



STAFF REPORT
Development Services

Subject: Former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands -
Step 2 Engagement Summary and Next Steps
Report No.: P. & D. 13/2026
To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: September 22, 2026
Prepared by: Tim Van Hinte, Director of Development Services

Recommendation

That the Council of the Township of Wellesley receive this report for information and further,

That Council direct staff to prepare preferred planning and design parameters related to the future redevelopment of the site that considers the Council endorsed guiding principles, public engagement results, community needs, partnerships, and good planning principles and bring a recommendation back to Council for consideration in the first quarter of 2027.

Executive Summary

Building on the Guiding Principles established through Step 1 of the Reimagining the Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands project, five redevelopment concepts were prepared by GSP Group and presented to the public to explore different approaches to the future use of the lands. These concepts ranged from a minimal-intervention open event space approach to mixed-use redevelopment scenarios incorporating community facilities, commercial uses, and residential development.

The Step 2 public engagement process included two open houses and an online discussion forum which generated significant community participation. Feedback demonstrated strong support for maintaining the lands as a public and community-serving space, preserving recreation and event functions, maintaining adequate parking, respecting village character, and ensuring future investments are financially responsible. Views regarding inclusion of a library, childcare facility, and residential uses were mixed, reflecting both opportunities and concerns associated with more intensive redevelopment.

The evaluation concluded that each concept contains advantages and trade-offs. At this stage, no single concept is being recommended as the preferred option. The five concepts should therefore be understood as preliminary demonstration scenarios that test different approaches and combinations of uses rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives. A future preferred concept may draw from elements of more than one scenario, including opportunities for additional community facilities, housing, commercial uses or partnerships where supported by demonstrated need, appropriate funding and operating arrangements.

At this time, staff is seeking Council direction to prepare a preferred concept that considers the endorsed guiding principles, public engagement results, partnerships, and good planning principles and report back to Council in the first quarter of 2027.

Report

1. Background

The former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands represent an important community asset within the Township. The overall property is approximately sixteen (16) acres in size and includes the arena, community centre, old Wellesley Fire Hall, ball diamonds, playground, splash pad, skateboard park and soccer fields. In 2019, Council passed a resolution requiring the land south of the existing arena and community centre to remain as recreation land, leaving the approximately three (3) acres of land to the north to be considered for development of another use.

Following the closure of the arena, Council initiated a two-step process to determine the future role of the property and identify opportunities that support the needs of current and future residents.

Step 1 of the project focused on understanding community values, priorities, and expectations. Through public and Council engagement, a series of Guiding Principles were developed to inform future planning for the site. These principles emphasized public stewardship, recreation-focused use, accessibility, community benefit, financial responsibility, and compatibility with the surrounding village character.

Step 2 translated these Guiding Principles into four conceptual redevelopment scenarios for public review and evaluation. The concepts were developed to test different levels of municipal investment, community programming, development intensity, partnership opportunities, housing potential, and revenue generation.

2. Analysis

Public Engagement Process

Step 2 engagement focused on presenting the preliminary concepts to the community and gathering feedback on the potential future direction of the lands. Step 2 engagement asked participants to consider specific concepts and the associated trade-offs related to land use, community programming, open space, parking, built form, investment, and potential revenue generation.

Engagement opportunities included two in-person public open houses as well as an online discussion forum through the Township's Engage Wellesley platform. The public open houses were held on May 19, 2026 at the Bill Gies Recreation Centre, with approximately 50 attendees, and on May 21, 2026 at the St. Clements Community Centre, with approximately 12 attendees. The sessions provided an opportunity for participants to review the concepts, speak directly with the project team, ask questions, and discuss the opportunities and considerations associated with each concept.

The concepts were also made available through the Township's Engage Wellesley platform. The online forum provided residents and other participants with an opportunity to review the concepts, identify preferred concepts or elements, raise concerns, and respond to comments submitted by others. The online forum reporting period extended from May 13 to July 13, 2026. A total of 145 contributions were recorded, including 83 comments and 62 replies, demonstrating a substantial level of discussion around the future of the lands.

The engagement exercise was not intended to select a final concept through a public vote. Rather, the feedback was used to understand community preferences, identify areas of agreement and concern, and inform the evaluation of the concepts. The number of comments or expressions of support associated with an individual concept therefore represents only one component of the decision-making process. Feedback received through Step 2 was considered alongside the Step 1 Guiding Principles and the functional, built form, financial, operational, and implementation considerations associated with each concept.

Summary of Engagement Results

Public engagement completed during Step 2 demonstrated a continued desire to preserve the lands as a community-focused destination. Community members consistently identified recreation, events, festivals, gathering spaces, and public accessibility as key priorities for the property. Some emphasis was placed on

maintaining the site's role in supporting community events such as the Apple Butter and Cheese Festival and other recreational activities.

Participants also stressed the importance of maintaining adequate parking and ensuring redevelopment does not negatively impact existing recreation facilities and event operations within the broader recreation complex. Concerns were raised regarding the scale and intensity of more significant redevelopment proposals, while others recognized opportunities to accommodate housing, commercial activity, and new community facilities within the site.

In summary, the engagement did not establish a clear community preference for a single redevelopment approach. Instead, feedback reflected a range of perspectives on the future of the lands, with broad support for maintaining their public, recreation and community-serving role, while views were more varied regarding additional community facilities, residential development and the appropriate level of investment. These findings should therefore be considered alongside the Guiding Principles and broader functional, financial, operational and implementation considerations in informing future decisions for the site.

The full report prepared by GSP group is included as Attachment 1 to this report.

Evaluation of Preliminary Concepts

The five redevelopment concepts for the lands were evaluated by GSP Group to assist in developing a preferred future direction for the site. The assessment considered the Guiding Principles, public feedback, community and event functionality, built form and village character, financial and operational implications, partnership requirements, implementation complexity, and long-term growth readiness. No single concept was expected to perform best across all criteria, with each option presenting distinct benefits and trade-offs.

Concept 1A (Open Event Space) represents the lowest-cost approach, retaining the community hall while converting the former arena footprint into a large flexible event space. The concept emphasizes public stewardship, recreation-focused use, and year-round community programming, while supporting future growth through enhanced event capacity and continued access to centrally located open space.

Concept 1B (Addition) builds on Concept 1A by adding community-serving uses such as a library and childcare facility while maintaining a significant open event space. This option improves access to community services, supports co-location opportunities, and enhances the site's capacity to meet future service and programming needs through a modest capital investment.

Concept 2 (Multi-Use Centre) replaces existing buildings with a new integrated facility housing cultural, library, and childcare services. While requiring higher upfront investment, the concept provides modernized infrastructure, operational efficiencies, enhanced programming opportunities, and long-term asset management benefits, strengthening the site's ability to accommodate future growth.

