



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN

Principles for a Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas

November 2025



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1.0 Introduction and Purpose of the Discussion Paper

1.1 What is an Official Plan?

An Official Plan is a comprehensive document, intended for long-term use, that shapes the future of a municipality by establishing how land in the community will be used. It outlines the goals, objectives, and policies for sustainable, efficient, growth within the Township of Wellesley. All land use, development, and public works in the Township must conform to the Official Plan.

The legislative ability for municipalities to enact an Official Plan arises from the Provincial Planning Act. All policies in the Official Plan must conform to this higher-order Provincial legislation. The Township of Wellesley is preparing a new Official Plan, which will guide growth and development within the Township until 2051. For the past two decades, growth in the Township has been shaped by both the Waterloo Regional Official Plan and the Township of Wellesley Official Plan. With recent Provincial legislation that removed planning authority from the Region of Waterloo, the Township has the opportunity to create a “made-for-Wellesley” Official Plan. This new Official Plan will incorporate the best of our past and present Official Plan policies, while charting out the future of Wellesley to the year 2051. A new Official Plan is being created to replace the existing Township and Regional Official Plans, and to align with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement.

The Township of Wellesley has one urban area with full municipal services (Village of Wellesley) and ten rural settlement areas, covering an area of 278 square kilometres with a population of about 12,371 residents. The Township includes three designated rural employment areas (the Scheider Rural Employment Area, the M.K. Martin Rural Employment Area, and the Wellesley Rural Employment Area) characterized predominantly by industrial and agricultural activities. It is projected that the Township will grow to approximately 14,191 to 17,301 residents and 6,390 to 10,070 jobs by 2051. The new Official Plan will build on the Township’s long-term vision for growth with a

renewed focus on complete communities, addressing land needs in both the urban area and rural settlement areas of the Township. This will include housing mix and affordability, employment and commercial opportunities, servicing options, active transportation, open space and recreation, environmental protection and management, and the continued preservation of agricultural land.

1.2 Township of Wellesley New Official Plan Process

The creation of the Township of Wellesley's new Official Plan will occur over a year-long period, with several opportunities for community consultation.



Phase 1 of the project included drafting and finalizing the Comprehensive Consultation and Engagement Strategy, and early conversations were held with Township residents and council members to inform the process. A series of one-on-one conversations were held between interested members of the public and the project team to lay the foundation for the project. The Township of Wellesley project team hosted a booth at the 2025 Wellesley Fall Fair, where members of the public were introduced to the project, asked about opportunities and current challenges, and shaping the vision of the new Official Plan. Notice of the project initiation was provided to agencies, Indigenous communities, and residents. The *Planning Act* Section 26 legislative requirements were met by providing a Notice of Special Council Meeting to local newspapers leading up to the meeting. On August 26, 2025, the Special Council Meeting was held, where the project was formally introduced and initiated. This included information regarding the

project's process and how residents and members of the public could get involved and follow along during the different phases of the project.

Phase 2 of the Official Plan involves conducting Background Research and Study Preparation, which includes the release of six draft Discussion Papers for public and stakeholder review and comment. Based on Township, agency, Council, and public feedback, the draft discussion papers will be reviewed and finalized. What is heard from engagement on these background reports will inform a series of policy directions which will inform Phase 3 of the project.

Phase 3 of the new Official Plan is the drafting of policies and land use maps. These **DRAFT** policies and maps will be published and shared with Township residents, stakeholders, and Indigenous communities for any further suggestions and input. The Statutory Public Open House and Statutory Public Meeting will both be held to inform Phase 4 finalization. A copy of the **DRAFT** Official Plan will be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for their review.

Phase 4 of the project involves the formal adoption of the new Township of Wellesley Official Plan by the Township of Wellesley's Council. Once Council adopts the new Official Plan, it will be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the Minister's review and approval. After ministerial approval, the Township's new Official Plan will be in effect, replacing both existing Township and Regional Official Plans.

