

15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy

TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH

December 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the New Official Plan process, a series of background reports have been prepared to support the Township's vision in planning for growth to 2051 and to inform the policy directions of the New Official Plan. This report represents the commercial strategy to support the implementation of 15-minute communities throughout the Township, with a focus on commercial land-uses in Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau.

The direction for implementing a 15-minute community comes from the Region of Waterloo Official Plan, which supports the achievement of 15-minute communities through promoting active transportation, mixed-use neighbourhoods, and a compact and transit-supportive built form. Although the Township's current Official Plan does not mention 15-minute communities, it provides policies to support the creation of complete communities throughout the Township. It is noted that facilitating 15-minute communities requires a coordinated and integrated approach to planning of key components such as housing, development, transportation, and urban design. The focus of this report is on 15-minute communities as it relates to commercial uses.

In order to evaluate the 15-minute community concept in Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau, the study context for each community was established as it pertains to existing uses and the nature of the built environment. A GIS network analysis of a 15-minute walk from key commercial areas was completed for each community, as well as an additional network analysis computing a 5-minute walk to represent the average distance traveled for seniors and/or non-able-bodied individuals. The analysis evaluated access to commercial uses from residential neighbourhoods as well as the overall walkability of each community, with a focus on whether the pedestrian experience is safe, convenient, and pleasant. Industrial lands and environmental protection lands were not included when identifying underserved neighbourhoods outside of the 15-minute walk of a commercial area. Walking was the sole mode of transportation reviewed in this analysis as it assumed basic active transportation facilities in the Township over more advanced facilities such as separate cycling lanes and bicycle parking.

The results of the 15-minute community analysis illustrated that existing residential neighbourhoods in Elmira and St. Jacobs are all within a 15-minute walk of key commercial areas, whereas the majority of Breslau's residential neighbourhoods are within a 15-minute walk of a commercial area with the exception of two neighbourhoods directly east and southwest of the Village Main Street. Overall, underserved neighbourhoods that are outside of a 15-minute walk largely comprise of undeveloped lands in these communities, highlighting the importance of future master planning with considerations for density and a variety of housing types to support commercial uses and to facilitate 15-minute communities. Although residential neighbourhoods in all three communities are largely within a 15-minute walk of a commercial area, it has been noted in this analysis and through public engagement that all three communities lack the full suite of commercial uses to facilitate daily living (e.g. grocery store in Elmira's core area and in St. Jacobs and Breslau).

Furthermore, although the GIS results show that most residential neighbourhoods are within a 15-minute walk of a commercial area, the streetscape and road network greatly influence whether one would decide to walk to a commercial area or use other forms of transportation (e.g. driving). In particular, urban design and built form factors such as wide roadways, busy traffic, the lack of safe and convenient pedestrian crossings, and indirect routes to and from the destination impact the extent of a safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian experience.

In order to address these challenges to facilitating a 15-minute community, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Completing a Commercial Hierarchy Study to Identify Commercial Needs in Each Community and Plan for Future Commercial Uses

Undertaking a commercial assessment or a commercial hierarchy study which will allow the Township to identify commercial gaps, viability of supporting other types of commercial uses, and ultimately recommend how much commercial is needed in each community and where it should go. This will include an assessment of the current GFA commercial requirement in the Official Plan.

2. Implementing Density Targets and a Range of Housing Choices to Support Essential Commercial Uses and Aging-In-Place

Promoting intensification, transit-oriented development, and higher densities that are appropriate to each community to support and attract essential commercial uses. Ensuring a mix of land-uses, including commercial uses, will allow for health, social, and community supports and services that is easily accessible in the community.

3. Promoting a Public Realm that Supports Safe, Connected, and Pleasant Pedestrian Experiences

Integrating various design features to promote safe, connected, and pleasant pedestrian experiences including, but not limited to implementing recommendations from the Elmira Core Urban Design Study; delineating pedestrian-only areas, shared streets, or crosswalks through different paving materials; ensuring sidewalk connectivity throughout the community; providing for appropriate and enhanced pedestrian crossings at key areas through signage, pavement material, and/or signalized features; ensuring that future master planning of new neighbourhoods incorporate street networks that provides for direct and efficient trips, and more.

4. Incorporating Traffic Calming Measures to Support Walkability and Active Transportation Options

Introducing features such as traffic calming bollards, landscaped medians to facilitate pedestrian crossings, corner extensions/bump-out, and creating narrower roadways within new neighbourhoods.

5. Redirecting Truck Traffic in Elmira's Core Area to Reduce Noise, Enhance the Public Realm, and Support the Use of Outdoor Space

Implementing a truck by-pass in Elmira so heavy truck traffic does not pass through the core area. This is a priority that has been repeatedly noted throughout the Official Plan process. This recommendation will enhance the public realm and support commercial uses and

pedestrian activity in the core area, and significantly contributes to the achievement of the urban design and traffic calming recommendations.

6. Updating Official Plan Policies to Permit Commercial Uses that Provides for the Needs of a 15-Minute Community

Ensuring the New Official Plan updates applicable policies pertaining to a 15-minute community that permits and encourages commercial uses that provide for the daily needs of the community.

7. Leveraging Economic Development Programs and Funding

Utilizing opportunities for grants such as My Main Street to support local BIAs, contributing to lively core areas and improving the viability of 15-minute communities in the Township.

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PART 1:

BACKGROUND

1. INTRODUCTION

The Township of Woolwich (“the Township”) is undertaking the creation of a New Official Plan. To support the development of the New Official Plan, three background reports have been prepared: an intensification strategy for Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau; a commercial strategy to support 15-minute communities throughout the Township; and a Township-wide institutional strategy.

This background report presents the Commercial Strategy to support the implementation of 15-minute communities throughout the Township, with a specific focus on commercial land-uses.

This report is divided into three parts:

- **Part 1** provides the background context through a summary of existing policies and plans related to 15-minute communities. A summary of the public engagement for this background report and a review of current land-use designations and permitted uses in Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau is also provided.
- **Part 2** reviews the existing context and conditions in Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau and includes an analysis of the 15-minute community concept within these communities. The analysis will comprise of a GIS network analysis of areas within a 15-minute walk of key commercial locations, reviewing access to existing commercial services within the community and focusing on the safety and enjoyability of the pedestrian environment.
- **Part 3** summarizes these findings, highlighting the characteristics that support 15-minute communities within Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau, as well as the key challenges. Recommendations are provided to improve access to commercial services and to support complete streets.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

WHAT IS A 15-MINUTE COMMUNITY?

A “15-minute community” or a “complete community” is an urban planning concept that refers to a neighbourhood wherein most, if not all, of the daily goods and services that people need are within a convenient 15-minute walk or bike ride away. The 15-minute community concept promotes a community that is self-sufficient and energy-efficient, comprised of a mix of land-uses and densities, and is vibrant and well-designed to support walking and active transportation. This concept is central to the sustainability and climate change policies in the Region of Waterloo’s Official Plan (“ROP”), as seen through Regional Official Plan Amendment 6 (“ROPA 6”), which supports the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods, as well as the current Township Official Plan climate change policies, as discussed further below.

To align with the language/terminology of the ROP, as amended by ROPA 6, this report considers a 15-minute neighbourhood to be conceptually equivalent to a 15-minute community.

ROPA 6

ROPA 6 was approved by the Province with modifications on April 11th, 2023 to update the ROP to plan for population and employment growth to 2051. Among the key changes advanced by

ROPA 6 is direction on the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods through a more compact built form.

A key background report prepared in support of ROPA 6 was the Climate Change Policy Directions Paper (January 2021), which established the three key categories for change through which climate action must be taken: how we move, how we live and work, and how we build. The establishment of 15-minute communities fall under actions related to “How We Live and Work”. Specifically, that a 15-minute neighbourhood would reduce the energy needed to obtain daily necessities by allowing people to choose active transportation options to complete their trips, reducing energy used by personal vehicles. This background report provided strategic policy directions later incorporated in ROPA 6.

ROPA 6 defines 15-minute neighbourhoods as the following:

Compact, well-connected places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within the Urban Area and Township Urban Areas. They are places that offer support and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities and at all times of year to conveniently access the necessities for daily living with a 15-minute trip by walking, cycling, and rolling, and where other needs can be met by taking direct, frequent, and convenient transit, wherever possible. 15-minute neighbourhoods include an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities. They are also age-friendly places and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.

One of the key guiding principles of ROPA 6 is the following:

- *Support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods designed to support healthy and active living and meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime.*

Policy 2.D.4.1 (b) directs Area Municipalities to identify and delineate Local Centres, Intensification Corridors, and Township Urban Growth Centres in their Official Plans and to implement official plan policies and zoning by-law regulations to support the achievement of 15-minute neighborhoods at an appropriate form and scale. Map 5.4 of the Township’s current Official Plan identifies only Elmira as a Township Urban Growth Centre. Furthermore, ROPA 6 identifies four Township Urban Areas that consist of Elmira, St. Jacobs, Breslau, and the Stockyards. For the purposes of this report, the focus will be on Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau.

Section 2.E of ROPA 6 directs that the Township’s Urban Areas should, “Promote gentle density and other context sensitive intensification to facilitate the transition of existing communities into vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods.”

ROPA 6 also identifies a Regional Intensification Corridor through Breslau. Policy 2.D.3.3 (c) directs the following:

Area municipalities, in consultation with the Region, will establish minimum density targets for all Regional Intensification Corridors that:

- (c) reflect opportunities for the intensification and support the transition of any surrounding neighbourhoods into 15-minute neighbourhoods;*

Further to this, ROPA 6 underscored the importance of mixed-uses to support the achievement of 15-minute communities, through a range of housing types and commercial uses. This is reflected in the following policies:

2.H.1 Employment Area Policies

2.H.1.16 The Region and the area municipalities will plan to support the retail sector by promoting compact built form and intensification of retail and service uses and areas, and encouraging the integration of those uses with other land uses to support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods.

3.A Range and Mix of Housing

To help[...]build a wider mix of housing options in neighbourhoods where people want to live, this Plan includes policies to support the construction of missing middle housing in both delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas. This type of housing facilitates gentle density and provides people of all ages, incomes and abilities with opportunities to live in 15-minute neighbourhoods.

As seen in the policies cited above, ROPA 6 supports the achievement of 15-minute communities throughout the Region by promoting active transportation and compact and transit-supportive urban form. Facilitating 15-minute communities require coordinated, integrative planning of key components such as housing and development, transportation, and urban design. While this report touches on a few of these components, the focus of this report is on 15-minute communities as it relates to commercial uses.

WOOLWICH OFFICIAL PLAN

The New Official Plan will include policies regarding 15-minute communities as established in ROPA 6. While the Township's current Official Plan ("OP") doesn't mention 15-minute communities, it provides for policies to support a "complete community" for which the following definition is provided:

communities that meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of employment, local services, a full range of housing and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation, and open space for their residents. Convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel is also provided.

The OP notes the support for facilitating complete communities in Elmira (7.29.7.1 (a)) and Breslau (Policy 7.26.1.2 (e)).

Also supportive of achieving complete communities within the Township, Policy 7.9.4 (b) of the OP sets out the following:

The majority of residences should be within approximately 400 metres (i.e., 5 to 10 minute walk) of an identifiable neighbourhood centre, which should contain all or some of the following:

- public park;
- day care facility;
- convenience store;
- post office/community mailboxes;
- opportunity for Transit (Urban and Township Urban Areas); and
- community hub (including schools, libraries, community centres).

Section 13.18 of the Official Plan outlines climate changes policies for the Township. Specifically,

Policy 13.18.1 provides the following with regard to a 15-minute community:

The Township, in collaboration with the Region, will update this Plan following the next municipal comprehensive review of the Regional Official Plan to identify actions in the Township that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals, aligned with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and the Climate Change Action Plan, 2016, that will include:

- a) Supporting the achievement of complete communities as well as the minimum reurbanization and density targets in this Plan;*
- b) Reducing dependence on the automobile and supporting existing and planned transit and active transportation;*

ELMIRA CORE URBAN DESIGN STUDY

The Elmira Core Urban Design Study (“the Core UDS”), dated July 2022, was prepared by the Planning Partnership to guide the development and enhancement of the Elmira Core Area through the establishment of an urban design framework. The Core UDS provides detailed consideration of streetscape enhancements through short-term and long-term concepts. Key among these recommendations are potential development sites, pedestrian/trail network enhancements, new public spaces, and landmark sites. The Study also reviewed various urban design elements and provided recommendations related to building height, massing, and design, as well as open space and streetscape improvements in the Core Area of Elmira.

The Core UDS is a key document as it provides analysis and recommendations to support the achievement of 15-minute communities. This includes advancing a framework for urban design excellence to create vibrant communities that facilitate walkability and active transportation that can be drawn from and applied elsewhere in the Township, most notably in St. Jacobs and Breslau.

3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A focus group meeting was held on October 4th, 2023, as part of the process of preparing this report and was attended by members from the Township of Woolwich Economic Development and Tourism department, Elmira Business Improvement Area (BIA) Group, St. Jacobs Business Improvement Area (BIA) Group, and the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival Committee. The meeting consisted of a presentation on preliminary findings and analysis, followed by an interactive discussion to solicit input on the findings to-date, as well as gain further insight into commercial uses in the Township and their relation to the pedestrian experience and how 15-minute communities can support commercial viability. Please see Appendix B for detailed meeting materials.

The discussion reinforced the importance of active transportation and urban design in contributing to 15-minute communities that support the viability of existing and planned commercial uses. Active transportation in particular was cited by the St. Jacobs BIA Group as a key opportunity both to enhance the Village’s tourism economy as well as in expanding residents’ access to daily necessities through a 15-minute cycling trip to the Stockyards and Market. Participants agreed on the walkability of the core areas but noted that a grocery store was key in contributing to the 15-minute access for daily needs. Pedestrian-oriented improvements to Arthur Street would benefit from a traffic by-pass. The opportunity for more public spaces and pedestrian-only spaces should be considered, while balancing the need for parking with street closures that facilitate these pedestrian-only spaces.

4. EXISTING LAND-USE DESIGNATIONS AND PERMITTED USES

The existing land-use designations and permitted uses were reviewed for Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau. This review was undertaken to assist in understanding the context and structure of each community, to identify opportunities and gaps, and to develop recommendations to support the achievement of a 15-minute community.

4.1 Elmira

Schedule A of the Township's Urban Area Settlement Plan for Elmira illustrates the existing land-use designations and the hierarchy of these designations in the community (see **Figure 1** below). The predominant land-use designation is Residential and Ancillary, which surrounds the core area and extends from the north to the southwest portion of Elmira. The Core Area designation is identified primarily along Arthur Street and Church Street, with some spillover to the adjacent side streets. Elmira is rounded out by Industrial land-use designations northeast of Riverside Drive West and south of First Street East, with limited Service Commercial and Commercial designations throughout the community. Service Commercial designations are approximately located on Church Street West between County Club Estates Drive and Kissing Bridge Drive. Commercial designations are primarily located along Church Street West between Herbert Street and Synder Avenue South.

Appendix C outlines Elmira's existing land-use designations and permitted commercial uses, as well as their implications for facilitating 15-minute communities. The Core Area functions as the primary commercial, service, and office area of Elmira and is also a designated Urban Growth Centre in the Township's OP.¹ Given its function, this designation is one of the key areas for analysis and in facilitating 15-minute communities. The Core Area permits mixed residential and commercial development, which has implications for the future use and function of underutilized lands within this designation.

As the predominant land-use designation in the community, lands designated Residential and Ancillary are intended to provide for living accommodations of all kinds and uses ancillary to a residential area. Neighbourhood commercial uses are permitted as ancillary uses in this designation, and more specifically permits Neighbourhood Commercial Facility and Convenience Commercial Facility uses which, per Section 7.29.6.3 and 7.29.6.4 of the Official Plan, are uses that are "necessary to satisfy limited shopping and personal service needs which occur daily or frequently" and are "office and establishments where goods and services are offered [that will not] negatively impact neighbouring residential areas". These permitted uses include mixed residential and commercial developments, convenience retail, medical or dental office, restaurant, and other similar uses that contribute to the achievement of 15-minute communities. The current OP only allows for a specified gross floor area permitted for these facilities (see Appendix C). However, the prevalence of this designation and permitted commercial uses is important to consider in addressing underserved areas and gaps in the network.

The Commercial designation does not define the types of permitted uses; these uses are instead regulated through the Zoning By-law. On the other hand, the Service Commercial designation is intended for commercial uses that are not appropriate in the Core Area due to their function and land area requirements, which includes a host of permitted uses ranging from automotive sales

¹ Per ROPA 6, Elmira is no longer designated an Urban Growth Centre in the Region's Official Plan.

to a restaurant to convenience retail to an industrial wholesale outlet, and more. As previously noted, both of these designations are limited in size. However, their current locations, which are surrounded by residential uses, can potentially contribute to facilitating 15-minute communities.

The Industrial designation permits limited commercial uses which are secondary to the industrial use and does not include retail outlets or retail that serves daily shopping needs. The Open Space and Environmental Protection designations do not permit commercial uses.