Concept 3 (Three-Storey Mixed-Use Development) combines community facilities with commercial space and approximately 30 residential units. The mixed-use model supports housing supply, broadens the range of services available on-site, and introduces opportunities for private-sector participation and revenue generation while maintaining a strong community focus.

Concept 4 (Four-Storey Mixed-Use Development) is the most intensive redevelopment scenario, incorporating community facilities, commercial space, and approximately 60 residential units. This concept offers the greatest potential for housing provision, service delivery, and revenue generation, maximizing the site's long-term growth readiness. However, it also involves the highest level of implementation complexity, capital investment, and long-term commitments.

Overall, the evaluation highlights a progression from lower-cost, community-focused options to higher-intensity mixed-use redevelopment scenarios, with increasing opportunities for service expansion, housing delivery, partnerships, and revenue generation, balanced against greater complexity and investment requirements.

It is also important to consider the Township's recently adopted Official Plan, which forecasts continued population and employment growth and identifies the need for additional housing and community infrastructure over the long term. This growth context supports maintaining future flexibility so the lands can respond to changing community needs and opportunities over time.

3. Recommendations and Rationale

At this time, staff is recommending the following:

- That Council receive this report for information; and
- That Council direct staff to prepare preferred planning and design parameters related to the future redevelopment of the site that considers the Council endorsed guiding principles, public engagement results, community needs, partnerships, and good planning principles and bring a recommendation back to Council for consideration in the first quarter of 2027.

4. Implementation Plan

If Council endorses the recommendations included in this report, the next step for this project would be for staff to prepare a preferred direction for the lands and bring a recommendation back to Council for consideration in the first quarter of 2027.

Township Strategic Plan Alignment

This report aligns with the Township of Wellesley's Customer Service Initiative with a Strategic Goal to ensure quality and accountability in providing effective and efficient customer services that match or exceed expectations.

Financial Implications

Council approved \$25,000 in funding from the general reserve fund for this work through the 2025 Township Budget process. Detailed financial implications of reimagining the lands will be further investigated in future stages as part of feasibility studies. No additional funding is being requested at this time.

Other Departments/Agency Comments

The Development Services Department and Recreation Department have reviewed this report and are supportive of the findings.

Legal Considerations

N/A

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Step 2 Report: Engagement and Evaluation Report September 2026

Previous Reports on this Topic

P. & D. 4.2026 – Former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands – Proposed Concept Options

P. & D. 14/2025 - Former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands - Summary of Engagement and Draft Guiding Principles

A. F. & P. 4/2025 - Former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Land - Next Steps

Reviewed by

Senior Management

Approved by

Rik Louwagie, Chief Administrative Officer

Reimagining the Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands



Step 2 Report: Engagement and Evaluation Report

September 2026

Reimagining the Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands

Step 2 Report: Engagement and Evaluation Report

September 2026

Prepared for the **Township of Wellesley**

Prepared by **GSP Group**

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Executive Summary

The Township of Wellesley is undertaking a process to determine the future use of the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands. This report represents Step 2 of that process and builds on the Step 1 Report: Engagement and Guiding Principles, which established the community-informed values, priorities and Guiding Principles intended to shape the future of the lands.

Step 2 translated these principles into five preliminary concepts representing different levels of change, municipal investment, community programming, development intensity and partnership potential. The concepts ranged from a lower-intervention approach focused on flexible public event space to more comprehensive redevelopment incorporating community, cultural, library, childcare, commercial and residential uses. The concepts were prepared as preliminary demonstration scenarios to explore the relative opportunities and trade-offs associated with different approaches to the future of the lands.

Community engagement during Step 2 included two public open houses and an online discussion forum through the Township's Engage Wellesley platform. The open houses were held on May 19, 2026 at the Bill Gies Recreation Centre, with approximately 50 attendees, and on May 21, 2026 at the St. Clements Community Centre, with approximately 12 attendees. The online forum was open from May 13 to July 13, 2026 and generated 145 contributions, consisting of 83 comments and 62 replies.

Feedback reinforced the importance of maintaining the lands as a public and community-serving place, preserving opportunities for recreation, festivals, events and community gathering, maintaining functional parking and site operations, respecting the scale and character of Wellesley Village, and considering the financial and operational implications of future investment. Views regarding new library and childcare facilities were mixed, while residential development generated both support and opposition.

The comparative evaluation identified a series of trade-offs between the concepts. The more intensive options provide greater opportunities for new community facilities, year-round programming, housing, commercial activity and potential revenue generation, but also involve greater capital requirements, implementation complexity, partnership requirements and changes to the established public and recreation-focused role of the lands. The lower-intervention concepts more directly maintain the existing community and event function of the site while preserving flexibility for future change.

Based on the Guiding Principles endorsed by Council, Step 2 engagement and the comparative evaluation, the five concepts demonstrate a range of possible approaches for the future of the lands. Each concept presents different strengths, limitations and trade-offs related to community use, recreation, open space, parking, built form, financial and operational considerations, partnerships and growth-readiness.

The Step 2 process reinforced the importance of maintaining the lands as a public and community-serving place, supporting recreation and community events, maintaining functional parking and site operations, respecting the scale and character of Wellesley Village, and considering the financial and operational implications of future investment.

At this stage, no single concept is being recommended as the preferred option. The five concepts should therefore be understood as preliminary demonstration scenarios that test different approaches and combinations of uses rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives. A future preferred concept may draw from elements of more than one scenario, including opportunities for additional community facilities, housing, commercial uses or partnerships where supported by demonstrated need, appropriate funding and operating arrangements, compatibility with the site and surrounding village, and future Council direction.

This approach allows the Township to carry forward the findings of Step 2 while maintaining flexibility for future Council consideration and further refinement of the preferred direction for the lands.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to document the work completed through Step 2 of the *Reimagining the Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands* project and to identify key findings and considerations to inform future Council decision-making.

The report:

- summarizes the Guiding Principles established through Step 1;
- documents the concepts developed during Step 2;
- summarizes the Step 2 engagement process and key findings;
- evaluates the relative strengths, limitations and trade-offs associated with each concept;
- identifies key elements and considerations to inform a future preferred direction; and
- outlines considerations and next steps for implementation.