1.3 What are the Discussion Papers?

A series of six Discussion Papers have been prepared, which establish a foundation from which to develop policy directions for the new Official Plan. They include:

- Residential Growth, Housing, and Intensification Strategy
- Commercial Needs Assessment
- Employment Projections and Employment Lands
- Scoped Secondary Plan for New Designated Growth Areas

- Settlement Boundary Expansions
- Land Use Policy Review and Analysis

Each paper includes policy context of Provincial, Regional, and local documents relevant to the topic, an overview of the current state, and preliminary policy directions for the Township, key topics for discussion, and next steps. These papers represent the basis of the first phase of consultation for the project, assisting in the development of policy directions for the New Official Plan.

1.4 Purpose of this Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper will create the foundation for the Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas (DGAs) within the Township's Urban Area. It is intended to generate discussion around secondary plan principles, urban design, transportation, stormwater management and climate change, and servicing.

This Discussion Paper sets forth several considerations and recommendations for the scoped secondary plan principles, informed by the transportation and servicing/stormwater management technical reports and the associated policies for the Township of Wellesley's new Official Plan.

2.0 Legislative Overview

This section provides an overview of the Provincial legislative context which informs the basis of creating the Township of Wellesley's new Official Plan.

2.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* is the overarching Provincial legislation which governs land use planning in Ontario. It establishes the respective roles of the Province and municipalities regarding land use planning and provides the basis for municipalities to create and use various planning tools, such as Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. The Act also sets out regulations for how planning processes are to be carried out, including mandatory dates for the completion of tasks, such as deciding on a planning application and setting the date for a public meeting.

Notably, in Section 2, the Act establishes “matters of provincial interest”, which municipalities must have regard to when carrying out land use planning. These matters include (but are not limited to) protection of ecological systems, protection of agricultural and natural resources, conservation of cultural history, provision of a full range of housing, the accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the orderly development of safe and healthy communities. It is important to note that all planning decisions and policies made by a municipality (or other planning authority) must conform to the *Planning Act*, as well as Provincial plans, as outlined in Section 2.1 of the Act. Further, Section 3 of the Act requires that all planning decisions shall be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement.

The *Planning Act*, Part III – Official Plans sets out how Official Plans shall be created by a municipality, with respect to content and process. Specifically, this section includes direction for the inclusion of Provincial policies and restrictions on Official Plans, as well as requirements for assessment reporting, amendments to plans, and approval authorities.

Section 17 of the *Planning Act* states that “*the Minister is the approval authority in respect of the approval of a plan as an official plan*” and sets out a prescribed process the Township of Wellesley must follow in the preparation of a new Official Plan.

Specifically, the Township must provide for consultation and a public meeting, an open house, and adequate notice provided for each.

The creation of the new Township of Wellesley Official Plan must be done in conformity with the *Planning Act* and the legislated process outlined above.

2.2 Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (“PPS”) is a guiding policy document that provides direction on a variety of planning and land use matters in the Province. The legal basis for conformity to the PPS is rooted in Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, which requires that all planning decisions be consistent with the minimum standards set out in the PPS. The Provincial Planning Statement outlines that “Official plans are the most important vehicle for implementation of the Provincial Planning Statement and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning.”

The PPS puts forward policy regarding housing, infrastructure, resource management, and public health. Pertinent policies for the new Township of Wellesley Official Plan include adjustments to municipal planning boundaries, regulations regarding employment areas, agricultural protection, and population growth targets. Specific policy guidance is provided by the PPS as it relates to planning for people and homes during the creation of a new Official Plan.

Section 2.3.1 states that “sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years, informed by provincial guidance.”

Furthermore, the PPS provides general policies for implementation and interpretation as it relates to the creation of the new Official Plan in Section 6.1.5. This section details

how Official Plans shall identify Provincial planning interests and sets out policies which implement these interests.

In order to protect provincial interests, planning authorities shall keep their official plans up-to date with the Provincial Planning Statement. The policies of the Provincial Planning Statement continue to apply after adoption and approval of an official plan.

The PPS replaces the 2020 PPS and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Municipalities no longer have to consider settlement area boundary expansions only through a municipal comprehensive review, as previously required in the Growth Plan. Section 2 of the PPS sets out the direction that municipalities are to follow in allowing settlement area boundary expansions. This direction will be considered as part of the identification of criteria for assessing settlement area boundary expansion requests.