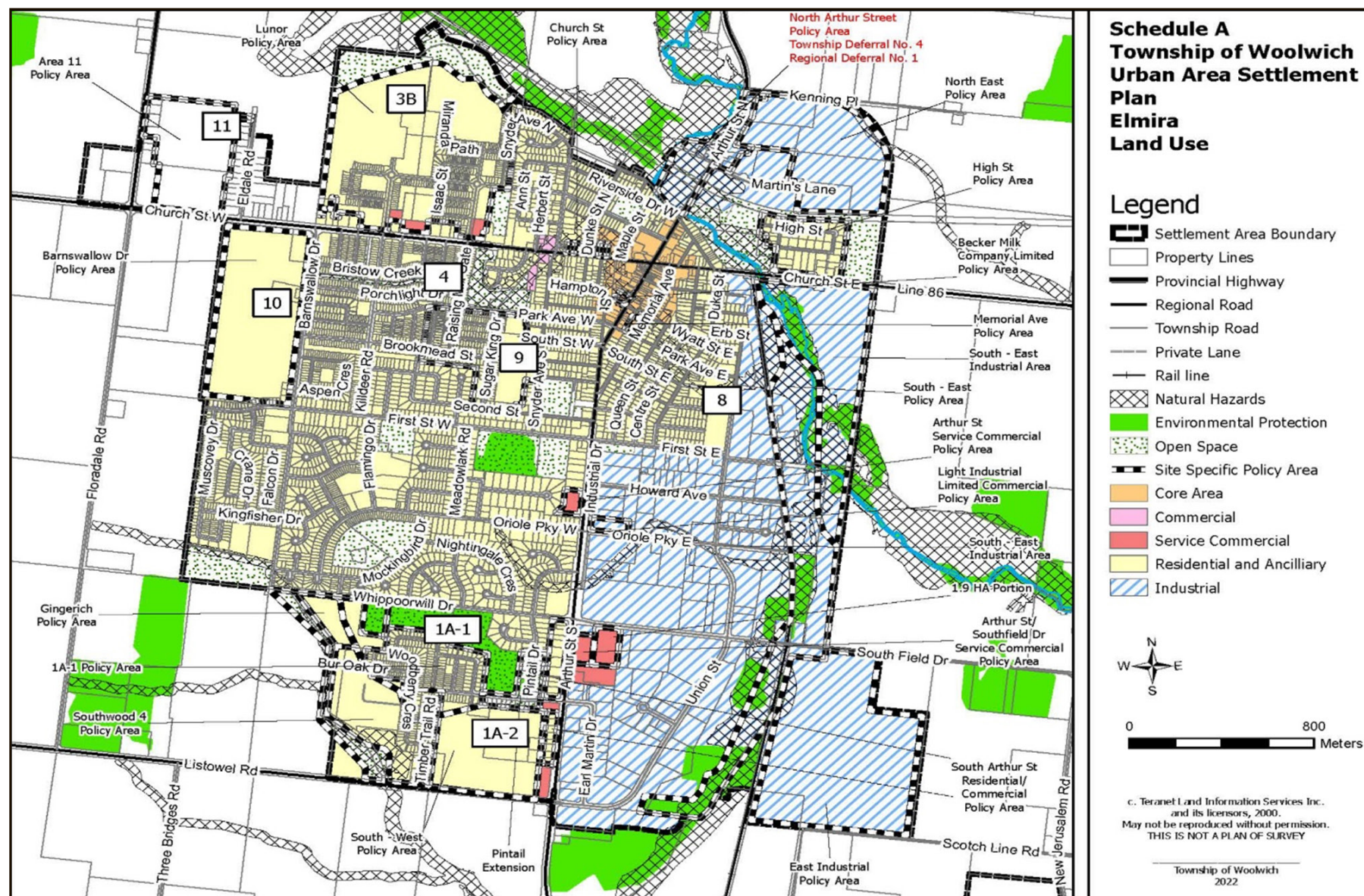


Figure 1 – Elmira Land-Use Plan

4.2 St. Jacobs

Schedule A of the Township's Urban Area Settlement Plan for St. Jacobs illustrates the existing land-use designations and the hierarchy of these designations in the community (see **Figure 2** below). The predominant land-use designation is Residential and Ancillary, which extends from the north to the south of the community and surrounds the Core Area. The Core Area is centered along King Street North from Front Street to Hachborn Street. Three property parcels are designated Commercial, located at the intersection of King Street North and Sawmill Road. While there are some industrial land-use designations located in the north end at the intersection of Arthur Street South, Sawmill Road, and King Street North, industrial designations are primarily located in the southern end, west of the railroad tracks.

Appendix C outlines St. Jacobs' existing land-use designations, permitted commercial uses, and their implications for facilitating 15-minute communities. As with Elmira, the Core Area functions as the primary commercial, service, and office area in the settlement area, with a recognized tourism role in the community. Along with a broad range of commercial and service uses, the Core Area designation also permits mixed residential developments.

While residential is the primary permitted use for the Residential and Ancillary Uses designation, limited commercial uses are allowed; specifically, Convenience Commercial Facility uses that satisfy limited daily/frequent shopping and personal service needs that may include convenience retail, medical/dental office, or a restaurant. Mixed-use is also permitted within the Residential and Ancillary Uses designation. The current OP specifies up to 465 m² of gross floor area permitted for a convenience commercial facility to meet the needs of residents to 2031. This requirement will be reviewed as part of the Official Plan process to ensure that it is still applicable and reflects the needs of the community.

The Commercial designation does not define the permitted uses. These are set out in the Zoning By-law. However, it is noted that the Commercial designation permits mixed residential/commercial development.

The Industrial designation permits limited commercial uses which are secondary to the industrial use and does not include retail outlets or retail that serves daily shopping needs. The Open Space and Environmental Protection designations do not permit commercial uses.

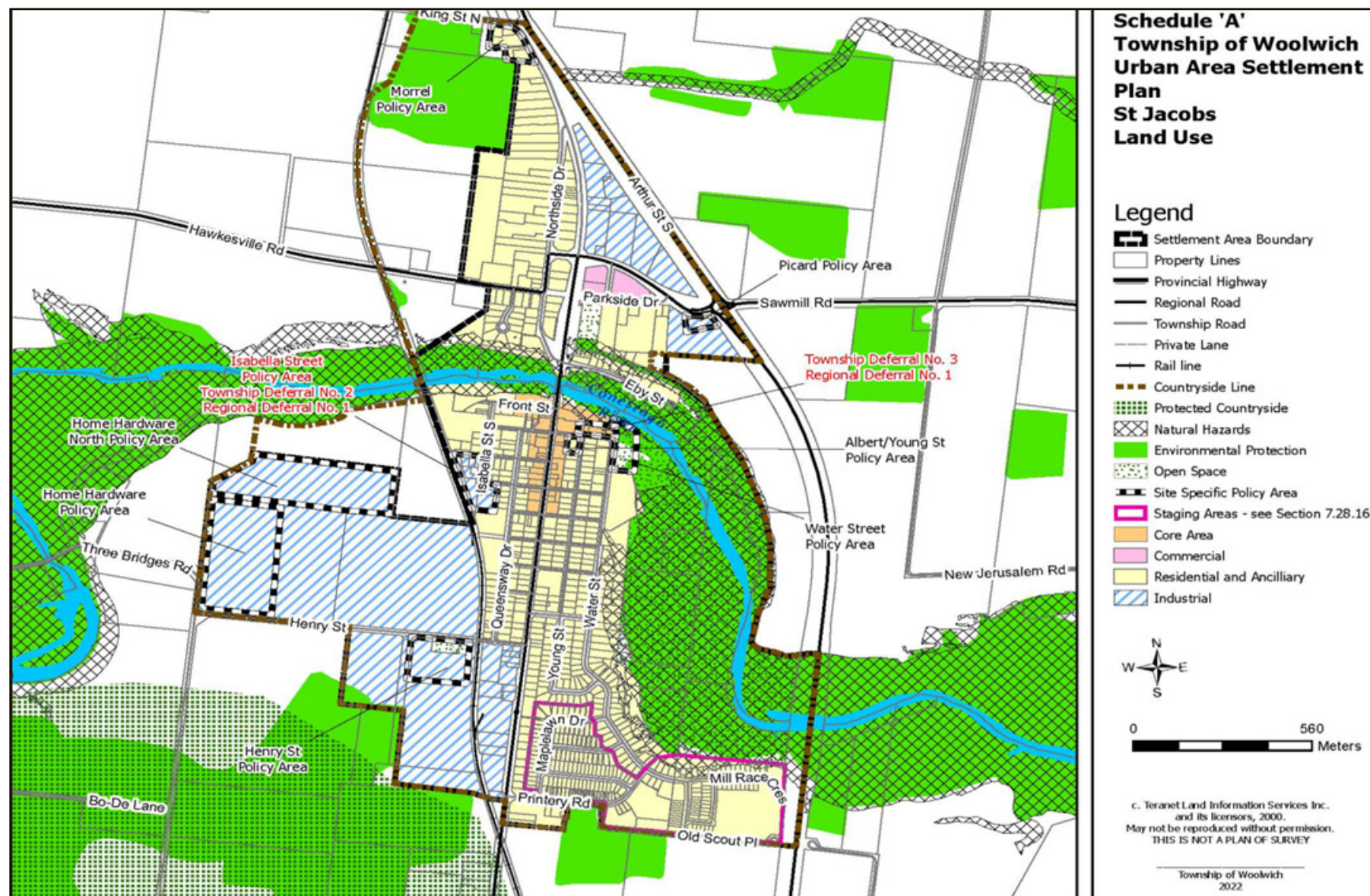


Figure 2 – St. Jacobs Land-Use Plan

4.3 Breslau

Schedule B of the Township's Urban Area Settlement Plan for Breslau illustrates the existing land-use designations and the hierarchy of these designations in the community (see **Figure 3** below). It is important to note that an update to the Breslau Secondary Plan is currently underway, with new proposed land-use designations for Breslau. For the purposes of this report, the land-use designations reviewed are those in the current OP. However, aligning the findings and recommendations of this report with the outcome of the Breslau Secondary Plan Update will be an important consideration when the new OP is prepared.

Unlike Elmira and St. Jacobs, Breslau is located adjacent to the Cities of Kitchener and Cambridge, and in close proximity to the Cities of Waterloo and Guelph, functioning as a transition between the Countryside and adjacent urban areas. The land-use designations for Breslau are unique to respect the context and planned structure of the community. It is the second largest Urban Area in the Township and is bisected by an east-west rail line with a proposed GO station to be located to the east of Fountain Street.

The Village Main Street designation extends from Woolwich Street South at Shields Street to Woolwich Street North, surrounded by various residential designations. The residential community comprises a large portion of Breslau, located both north and south of the railway tracks. The Village Residential designation is located immediately southeast and southwest of the Village Main Street along Woolwich Street South. Low/Medium Density Residential designations are predominantly located west of Woolwich Street South and east of Woolwich Street North, encompassing existing subdivisions as well as planned future neighbourhoods. Commercial/Mixed Use Designations along Woolwich Street North and Victoria Street North are adjacent to Commercial/Retail and Medium/High Density Residential designations, and adjacent to Medium/High Density Residential designations to the south of the railway at Shallow Creek Road. South of Shallow Creek Road to the limits of the Settlement Area are lands designated South Breslau Industrial Area, with Employment Land I and II designations located at the northeastern limits of the Settlement Area. Lastly, the northeastern portion of Breslau along Victoria Street North before Greenhouse Road contain a future planned neighbourhood consisting of the proposed GO station, Open Space / Recreational use, and a mix of Commercial/Mixed Use, Low/Medium Density Residential, and Medium/High Density Residential uses.

Appendix C outlines Breslau's existing land-use designations, permitted commercial uses, and their implications for facilitating 15-minute communities. The Village Main Street designation is the historical main street of Breslau, and functions as the focal point of the community. It is intended to provide local shopping opportunities, cultural and entertainment opportunities, and housing, permitting retail and commercial uses, live-work units, and mixed-use buildings. The Village Residential designation provides limited opportunities to support commercial uses as they are only permitted as ancillary to institutional uses. Small-scale convenience commercial uses are permitted within Low/Medium Density Residential and Medium/High Density Residential designations to support the surrounding residential neighbourhood, while the Medium/High Density Residential designation further permits live-work units and mixed-use buildings, providing a greater opportunity to support commercial uses that contribute to a 15-minute community.

The Commercial/Mixed Use and Commercial/Retail are two key designations that primarily permit commercial uses. The Commercial/Mixed Use designation is prime for facilitating a 15-minute community, as it permits all forms of commercial/retail stores (limited to a maximum

of 600 m² per store), restaurants and service commercial uses (limited to a maximum of 300 m² per restaurant), business and professional offices, live-work units, mixed-use buildings, and commercial uses ancillary to institutional uses. Furthermore, the designation is located adjacent to various residential designations, making it prime to support a pedestrian-scale and walkable community with surrounding residential uses.

While the Commercial/Retail designation permits a range of commercial uses, its intent is to provide commercial uses and services to the traveling public and drive-by consumer. The designation's current location along a wide Regional road and the land extensive requirements for these uses are not likely to be conducive to walkability and a 15-minute community. The type of commercial uses and street design, including pedestrian crossings and infrastructure, will influence the walkability of this area.

The proposed GO Station permits retail and commercial uses that are ancillary to the commuter rail station function. Permitted commercial uses are intended to supplement the GO station and are not intended to service the daily commercial needs of the neighbourhood as related to a 15-minute community.

The Employment Land I and II designations permits a wide range of commercial uses; however, the location and permitted commercial uses of this designation are generally not conducive to walkability or facilitating a 15-minute community.

The Industrial designation permits limited commercial uses which are secondary to the industrial use and does not include retail outlets or retail that serves daily shopping needs. The Open Space and Environmental Protection designations do not permit commercial uses.

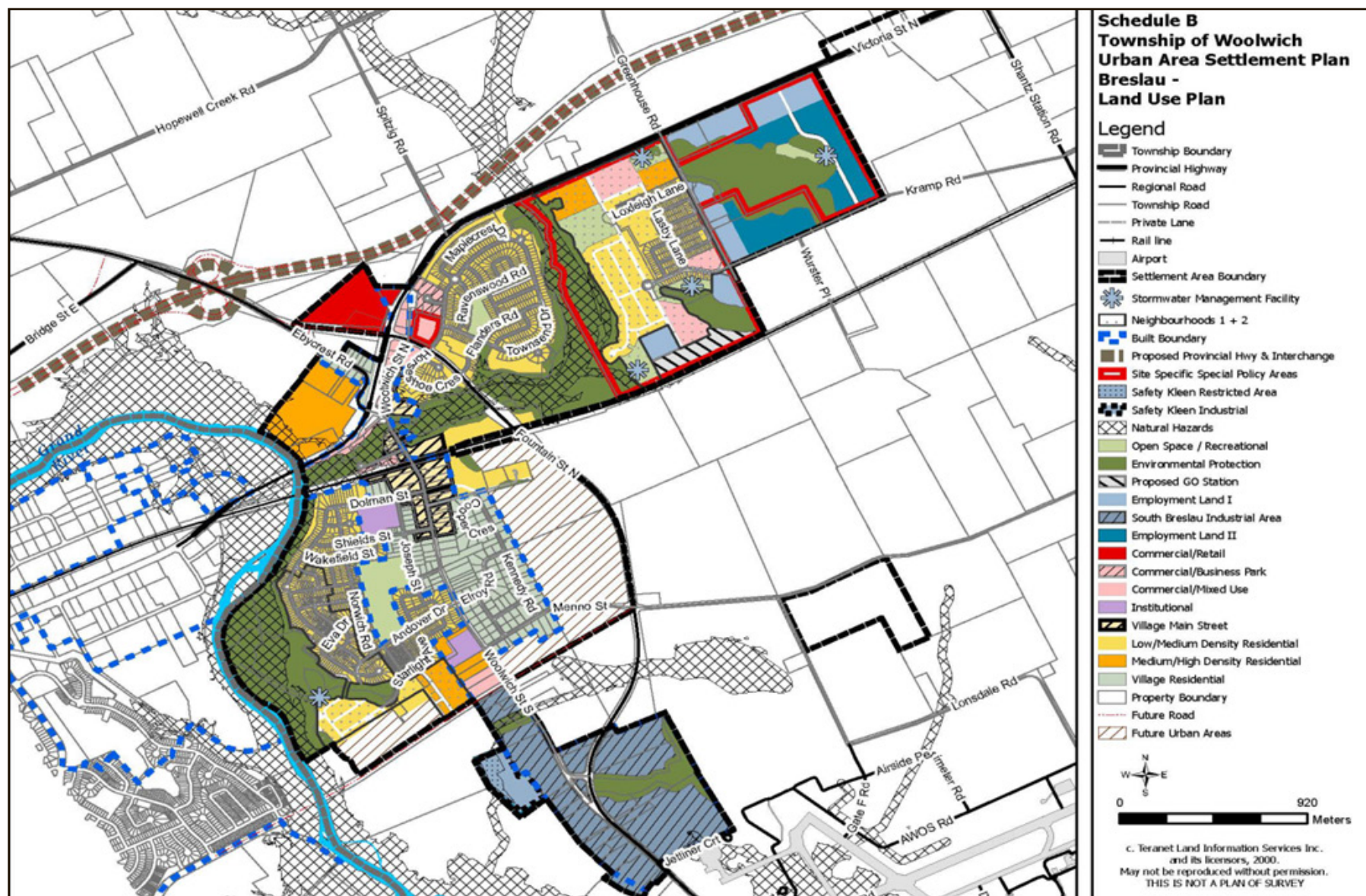


Figure 3 – Breslau Land-Use Plan

PART 2:

15-MINUTE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

METHODOLOGY

This section will apply the 15-minute community concept to Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau. This analysis will be completed in two parts:

- (1) establishing the study context by cataloguing existing uses in each community, as well as the nature of the built environment as it relates to the pedestrian experience; and
- (2) completing a GIS network analysis by applying a 15-minute walk from key commercial areas in each community.

