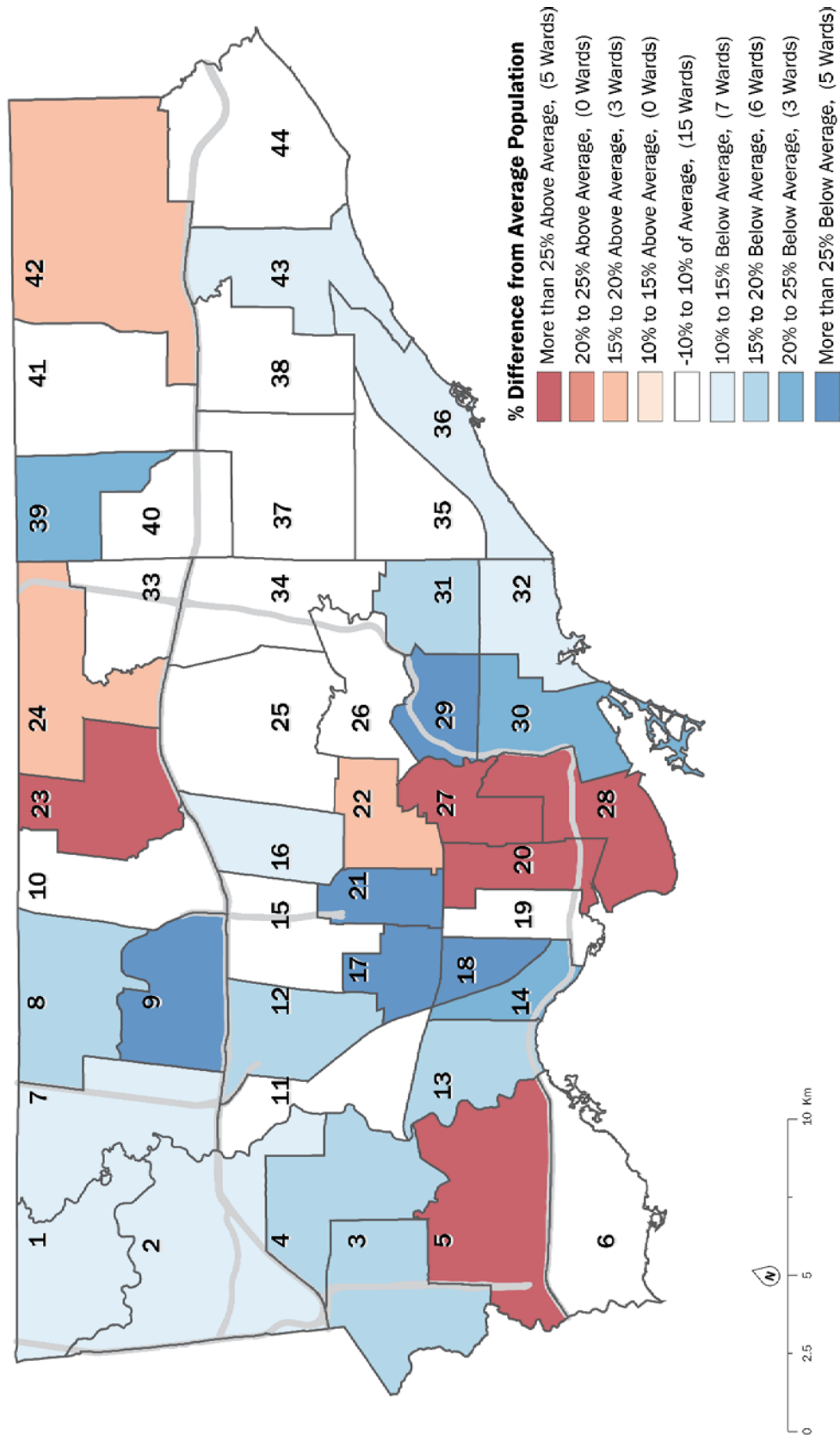
MAP 9: TORONTO WARDS VARIANCE BY CURRENT WARD, 2022



MAP 10: TORONTO WARDS VARIANCE BY CURRENT WARD, 2026



MAP 11: TORONTO WARDS VARIANCE BY CURRENT WARD, 2030



THE STATUS QUO IS NOT AN OPTION

While the current ward allocation has served Toronto well through 5 election cycles (including 2014), the magnitude and distribution of growth that has taken place over the past 14 years suggests that, in terms of voter parity, the City is becoming less equitable. With over 132,000 residential units which could be built over the medium term, it seems clear that Toronto is well on track to grow to the 3.19 million population prescribed by the Growth Plan for 2031. The magnitude of growth on the horizon, and its uneven distribution across the City, indicate that the status quo with respect to existing ward boundaries will not serve to ensure representative democracy for Toronto in future elections. New ward boundaries are necessary and should stand the test of effective representation for at least three election cycles: the status quo is not an option.

This growing disparity in effective representation is not lost on Councillors or the electorate. In fact, a petition was submitted to City Council advocating for one specific option for new ward boundaries. Council turned down this petition recognizing that a new model for ward boundaries should be based on a broad-based consultation with the public and a rigorous research program that would ensure effective representation and consider communities of interest across Toronto.