The Province, through Bill 162 (Get It Done Act, 2024) added 24 hectares of land to the Wellesley Urban Area Boundary. Although the Province has not identified the Township of Wellesley as a fast and growing municipality, it is essential that the New Official Plan and the Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas support and plan for focused growth in this area in accordance with Provincial direction. Additional lands may be added to the Wellesley Urban Area boundary through the Lands Needs Analysis being undertaken as part of this Official Plan process.

The Village of Wellesley is the identified Urban Area in the Township of Wellesley Official Plan and is intended to accommodate a mix of uses and serve as the primary focus for growth. The Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas will reflect Section 2.3.1.2 of the PPS, to ensure that land use patterns efficiently use land and resources, that existing and planned infrastructure is optimized, and that active transportation is supported. While the Township is not a large and fast-growing municipality according to the PPS, Section 2.3.1.5 does encourage setting a density

target based on local conditions, which is prudent for supporting baseline infrastructure planning.

Any land added to the Wellesley Urban Area will be planned as a complete community and respond to the requirements under Section 2.4.1 through a range of housing options and mixed-use development to accommodate population and employment growth, as well as supporting affordable and accessible housing. To contribute toward a complete community, housing options include a range of housing types (such as apartments, multiplexes, tiny homes, additional residential units, single-detached dwellings, and townhomes, among others) and housing forms (such as life lease, affordable housing, co-ownership, multigenerational housing, and housing related to employment, educational, or institutional and health uses). Supporting a mix of these housing types and forms at different densities in areas identified for intensification—such as strategic growth areas and future transit supportive areas that efficiently use land, resources, and infrastructure—help create complete communities.

3.0 Local Context

The following section provides an overview of the Region of Waterloo and the Township of Wellesley's policy and strategic documents that set direction and priorities for planning matters within in the Township.

3.1 Waterloo Regional Official Plan, 2025

The Waterloo Regional Official Plan, 2025 ("ROP") was the Official Plan of the Region of Waterloo, which is an upper-tier municipality that encompasses a federation of lower-tier municipalities, including the Township of Wellesley. Historically, the Region of Waterloo was the approval authority for the Township of Wellesley's Official Plan, and Wellesley was required to conform to that plan.

As of January 1, 2025, the ROP became a Local Plan of the Township of Wellesley. The new Official Plan that is being created will replace the existing Township and Regional Official Plans and align with the Provincial direction set out in the PPS. The Township of Wellesley's new Official Plan will incorporate the best of the Region of Waterloo's Official Plan policies, while charting out the future of the Township's growth to the year 2051.

The Waterloo Regional Official Plan contained high-level policies which promoted a range and mix of housing that guided housing policy implementation at the local Township level. These policies spoke briefly to:

- Focusing on supporting a diverse range and mix of housing options and densities, including additional residential units, affordable, and missing middle housing, to serve all sizes, incomes, and ages of households.
- Achieving net-zero operational carbon performance for all newly built housing, including affordable housing, and implementing measures to minimize embodied carbon and building energy needs, support the energy transition off fossil fuels, and increase the overall energy resiliency in the community.

More specific housing policies took direction from the Regional Official Plan and are implemented through the Township of Wellesley Official Plan.

3.2 Region of Waterloo Transportation Master Plan, 2018

The Region of Waterloo Transportation Master Plan (TMP), titled *Moving Forward*, is a long-term strategic document guiding transportation development in the region to the year 2041. The TMP includes policies and outlines goals and strategies to address the Region's active transportation, public transit, and road network needs, which in turn supports sustainable travel and economic growth. The Plan outlines four overall goals brought forward from the previous 2010 TMP:

1. Promote travel choice
2. Foster a strong economy
3. Support sustainable development
4. Optimize the transportation system

To achieve these goals, five broad strategies were created to serve as guiding principles for future initiatives. These strategies include:

- Building a Transportation Network that Supports all Modes of Travel
- Promoting a Healthy Community
- Developing a Frequent Transit Network
- Enhancing Inter-Regional Connections
- Positioning the Network for New Mobility

The plan emphasizes a shift toward active transportation and public transit, with investments in walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure. By 2041, the TMP involves planned transit service enhancements, active transportation network expansion, road network changes, and new or updated strategies. Developed through extensive public and stakeholder engagement, the TMP reflects the Region's commitment to inclusive,

forward-thinking transportation planning that supports both community well-being and long-term sustainability.