The first part is informed by a desktop review through Google Streetview as well as site visits to these communities. Contextualizing the existing uses and the urban environment is important in order to better understand the makeup of the community, available commercial uses, as well as the viability of walking to access these uses.

The second part of the analysis utilizes ArcGIS software to compute a 5-minute and 15-minute network map originating from key commercial areas in each community. A walking speed of 4.82 kilometres per hour (average speed of an adult aged 20 to 59) was used to represent the speed for an average able-bodied individual. Given the focus on creating 15-minute communities for people of all ages in the ROPA 6 definition, the 5-minute maps are intended to conceptually represent the experience for seniors and/or people with disabilities. This approach assumes a general understanding that the distance covered within a 15-minute walk for seniors and/or people with disabilities will be less than that of an able-bodied individual.

To apply the 15-minute community concept, the report evaluates access to necessities/commercial services as well as the overall walkability of the community, with a focus on the extent to which the pedestrian experience is safe, convenient, and pleasant. Identifying underserved neighbourhoods outside of the 15-minute walk of a commercial area shall generally apply to lands that may be suitable for residential development (designated per the respective land-use schedules in the current Official Plan and/or the proposed Breslau Secondary Plan); as such, industrial lands and environmental protection lands are not included.

It should be noted that the analysis in this report is focused on commercial uses, and only considers walking as a mode to access services. The analysis does not consider other modes of active transportation or public transit, existing or proposed. Due to the size of the settlement areas, it is acknowledged that including cycling within the analysis will impact the perceived access to commercial uses in the community. Walking as a modal choice to access commercial services is a base scenario that assumes the presence of basic active transportation facilities throughout the Township (e.g sidewalks) over more advanced offerings (e.g separated cycling lanes, bicycle parking). As active transportation facilities improve, it is expected that it will have the effect of further reinforcing the 15-minute community. This caveat is further discussed in **Part 3** of this report.

1. ELMIRA

1.1. Study Context

A site visit was undertaken on Wednesday, August 2nd, 2023, to assess existing conditions and uses within Elmira. This was key for understanding the context for applying a 15-minute community.

EXISTING USES

Throughout the site visit, it was noted that Elmira's core area contained a wide variety of commercial uses. The north end of the core area along Church Street consisted of various retail, professional offices, personal services, and institutional uses such as a gym, garden center, bakery, law office, chiropractor, liquor store, vacuum shop, foot massage and pedicure service, thrift store (Woolwich Community Services), and affordable rental housing (the Foundry). The intersection of Arthur Street and Church Street East features a pharmacy (Shopper's Drug Mart) and a gas station (Esso), prominently located at the entrance to the core.

Along Arthur Street South, a myriad of commercial uses was noted, with niche retail options such as a scrapbooking store, discount stores, paint store, jewelry store, and boutique store; small-scale grocery options and restaurants; and professional offices consisting of dental, accountant, lawyer, real estate, and medical offices. There are also two banks (TD and BMO) as well as another gas station (Shell) on Arthur Street South. In addition to these commercial uses, various community uses were noted such as the library, dance school, church, and Gore Park located directly south of the core area.

The peripheral of the core on Wyatt Street East primarily functions as an access to parking for commercial uses along Church Street West and Arthur Street South, the municipal parking lot, and horse and buggy parking. While parking is the predominant use in this area, there is a personal service use that consists of a beauty bar, hair salon, and spa (Basics Beauty and Beyond) at 13 Walker Street, which is accessed at the rear of the property via Wyatt Street.

Further southwest of the core area along Synder Avenue South are the Woolwich Memorial Centre and the Elmira District Secondary School, which are located adjacent to the core area in a residential neighbourhood. Lastly, directly south of the core area along Arthur Street and Howard Avenue is a Food Basics. South of the Food Basics on the other side of the street is a commercial plaza that contains Foodland.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Sidewalks generally exist on both sides of the street in the core area along Church Street and Arthur Street South to First Street. Between First Street to Southfield Drive, sidewalks are only featured on the west side (commercial/residential side) of Arthur Street and the east side of Industrial Drive (adjacent to the commercial uses). Many residential neighbourhoods southwest of First Street have sidewalks on one or both sides of the street. Notably, neighbourhoods with cul-de-sacs do not have any sidewalks present on either side of the street.

There was consistent traffic flow along Arthur Street South throughout the core area. Transport trucks were observed passing through the core from the late morning to the early afternoon during the site visit. Although there were many pedestrians in the core area throughout the day,

the steady stream of traffic and presence of large trucks throughout the core area created a noisy pedestrian environment which is not conducive to people spending time in public spaces and utilizing the public realm. Notably, few people were observed utilizing the community seating pop-up on Mill Street, the greenspace outside the library, Gore Park, or Memorial Park.

It was noted, however, that street parking in the core area was well utilized throughout the day. The parking lots on Wyatt Street were also largely occupied during the day.

1.2. 15-Minute Community Analysis

A GIS analysis was conducted for the following areas in Elmira:

- Core area
- Food Basics
- Foodland
- Commercial plaza at 112 Oriole Parkway
- Commercial plaza at 122 Church Street West
- Commercial plaza at 384 Arthur Street South

These areas were chosen as the focal point for the 15-minute walking analysis as they represent the key commercial areas that are essential for daily living.

Figure 4 shows the outcome of this service analysis (please refer to **Appendix D** for detailed maps). Overall, all of Elmira's existing residential neighbourhoods are within a 15-minute walk to a key commercial area in the neighbourhood. In northern Elmira, this walkability can be attributed to the larger commercial areas (core area), as well as the grid street pattern that allows for ease of through movement. Furthermore, the prevalence of various commercial areas throughout northern and southern Elmira and the existing sidewalk infrastructure facilitates relative ease of access from residential areas. This illustrates that these residential neighbourhoods are within a 15-minute walk to a range of commercial services.

The analysis also provides for a 5-minute catchment area, which considers the range of access for seniors and/or non-able bodied individuals. In comparison to the results of the 15-minute catchment area, applying the 5-minute walk demonstrates the variable gap in commercial access between individuals who are able to walk the distance in the 5-minute catchment area versus the distance covered in the 15-minute catchment area. This gap is intended to illustrate the range of mobility for people of all ages and abilities. It highlights the need to create communities that age-in-place, which by extension supports access to commercial areas through active transportation and/or public transit. Consideration must be given to density and housing choices in order to facilitate a 15-minute community that is inclusive of people of all ages and abilities.

Further to this, the analysis demonstrates the need for comprehensive master planning in future residential neighbourhoods to support 15-minute communities. Although existing residential areas are within a 15-minute walk of commercial uses, there are large swathes of primarily undeveloped lands in western Elmira that are not within a 15-minute walk to existing commercial areas. As shown in Figure 4 and discussed above, this is further exacerbated for non-able bodied individuals, children, and seniors as a 15-minute walk for an able-bodied individual is equivalent to approximately a 5-minute walk. Given the predominant Residential and Ancillary land-use designation that permits convenience commercial and neighbourhood commercial uses, there is

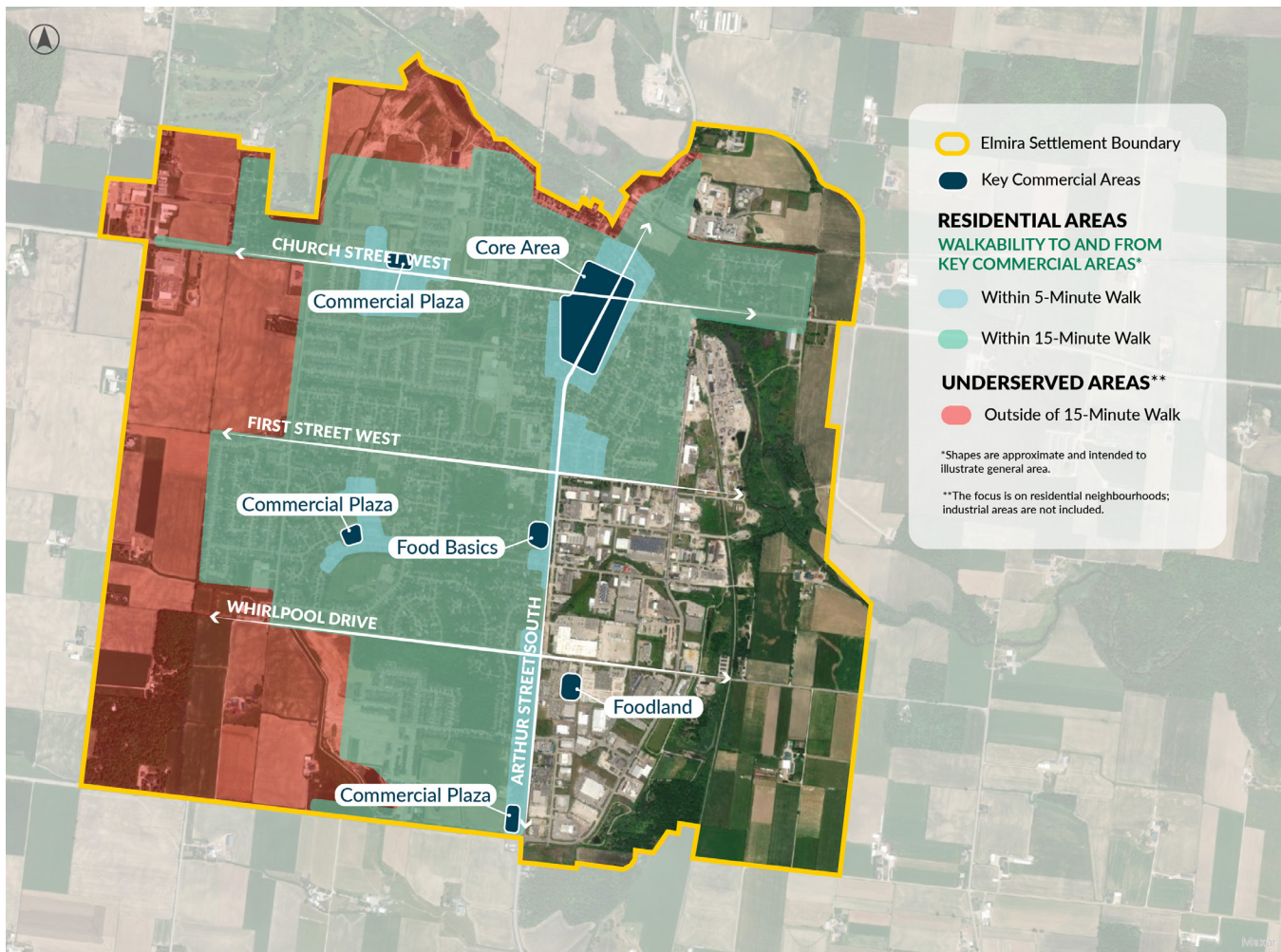


Figure 4 – Elmira 15-Minute Walking Analysis Map

an opportunity for the Township to review the current permitted convenience commercial GFA within this designation to establish whether there is a need to increase the permitted GFA to support future neighbourhoods in this area.

Although there may be existing infrastructure to facilitate access to commercial areas, factors such as urban design and the pedestrian experience are critical in promoting walkability. A key aspect of the 15-minute community is the idea of convenient access – this translates to a direct, safe, and pleasant walking and/or cycling experience. A prime example are the newer neighbourhoods south of First Street, which are newer neighbourhoods that exhibit a suburban cross-section. While some neighbourhoods south of First Street and west of Arthur Street South can access the Food Basics and Foodland via a 15-minute walk, there are various design factors that will likely inhibit residents from doing so. Firstly, the curvilinear street network is a barrier to direct access. This can be seen in how houses that back onto the Food Basics must take a longer and roundabout route to the Food Basics, as Bobolink Drive does not provide through street access (see **Figure 5**). This curvilinear network with cul-de-sacs is common throughout the southwest neighborhoods. When planning future neighbourhoods in Designated Greenfield Areas it will be important to ensure future development and public realm improvements will support 15-minute communities.

Furthermore, the streetscape and roadway design are important to consider in evaluating

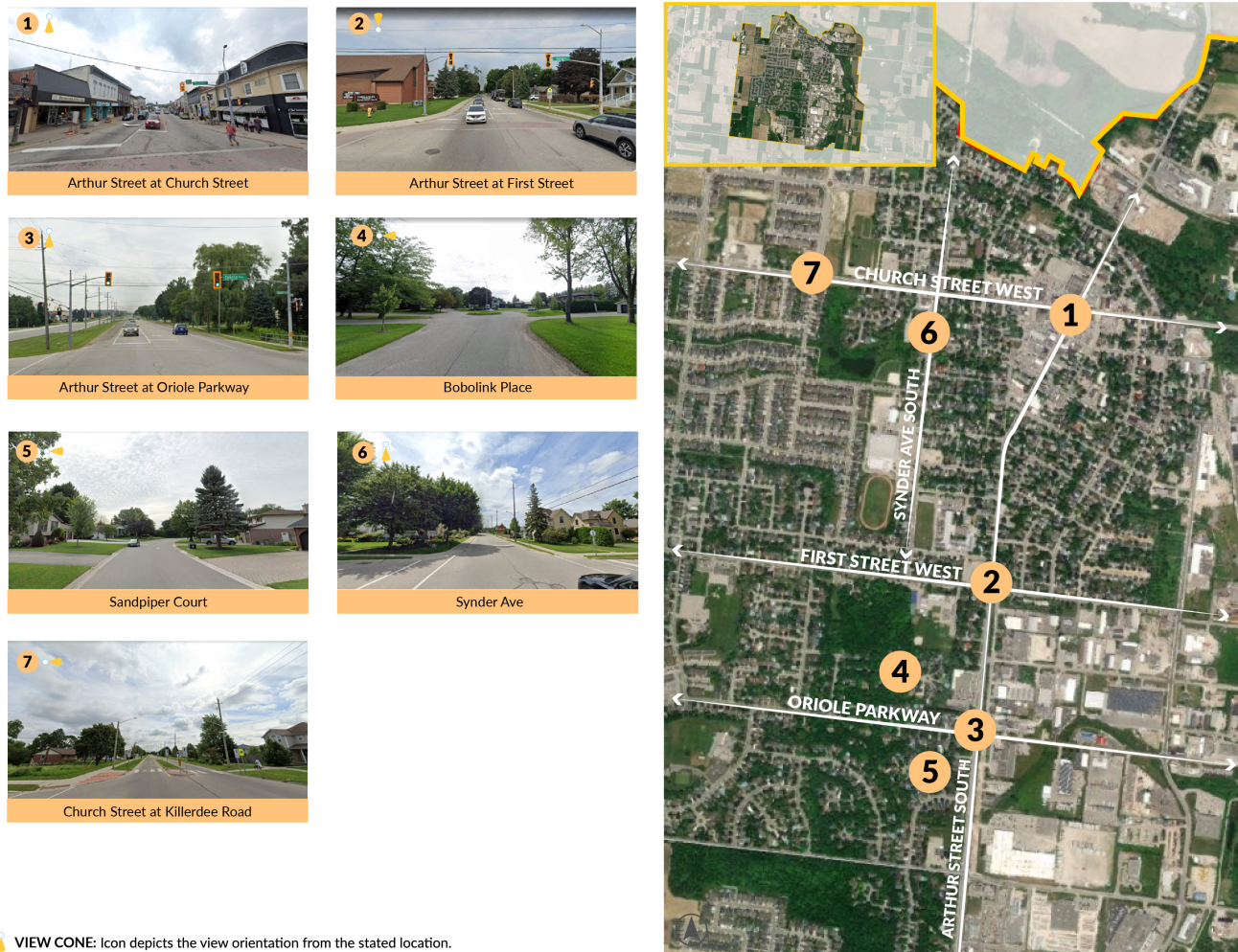


Figure 5 – Elmira Streetscape Views

walkability, especially as it contributes to a safe and pleasant walking and/or cycling experience. Notably, at the southern end of Elmira south of Arthur Street at First Street, the roadway widens to accommodate turning lanes and paved shoulders, with larger setbacks to the street. Furthermore, Industrial Drive runs parallel to Arthur Street South from First Street to Whirlpool Drive, adding to the wide expanse of paved roads. Beyond First Street, there are no pedestrian crossings except at signalized intersections, which range between 500 metres and 900 metres apart, requiring that pedestrians and/or cyclists cross at a signalized intersection, adding to the total length of the trip. Along with the truck traffic that passes through Elmira, the indirect street network, wide thoroughfare, and lack of pedestrian crossings creates an unpleasant environment for walking and/or cycling.