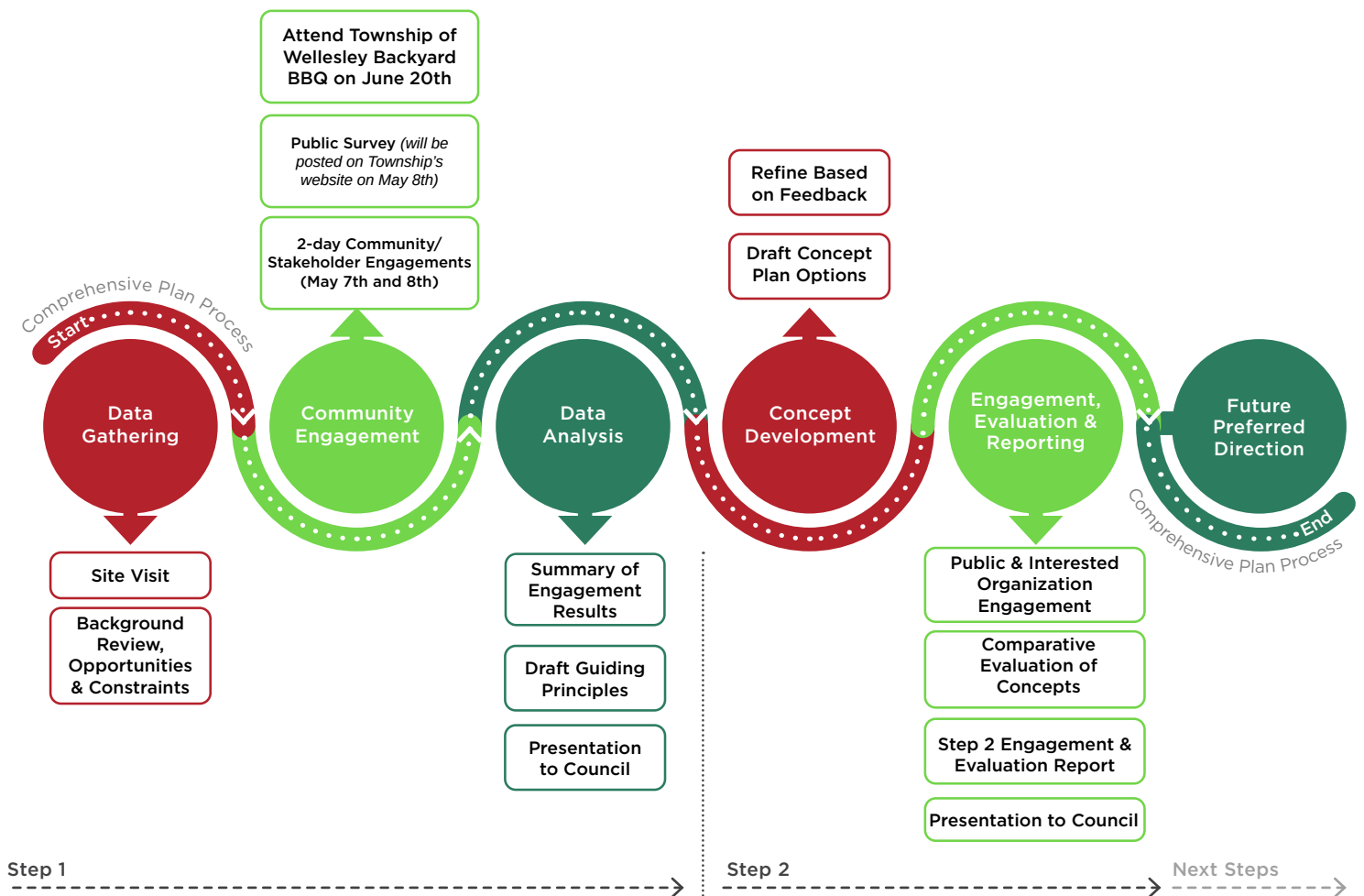
The report is intended to support future Council decision-making by providing a clear summary of the Step 2 findings, concept evaluation and considerations that may inform subsequent design, costing, technical review, partnership discussions, funding analysis and implementation planning.

1.2 How this Report Builds on Step 1

This report builds directly on the Step 1 Report: *Engagement and Guiding Principles*, which documented the project background, site context, community and interested organization engagement and the Guiding Principles established for the future of the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands.

Step 1 focused primarily on understanding community values, priorities and expectations before preparing site-specific redevelopment concepts. It established that the future of the lands should be considered through a community-first lens and that subsequent concept development should balance public use, recreation, community amenities, accessibility, village character, parking and site operations, financial responsibility and implementation feasibility.

Step 2 does not repeat the detailed background review or engagement findings documented in Step 1. Rather, it applies the Step 1 Guiding Principles to a range of potential future scenarios and considers how those scenarios perform when assessed against community feedback and broader functional, financial, operational and implementation considerations.



1.3 Overview of the Step 2 Process

Step 2 focused on translating the Guiding Principles established through Step 1 into a range of concepts for the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands. The concepts were developed to test different approaches to public space, community programming, built form, parking and site operations, municipal investment, potential revenue generation, and partnership opportunities.

The concepts were subsequently presented to the community and interested organizations to gather feedback on their relative strengths, concerns, and trade-offs. This feedback, together with the Guiding Principles and technical, financial, and operational considerations, informed the evaluation of the concepts and identification of key findings and considerations to inform a future preferred direction.

The Step 2 process included:

- preparation and refinement of concepts;
- review of the concepts with Township staff;
- presentation of the concepts to Council;
- public and interest holder engagement;
- review and analysis of feedback received;
- comparative evaluation of concepts; and
- identification of key findings and considerations to inform a future preferred direction.

2. Concept Development

2.1 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles established through Step 1 were carried forward as the foundation for concept development and evaluation during Step 2.

The principles are intended to be considered collectively. Although individual concepts may respond more strongly to certain principles, no single principle was intended to determine the preferred direction on its own.

Table 1: Guiding Principles and Application in Step 2

Guiding Principle	How it Informed Step 2
Public Stewardship and Recreation-Led Use	Considered how each concept maintains public/community use and supports recreation, events and gathering.
Community-Oriented, Inclusive, and Safe	Considered whether each concept creates a welcoming and comfortable place for all ages and abilities.
Universal Accessibility by Design	Considered barrier-free movement, accessible building entrances, parking, washrooms, seating, and connections throughout the site.
Year-Round Activation and Everyday Use	Considered the ability of each concept to support everyday activity as well as seasonal programming, festivals, tournaments, and major community events.
Distinct and Complementary Community Amenities	Considered whether proposed uses address identified community needs while complementing, rather than duplicating, facilities and services available elsewhere in the Township.
Community-Serving Housing	Considered whether housing, where included, responds to local needs and remains compatible with the site's community role.
Height, Massing, and Village Fit	Considered building height, scale, massing, and compatibility with the surrounding village context.