3.3 Region of Waterloo Active Transportation Plan, 2014

The Region of Waterloo's Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP), titled *Walk Cycle Waterloo Region*, is a strategic document aimed at enhancing walking, cycling, and rolling infrastructure throughout the Region. Developed in alignment with the broader Transportation Master Plan, the ATMP supports the Region's goals for sustainable growth, compact urban development, and improved mobility for all residents. With the population expected to grow significantly by 2031, the plan seeks to make active transportation a safe, convenient, and attractive option for everyday travel, helping to reduce congestion, support transit use, and foster healthier communities.

The ATMP envisions a connected and inclusive region where active transportation plays a central role in daily life. It sets a target to increase the share of walking and cycling trips in the Region from 7.8% to 12% by 2031. In rural municipalities like the Township of Wellesley, the walking mode share goal is 4.7%. To achieve this, the plan outlines five key action areas:

1. Network Action Plan
5. Strategic Signage Action Plan
6. Winter Network Action Plan
7. Behavioural Shift Action Plan
8. Performance Monitoring Action Plan

These strategies are designed to create accessible routes that serve people of all ages and abilities while also improving access to schools, transit, and other community destinations. Developed through extensive public engagement, the ATMP also supports broader regional objectives such as reducing emissions, improving public health, and advancing transportation equity. It emphasizes the importance of inclusive planning, ensuring that active transportation investments benefit vulnerable populations.

3.4 Township of Wellesley Official Plan, 2022

The Official Plan establishes policies for the Township Urban Area, urban area expansions, a range and mix of housing, compatibility, active transportation, open space and recreational facilities, environmental stewardship, and energy conservation. To establish a set detailed secondary plan and policies for new expansion areas, it is necessary to recognize the existing policy framework and where opportunities exist to direct future development that supports and respects the context of the Village of Wellesley.

The table below provides further context for the sections of the Official Plan which provide the existing policy framework for Secondary Plans.

Section	Policy Framework
2.7	<p>Establishes policies for the Wellesley Urban Area, which is the primary focus for population and employment growth in the Township.</p> <p>States that the Township will ensure that development occurring in the urban area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs on municipal service; • Contributes to a complete community with a mix of uses; • Supports walking and cycling; • Respects the character of established neighbourhoods; and • Promotes energy conservation.
2.7.3	<p>Includes policies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Greenfield Areas (now called Designated Growth Areas by PPS 2024), with a minimum density target of 45 residents and jobs combined.

Section	Policy Framework
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies further outline the intent to create urban design guidelines for development in Designated Greenfield Areas.
2.7.4	<p>Establishes policies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban area expansions and the requirement for the provision of infrastructure to be provided in a <i>sustainable</i> manner; • Complete communities; and • Considering potential impacts to adjacent agricultural operations.
2.7.9.2	Provides direction for the preparation of a Secondary Plan to identify land uses and servicing considerations, in accordance with policies 2.7.3 and 2.7.4, for the lands added to the Village of Wellesley.
4.1	<p>Includes housing policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range and mix of housing types; • The provision of affordable housing by establishing a target of 30% of new housing be planned in forms other than single detached and semi-detached dwellings; • Integrating mixed-use development; and • Permitting additional residential units.
6.1	<p>Establishes policies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use compatibility; • The preservation of natural and cultural heritage resources; and • Utilizing design features such as landscaping, buffering, and setbacks to minimize sun, shadow, and wind impacts.
6.8.8	Encourages the development of cycling and pedestrian routes to encourage active transportation “for purposes of convenient travel, recreation, health, environmental and economic reasons, and promoting physical activity...”