The site reconnaissance and public engagement reinforced the importance of the public realm in inviting pedestrian activity and facilitating walkability. The noise on Arthur Street from the passing truck traffic created an unpleasant environment. This was corroborated by the lack of users observed at the community seating pop-up on Mill Street, few people noted at Gore Park, and no people present at the Memorial Park. The Arthur Street by-pass was consistently cited during the focus group as a solution to reallocate heavy traffic and prioritize pedestrian activity in the core.

2. ST. JACOBS

2.1. Study Context

A site visit was undertaken on Wednesday, August 2nd, 2023, to assess existing conditions and uses within St. Jacobs, and gain an understanding of the context for applying a 15-minute community.

EXISTING USES

The core and immediately surrounding areas consist of a diverse mix of uses. South of the Conestogo River along King Street North are various commercial uses including professional offices (The Quarry), a variety of restaurant and café offerings, niche retail and boutique stores (e.g. broom store, gift shops, quilt shop, lifestyle apparel store), as well as a post office (Canada Post), bank (Scotiabank), a butcher store and various pastry shops. It is noted that there is a small-scale local grocery/variety store located at King Street and Princess Street (Hillside Variety). There are various institutional spaces such as event venues (Cellar 52 and the Timber Barn), the St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, a cultural space (Three Sisters Cultural Centre), a public library, a retirement home (Village Manor), and a performing arts theatre (Schoolhouse Theatre).

The neighbourhoods around the core and south of the Conestogo River consist of low-rise and low-density built forms. Older residential neighbourhoods are located within a grid-network surrounding the core area, with newer subdivisions to the southeast.

North of the Conestogo River are a mix of commercial, industrial, and institutional uses, with low-density residential to the west of King Street North along Northside Drive. The upper limits of St. Jacobs along King Street North feature a plaza with various industrial uses. The intersection of King Street North and Sawmill Road contain a mix of commercial and institutional uses such as a restaurant (Harvest Moon), along with the Woolwich Community Health Centre and a midwives service (St. Jacobs Midwives). Industrial uses such as steel fabricator and manufacturing companies are located on the north side of Sawmill Road.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Sidewalks exist on both sides of the street along King Street North south of the Conestogo River, from the core area to the southern end of St. Jacobs. The side streets and older residential neighbourhoods around the core area generally feature a sidewalk on one side of the street, whereas the newer subdivision to the south features sidewalks on both sides. There is a sidewalk on one side of King Street, leading north of the Conestogo River which terminates at Sawmill Road. Along Northside Drive, the residential neighbourhood south of Sawmill Road features at least one sidewalk on the street, whereas there are no sidewalks north of Sawmill Road on Northside Drive and King Street North.

It was noted that parking throughout the core area was well-utilized in the afternoon, with many pedestrians milling about the core area. Due to the size and compact nature of the core area, St. Jacobs south of the Conestogo River is very walkable.

2.2. 15-Minute Community Analysis

A GIS analysis was conducted for the following areas in St. Jacobs:

- Core area
- Hillside Variety Store
- Commercial plaza at 1212 King Street North

These areas were chosen as they represent the primary commercial areas in the community.

Figure 6 shows the outcome of this service analysis (please refer to **Appendix D** for detailed maps). The residential neighbourhoods throughout the community are all within a 15-minute walk

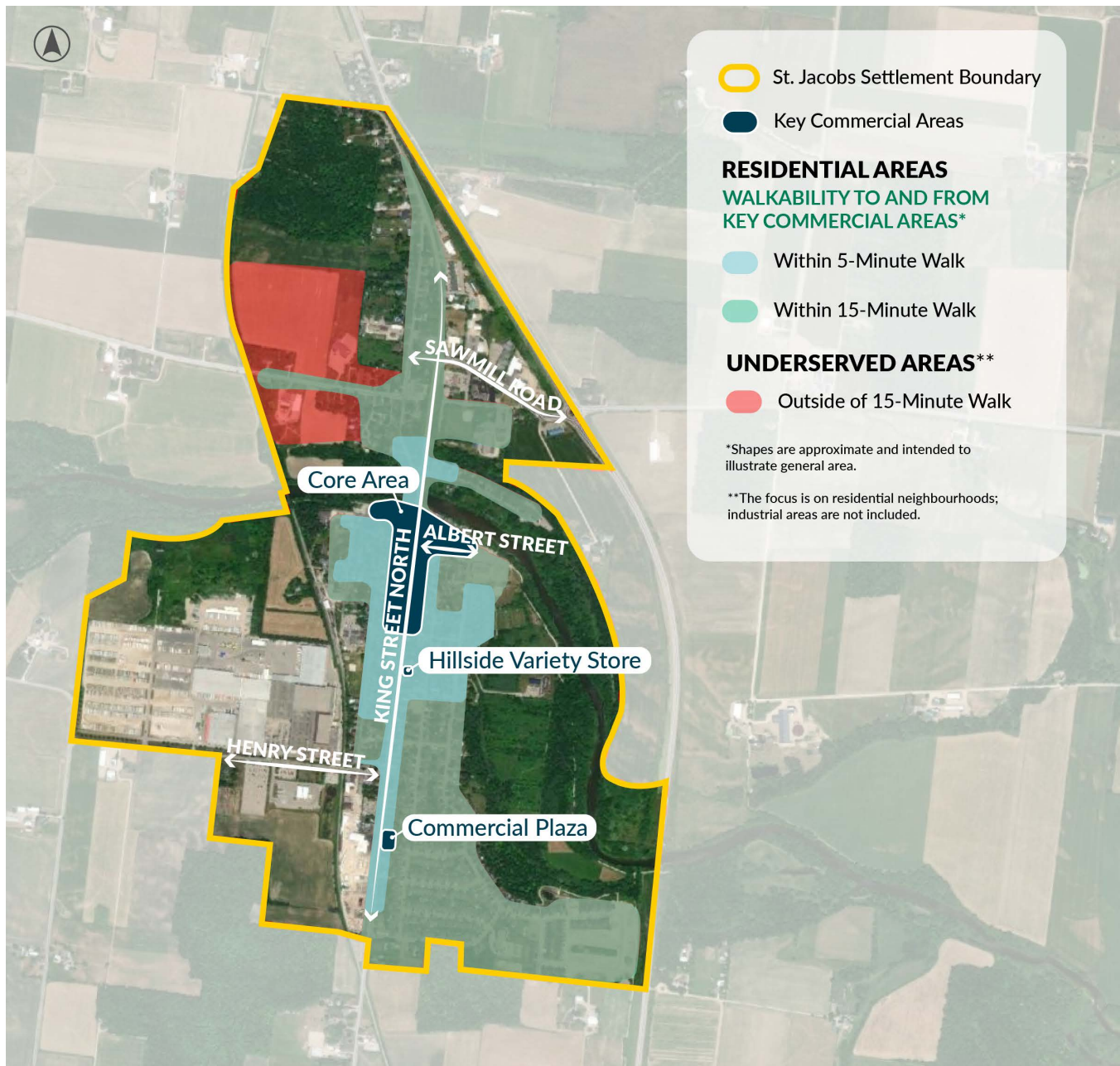


Figure 6 – St. Jacobs 15-Minute Walking Analysis Map

to a key commercial area. As previously noted, the size and compact nature of the community lends itself to a high degree of walkability, and the existing sidewalk infrastructure and a general grid street network facilitates a 15-minute walk of the core area to access commercial services.

The analysis also demonstrates access to commercial areas within a 5-minute walk. Notably, the residential neighbourhoods south of the Conestogo River, surrounding the core area appear to enjoy the highest degree of walkability, as these neighbourhoods are within both a 5-minute and 15-minute walk to key commercial areas. Newer neighbourhoods north of the Conestogo river and to the southeast of the core area are not within a 5-minute walk of the commercial areas. In particular, these newer residential neighbourhoods to the southeast, immediately east of King Street, bounded by Maplelawn Drive to the north and Printer Road to the south, exhibit a curvilinear street pattern that does not promote direct through movement. However, there is an existing pedestrian pathway at the north corner of Maplelawn Drive to King Street North, which provides through movement for pedestrians and cyclists, allowing them to circumvent the meandering streets and more directly access the commercial areas (see **Figure 7**). The southeastern subdivision exhibits the same street network but is further away from pedestrian pathway to King Street North.



Figure 7 – St. Jacobs Streetscape Views

Furthermore, the Conestogo River acts as a dividing line splitting St. Jacobs into a northern and southern half. While the northern residential neighbourhoods are within a 15-minute walk to the core area, the elevation change and need to cross the bridge may act as a barrier and increase the apparent distance for residents. Additionally, when considering aging-in-place, the northern neighbourhoods are not walkable to the core area. Convenience and safety are impacted, especially for older adults and people with disabilities during the winter. Proper sidewalk maintenance in this area is important to ensure walkability, especially during winter months. Finally, it is worth considering the inclusion of new commercial areas when planning for the lands added to the Settlement Area in the northern half of St. Jacobs as they represent an area that will be underserved by the current commercial uses (see **Figure 6**). This consideration should also account for density, future housing types and options, as well as streetscape design, as these factors will have a bearing on the viability of commercial uses. Future master planning should ensure the integration with the existing residential neighbourhood and urban design considerations to facilitate convenient, safe, and pleasant access for pedestrians.

Throughout the site visit, review of existing land-uses, and the focus group meeting, the walkable and compact nature as well as the diverse commercial offerings of the core area were consistently noted as characteristics that facilitate a 15-minute community in St. Jacobs. However, while it is noted that a small-scale variety/grocery store exists along King Street North, the focus group meeting for this strategy report, as well as a stakeholder meeting with the St. Jacobs BIA group during the previous phase of the Official Plan project, highlighted the need for a grocery store in the community, pointing to this lack as a key gap in fully facilitating a 15-minute community.

3. BRESLAU

3.1. Study Context

A site visit was undertaken on April 20th, 2023, to assess existing conditions and uses within Breslau, as well as better appreciate the context for applying a 15-minute community.

EXISTING USES

Breslau is comprised of a residential community, an industrial area, and a limited amount of commercial/retail activity. A railway runs east-west through the community, bisecting Breslau into two: northern Breslau (Woolwich Street North) and southern Breslau (Woolwich Street South). In comparison to Elmira and St. Jacobs, Breslau is a newer community with less of an established core area. The intersection of Woolwich Street South and Dolman Street in southern Breslau is considered the historical main street of the community, with a small commercial plaza at this corner containing fast food restaurants, a convenience store, and a dental office. The post office and the Breslau Public School are located along Dolman Street, anchoring this intersection as a focal point in the community.

While southern Breslau contains a mix of uses, it is largely residential in nature, comprised of single-detached dwellings and institutional uses such as the Breslau Evangelical Missionary Church and Breslau Mennonite Church within the mix. Industrial uses are generally located north of Dolman Street and south of Menno Street on Woolwich Street South, further from sensitive land-uses.

Northern Breslau is largely comprised of residential neighbourhoods, including newer residential subdivisions between Fountain Street North to Greenhouse Road. The intersection of Woolwich Street North and Fountain Street North contains a commercial plaza with various restaurant offerings, a pharmacy, a medical clinic, and a dental office. Directly north of the plaza along Victoria Street North are a series of industrial land-uses that abut the Breslau Fire Station.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Sidewalks generally exist throughout northern and southern Breslau. The residential neighbourhoods in southwestern and northern Breslau by and large feature sidewalks on both sides of the street, especially in newer subdivisions. Woolwich Street South features sidewalks on both sides of the street within the Village Main Street, with this portion of the roadway marked with a sharrow and incorporating bollards for traffic calming. Woolwich Street South then transitions to having sidewalks on one side of the street only, with sidewalks terminating at Fountain Street North in northern Breslau and at Menno Street in southern Breslau. Sidewalks are not present in older residential areas in proximity of the Village Main Street designation.

There was a consistent stream of traffic along Woolwich Street South in southern Breslau. Not many pedestrians were noted throughout the site reconnaissance.

3.2. 15-Minute Community Analysis

A GIS analysis was conducted for the following areas in Breslau:

- Village Main Street
- Commercial Plaza at the corner of Woolwich Street North and Fountain Street North
- Proposed GO Station

These areas were chosen as the focal point for the 15-minute walking analysis as they represent the key commercial areas and public service facilities that are essential for daily living. Although the proposed GO station and surrounding neighbourhood is not designated as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) according to the Region's Official Plan, the Township's current Official Plan and proposed land-use schedule in the Breslau Secondary Plan anticipates mixed-uses around the proposed GO station to support the surrounding neighbourhood.

Figure 8 shows the outcome of this service analysis (please refer to **Appendix D** for detailed maps). By and large, existing residential neighbourhoods in northern and southern Breslau are within a 15-minute walk of a key commercial area. Notable underserved residential areas include

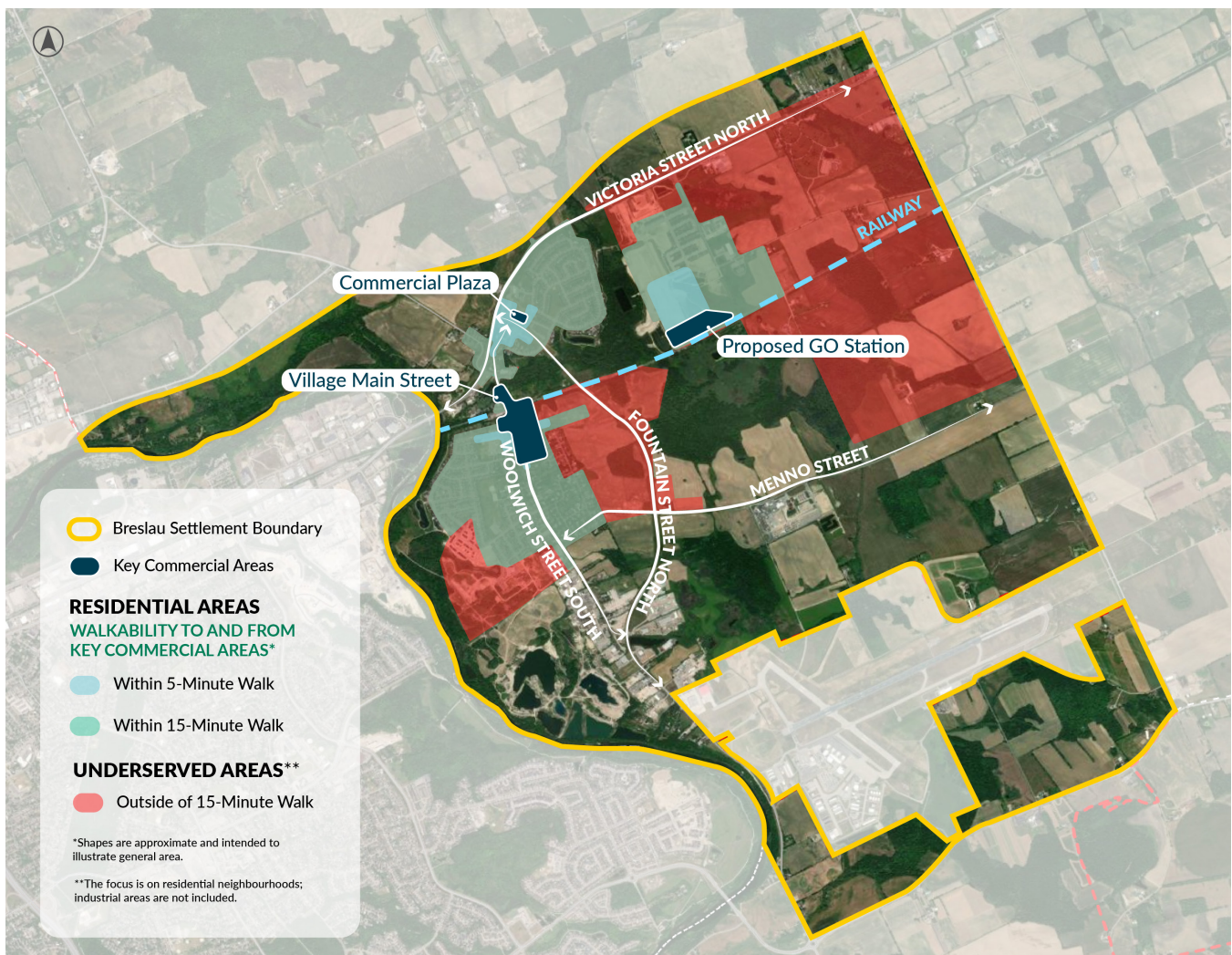


Figure 8 – Breslau 15-Minute Walking Analysis Map

the neighbourhood immediately east of the Village Main Street, new subdivisions that are further southwest of the Village Main Street as well as undeveloped lands identified for residential development in the proposed Secondary Plan land-use schedule. These areas will be addressed in the following analysis. As well, it should be noted that the easternmost residential neighbourhood in northern Breslau is within the 15-minute catchment area of the future commercial uses around the proposed GO station, per the Official Plan and Secondary Plan land-use schedule. However, at the time of the writing of this report, this neighbourhood is not within a 15-minute walking distance to any existing commercial uses.

As demonstrated in the analysis for Elmira and St. Jacobs, the 5-minute catchment area showcases the importance of integrated land-use planning that considers density, various housing types and options to support aging-in-place, and urban design and street network design. Taken together, these factors work to facilitate ease of access to commercial areas while supporting the viability of commercial uses in the neighbourhood. These factors are further discussed below.