Table 2: Population counts and future projections by existing wards 2014 - 2030

WARD	2014	VARIANCE	2018	VARIANCE	2022	VARIANCE	2026	VARIANCE	2030	VARIANCE
1	60,577	-0.06%	60,154	-4.38%	59,918	-7.35%	60,122	-9.57%	60,412	-11.59%
2	59,263	-2.22%	59,298	-5.74%	59,205	-8.46%	59,935	-9.85%	60,886	-10.90%
3	53,165	-12.29%	54,520	-13.33%	55,155	-14.72%	55,675	-16.26%	56,229	-17.71%
4	51,762	-14.60%	53,237	-15.37%	54,403	-15.88%	54,768	-17.62%	55,253	-19.14%
5	70,448	16.23%	76,653	21.85%	81,776	26.44%	90,056	35.45%	98,527	44.19%
6	61,460	1.40%	65,500	4.12%	67,540	4.43%	69,434	4.44%	71,557	4.72%
7	54,860	-9.49%	57,080	-9.26%	57,624	-10.90%	59,105	-11.10%	60,807	-11.01%
8	48,065	-20.70%	48,362	-23.12%	49,568	-23.36%	53,030	-20.24%	56,873	-16.77%
9	47,784	-21.16%	48,278	-23.26%	48,596	-24.86%	49,048	-26.23%	49,899	-26.98%
10	63,469	4.72%	64,410	2.39%	64,986	0.48%	66,096	-0.59%	67,360	-1.42%
11	61,579	1.60%	61,420	-2.37%	61,923	-4.25%	64,304	-3.28%	66,844	-2.18%
12	53,346	-11.99%	53,654	-14.71%	54,097	-16.35%	55,261	-16.88%	56,729	-16.98%
13	53,891	-11.09%	55,548	-11.70%	56,943	-11.95%	57,505	-13.51%	58,045	-15.05%
14	52,480	-13.42%	52,814	-16.04%	53,079	-17.93%	53,747	-19.16%	54,520	-20.21%
15	61,872	2.08%	63,527	0.98%	64,327	-0.54%	67,025	0.81%	69,969	2.40%
16	56,365	-7.01%	57,292	-8.93%	58,002	-10.32%	58,560	-11.92%	59,156	-13.43%
17	50,426	-16.80%	50,302	-20.04%	50,294	-22.23%	50,719	-23.71%	51,210	-25.06%
18	45,440	-25.03%	46,450	-26.16%	47,060	-27.24%	47,482	-28.58%	47,862	-29.96%
19	57,789	-4.66%	59,124	-6.01%	60,058	-7.14%	61,179	-7.98%	62,219	-8.94%
20	85,291	40.72%	99,949	58.88%	112,475	73.91%	125,578	88.88%	132,910	94.51%
21	46,230	-23.73%	46,697	-25.77%	46,977	-27.36%	47,100	-29.16%	47,198	-30.93%
22	66,932	10.43%	72,086	14.59%	76,647	18.51%	78,291	17.76%	79,856	16.86%
23	93,687	54.57%	96,342	53.15%	97,520	50.79%	100,999	51.91%	104,934	53.57%
24	68,014	12.21%	73,948	17.55%	76,083	17.64%	77,416	16.44%	78,865	15.41%
25	59,899	-1.17%	62,046	-1.37%	63,179	-2.31%	63,583	-4.36%	63,975	-6.38%
26	63,173	4.23%	63,987	1.72%	65,004	0.51%	65,933	-0.83%	66,834	-2.19%
27	94,597	56.07%	109,447	73.98%	121,105	87.25%	129,992	95.52%	138,489	102.67%
28	72,917	20.30%	92,129	46.45%	109,024	68.57%	116,872	75.79%	124,848	82.71%
29	44,404	-26.74%	44,245	-29.67%	44,142	-31.75%	44,265	-33.42%	44,412	-35.01%
30	52,458	-13.45%	53,086	-15.61%	53,685	-16.99%	53,785	-19.10%	53,877	-21.15%
31	54,446	-10.17%	54,931	-12.68%	55,141	-14.74%	55,540	-16.46%	56,083	-17.93%
32	57,345	-5.39%	58,285	-7.35%	58,779	-9.12%	59,224	-10.92%	59,634	-12.73%
33	58,089	-4.16%	59,614	-5.23%	60,701	-6.14%	61,471	-7.54%	62,300	-8.83%
34	61,668	1.74%	63,367	0.73%	63,604	-1.65%	64,046	-3.67%	64,572	-5.50%
35	61,443	1.37%	61,940	-1.54%	62,821	-2.87%	64,495	-2.99%	66,757	-2.30%
36	51,233	-15.47%	51,902	-17.49%	53,102	-17.89%	55,546	-16.45%	58,331	-14.64%
37	66,797	10.21%	67,199	6.82%	68,105	5.31%	71,022	6.82%	74,709	9.33%
38	67,911	12.04%	68,561	8.99%	69,062	6.78%	70,617	6.21%	73,610	7.73%
39	53,015	-12.53%	52,711	-16.21%	52,472	-18.87%	52,392	-21.20%	52,323	-23.43%
40	60,000	-1.01%	61,855	-1.67%	63,362	-2.03%	64,451	-3.06%	65,598	-4.00%
41	69,302	14.34%	69,787	10.94%	70,019	8.26%	69,989	5.27%	70,250	2.81%
42	78,339	29.25%	79,120	25.77%	79,633	23.13%	79,511	19.59%	79,719	16.67%
43	54,296	-10.42%	54,969	-12.62%	55,937	-13.51%	57,086	-14.14%	58,384	-14.56%
44	61,351	1.22%	62,105	-1.28%	62,519	-3.33%	63,099	-5.09%	63,765	-6.68%