Section	Policy Framework
6.12	<p>Recognizes the importance of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to provide both active and passive recreational opportunities to meet the needs of all age groups and abilities.</p> <p>Encourages the development of a system of linked green spaces and trails and a network of bicycle routes and pedestrian paths to link major public spaces, schools, and activity centres.</p>
6.14	Includes policy to support alternative and renewable energy systems in all land use designations.

3.5 Township of Wellesley Transportation and Mobility Master Plan (Forthcoming)

The Township of Wellesley is in the process of creating a Transportation and Mobility Master Plan to determine the Township's long-term and short-term transportation needs over the next twenty-five years. The Plan will look at safe, healthy, and accessible mobility options and opportunities for complete streets, land use and transportation integration, transportation demand management, and future technologies.

The Transportation and Mobility Master Plan is in the early stages of the project, with a draft of the Plan expected in winter 2025–26 and a final Plan expected to be presented to Council for adoption in February 2026. The Transportation and Mobility Master Plan will complement the new Official Plan process, where findings and recommendations will inform Official Plan policy directions. Findings and recommendations from each process will inform and reinforce one another, creating an integrated and collaborative approach to planning for the Township's future mobility and land use needs.

As that study progresses, additional or revised policy directions may arise for consideration in the new Official Plan.

3.6 Wellesley Water and Wastewater Master Plan (Forthcoming)

The Region of Waterloo is in the process of completing a Water and Wastewater Master Plan (WWWMP) for Wellesley Village to address the community's water and wastewater needs up to 2051. The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment projects growth for Wellesley Village to grow from its current population of 3,700 to approximately 5,600 by 2051 and will evaluate and the most effective ways to provide these services through upgrades to existing water and wastewater servicing infrastructure and proposed new projects.

The following key projects have been identified as part of the ongoing study:

- **Increased Water Supply Capacity:** There is an identified the need to increase water supply capacity by 2034 to service growth. This includes studies to examine increasing capacity at the existing Wellesley wells, as well as supply from potential new wells.
- **New Water Storage Facility at Bill Gies Recreation Center Location:** The study has identified insufficient water storage to meet growth demands and is recommending a new storage facility to be located within Wellesley Village.
- **Upgrades to the Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant:** The study has recommended significant need for capacity and process upgrades at the existing Wellesley Wastewater Treatment Plant in order to service growth needs.
- **Firella Creek Trunk Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Reduction:** The Firella Creek Trunk Sewer has been identified as key wastewater infrastructure that can provide additional capacity through inflow and infiltration (I&I) reduction measures and has recommended additional study to determine how best rehabilitate /upgrade the trunk sewer to reduce I&I flows.

3.7 Grand River Transit Business Plan, 2025

Grand River Transit (GRT) is the transit authority that operates regional transit service throughout the Region of Waterloo. The GRT Business Plan was created with the vision

of expanding future transit service and investments over the next ten years and beyond. The Business Plan will be informed by five guiding principles:

- Frequency
- Speed
- Customer Focus
- New Coverage
- Simple and Intuitive

The GRT Business Plan involves three main parts, including the Conventional Bus and Train Plan, the MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit Plan, and the Township Transit Strategy. As part of the Business Plan's Township Transit Strategy, GRT will introduce a new fixed route in the Township of Wellesley connecting the Village of Wellesley and other Township communities to Conestoga Station in the City of Waterloo, as shown on Figure 1. This would result in an end-to-end travel time of approximately forty minutes, and it also connects over 50% of the Township's population.