Although a large portion of the residential areas in Breslau are within a 15-minute walking distance of an existing commercial area, there are two factors to consider when assessing the success in applying a 15-minute community: the existing commercial uses to support daily living and the viability of walking to access those uses. As previously noted, Breslau is a relatively new community in the Township – as such, the main street and commercial areas are not as established in comparison to older communities like Elmira and St. Jacobs. This is evident in the built form as well as in the variety of existing commercial uses in the community. The identified commercial areas in Breslau are limited in size and scope and largely comprise of fast-food joints or professional offices. Notably, there is no grocery store in Breslau. The lack of commercial uses, particularly those that are essential for daily living, limits the realization of a 15-minute community. As well, it is important to note the role of density in supporting the viability of future commercial uses. Simply permitting commercial uses is not sufficient – it is crucial to provide the population density required to support commercial areas in the neighbourhood.

The lacking variety of commercial uses in the community goes hand-in-hand with the viability of walking to access these uses. Given the limited commercial uses and Breslau's proximity to Kitchener, it is expected that many residents currently access their daily services and facilities in nearby urban areas such as Kitchener-Waterloo. Furthermore, although there are existing sidewalks throughout the community, the wide roadways and lack of safe pedestrian crossings, particularly on Fountain Street, promote car-centric infrastructure over active transportation options. While these factors inhibit walkability for an average able-bodied individual, it is also important to note that this built form discourages aging-in-place, as the auto-reliant environment restricts mobility for those without access to a personal vehicle.

Throughout the report, the built environment and roadway design are consistently cited as key factors in facilitating walkability as they influence the extent of a safe, convenient, and pleasant walking experience. The impacts of these factors on walkability are evident throughout Breslau, particularly when examining the pedestrian experience from southern Breslau to northern Breslau. The only viable pedestrian route is along Woolwich Street South to Woolwich Street North and Fountain Street North. As mentioned, Woolwich Street South only features a sidewalk on one side of the street past the Village Main Street. While this sidewalk is carried through to Woolwich Street North, the sidewalk terminates at the intersection of Fountain Street North. This is a notable intersection – the pedestrian experience changes dramatically entering northern Breslau as Woolwich Street, a two-lane road, intersects with Fountain Street, a wide four-lane



Figure 9 – Breslau Streetscape Views

roadway with a posted speed limit of 70 kilometers per hour. There is no pedestrian crossing at this intersection or along Fountain Street North to access the commercial plaza across the street. Although there is a signalized pedestrian crossing at Fountain Street North and Victoria Street North, there are no sidewalks on either side of Fountain Street from Woolwich Street. This abrupt end is disorienting for a pedestrian – having to traverse a four-lane roadway is needlessly dangerous, creating a hostile environment for both able-bodied and non-able-bodied individuals, altogether discouraging walkability. Furthermore, it effectively disconnects the pedestrian network between northern and southern Breslau.

The existing underserved neighbourhoods outside of a 15-minute walk to key commercial areas are located directly east of the Village Main Street area in southern Breslau, bounded by Cooper Crescent to the north, south, and west, and Kennedy Road to the east. Despite its proximity to the Village Main Street, the road network provides for an indirect connection at best, with the termination of Kennedy Road to the north despite Maders Lane directly abutting this road. The adjacency of Maders Lane presents an opportunity for Kennedy Road to be extended, which will provide much more direct access to the Village Main Street area.

Lastly, the neighbourhood further southwest of the Village Main Street, approximately west of Norwich Street and south of Tilbury Street. Other underserved areas consist of undeveloped lands

on both sides of Fountain Street North, bounded to the north by the railway and to the south by Menno Street, and lands to the east of the existing subdivision in the proposed GO station neighbourhood extending to the edge of the settlement boundary. The existing neighbourhood is a newer subdivision and the undeveloped lands are the lands that were added to the settlement boundary per ROPA 6. The lack of commercial services within a 15-minute walk in these existing and future neighbourhoods emphasizes the importance of future master planning in this area and throughout Breslau, to ensure the appropriate density targets, range of housing types, and mix of commercial and residential uses to facilitate a 15-minute community.

PART 3:

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

The 15-minute community concept envisions a vibrant and walkable community, wherein residents can access most of their necessities for daily living within a 15-minute walk, bike ride, or bus ride away, without the need for a car to access their daily needs. This concept also supports economic opportunities and commercial uses within the community, as it provides residents the convenience of shopping close to home while supporting local businesses. It is evident throughout this analysis and through public engagement that the success of a 15-minute community is predicated on a mix of diverse land-uses, a variety of commercial uses that offer services to support daily living, appropriate density and housing types to support those commercial uses, and the quality of a pedestrian-oriented built form.

The Township's urban communities have a solid foundation to support the achievement of 15-minute communities, with many residential neighbourhoods found to be within a 15-minute walk of a key commercial area, as demonstrated through the GIS analysis in Part 2 of this report. The core/main street areas of Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau are observed to be compact and walkable, featuring a cluster of commercial uses and a traditional grid network that promotes direct trips from adjacent residential areas by foot. Compared to Breslau, Elmira and St. Jacobs are better served in terms of the variety of commercial uses as well as compact land-uses around the core area.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

While the analysis demonstrated that the majority of residential neighbourhoods in each community are within a 15-minute walk to key commercial areas, there are various factors to consider regarding the extent to which a 15-minute community is realized. The 15-minute community idea is prefaced on access to commercial uses that meet the daily needs of residents. Although various commercial areas exist in each community within walking distance of residential neighbourhoods, it has been repeatedly observed throughout Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau that these communities lack the full suite of commercial uses to meet the daily needs of residents. Namely, there is no grocery store within the core area of these communities and the existing grocery stores within Elmira are not in a location conducive to walkability. Breslau's existing commercial uses are limited both in scope and in size, primarily consisting of fast-food joints and professional offices. This challenge is further compounded when considering existing and planned neighbourhoods that are not within a 15-minute walk of key commercial areas.

This report recognizes the importance of the current commercial uses in contributing to a 15-minute community, as they are located in areas within a 15-minute walk from most residential neighbourhoods. However, there is an identified need for a greater variety of commercial uses that meet the daily needs of residents. There is an opportunity for the Township to assess the existing commercial uses in Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau to better understand the commercial needs and gaps in the community, and to identify how much new commercial is needed and where it should go. As noted in **Part 2**, the Residential and Ancillary land-use designation is a primary designation in Elmira and St. Jacobs, which permits convenience commercial and neighbourhood commercial uses. As part of the commercial assessment, the Township should also review the current permitted convenience commercial GFA within this designation to establish whether there is a need to increase the permitted GFA to support future neighbourhoods in the area. It is worth noting as well that a limitation of this report is that it only considers a 15-minute walk within the

bounds of the settlement areas. There may be instances in which residential neighbourhoods can access commercial uses within a 15-minute walk, bike ride, or transit ride away that is outside of the community (e.g. the southern neighbourhood of St. Jacobs Village is a 7-minute bike or transit ride to the Stockyards). The commercial assessment should consider commercial uses in proximity to but outside of the settlement boundaries for a fulsome understanding of commercial needs within each community.

It has been noted that density and housing forms play a key role in ensuring the viability and success of commercial uses in the community. While density supports commercial uses in a neighbourhood, providing a range of housing choices and mixed density in a neighbourhood also encourages aging-in-place and contributes to an inclusive community whereby residents of all ages and abilities can walk to access commercial uses. These two key factors should be considered along with the commercial assessment when identifying where and how much commercial is needed to ensure that proposed commercial uses can be supported to facilitate a 15-minute community.

Further to this, the viability of the 15-minute community is also assessed through the lens of walkability, and how viable it is for a pedestrian to walk 15-minutes to commercial areas. The analysis in **Part 2** points to the importance of facilitating a safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian experience to support the viability of accessing commercial uses through active transportation over auto-centric options. This is underscored by the design of the streetscape and public spaces, particularly in promoting walkability and inviting residents and visitors to linger and enliven the public realm. There is a need for a public realm that integrates traffic calming measures, provides for safe and convenient movement between neighbourhoods, and provides vibrant community spaces that promote pedestrian activity.

While each community is unique in terms of its composition, by and large, the key challenges facing the implementation of 15-minute communities are the lack of essential commercial services to support daily living, the need for appropriate density targets and various housing forms to support commercial uses, and an auto-centric design that deprioritizes the pedestrian and active transportation options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations seek to address the challenges in the previous section:

1. Completing a Commercial Hierarchy Study to Identify Commercial Needs in Each Community and Plan for Future Commercial Uses

Undertaking a commercial assessment or a commercial hierarchy study which will allow the Township to identify commercial gaps, viability of supporting other types of commercial uses, and ultimately recommend how much commercial is needed in each community and where it should go. This will include an assessment of the current GFA commercial requirement in the Official Plan. The study will classify the existing commercial uses in each community, while accounting for commercial uses beyond the settlement boundaries. This will aid in understanding the current commercial hierarchy, as well as the unique commercial context and needs of each community to facilitate the achievement of a 15-minute community.

2. Implementing Density Targets and a Range of Housing Choices to Support Essential Commercial Uses and Aging-In-Place

Promoting intensification, transit-oriented development, and higher densities that are appropriate to each community to support and attract essential commercial uses. The increased density and compact built form will not only facilitate access to commercial uses through active transportation, but it will also provide the necessary population and spending power required to support the commercial uses. Furthermore, it will supporting a compact and walkable built environment that is safe, convenient, and pleasant for residents of all ages and abilities. Ensuring a mix of land-uses, including commercial uses, will allow for health, social, and community supports and services that is easily accessible in the community.

3. Promoting a Public Realm that Supports Safe, Connected, and Pleasant Pedestrian Experiences

Integrating various design features to promote safe, connected, and pleasant pedestrian experiences. These can include implementing recommendations from the Elmira Core Urban Design Study; delineating pedestrian-only areas, shared streets, or crosswalks through different paving materials; ensuring sidewalk connectivity throughout the community; providing for appropriate and enhanced pedestrian crossings at key areas through signage, pavement material, and/or signalized features; integrating multi-use paths in the community; transforming underutilized spaces within communities such as alleyways for public spaces to promote pedestrian activity; including landscaping between the roadway and sidewalks; and ensuring that future master planning of new neighbourhoods incorporate street networks that provides for direct and efficient trips.

4. Incorporating Traffic Calming Measures to Support Walkability and Active Transportation Options

Introducing features such as traffic calming bollards, landscaped medians to facilitate pedestrian crossings, corner extensions/bump-out, and creating narrower roadways within new neighbourhoods. The Arthur Street by-pass was noted as a solution to explore in managing traffic and ensuring Elmira's core area is pedestrian oriented.

5. Redirecting Truck Traffic in Elmira's Core Area to Reduce Noise, Enhance the Public Realm, and Support the Use of Outdoor Space

Implementing a truck by-pass in Elmira so heavy truck traffic does not pass through the core area. This is a priority that has been repeatedly noted throughout the Official Plan process. This recommendation will enhance the public realm and support commercial uses and pedestrian activity in the core area, and significantly contributes to the achievement of the urban design and traffic calming recommendations.

6. Updating Official Plan Policies to Permit Commercial Uses that Provides for the Needs of a 15-Minute Community

Ensuring the New Official Plan updates applicable policies pertaining to a 15-minute community that permits and encourages commercial uses that provide for the daily needs of the community.

7. Leveraging Economic Development Programs and Funding

Utilizing opportunities for grants such as My Main Street to support local BIAs, contributing to lively core areas and improving the viability of 15-minute communities in the Township.

These recommendations will be incorporated into the Policy Directions Report and will support future policies in the new Official Plan.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A** 15-Minute Community Policies
- Appendix B** Focus Group Meeting Materials
- Appendix C** Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau Land-Use Designations
- Appendix D** 5-Minute & 15-Minute GIS Network Maps

APPENDIX A:

15-MINUTE COMMUNITY POLICIES

ROPA 6

PART A – THE PREAMBLE

Key Components of the Amendment

This ROP amendment incorporates the results of the first phase of the ROP Review. It conforms to and implements the following key growth-related requirements of the

Growth Plan:

- d) Provides direction for an urban form that will support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods through a more compact built form;

Summary of Key Policy Changes

In addition to the growth-related requirements of the Growth Plan noted above, this ROP amendment implements several key policy changes:

Climate Action

- Requiring the development of 15-minute neighbourhoods in the cities and townships where residents can meet their daily needs for living short by a short trip from home by walking, cycling, and rolling.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.2.3 Building a Sustainable Community

A sustainable region also proactively builds resiliency by protecting people, wildlife, nature, and property from increases in heat, precipitation, and extreme weather that result from human-caused greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. A sustainable region is efficient and produces clean energy locally, and meets energy needs without using fossil fuels. It is a region comprised of 15-minute neighbourhoods that are compact, vibrant, and where people can meet their daily needs within a 15-minute trip by walking cycling, and rolling.

1.4.4 Implementing Provincial Policy Directions

This Plan implements the policy directions set out in the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), and all relevant Provincial Plans including the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area (2019), and the Greenbelt Plan (2017). The key Provincial policy directions implemented in this Plan include:

- building 15-minute neighbourhoods with convenient access to a broad mix of uses;

1.5 Guiding Principles

The policies of this Plan regarding how land is developed, how infrastructure investments are made, and how resources are managed and protected are based on the following key principles:

- Support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods designed to support healthy and active living and meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime;

Chapter 2 - Where and How to Grow

2. Where and How to Grow

A key objective of this Chapter is to accommodate forecasted growth by building 15-minute neighbourhoods. These are compact, well-connected places where people can meet their daily needs for goods, services, and employment within a 15-minute trip from home by walking, cycling, and rolling, and where other needs can be met by using direct, frequent, and convenient transit. For neighborhoods to function in this way, they need to be designed with a diverse mix of land uses and provide a full range of housing to accommodate a range of incomes and household sizes. They also require development densities with enough people living and working in the area to support a broad range of services.

Building 15-minute neighbourhoods supports several important community-building objectives. They promote individual health and well-being by providing an opportunity for people to be physically active on a regular basis, throughout their day. They provide access to high quality public parks and urban greenlands, and opportunities for recreation. They also provide greater access to local, healthy and affordable food by providing good access to local grocery stores and community gardens.

From a climate change perspective, 15-minute neighbourhoods provide an important foundation for achieving transformational climate action. More compact and wellconnected urban areas reduce the energy our community needs for transportation and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with them, by minimizing the need for automobile travel, and allowing goods to be moved more efficiently. They also provide a better balance of jobs and housing in local communities across the region, helping to reduce the need for long distance commuting. Taken together, 15-minute neighbourhoods reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease air pollution, and support the region's transition off fossil fuels.

Objectives:

- Build vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods with a broad mix of land uses where people can meet their daily needs for goods, services, and employment within a 15-minute trip by walking, cycling, and rolling, and where other needs can be met by taking direct, frequent, and convenient transit;

2.A Managing Population and Employment Growth

2.A.4 The Region and the area municipalities will undertake integrated planning to phase and coordinate the forecasted growth in Table 1, which will:

- (d) provide direction for an urban form that will optimize infrastructure, particularly along the ION light rail transit and other transportation corridors, to support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods through a more compact built form in accordance with all the applicable policies of this Plan;

2.B Urban System

Although most of the Region's future growth will occur in delineated built-up areas through intensification, some new development will also be accommodated within designated greenfield areas. Future development in both of these policy areas will contribute to the creation of 15-minute neighbourhoods with a broad mix of land uses where people can meet their daily needs for goods,

services, and employment within a 15-minute trip by walking, cycling, and rolling, and where other needs can be met by using direct, frequent, and convenient transit.

2.C Urban Area

Objectives:

- Achieve transit-supportive development and 15-minute neighbourhoods throughout the Urban Area with a diverse mix of land uses, housing types and open spaces in proximity to each other; and

2.C.2 Urban Area Policies

2.C.2.1 The Urban Area is designated as shown on Map 1. This designation contains the primary urban areas of the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, and also extends into portions of the Township of Woolwich. The lands included within this designation are intended to accommodate the largest share, almost 90 percent, of the Region's population and employment growth within the planning horizon of this Plan, and will be planned and developed in accordance with the policies of this Chapter and other applicable policies in this Plan.

2.C.2.2 Area municipalities will develop official plan policies and implementing zoning by-laws, and other planning documents or programs to ensure that development occurring within the Urban Area is planned and developed in a manner that:

- (b) advances the community's transition into an energy-efficient, resilient, low-carbon community by:
 - (i) promoting a more compact built form that enables a modal shift to most trips being made by walking, cycling, and rolling;
 - (ii) contributing to the creation of 15-minute neighbourhoods;

2.C.3 Expansions and Adjustments to the Urban Area

2.C.3.2 The Region, in collaboration with the area municipalities, will determine the feasibility and location of an Urban Area boundary expansion justified through Policy 2.C.3.1 based on the comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan, including the following:

- (k) the proposed expansion is of a sufficient size to be developed as a 15- minute neighbourhood by itself, or can be integrated with existing developments to contribute to the creation of a 15-minute neighbourhood.