Access, Parking, and Operations for Events	Considered parking supply, circulation, access, tournaments, festivals, and event-day operations.
Financial Responsibility and Operational Realism	Considered relative capital investment, ongoing operating and maintenance requirements, lifecycle implications, potential revenues, property ownership/tenure options, service delivery model, and overall implementation feasibility.
Community First Partnerships and Co-Location	Considered opportunities to co-locate community-serving uses and establish partnerships for library, childcare, cultural, youth/seniors, and other programs and services while maintaining public access and community benefit.



Fig.1: Aerial view of the former arena and community centre, with extensive parking lots and a ball diamond to the south, set within a residential context.

2.2 Concepts Considered

A range of concepts was prepared to explore different potential futures for the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands. The concepts were developed as preliminary demonstration concepts to test different levels of intervention, public investment, community programming, built form, parking and site operations, partnership opportunities, and potential revenue generation.

The concepts are not intended to represent final designs. Rather, they illustrate an order-of-magnitude development scenario for each approach and were used to support discussion with the Township, community, and interested organizations about the relative benefits, challenges, and trade-offs associated with different directions for the site.

Table 2: Overview of Step 2 Concepts

Concept	General Description
Concept 1A - Open Event Space	Lower-Intervention option focused on removing the former arena and creating a flexible open event space.
Concept 1B - Addition	Retains the community hall and adds community-serving uses such as library and childcare space.
Concept 2 - Multi-Use Centre	New civic-focused building with cultural, library, and childcare uses.
Concept 3 - Three-Storey Mixed-Use	Mixed-use option with community uses, commercial space, and approximately 30 residential units.
Concept 4 - Four-Storey Mixed-Use	Highest intensity mixed-use option with community uses, commercial space, and approximately 60 residential units.

2.3 Comparison of Concepts

Table 3: Comparative Summary of Concept Options

Concept	Description	Relative Scale & Intensity	Relative Cost	Ownership Model	Potential Revenue	Primary Guiding Principles Emphasized
Concept 1A – Open Event Space	Large flexible outdoor event space with retention of community hall	Low	\$\$	Township retains full ownership and operation	Low (\$) – event rentals, festivals	Public Stewardship, Recreation-Led Use, Year-Round Activation
Concept 1B – Addition	Event space with library + childcare additions	Low to moderate	\$\$-\$\$\$	Township ownership with potential building leases and service partnerships (e.g., library, childcare operator)	Moderate (\$\$) – program fees, leases	Community-Oriented, Inclusive, and Safe, Community First Partnerships and Co-Location
Concept 2 – Multi-Use Cultural, Library and Childcare Centre	New cultural centre + library + childcare + event space	Moderate	\$\$\$	Township-ownership with potential building leases and service/ operating partnerships	Moderate (\$\$) – rentals, programming, partnerships	Distinct and Complementary Community Amenities, Year-Round Activation, Community First Partnerships and Co-location
Concept 3 – Three-Storey Mixed-Use	New cultural centre + library + childcare + commercial + ~30 residential units	Moderate to high	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	Township + development partner with potential long-term leases for land and building space, shared site management responsibilities (public-private partnership)	Higher (\$\$\$) – leases, residential, commercial	Financial Responsibility and Operational Realism, Community-Serving Housing
Concept 4 – Four-Storey Mixed-Use	New cultural centre + library + childcare + commercial + ~60 residential units	High	\$\$\$\$	Township + development partner (public-private partnership)	Highest (\$\$\$\$) – residential + commercial revenue	Financial Responsibility and Operational Realism, Height, Massing, and Village Fit

Note: The relative cost and revenue categories are intended for comparative purposes at this stage and do not represent detailed capital, operating, or lifecycle estimates. All Guiding Principles apply to each concept; the final column identifies those principles most directly tested or emphasized by each scenario.



LEGEND

-  Old Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands (3 acres)
-  Potential Maple Leaf Street Extension (1 acre)
-  Existing Recreation Land to Remain (12 acres)

Study Area

3. Step 2 Engagement Summary

3.1 Engagement Process

Step 2 engagement focused on presenting the preliminary concepts to the community and gathering feedback on the potential future direction of the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands. Unlike Step 1, which focused broadly on community values and priorities, Step 2 engagement asked participants to consider specific concepts and the associated trade-offs related to land use, community programming, open space, parking, built form, investment, and potential revenue generation.

Engagement opportunities included two in-person public open houses as well as an online discussion forum through the Township's Engage Wellesley platform. The public open houses were held on May 19, 2026 at the Bill Gies Recreation Centre, with approximately 50 attendees, and on May 21, 2026 at the St. Clements Community Centre, with approximately 12 attendees. The sessions provided an opportunity for participants to review the concepts, speak directly with the project team, ask questions, and discuss the opportunities and considerations associated with each concept.

The concepts were also made available through the Township's Engage Wellesley platform. The online forum provided residents and other participants with an opportunity to review the concepts, identify preferred concepts or elements, raise concerns, and respond to comments submitted by others.

The online forum reporting period extended from May 13 to July 13, 2026. A total of 145 contributions were recorded, including 83 comments and 62 replies, demonstrating a substantial level of discussion around the future of the lands.

The engagement exercise was not intended to select a final concept through a public vote. Rather, the feedback was used to understand community preferences, identify areas of agreement and concern, and inform the evaluation of the concepts. The number of comments or expressions of support associated with an individual concept therefore represents only one component of the decision-making process.

Feedback received through Step 2 was considered alongside the Step 1 Guiding Principles and the functional, built form, financial, operational, and implementation considerations associated with each concept.

3.2 What We Heard – Key Themes

Feedback received through the Step 2 engagement reflected a range of perspectives; however, several recurring themes emerged.



Fig.2: Public open house held at the Bill Gies Recreation Centre, Wellesley.

1. Maintain a Public and Recreation-Focused Site

Maintaining the lands primarily for public, recreation, event and community purposes was one of the most prominent themes.

Concept 1A was frequently identified by participants who preferred a lower-intervention approach. Comments supporting this direction emphasized the importance of retaining flexible public space in the centre of the village and continuing to provide opportunities for community gathering.

2. Preserve Event and Festival Functionality

Participants frequently identified festivals and community events as an important function of the site.

Specific reference was made to the Apple Butter and Cheese Festival, as well as the broader ability of the lands to support markets, performances, festivals and other community activities.

3. Protect Open Space and Village Character

Open space and the existing character of Wellesley Village were also recurring themes.

Some participants expressed concern that more intensive residential or mixed-use development could reduce publicly accessible space or change the established character of the area.

These concerns were particularly associated with the three- and four-storey mixed-use concepts.

At the same time, other participants recognized that development on centrally located land could provide opportunities for additional housing and services.