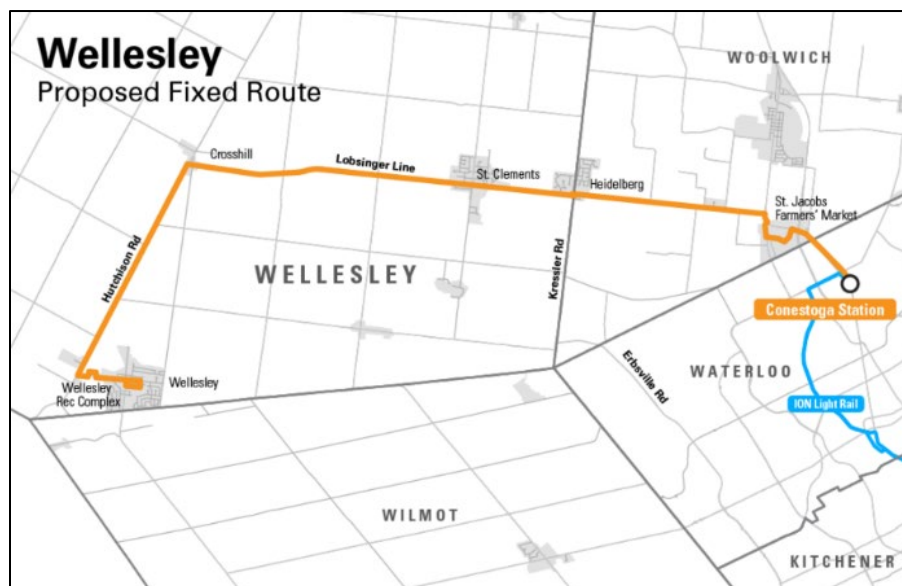


Figure 1: GRT Proposed Route (Wellesley)

On-demand zones are intended to be introduced to serve the remaining areas of Wellesley not serviced by the fixed route. On-demand Zone 1 and Zone 2 would overlap coverage with parts of neighbouring townships, as shown on Figure 2.

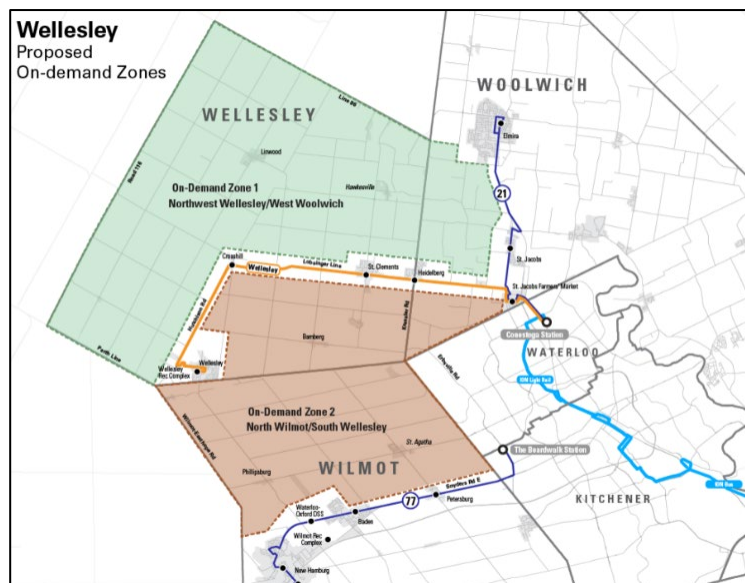


Figure 2: GRT Proposed On-demand Zones (Wellesley)

Kiwanis Transit service will also be enhanced through service investments and expanded hours. Overall, the GRT Business Plan hopes to improve transit service in Wellesley and support better access to essential services and employment opportunities.

3.8 Township of Wellesley Recreation Master Plan, 2024

The Township of Wellesley Recreation Master Plan was prepared to provide a long-term vision for future growth and changes in demographics. The Master Plan was based on an extensive consultation program that engaged Council, staff, user groups, community leaders, participants, and residents to understand the needs and interest for future parks and recreation services.

The Master Plan recognizes the importance of promoting physical and mental health through access to green spaces and recreational facilities. Recommendations are

grouped under strategic themes such as Financial Sustainability, Facilities and Space Allocation, and Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces. The recommendations include suggested timing for implementation under “Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term” priorities.

The summary of observations from the Recreation Master Plan identified that the Township does not have an established park classification or park standards framework, is slightly deficient in neighbourhood parks, and that there are opportunities to create additional trails around sports fields.

- **Recommendation 4.1** includes adopting a parkland classification system and amending the Official Plan to reflect the parkland classification system, including parkland targets.
- **Recommendation 4.13** encourages the Township to ensure development applications identify lands for park dedication and trail connections.