2.D Strategic Growth Areas

Strategic growth areas are nodes, corridors and other areas that will accommodate most of the planned intensification in the region. Nodes, including Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, Local Centres, and Township Urban Growth Centres, will be planned as areas of more intense density, use and activity. They are compact clusters of uses that can range in scale and intensity of development, such as the downtown cores of the cities and townships, mixed-use communities, and postsecondary educational campuses or other higher-density uses both large and small.

Corridors, including Regional Intensification Corridors and Local Intensification Corridors, share

similar characteristics as nodes, but are oriented along existing or planned frequent transit service or higher order transit routes. They represent key routes between strategic growth areas, creating a continuous and integrated mobility network for walking, cycling, and rolling, and taking transit across the region. Existing corridors will be reinforced through infill and redevelopment, and supported with strategic investments in enhanced transit service and protected infrastructure for walking, cycling and rolling.

Local Centres, Local Intensification Corridors, and Township Urban Growth Centres are generally smaller in scale and scope than Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas and Regional Intensification Corridors, but play a strong supporting role in the broader Regional urban system hierarchy. They provide neighbourhood focal points for a range of uses and activities, including missing middle housing, in areas served by existing or planned transit services. Over time, these areas will enhance connectivity within and between the cities and townships, and help transition existing residential areas into vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods.

2.D.3 Regional Intensification Corridor Policies

2.D.3.3 Area municipalities, in consultation with the Region, will establish minimum density targets for all Regional Intensification Corridors that:

- (c) reflect opportunities for the intensification and support the transition of any surrounding neighbourhoods into 15-minute neighbourhoods;

2.D.4 Local Centres, Local Intensification Corridors, and Township Urban Growth Centres

2.D.4.1 Area Municipalities will identify and delineate Local Centres, Local Intensification Corridors, and Township Urban Growth Centres in their Official Plans, and establish official plan policies with implementing zoning by-law regulations for these areas that address the following:

- (b) support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods with an appropriate scale and form that serve the surrounding community;

2.E Township Urban Areas

The region contains several fully serviced settlement areas located throughout the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. These communities, designated as Township Urban Areas in this Plan, vary in population, level of economic activity, and intensity and diversity of uses. Historically, each Township Urban Area grew around a traditional village core area with a unique character and distinct sense of place. Today, these thriving communities have evolved to become the main centres for their respective municipalities. They also play a key supporting role in the broader regional urban system by providing for opportunities for living and working in the townships. Moving forward, the policies of this Plan support the continued growth of these areas as vibrant, 15-minute neighbourhoods with a broad range of opportunities for living, working, recreation and entertainment.

Objective:

- Promote gentle density and other context sensitive intensification to facilitate the transition of existing communities into vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods.

2.F Intensification Targets in Delineated Built-Up Areas

While strategic growth areas will play the primary role in achieving the intensification targets of this Plan, intensification will also occur more broadly within existing neighbourhoods through gentle density. Although some of the building stock in these neighbourhoods is still too recent to expect widespread change over the planning horizon of this Plan, this Plan envisions the transition of these areas into vibrant 15- minute neighbourhoods. This transition will occur gradually over time as new opportunities arise for infill, redevelopment, additional residential units, new missing middle housing options, development of vacant and/or underutilized lots, and the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

Objectives:

- Support the gradual transition of existing neighbourhoods into 15-minute neighbourhoods that are denser, have a broad mix of land uses where people can meet their daily needs for goods, services, and employment within a 15- minute trip by walking, cycling, and rolling, and where other needs can be accessed using direct, frequent, and convenient transit.

2.F.2 Area municipalities, in collaboration with the Region, will develop and adopt a strategy to meet or exceed the minimum intensification targets set out in Table 3, and intensification more broadly throughout delineated built-up areas, which will:

- (d) ensure lands are zoned and development is designed in a manner that supports the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods;
- (e) support the gradual transition of existing neighbourhoods into 15- minute neighbourhoods that are denser, more energy efficient, and liveable;

2.G Designated Greenfield Areas

Although this Plan directs most of the region's future growth to delineated built-up areas through intensification, new development will also be directed to designated greenfield areas to accommodate some of the Region's forecasted growth. This section sets out policies to guide how the Region's new greenfield communities will be planned and designed to support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods that are equitable, thriving and sustainable.

New greenfield communities will be compact and efficient to meet the vision and objectives of this Plan. They will be designed as 15-minute neighbourhoods that enable people to live car-free or "car-lite" (i.e., households with fewer vehicles than workers) by offering convenient access to a diverse mix of jobs, housing, schools, cultural, and recreational opportunities, and local shops and food destinations. They also provide access to high quality, pedestrian accessible open spaces, parks and greenspaces to all members of the community in an inclusive and equitable way.

Most of the region's existing designated greenfield areas were not originally planned and designed to function as 15-minute neighbourhoods. Many of these greenfield communities will be approaching 50 years old by 2051, and will require upgrades to parks, trails, roads, community centres and other physical and community infrastructure. These upgrades and associated planning updates would provide an opportunity to retrofit and rebuild some greenfield communities to become vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods. This transition will occur gradually over time through gentle density in the form of infill, missing middle housing, and additional residential units.

Objectives:

- Plan and design designated greenfield areas to function as 15-minute neighbourhoods that feature a diverse mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, and convenient access to local stores, services, and public service facilities;

2.G.1 Designated Greenfield Areas Policies

2.G.1.2 Area municipalities, in collaboration with the Region, will ensure that new development taking place in designated greenfield areas will be planned, designated, zoned and designed to:

(a) function as 15-minute neighbourhoods with a broad mix of land uses where people can meet their daily needs for goods, services and employment within a 15-minute trip by walking, cycling and rolling, and where other needs can be met by using direct, frequent and convenient transit;

2.G.1.4 Area municipalities will establish policies in their official plans, or other planning documents, to ensure that new development within designated greenfield areas is phased in a manner that:

(b) achieves the delivery of 15-minute neighbourhoods in accordance with the policies of this Plan;

2.G.1.5 Area municipalities will establish policies in their official plans, or other planning documents, to support the gradual transition of existing designated greenfield areas to become vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods through gentle density in the form of infill, missing middle housing, and additional residential units.

2.H Employment Areas**2.H.1 Employment Area Policies**

2.H.1.16 The Region and the area municipalities will plan to support the retail sector by promoting compact built form and intensification of retail and service uses and areas, and encouraging the integration of those uses with other land uses to support the achievement of 15-minute neighbourhoods.

Chapter 3.A - Housing**3.A Range and Mix of Housing**

In recent years, the region's housing stock has become increasingly characterized by particular housing types and densities – namely, high-density, high-rise condominium buildings and low-density, single- and semi-detached housing. To help address this challenge and build a wider mix of housing options in neighbourhoods where people want to live, this Plan includes policies to support the construction of missing middle housing in both delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas. This type of housing facilitates gentle density and provides people of all ages, incomes and abilities with opportunities to live in 15-minute neighbourhoods.

Glossary of Terms

15-minute neighbourhoods: Compact, well-connected places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within the Urban Area and Township Urban Areas. They are places that offer support and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities and at all times of year to conveniently access

the necessities for daily living with a 15-minute trip by walking, cycling, and rolling, and where other needs can be met by taking direct, frequent, and convenient transit, wherever possible. 15-minute neighbourhoods include an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities. They are also age-friendly places and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.

Township of Woolwich Official Plan

CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

3.2 This Plan is based on the population forecasts contained in the Regional Official Plan, which forecasts an increase in the Township's population from:

- 21,100 in 2006,
- to approximately 36,500 in 2031,

along with growth in employment from:

- 13,540 in 2006 to
- 19,000 in 2031,

in a manner that integrates land use planning with infrastructure investment planning and environmental protection to build complete communities.

3.11 Future development in the Breslau and Stockyards Urban Areas, and the Elmira and St Jacobs Township Urban Areas will be appropriately staged and prioritized to:

- c) For the Breslau Urban Area, and the Elmira and St. Jacobs Township Urban Areas, to support the achievement of complete communities with a broad range and mix of housing options.

CHAPTER 4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES, COMMUNITY VALUES AND GOALS OF THE PLAN

4.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The policies of this Plan regarding how land is developed, resources are managed and protected, and public dollars are invested reflect the key principles of the Provincial Growth Plan and the Regional Official Plan in the following manner:

- Supports the achievement of complete communities designed to support healthy and active living and meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime.

4.4 GOALS

3. To support the achievement of complete communities that are designed to support healthy and active living and meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime.

CHAPTER 5 PLANNED TOWNSHIP STRUCTURE

5.4 GENERAL POLICIES FOR THE BRESLAU AND STOCKYARDS URBAN AREAS

5.4.1 In preparing or reviewing planning studies, or in reviewing development applications or site plans, the Township will ensure that development occurring within the Breslau and Stockyards Urban Areas will be planned and developed in a manner that:

- c) Contributes to the creation of complete communities with development patterns, densities and an appropriate mix of land uses that supports walking, cycling and the use of transit in addition to motor vehicles;

5.5 GENERAL POLICIES FOR THE ELMIRA AND ST. JACOBS TOWNSHIP URBAN AREAS

5.5.1 In preparing or reviewing planning studies, or in reviewing development applications or site plans, the Township will ensure that development occurring in the Elmira and St. Jacobs Township Urban Areas will be planned and developed in conformity with sections a) to h) of Policy 5.4.1.

5.6 REURBANIZATION TARGET

5.6.3 The Township will phase in and achieve the reurbanization target of this Plan by:

- d) Ensuring lands are zoned and development is designed in a manner that supports the achievement of complete communities;

CHAPTER 7 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

7.26.1.2 VISION

- e) Breslau will be a complete community and will include a full array of land uses, such that there are places to live, go to school, work, shop and play within the community. All new development will be sustainable, compact and efficient, and will achieve Provincial and Regional planning objectives. Breslau will accommodate a full range of housing types, including housing that is considered more affordable.

7.26.6 A COMPLETE COMMUNITY - HEALTHY AND DESIRABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

- a) The Breslau Settlement Area contains an older, distinct residential neighbourhood that has been designated Village Residential on Schedule 'B' – Settlement Plan - Breslau. This Plan recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing this stable residential neighbourhood. These lands are all within the defined Built Boundary.
- b) Lands designated for residential use outside of the defined built boundary include newly developed residential neighbourhoods, as well as substantial designated greenfield areas that will accommodate new residential development within the Breslau Settlement Area. These areas provide opportunities for the creation of new neighbourhoods and other compatible uses that provide for the day-to-day needs of residents, including potential school sites.

7.26.8.2 SERVICING AND UTILITY POLICIES

- d) Township Council, by resolution, has the responsibility to allocate wastewater capacity for new sanitary service connections to existing or new development in the Breslau Settlement Area. Prior to allocating the wastewater capacity, Council shall consider a series of guidelines to establish the recommended allocation. The guidelines are to focus on managing growth, roads and infrastructure, human resources, and the interests of community health and safety, which are in keeping with the policies of this Plan and the Township's Strategic Plan. The guidelines that are to be considered include:
 - o iii) Considering the goal of contributing towards a diverse and complete community with opportunities for residential, industrial, commercial, recreational and institutional developments;

7.29.7.1 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL POLICIES

- a) The Elmira Settlement Area will require additional industrial lands to meet the needs to 2031. The Township will work to designate additional lands in order to achieve a complete community and an appropriate supply of lands.

CHAPTER 9 HOUSING POLICIES

9.1.5 Notwithstanding Sections 9.1.2 and 9.1.3, in implementing Section 9.1.4, the Township will support the achievement of complete communities by:

- a) Planning to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan;
- b) Planning to achieve the minimum reurbanization and density targets in this Plan;
- c) Considering the range and mix of housing options and densities of the existing housing stock; and
- d) Planning to diversify their overall housing stock across the Township.

CHAPTER 13 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP POLICIES

13.18 CLIMATE CHANGE

13.18.1 The Township, in collaboration with the Region, will update this Plan following the next municipal comprehensive review of the Regional Official Plan to identify actions in the Township that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals, aligned with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and the Climate Change Action Plan, 2016, that will include:

- a) Supporting the achievement of complete communities as well as the minimum reurbanization and density targets in this Plan;
- b) Reducing dependence on the automobile and supporting existing and planned transit and active transportation;

GLOSSARY

Complete Community: Communities that meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of employment, local services, a full range of housing and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation, and open space for their residents. Convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel is also provided.

APPENDIX B:

FOCUS GROUP MEETING MATERIALS

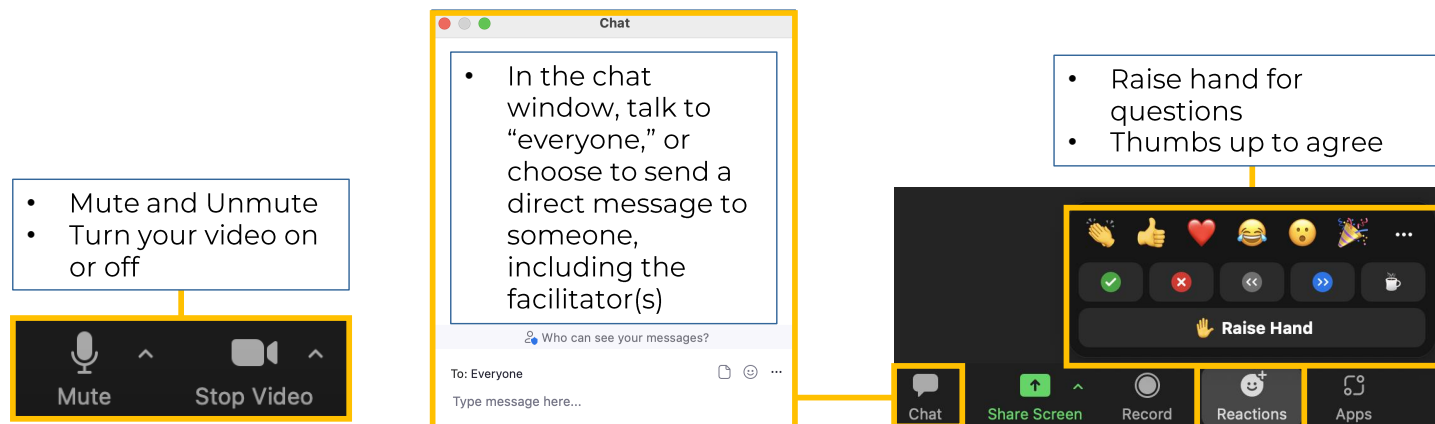


Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



Zoom Etiquette

- Please mute yourselves during the presentation to reduce audio feedback
- Use the chat to contribute and ask questions
- Use the raise hand function and reaction buttons as needed
- Be respectful in discussions with your fellow participants and facilitators



Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



Today's Agenda

- What is a 15-Minute Community?
- Methodology & Preliminary Findings for 15-Minute Community (Commercial Areas)
 - Elmira
 - St. Jacobs
 - Breslau
- Discussion Session

Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



What is a 15-Minute Community?