4. Maintain Parking and Site Operations

The lands currently support not only the former arena/community centre functions but also nearby ball diamonds, soccer fields, playgrounds, tournaments, festivals and other recreation activities.

Participants emphasized that redevelopment should not compromise the ability of the broader recreation complex to function during major events and peak periods.

5. Mixed Views on Library and Childcare Uses

Participants expressed differing views regarding the inclusion of new or relocated library and childcare facilities.

Some participants supported the opportunity to provide modern, accessible facilities and to co-locate community services.

Others questioned whether additional or relocated facilities are required given services already available in the village and raised concerns regarding the associated municipal cost.

6. Differing Perspectives on Residential Development

Residential development generated both support and opposition.

Many participants preferred that the lands remain focused on recreation and community use and opposed to introducing residential development.

Other participants supported Concepts 3 and 4 because of the potential to:

- provide additional housing choices for younger residents, seniors and smaller households;

- make more intensive use of centrally located land; and
- introduce potential revenues or private-sector investment.

7. Financial Responsibility

Different perspectives on the financial considerations associated with the concepts were evident based on the feedback received.

Participants supporting lower-intervention concepts frequently cited concerns about municipal spending and taxation.

Participants supporting mixed-use concepts pointed to the potential for residential and commercial components to generate revenues or contribute toward redevelopment costs.

8. Additional Ideas

Participants also raised a variety of specific ideas for future consideration, including:

- reuse of existing buildings;
- an outdoor or community pool;
- community gardens;
- enhanced landscaping and tree planting;
- relocation of the dog park;
- future use of the existing library building;
- additional recreation amenities; and
- youth-oriented facilities and programming.

These ideas may inform future design and programming but do not necessarily form part of the recommended direction.

3.3 Key Engagement Findings

Overall, the Step 2 engagement reinforced several priorities established through Step 1. Participants continued to place a strong emphasis on maintaining the lands for public, recreation and community use; preserving flexible space for festivals, events and gathering; maintaining functional parking and site operations; respecting the scale and character of Wellesley Village; and ensuring that future investment is financially and operationally responsible.

The engagement also identified areas where perspectives were more varied. Support for new or relocated library and childcare facilities was mixed, and residential development generated both support and opposition. Some participants saw opportunities for additional housing, services and potential revenues, while others preferred that the lands remain focused on recreation and community use.

The engagement did not establish a clear community preference for a single redevelopment approach. Instead, feedback reflected a range of perspectives on the future of the lands, with broad support for maintaining their public, recreation and community-serving role, while views were more varied regarding additional community facilities, residential development and the appropriate level of investment. These findings should therefore be considered alongside the Guiding Principles and broader functional, financial, operational and implementation considerations in informing future decisions for the site.

3.4 Planning and Readiness for Future Growth

Many of the community needs and priorities identified through Steps 1 and 2 are closely related to the Township's anticipated growth and changing demographics. As the Township grows, demand for recreation, community services, gathering spaces, housing and other public amenities will also evolve. The future of the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands should therefore be considered not only in relation to current needs, but also in terms of the Township's ability to respond to growth over the longer term.

The Township's new Official Plan, adopted by Council in July 2026, establishes a long-term framework for managing growth and change to 2051. The Plan identifies the Wellesley Urban Area as the primary focus for future population and employment growth and supports a broad mix of residential, commercial, employment, institutional, recreational and open space uses as part of creating complete communities.

The Official Plan forecasts the Township's population to increase from approximately 12,371 in 2024 to 14,191 by 2051, representing approximately 1,820 additional residents. Employment is forecast to increase from approximately 5,500 to 6,600 jobs, representing approximately 1,100 additional jobs. The Plan also identifies a need for approximately 630 additional homes to accommodate projected population growth, with most growth directed to the Wellesley Urban Area.

These forecasts reinforce the need to plan community infrastructure and public service facilities with sufficient capacity and flexibility to respond to both current and future needs. The Official Plan directs the Township to coordinate infrastructure and public service facility planning with land use planning and

growth management, ensure facilities are financially viable over their lifecycle, and make them available to meet projected needs. It also gives priority to optimizing, maintaining and adapting existing public service facilities before developing new facilities and supports the co-location and integration of community-serving uses where appropriate.

The Step 2 concepts respond to growth-readiness in different ways. Concept 1A improves the functionality and flexibility of the site for recreation, festivals and community use while retaining the community hall and preserving opportunities for future change. Concept 1B builds on this approach by introducing additional community-serving space and greater capacity for year-round programming. Concept 2 provides a more comprehensive purpose-built community facility with opportunities for co-location and long-term service delivery. Concepts 3 and 4 further explore how community facilities could be integrated with housing and commercial uses, providing additional residential capacity and opportunities for private-sector participation, while also introducing greater development and implementation complexity.

Planning for future growth does not necessarily require the Township to construct facilities to their ultimate long-term capacity at the outset. An incremental approach can allow near-term improvements to proceed while preserving the ability to expand, adapt or introduce additional uses as community needs, funding opportunities and partnerships become clearer. This approach is consistent with the Official Plan's direction to optimize existing infrastructure and public service facilities, consider adaptive reuse, and stage community-facility investments over time.

Growth-related improvements may also create opportunities to access funding sources that support increased municipal service capacity. The Official Plan identifies Development Charges as one mechanism intended to ensure that the capital cost of eligible growth-related services does not place an undue burden on existing taxpayers. Any potential Development Charge funding for improvements to the Arena and Community Centre lands would need to be confirmed through the Township's applicable Development Charges Background Study and By-law.

4. Evaluation and Recommended Direction

4.1 Evaluation Approach

The concepts were evaluated to determine which concept, or combination of elements from the concepts, provides the strongest basis for a preferred direction for the former Wellesley Arena and Community Centre lands.

The evaluation was informed by:

- the Guiding Principles established through Step 1;
- feedback received during Step 2 engagement;
- community and event functionality;
- built form and village character;
- relative financial and operational implications;
- partnership requirements;
- implementation complexity; and
- growth-readiness and the ability to adapt to future needs.

The evaluation was not intended to identify a concept that performs best in every category. Each concept involves different strengths and trade-offs.

4.2 Comparative Evaluation

Concept 1A – Open Event Space

This concept represents a minimal intervention approach, focused on the demolition of the existing former arena while retaining the community hall and storage building. The former arena footprint is repurposed into a large open event space (±27,600 sq.ft), designed to accommodate flexible community uses such as markets, festivals, and seasonal programming.

The concept maintains existing park amenities and the current parking supply (±232 spaces), prioritizing flexibility, low capital investment, and continued public access to open space while enabling a range of informal and programmed activities. Revenue potential is limited and primarily associated with event rentals and community programming.