The provision of parks must be a consideration for lands within the Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas. Supporting public health and access to a variety of parks and open spaces should be a key planning principle.

3.9 The Township of Wellesley Strategic Plan, 2019

The Township’s Strategic Plan ‘.community’ is a guidance document which allows Council and staff to prepare for the future needs of the Township. The 2019–2023 Plan has been extended to the end of 2026.

The Strategic Plan includes five focus areas, developed by the Region of Waterloo and adopted by the Township:

- Thriving Economy
- Sustainable Transportation
- Environment and Sustainable Growth
- Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities

- Responsive and Engaging Government Services

Under these five focus areas are fourteen strategic initiatives, including Affordable/Age Appropriate/Available Housing, Environmental Stewardship, Health Promotion, Intensification, Zoning, Development and Growth, and Public Transit/Access to Urban Services, among others.

One of the tasks identified in the action plan under Intensification, Zoning, Development and Growth was a Secondary Plan for the Village of Wellesley. As a component of the new Official Plan, the Secondary Plan will be scoped to include the lands identified as Lands Added to Wellesley Urban Area Boundary (ROPA 6 and Bill 162).

3.10 Township of Wellesley Accessibility Plan, 2018

The Township of Wellesley Accessibility Plan (2018–2022) is a multiyear strategy developed to meet the obligations of Provincial accessibility legislation, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. The plan outlines potential accessibility barriers in municipal services and facilities, including information and communication barriers, technological barriers, policy/practice barriers, attitudinal barriers, and physical/architectural barriers. It highlights previous accessibility initiatives and sets out goals for new and ongoing initiatives, largely focusing on addressing physical/architectural barriers. The Township also commits to maintaining accessible formats and communication supports upon request to ensure that people with disabilities can access information and services.

3.11 Development Standards, 2017

The Township of Wellesley Development Standards, 2017 provides guidance to designers to meet municipal requirements. The document outlines standards related to site plans, drawings, roads, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, water distribution systems, lot grading, stormwater management, and additional site plan requirements. These

standards include various policies on storm sewers and acceptable design practices for stormwater management, which are not in the Township Official Plan.

The Township adopted the following objectives for stormwater drainage (Section 4.1):

- Minimize the risk of loss of life, health hazards and flood damage.
- Minimize inconvenience due to surface ponding and flooding.
- Minimize pollution impacts to ground water and surface water resources.
- Minimize erosion and sediment transport to existing watercourses.

In addition, Section 4 of the Development Standards included the storm sewer policies regarding the developer's role in seeking:

- Approvals, if required, from other agencies, including the Grand River Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment (Section 4.2),
- Drawings that show floodlines, hazard lands, and other sensitive areas (Section 4.3),
- Township support for the major and minor system design concept (Section 4.4),
- Design levels ranging from 5-year to 100-year design storm levels (Section 4.5),
- Connection to existing sewers (Section 4.15), and
- Sediment and erosion control (Section 4.16).

4.0 Key Topics for Discussion

4.1 Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas

Bill 162 (Get It Done Act, 2024) received royal assent on May 16, 2024, retroactively modifying the Region of Waterloo's Amendment No. 6 to expand the boundaries of the Township Urban Area in Wellesley to include additional lands beyond what Regional Council had adopted. The expanded boundary includes twenty-four hectares of land located to the east and west of the Village of Wellesley (see Figure 3).

One of the areas added to the Village of Wellesley borders Greenwood Hill Road to the west, Gerber Road to the south, and agricultural lands to the east and north. The lands are primarily used for agriculture, with some existing residential uses closer to the northern boundary. The second area is located to the west of the Village behind existing residential lots along Pond View Drive and Zinkann Crescent, and north of the draft-approved Strohvest Plan of Subdivision. The Draft Plan is comprised of 157–169 units that include a mix of single and semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, and townhouse/apartments, a park, and a stormwater management pond.