***Compact, well-connected places** such as **mixed-use neighbourhoods**[...] They are places that offer support and opportunities for **people of all ages and abilities** and at all times of year to **conveniently access the necessities for daily living with a 15-minute trip by walking, cycling, and rolling**[...]. 15-minute neighbourhoods include an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities.[...]*

- ROPA 6 definition

Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



Access to Necessities



Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting

Walkability: Pedestrian Experience

CONVENIENT

SAFE

PLEASANT

Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



Methodology and Preliminary Findings

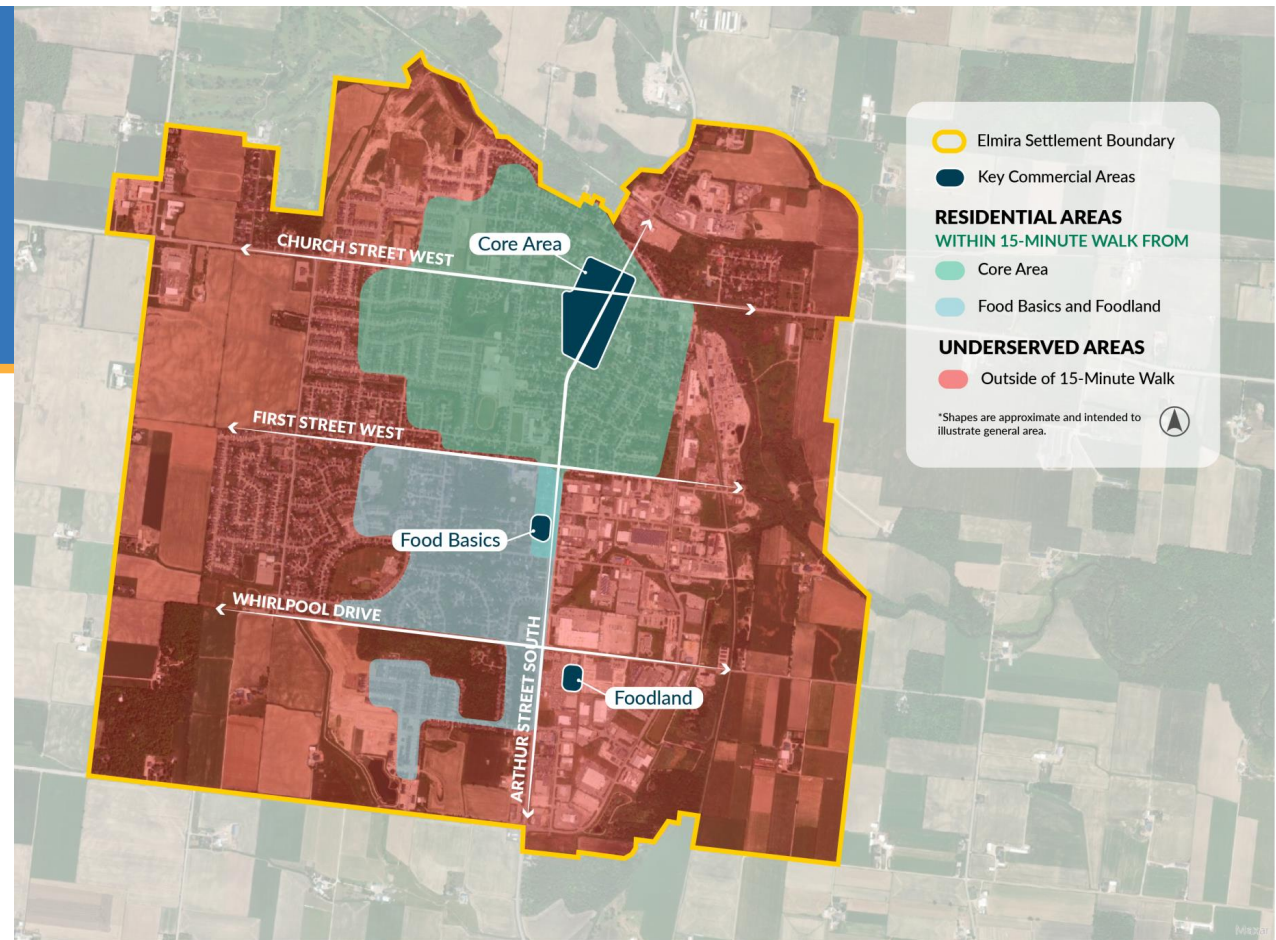
- Analysis conducted for Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau
 - Site reconnaissance
 - GIS network analysis
- Findings:
 - Very walkable core areas
 - Need to plan for new and underserved neighbourhoods
 - Urban design considerations

Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



Preliminary Findings: Elmira

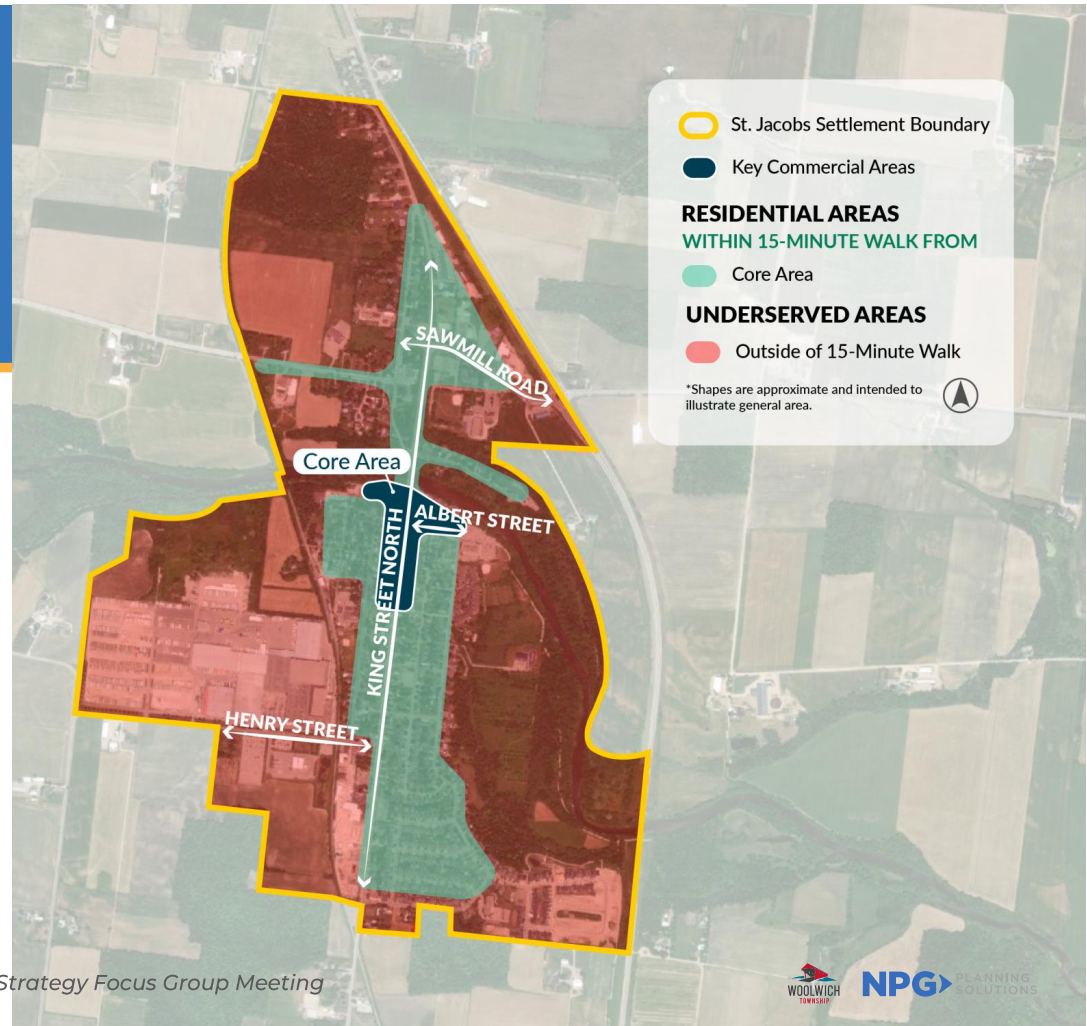
- Northern Elmira very walkable
- Parts of Southern Elmira walkable to major grocery stores
- Road and street design influencing walkability
- Master planning future areas



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Preliminary Findings: St. Jacobs

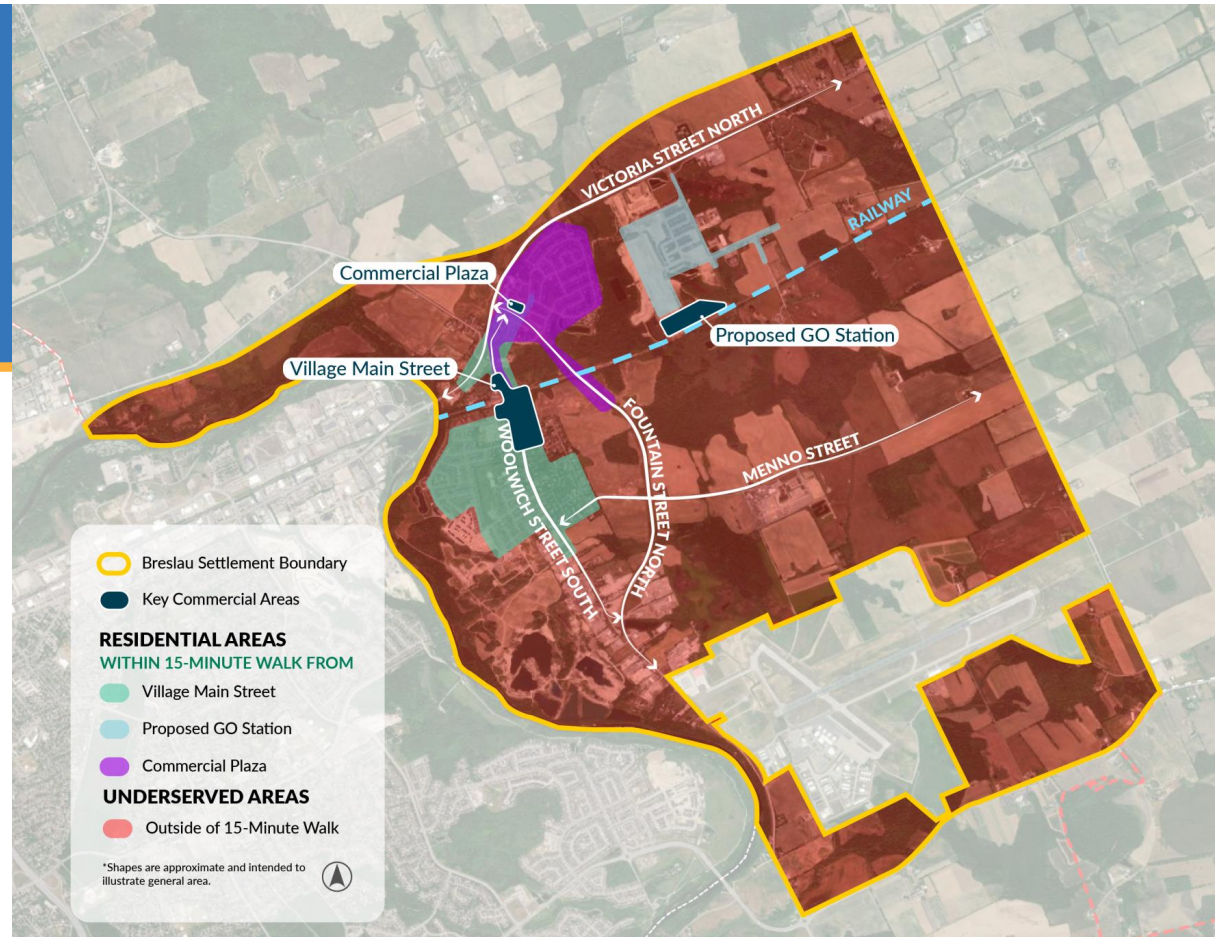
- St. Jacobs generally very walkable
- Southern residential area and new residential developments needs further consideration



Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting

Preliminary Findings: Breslau

- Existing residential neighbourhoods generally walkable to commercial areas
- Importance of master planning for future neighbourhoods
- Align with Secondary Plan land-use concepts



Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting

Discussion Session

Township of Woolwich – 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group Meeting



Township of Woolwich New Official Plan - 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group

How often do you access **commercial services** (e.g retail and professional offices) **on foot or bike?**

Missing (St. Jacobs)
- regular grocery
store for a local but
the allure is the
small-town nature
for a tourist

People are
excited to be
able to walk in
the core in St.
Jacobs

Question of
whether there
are enough
retail to draw
people

Having the
right facilities
and
commercial
uses to draw
people

Don't see too
many people
biking to
access comm

More likely to
bike for trips
to the south
St. Jacobs

Sobeys and
Walmart in
Waterloo

Need for more
restaurants in
St. Jacobs and
Elmira

Do you think there are any
services that are missing
from the core area?

Harder to walk
to the
Dollarama and
Canadian Tire
in the south

Good
walkability in
the core

15-minute bike
ride from St.
Jacobs Village
to Stockyards

What kind of services
would you like to be
able to walk to from
your home?

traffic control
will help with
revitalization

Getting people to
walk/bike in Elmira -
challenge with the
through traffic -
discussion of
by-pass - downtown
is congested with
through traffic -

COMMERCIAL USES AND GAPS

What do you think the
Township can do to
strengthen the core as a
business area?

encourage
foot traffic by
reducing
traffic
congestion

Elmira has
professional
services that
are
well-utilized

Drawing people to
the downtown so
they don't have to
go to KW for
restaurants after
work

Arthur
Kitchen and
Grill is a good
draw to the
downtown

My Main Street -
EdCo - 15-minute
walk - improve
walkability and
promote community
events

St. Jacobs Market - a
lot of groceries - not
walkable to the
Village - better
connection to the
Stockyards

Public transit
for Elmira and
St. Jacobs

Anticipate that
proposed bike lane
from the Village to
the Stockyards will
be used by both
residents and
visitors

Separate bike lane
on King Street to
the Stockyards -
currently very busy
and not a direct trip

Is there a need for more neighbourhood or **convenience commercial facilities** closer to residential neighbourhoods? Where are they needed? Examples include convenience store, restaurant, or medical office.

Township of Woolwich New Official Plan - 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group

How do you typically access your daily necessities (by walking, cycling, or driving)?

Are you within a 15-minute walk or cycle ride away?

Creating multi-use buildings - will facilitate walkability

How to improve outdoor patio spaces in the Village

Having a pedestrian-only area would add a lot to the pedestrian experience in the Village

Mill Street - Elmira Pop-Up - concern with closing the street gives public seating but reduces parking

Lack of parking on Mill Street - a lot of renters above the businesses

Discussion on closure of Mill Street - balancing parking and more community seating

Can't close King Street as it's a Regional road - for special events occasionally

Seating for alleyways

Wooden structure/patio on parking spots on the street

How often do you walk/bike for these trips?

St. Jacobs very walkable - just needs a grocery store

Underutilized spaces that can be used for community seating

PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

What would make you choose to walk or cycle more for these trips?

What do you think of the Elmira Community Seating Pop-Up?

Have you used it?

Not a lot of seating in the downtown for festival goers - any permanent solutions - disperse through the core, don't have to concentrate on main street



Redoing underground infrastructure - updated electrical infrastructure for vendors

Maple Syrup festival - Gore Park to Shopper's Drug Mart is shut down - 100+ vendors

Grocery store in the core - for seniors

Maple Street - behind Township office - where old farmer's market used to be - potential park

Small grocery store - local growers - Vincenzos

Small retail can't support rental rates

Less foot traffic - people don't utilize patios because of traffic - less retail replaced with professional services

Concern with transport trucks on Arthur - difficult to get people to sit out

Don't see as much traffic passing through on Church St

80,000+ in attendance - people driving into the festival

What kind of things like the Community Seating Pop-Up (urban design, activities and events, etc.) would draw you to the core area?

Township of Woolwich New Official Plan - 15-Minute Community (Commercial) Strategy Focus Group

Do you have any final
thoughts or comments
on what was presented
today?

What other ways can the Township
support 15-minute communities?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS?

How do you see the Township
improving access to commercial
services and amenities for your
neighbourhood?

What else should we
know and keep in mind
in creating the
commercial strategy?

APPENDIX C:

ELMIRA, ST. JACOBS, AND BRESLAU LAND-USE DESIGNATIONS

ELMIRA			
Land-Use Designations	Planned Function	Permitted Commercial Uses	Implications
Core Area	Primary commercial, service and office area of Elmira. This area is to be developed to accommodate additional population and employment growth consistent with Elmira's traditional small-town role as a focus for social, economic and cultural activities for the community. It will also be a focal point for retail and investment in institutional and local human services, as well as recreational, cultural and entertainment land uses, and will provide for the integration of Regional transit services.	Mixed residential/commercial development	- Key area in facilitating 15-minute communities. - Underutilized lands with this designation should be carefully considered on how to best support 15-minute communities.
Commercial	Primarily for commerce, however, this designation does not prevent some of the land so designated from being used for other compatible and complementary uses (predominant commercial use). This designation is intended to indicate the general limits of the area in which the defined commercial uses may be considered.	Actual permitted uses are regulated through the Zoning By-law.	Currently located at Church Street West at Synder Avenue North, surrounded by Residential and Ancillary Uses designation. Commercial uses should be sensitive to the area and be of a nature that supports neighbourhood function.

ELMIRA			
Service Commercial	Limited to commercial uses not appropriate in Core Area due to their function and individual land area requirement (large single floor space and associated parking and/or outdoor storage area requirements).	Automotive sales and rental; automotive service station; automotive supply and repair; building supply centre; recreational vehicle sales and rental; recreational vehicles supply and repair; garden centre or nursery; hotel/motel; industrial and farm equipment sales and rental; restaurant; funeral home; medical clinic; convenience retail; feed, seed and farm supply depot with limited accessory retail; office equipment and furniture sales with limited accessory retail; commercial recreation; home brewing outlet; repair, rental, and service (i.e., Rent All); and industrial wholesale outlet.	- Areas adjacent to industrial area along Industrial Drive and Arthur Street South are not conducive to walkability. - Areas surrounded by Residential and Ancillary designations on Church Street West can support 15-minute communities, but commercial uses are limited to those that service residents' needs on the daily such as restaurant, medical clinic, and convenience retail.

ELMIRA			
Residential and Ancillary Uses	Neighbourhood Commercial Facility uses are permitted in this designation. The Elmira Settlement Plan contains one existing neighbourhood commercial facility on an approximate 0.9 ha site at Oriole Parkway and Flamingo Drive. An expansion to the parcel size of this existing neighbourhood facility is not permitted without an amendment to this Plan. Per OP Policy 7.29.6.1 (b), no additional floor space is expected for this use.	- offices and establishments where goods and services are offered, but no incidental processing, repair and/or outdoor commercial activity is permitted that may negatively impact neighbouring residential areas - Mixed residential/ neighbourhood commercial development	The permitted space requirements per the current OP will need to be reviewed as part of the new OP process.