This concept strongly aligns with the principles of Public Stewardship and Recreation-Led Use, as well as Year-Round Activation, by maintaining the site as a flexible, publicly accessible community space. It represents a low-cost approach that prioritizes community use over built form intensification.

This concept contributes to growth-readiness by expanding event space availability and functionality and offering additional centrally-located greenspace to help support local intensification. Re-opening the community hall offers greater certainty about the availability and capacity of dedicated space for existing and potential future / growing cultural programming and activities.

Concept 1B – Addition

This concept builds on Concept 1A by introducing modest new community-serving uses, including a library ($\pm 4,000$ sq.ft) and childcare ($\pm 4,800$ sq.ft), while retaining the community hall.

The former arena and storage building are removed, and the site continues to provide an open event space, although slightly reduced in size ($\pm 24,500$ sq.ft). Parking is reduced to approximately 175 spaces to accommodate the additional building area. This concept represents a low-to-moderate investment scenario that enhances community services while maintaining a strong open space component. Revenue potential is moderate and may be generated through program fees, leases, and partnerships with service providers.

This concept aligns with the principles of Community-Oriented, Inclusive, and Safe, as well as Community First Partnerships and Co-Location, by introducing additional services that respond to local needs while maintaining a strong public realm presence.

The addition of new modern community-serving space would contribute to growth-readiness by offering greater capacity for needed services while also expanding programming opportunities and producing potential operational efficiencies.

Concept 2 – Multi-Use Centre

This concept introduces a fully redeveloped civic-focused site, replacing existing structures with a consolidated and integrated multi-use building ($\pm 17,800$ sq.ft) that includes a cultural centre, library, and childcare.

An open event space ($\pm 25,000$ sq.ft) is retained, along with existing outdoor recreational amenities. Parking is reduced to approximately 161 spaces to accommodate the new building area. This concept reflects a municipally-led,

partnership-based and service-oriented approach, prioritizing community infrastructure and long-term public use. Revenue potential remains moderate, primarily through rentals, programming, and potential operating partnerships.

This concept strongly reflects the principles of Distinct and Complementary Community Amenities and Year-Round Activation, while supporting Community First Partnerships through the Co-Location of services within a single facility.

An entirely new and modern building entails higher upfront capital costs than reopening / repurposing existing space, but will refresh the site, address uncertainties associated with the existing aging infrastructure, and reset lifecycle and asset management activities. This also produces building and operational efficiencies and enhanced programming opportunities for the long term, contributing to optimally positioning the site and facilities for future growth-readiness.

Concept 3 – Three-Storey Mixed-Use Development

This concept introduces a mixed-use development model, combining community uses with residential and commercial components. The proposal includes a three-storey building (±57,053 sq.ft) with:

- A cultural, library and childcare centre (±17,800 sq.ft) – as in Concept 2
- Commercial space (±6,138 sq.ft)
- Approximately 30 residential units

This concept maintains key community functions while introducing new housing and commercial opportunities. Parking is estimated at ±213 spaces involving some reconfiguration, optimization and expansion of existing parking. It represents a mixed public-private approach, integrating public services with private development potential and higher revenue generation compared to civic-focused concepts, while maintaining a strong community component.

This concept aligns with the principles of Financial Responsibility and Operational Realism, as well as Community-Serving Housing, by introducing revenue-generating uses and supporting a broader mix of functions while maintaining community services.

This concept contributes to growth-readiness by combining expanded community-serving space with new residential and commercial uses in a more intensive mixed-use format. The inclusion of approximately 30 residential units would provide additional housing capacity within the Wellesley Urban Area,

while the community and commercial components would increase the range of services and activity accommodated on the site. The mixed-use model also creates opportunities for private-sector participation and shared investment as community needs grow over time.

Concept 4 – Four-Storey Mixed-Use Development

This concept represents the highest intensity redevelopment scenario, with a four-storey mixed-use building (±85,265 sq.ft). It includes:

- A multi-use cultural, library and childcare centre (±17,800 sq.ft) – as in Concepts 2 and 3
- Reduced commercial space (±3,849 sq.ft) as compared with Concept 3
- Approximately 60 residential units

The concept maximizes residential density and overall floor area while maintaining community uses. Parking increases to approximately 281 spaces through reconfiguration, optimization and expansion of existing parking. This concept reflects a higher-density, partnership-oriented model, with the greatest potential for revenue generation, subject to further financial, market and implementation analysis.

This concept aligns with the principles of Financial Responsibility and Operational Realism and reflects Height, Massing, and Village Fit considerations, while introducing a higher level of intensification within a mixed-use framework.

This concept provides the greatest degree of growth-readiness among the options by maximizing the amount of residential, community and commercial floor area accommodated on the site. The inclusion of approximately 60 residential units would provide the greatest additional housing capacity, while the larger mixed-use program would allow the site to support a broader range of community services and activities over the long term. This additional capacity would also involve greater implementation complexity, capital requirements and long-term commitments than the lower-intensity concepts.

4.3 Recommended Direction

Based on the Guiding Principles, Step 2 engagement and the comparative evaluation, the five concepts demonstrate a range of possible approaches for the future of the lands. Each concept presents different strengths, challenges and trade-offs, and no single concept is being recommended as the preferred option at this stage.

The Step 2 process identified several elements that should inform the development of a future preferred concept, including continued public and community use of the lands; recreation and community gathering; flexible outdoor event space; functional parking and circulation; accessibility and public-realm improvements; financial and operational responsibility; compatibility with Wellesley Village; and flexibility to respond to future community needs and opportunities.

The five concepts should therefore be understood as preliminary demonstration scenarios that test different approaches and combinations of uses rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives. A future preferred concept may draw from elements of more than one scenario, including opportunities for additional community facilities, housing, commercial uses or partnerships where supported by demonstrated need, appropriate funding and operating arrangements, compatibility with the site and surrounding village, and future Council direction.

This approach allows the Township to carry forward the findings of Step 2 without committing to a specific concept at this stage, while maintaining flexibility for future Council consideration and further refinement of the preferred direction for the lands.

5. Future Considerations and Next Steps

5.1 Implementation Considerations

Any future advancement of a preferred concept will require further work before construction or redevelopment proceeds.

The Step 2 concepts are preliminary and should be used as a basis for future concept refinement and decision-making rather than as construction-ready plans.

Future work should proceed in a manner that allows Council to make decisions as information becomes more detailed and priorities, funding and partnership opportunities become clearer.