ELMIRA			
Residential and Ancillary Uses	Convenience Commercial Facility uses are permitted in this designation. The Elmira Settlement Plan provides for two convenience commercial facilities, which includes a facility up to 465 m² of gross floor area located in the southwest residential growth area and a facility up to 1200 m² in the vicinity of Barnswallow Drive and Church Street. Per OP Policy 7.29.6.1 (b), only two (2) facilities, up to 1665 m² are expected to meet the needs of residents to 2016.	- only uses which are necessary to satisfy limited daily/frequent shopping and personal service needs requiring close proximity to the residential neighbourhood they serve, including: ○ convenience retail; ○ financial establishment; ○ medical/dental office; ○ personal services; and ○ restaurant - Mixed residential/ neighbourhood commercial development	The permitted space requirements per the current OP will need to be reviewed as part of the new OP process.
Industrial	Predominant used of the land shall be for industry, which is defined as manufacturing, extracting, and processing of materials, service, assembly and fabricating, repair workshops and storage. This designation also permits facilities for industrial research and development, non-accessory offices, health care services, and a data services operation.	Limited commercial uses are permitted to support the industrial uses.	N/A

ELMIRA			
Open Space	Includes major publicly owned park areas, cemeteries, major school sites, fairgrounds, golf courses, etc. Designated areas shall continue to be used for public and quasi-public purposes and shall not be used for other urban development purposes except by amendment to this Plan.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A
Environmental Protection	Comprises of the Greenlands Network, such as significant valleylands, significant woodlands, provincially significant wetlands (PSW), environmentally sensitive policy areas (ESPA), potential environmentally significant valley features, potential supporting environmental features, and an ecological buffer associated with natural heritage features.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A

ST. JACOBS			
Land-Use Designations	Planned Function	Permitted Commercial Uses	Implications
Core Area	Primary commercial, service and office area of St. Jacobs, recognizing the role of the tourist industry in the community.	- Broad range of commercial uses and service uses to service community and tourist needs - Mixed residential/Core Area developments	- Key area in facilitating 15-minute communities. - Underutilized lands with this designation should be carefully considered on how to best support 15-minute communities.
Commercial	Primarily for commerce, however, this designation does not prevent some of the land so designated from being used for other compatible and complementary uses (predominant commercial use). This designation is intended to indicate the general limits of the area in which the defined commercial uses may be considered.	- Actual permitted uses are regulated through the Zoning By-law. - Mixed residential/commercial development	Currently located at Sawmill Road at Parkside Drive, surrounded by Industrial, Open Space, and Residential and Ancillary Uses designations. Commercial uses should be sensitive to these different land-uses.

ST. JACOBS			
Residential and Ancillary Uses	Convenience Commercial Facility uses are permitted in this designation. The St. Jacobs Settlement Plan provides for one convenience commercial facility of up to 465-m² gross floor area located in the south King Street area. Per OP Policy 7.28.6.1 (b), only one (1) facility, up to 465 m² are expected to meet the needs of residents to 2031.	- only uses which are necessary to satisfy limited daily/frequent shopping and personal service needs requiring close proximity to the residential neighbourhood they serve, including: ○ convenience retail; ○ medical/dental office; and ○ restaurant - Mixed residential/ neighbourhood commercial development	The permitted space requirements per the current OP will need to be reviewed.
Industrial	Predominant used of the land shall be for industry, which is defined as manufacturing, extracting, and processing of materials, service, assembly and fabricating, repair workshops and storage. This designation also permits facilities for industrial research and development, non-accessory offices, health care services, and a data services operation.	Limited commercial uses are permitted to support the industrial uses.	N/A

ST. JACOBS			
Open Space	Includes major publicly owned park areas, cemeteries, major school sites, fairgrounds, golf courses, etc. Designated areas shall continue to be used for public and quasi-public purposes and shall not be used for other urban development purposes except by amendment to this Plan.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A
Environmental Protection	Comprises of the Greenlands Network, such as significant valleylands, significant woodlands, provincially significant wetlands (PSW), environmentally sensitive policy areas (ESPA), potential environmentally significant valley features, potential supporting environmental features, and an ecological buffer associated with natural heritage features.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A

BRESLAU			
Land-Use Designations	Planned Function	Permitted Commercial Uses	Implications
Village Main Street	The intent of this designation is to strengthen the Main Street as an area of historical significance and focal point of the community and a draw for tourists. This designation is intended to provide local shopping opportunities, retail, cultural and entertainment opportunities, residential dwelling units.	- Existing converted dwellings to contain retail, service commercial or offices - Live-work units - Mixed-use buildings - Bed and breakfast establishments - Retail and commercial uses ancillary to institutional uses.	- Focal area in the community to facilitate 15-minute communities. - Future (re) development within this designation should ensure an appropriate mix in commercial uses to support both the community and tourists.

BRESLAU			
Commercial/Retail	To provide a variety of retail and service commercial uses to serve the needs of the community and may include users catering to the traveling public or drive-by consumer, as well as larger retail stores that are more land extensive.	• Commercial/retail stores • Restaurants and other service commercial uses • Automotive related uses including gas bars, car washes and service stations	• This designation provides for a range of commercial uses but may not be conducive to facilitating a 15-minute community considering the land extensive requirements of the permitted uses as well as the location of the designation along a major Regional road. • The designation is in proximity to existing residential uses – the type of commercial uses and street design for this designation will influence the walkability and viability of pedestrian foot traffic to the area.

BRESLAU			
Commercial/Mixed-Use	To provide neighbourhood scale retail opportunities in a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use format in proximity to primary residential neighbourhoods. This will incorporate a variety of institutional, retail and service commercial, cultural and residential uses within a mixed-use context.	• All forms of commercial/retail stores, limited in size to a maximum of 600 m2 per store • Restaurants and other service commercial uses, limited in size to a maximum of 300 m2 per restaurant • Business and professional offices • Live-work units • Mixed-use buildings • Retail and commercial uses ancillary to institutional uses.	• This designation is prime for facilitating 15-minute communities for new/planned neighbourhoods in Breslau. • Development should ensure pedestrian-friendly design and integration with adjacent residential uses to enhance viability.

BRESLAU			
Commercial/Business Park	Promotes commercial uses that generate low traffic volumes, don't rely on the travelling public, and are destination oriented. These services may offer a personal service to the public or a small-scale operation providing a service to a business.	Personal service uses; financial institutions; catering services; sales and service of business machines and specialized office and industrial equipment; veterinary clinics; facilities for research and development; professional offices; executive and/or administrative or business offices of an industrial enterprise whose industrial activities are conducted off-site; data service operations; private clubs (but not including a rental banquet hall); commercial schools; fire stations; police stations; and ambulance bases; public and private utilities except for electricity generating plants or facilities; and parks, open space, and pedestrian and bicycle routes.	There are no properties with this designation in the Township – N/A.

BRESLAU			
Village Residential	Intended to recognize, protect, and enhance the existing stable residential neighbourhood while supporting an appropriate mix of housing and local community uses and facilities.	• Bed and breakfast establishments • Retail and commercial uses ancillary to institutional uses.	• Limited opportunities for commercial uses, and only as ancillary to institutional uses.
Low/Medium Density Residential	Intended to promote primarily low-density residential development with some opportunities for compatible medium-density residential uses.	• Bed and breakfast establishments • Small-scale convenience commercial.	• Small-scale opportunities for neighbourhood commercial uses to serve the surrounding neighbourhood.
Medium/High Density Residential	Intended to promote primarily medium density residential development with some opportunities for compatible high-density residential uses	• Live-work units • Mixed-use buildings • Small-scale convenience commercial.	• Opportunities to integrate a variety of commercial uses with housing development. • Connectivity with surrounding neighbourhood and urban design considerations are key to ensure commercial uses can contribute to a 15-minute community within the wider area.

BRESLAU			
Employment Land I	Generally applies to lands generally immediately adjacent to a Provincial Highway or Regional Road, and will require high quality built-form and prestige employment uses.	- All types of business and professional offices, including ancillary retail and service uses and restaurants where integrated as part of office building; - Hotels and hotel/convention centres, including ancillary retail, restaurants and services where integrated as part of hotel use;	Location this designation generally not conducive to walkability/15-minute community.
Employment Land II	Intended to accommodate a wide range of employment uses.	All types of business and professional offices.	Permitted uses not applicable to walkability/15-minute community.
Proposed GO Station	This designation will function as primarily a commuter-focused station and will include substantial parking and other supporting land-uses. It is anticipated that surface parking lots could be redeveloped and intensification within the area be accommodated by provision of structured parking and compatible development.	Retail and commercial uses ancillary to the commuter rail station function.	Opportunities to support commercial uses only as secondary to a GO station – not intended to be a primary focus to service daily commercial needs as related to a 15-minute community.

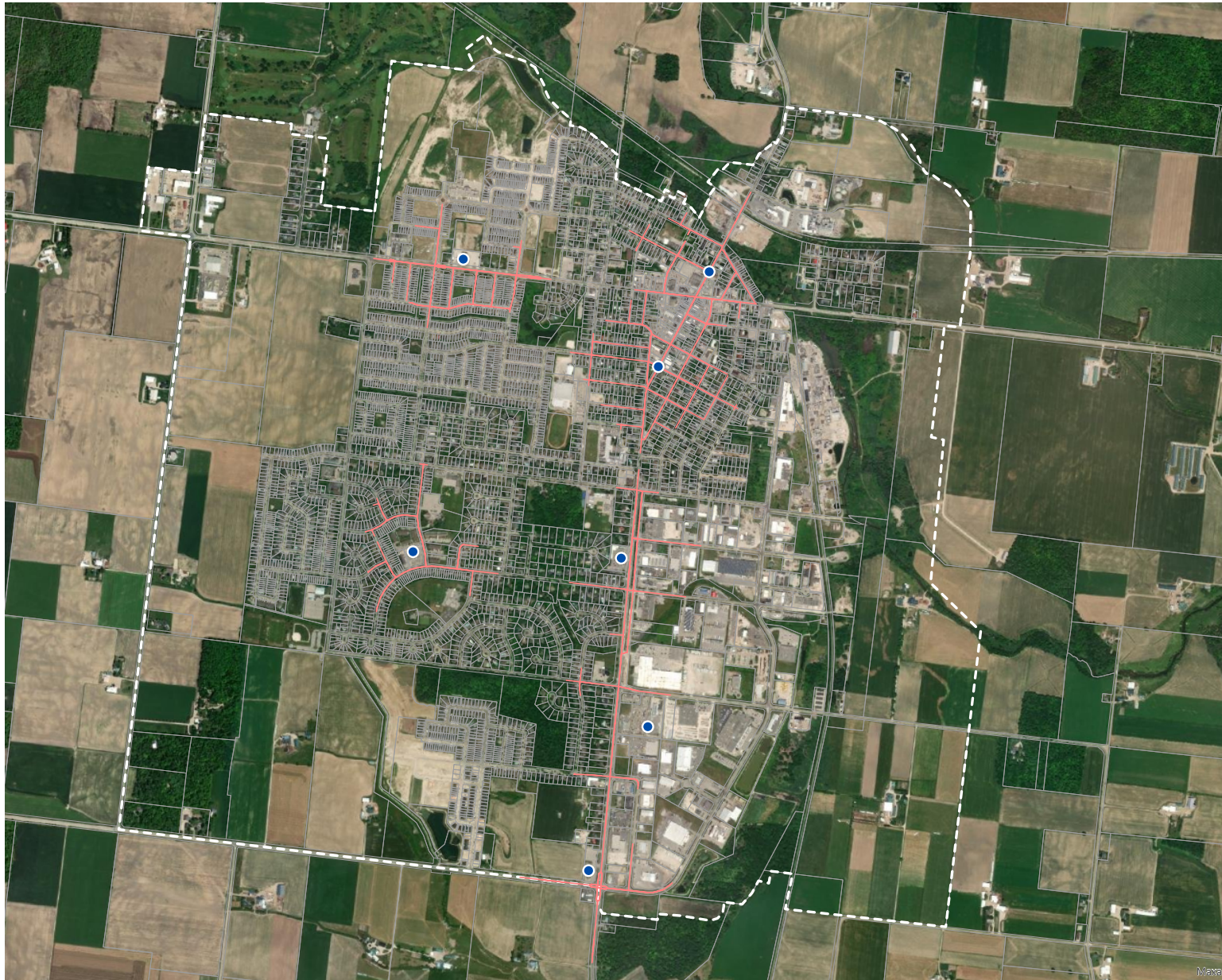
BRESLAU			
Institutional	Intended to support a range of institutional and community uses such as community, recreational, and cultural facilities; assisted, special needs, and seniors' housing; elementary and secondary schools; government offices; places of worship; hospitals; cemeteries; fire stations; and parks, open space, and pedestrian and bicycle routes.	Retail and commercial uses ancillary to institutional uses.	Opportunities to support commercial uses only as secondary to primary institutional use.
South Breslau Industrial Area	A stable and valued employment area that contains many of the Township's industrial uses.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A
Open Space	This designation includes major publicly owned park areas, cemeteries, major school sites, fairgrounds, golf course, etc. and should continue to be used for public and quasi-public purposes and shall not be used for urban development purposes except by amendment to this Plan.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A

BRESLAU			
Environmental Protection	Comprises of the Greenlands Network, such as significant valleylands, significant woodlands, provincially significant wetlands (PSW), environmentally sensitive policy areas (ESPA), potential environmentally significant valley features, potential supporting environmental features, and an ecological buffer associated with natural heritage features.	No commercial uses are permitted.	N/A

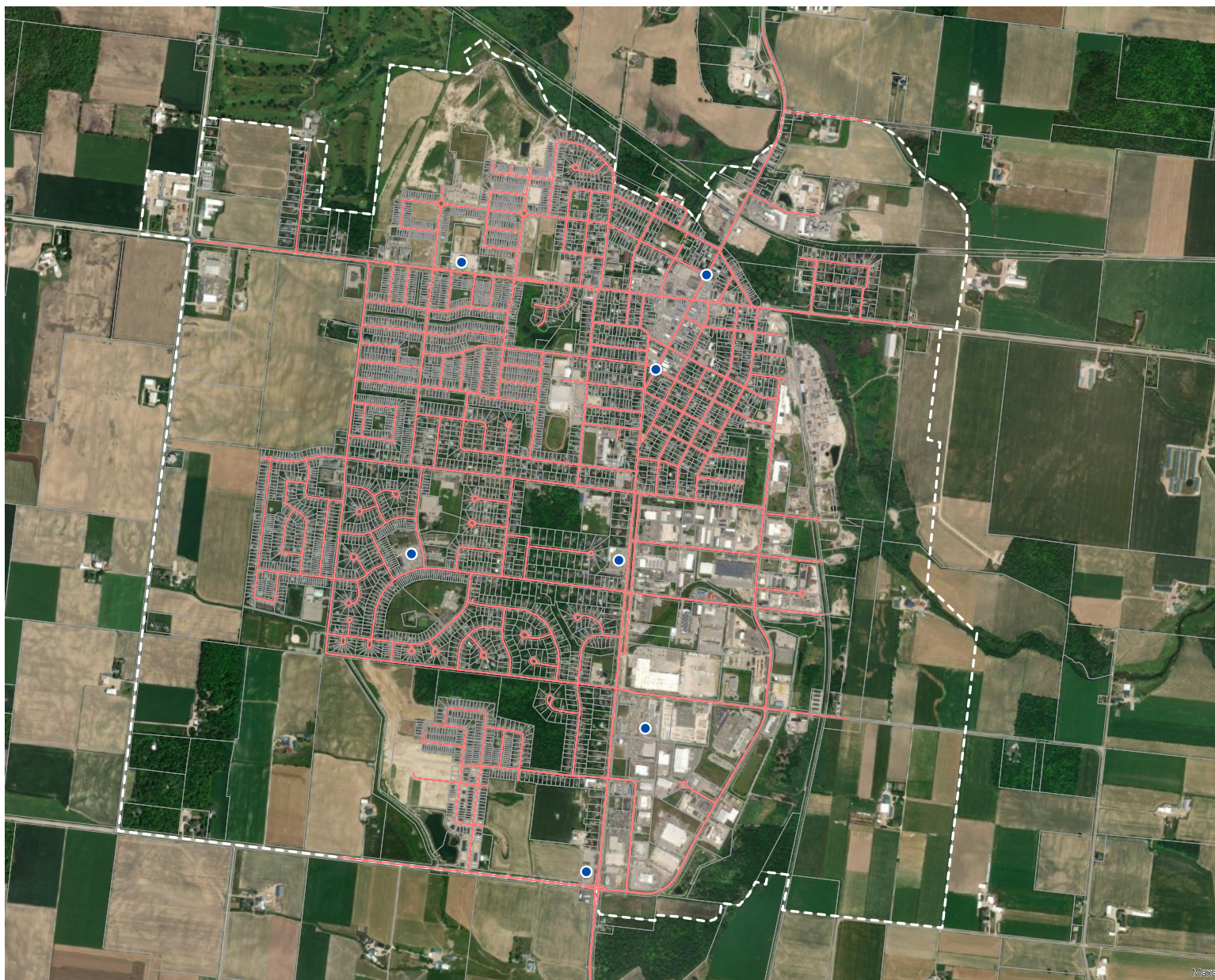
APPENDIX D:

5-MINUTE & 15-MINUTE GIS NETWORK MAPS

ELMIRA: 5-MINUTE WALK



ELMIRA: 15-MINUTE WALK



ST. JACOBS: 5-MINUTE WALK



ST. JACOBS: 15-MINUTE WALK



BRESLAU: 5-MINUTE WALK



BRESLAU: 15-MINUTE WALK