Table 4: Future Implementation Considerations

Implementation Area	Considerations
Phasing	Confirm whether the preferred direction can be implemented in stages.
Detailed Design	Refine the site layout, building program, open space, parking, and circulation.
Costing	Prepare detailed capital cost estimates, soft costs, contingencies, and lifecycle costs.
Operations	Confirm operating responsibilities, maintenance needs, staffing, and programming.
Partnerships	Explore potential partnerships for library, childcare, cultural, community, or development uses.
Funding	Identify grants, municipal funding sources, partnership contributions, and other funding opportunities.
Approvals	Confirm planning, building, servicing, accessibility, and other technical approval requirements.

Ownership and Tenure Considerations

The Step 2 concepts illustrate a range of potential ownership, tenure and operating arrangements. The appropriate model would depend on the ultimate mix of uses, level of municipal investment, partnership opportunities, operating responsibilities and the Township's desired level of long-term control over the lands.

Potential models include:

Model	General Approach	Potential Application
Full Township Ownership and Operation	The Township retains ownership of the lands and facilities and remains responsible for operation, maintenance and programming.	Most directly applicable to Concept 1A and other primarily municipal recreation, event and community uses.
Township Ownership with Leases or Service Partnerships`	The Township retains ownership of the lands and/or buildings while portions of the facility may be leased to, or operated in partnership with, community organizations or service providers.	Could support library, childcare, cultural or other community-serving uses contemplated through Concepts 1B and 2.
Township Ownership with a Development Partnership	The Township retains an ownership interest in the lands while working with a private or other development partner to deliver particular components of the project. Long-term leases or other tenure arrangements could be used to define responsibilities for land, building space and ongoing operations.	Potentially applicable to the mixed-use components explored through Concepts 3 and 4.
Shared Site Management / Operating Partnership	Ownership and operating responsibilities may be divided between the Township and one or more partners, with responsibilities for maintenance, programming, building management and other site functions established through agreements.	Could apply where municipal, community, commercial or residential uses are integrated on the same site.

The preferred ownership and tenure model does not need to be determined at this stage. As a future preferred direction is developed, the Township

should consider the degree of municipal control required to protect the long-term public and community-serving function of the lands, together with capital requirements, potential revenues, operating responsibilities, lifecycle obligations, partnership opportunities and implementation risk.

For any future partnership model, the Township should clearly establish ownership, tenure and control of the land and buildings, responsibility for capital improvements and maintenance, operating and programming obligations, access to shared spaces and parking, revenue and cost-sharing arrangements, and the long-term protection of public access and community benefit.

5.2 Next Steps

It is recommended that:

1. Council receive the *Reimagining the Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands: Step 2 Engagement and Evaluation Report* for information.
2. Council receive the findings of the Step 2 engagement and comparative evaluation as a basis for future consideration of a preferred direction for the lands.
3. Future work should build on the findings of Step 2 and further consider the design, parking and event-function, financial, operational, technical, funding, partnership, ownership and implementation implications associated with potential elements of a preferred concept.
4. Township staff continue to investigate potential community partnerships and community-serving uses, where supported by demonstrated need and appropriate funding and operating arrangements.
5. The findings of Step 2 be used to inform the development of a future preferred direction for the lands, which would be brought forward for Council consideration before detailed design or implementation proceeds.

6. Conclusion

Step 2 of the Reimagining the Wellesley Arena and Community Centre Lands project advanced the Township's work from broad community values and Guiding Principles to site-specific concepts, community engagement and comparative evaluation.

The five concepts explored different potential futures for the lands, ranging from a lower-intervention public event-space approach to more comprehensive civic and mixed-use redevelopment. Each concept presents different opportunities, challenges and trade-offs related to community use, recreation, open space, parking, built form, municipal investment, partnerships and long-term growth.

The Step 2 engagement reinforced the importance of maintaining the lands as a public and community-serving place, preserving recreation and event functions, maintaining parking and site operations, respecting village character, and ensuring that future investment is financially and operationally responsible. At the same time, feedback reflected a range of perspectives regarding additional community facilities, housing, commercial uses and the appropriate level of investment.

Accordingly, no single concept is being recommended as the preferred option at this stage. The five concepts should instead be viewed as preliminary demonstration scenarios that identify potential elements and approaches that may inform a future preferred direction for the lands.

The findings of Step 2 provide a foundation for future Council consideration and further refinement of the preferred direction. A future concept may draw from elements of more than one scenario and should respond to demonstrated community needs, financial and operational considerations, partnership opportunities, compatibility with Wellesley Village and future Council priorities.

Further design, costing, technical and operational work will be required before detailed design or implementation proceeds. This work should build on the findings of Step 2 and support the development of a refined preferred direction for future Council consideration.

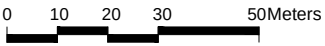
Appendix A – Step 2 Concept Plans and 3D Views



EXISTING SITE PLAN

Wellesley Arena Lands

TOTAL GFA:	± 39,334 ft ² (3,654 m ²)
COMMUNITY HALL:	± 7,800 ft ² (725 m ²)
STORAGE BUILDING:	± 2,034 ft ² (189 m ²)
ARENA:	± 29,500 ft ² (2,740 m ²)
TOTAL PARKING SPACES:	± 232 spaces existing



NOTE: This concept should be considered as a preliminary demonstration model that illustrates an 'order of magnitude' development scenario for the site. The number of units, floor area and parking supply are approximate and subject to more detailed design as well as municipal planning approvals.

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GSP
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DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Option 1a - Open Event Space

Wellesley Arena Lands

TOTAL EXISTING GFA:	± 9,834 ft ²	(920 m ²)
COMMUNITY HALL:	± 7,800 ft ²	(725 m ²)
STORAGE BUILDING:	± 2,034 ft ²	(189 m ²)
ARENA:	Demolished	
TOTAL PARKING SPACES:	± 232 spaces	

0 10 20 30 50Meters

NOTE: This concept should be considered as a preliminary demonstration model that illustrates an 'order of magnitude' development scenario for the site. The number of units, floor area and parking supply are approximate and subject to more detailed design as well as municipal planning approvals.

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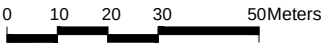
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Option 1b - Addition

Wellesley Arena Lands

TOTAL EXISTING GFA:	± 9,834 ft ²	(920 m ²)
COMMUNITY HALL:	± 7,800 ft ²	(725 m ²)
STORAGE BUILDING:	Demolished	
ARENA:	Demolished	
TOTAL PROPOSED GFA:	± 9,800 ft ²	(910 m ²)
CULTURAL CENTRE:	± 980.9 ft ²	(91 m ²)
LIBRARY:	± 4,000 ft ²	(372 m ²)
DAY CARE:	± 4,800 ft ²	(446 m ²)

TOTAL PARKING SPACES: ± 175 spaces



NOTE: This concept should be considered as a preliminary demonstration model that illustrates an 'order of magnitude' development scenario for the site. The number of units, floor area and parking supply are approximate and subject to more detailed design as well as municipal planning approvals.

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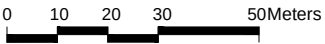


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DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT
Option 2 - Multi-Use Centre
Wellesley Arena Lands

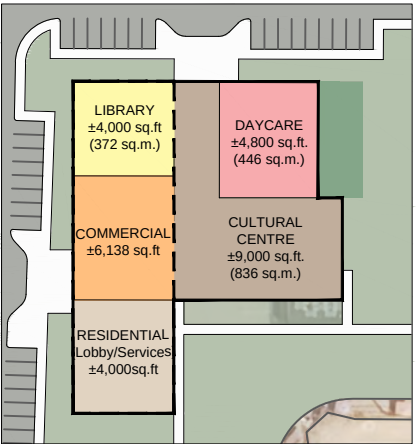
TOTAL EXISTING GFA:	Demolished
TOTAL PROPOSED GFA:	± 17,800 ft ² (1,654 m ²)
CULTURAL CENTRE:	± 9,000 ft ² (836 m ²)
LIBRARY:	± 4,000 ft ² (372 m ²)
DAYCARE:	± 4,800 ft ² (446 m ²)
TOTAL PARKING SPACES:	±161 spaces



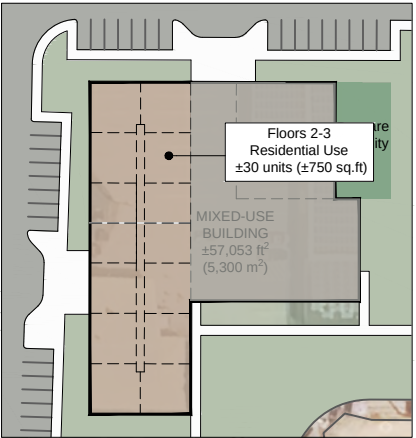
NOTE: This concept should be considered as a preliminary demonstration model that illustrates an 'order of magnitude' development scenario for the site. The number of units, floor area and parking supply are approximate and subject to more detailed design as well as municipal planning approvals.

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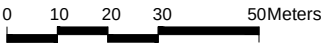
GROUND FLOOR



RES - TYPICAL FLOOR
(Floors 2-3)

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT
Option 3 - 3 Storey Mixed-Use
Wellesley Arena Lands

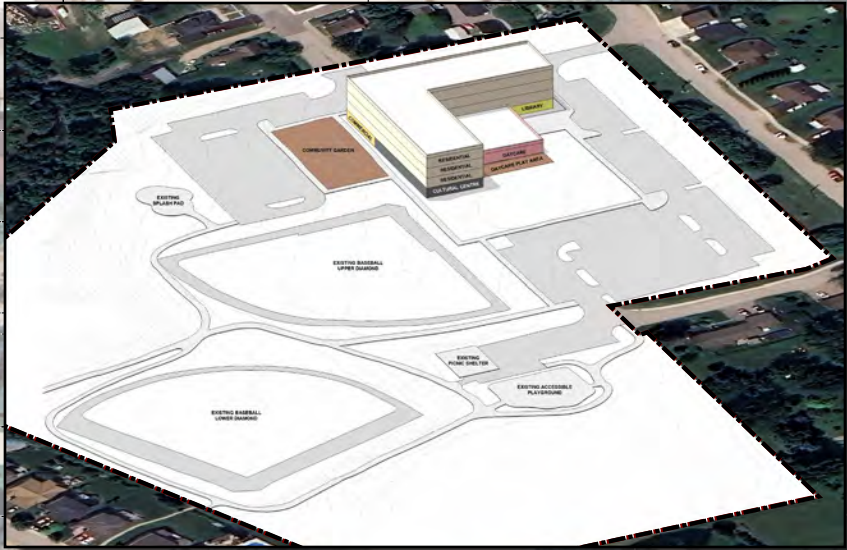
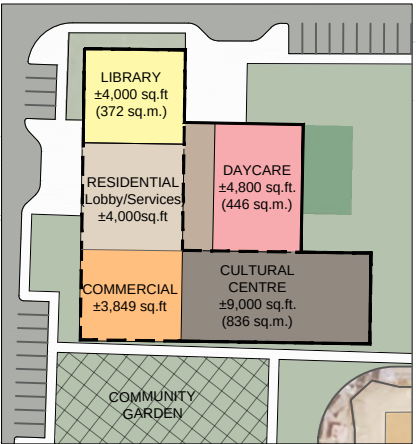
TOTAL EXISTING GFA:	Demolished
TOTAL PROPOSED GFA:	± 57,053 ft ² (5,300 m ²)
TOTAL MULTI-USE CTR:	± 17,800 ft ² (1,654 m ²)
COMMERCIAL:	± 6,138 ft ² (570 m ²)
RESIDENTIAL:	± 33,115 ft ² (3,077 m ²)
	±30 units
TOTAL PARKING SPACES:	± 213 spaces



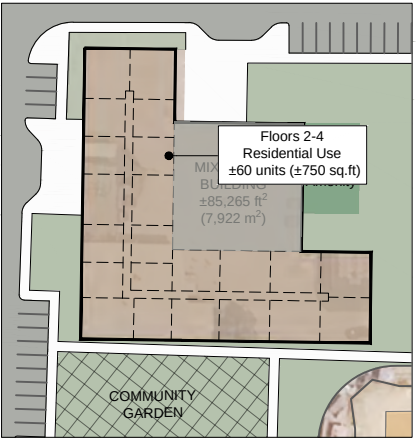
NOTE: This concept should be considered as a preliminary demonstration model that illustrates an 'order of magnitude' development scenario for the site. The number of units, floor area and parking supply are approximate and subject to more detailed design as well as municipal planning approvals.

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GROUND FLOOR



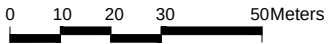
RES - TYPICAL FLOOR
(Floors 2-4)

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Option 4 - 4 Storey Mixed-Use

Wellesley Arena Lands

TOTAL EXISTING GFA:	Demolished
TOTAL PROPOSED GFA:	± 85,265 ft ² (7,922 m ²)
TOTAL MULTI-USE CTR:	± 17,800 ft ² (1,654 m ²)
COMMERCIAL:	± 3,849 ft ² (358 m ²)
RESIDENTIAL:	± 63,616 ft ² (5,910 m ²)
	±60 Units
TOTAL PARKING SPACES:	± 281 spaces



NOTE: This concept should be considered as a preliminary demonstration model that illustrates an 'order of magnitude' development scenario for the site. The number of units, floor area and parking supply are approximate and subject to more detailed design as well as municipal planning approvals.

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