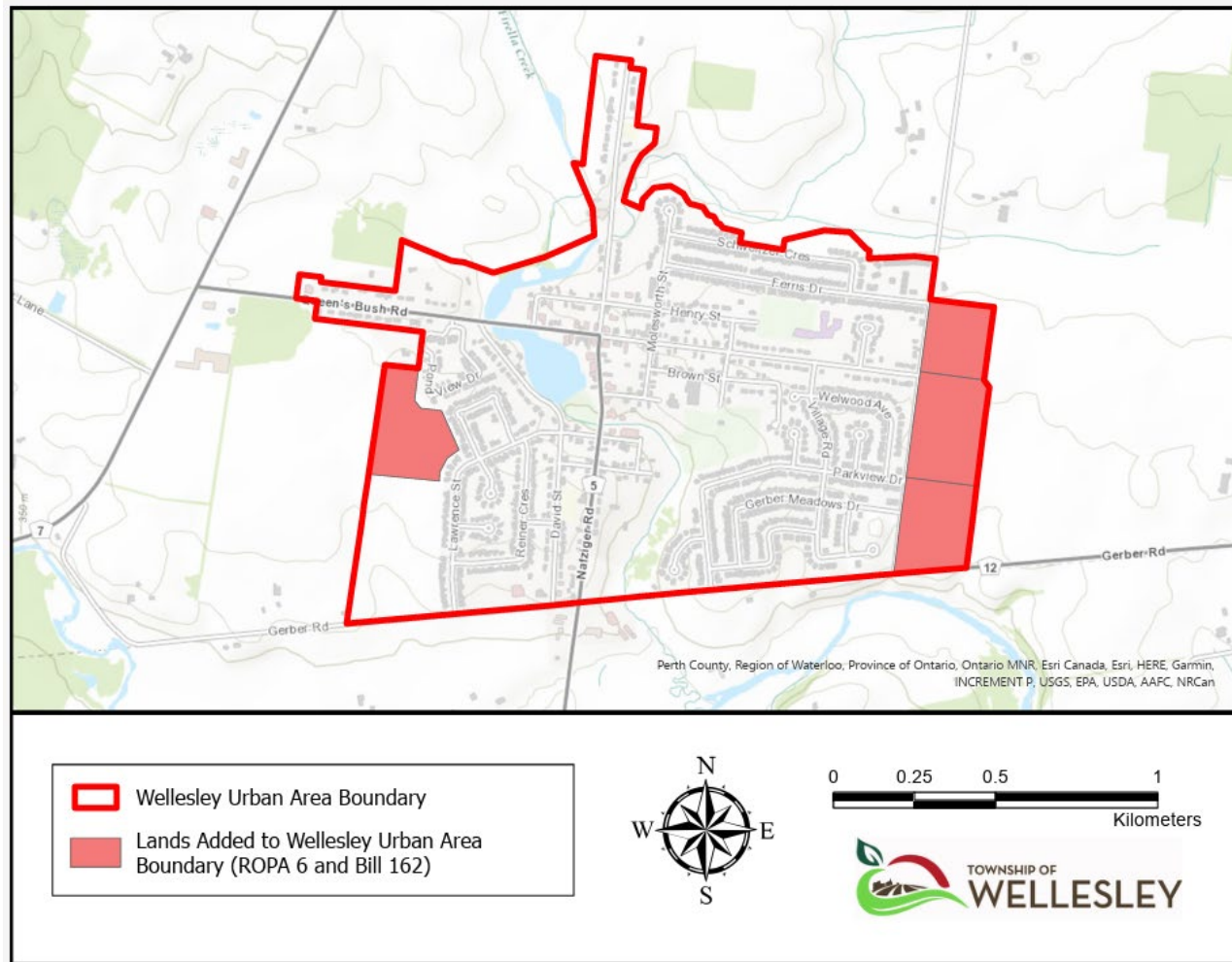


Figure 3: Lands added to the Wellesley Urban Area Boundary

Source: Township of Wellesley

Before these lands can proceed with development applications, a Scoped Secondary Plan for New Designated Growth Areas is being undertaken to identify future land use designations, road connections, and servicing strategies. The following sets out the Secondary Planning process, guiding principles, priorities, structure for the plan, and the key considerations for servicing and transportation.

4.2 Secondary Planning Process

The Scoped Secondary Plan process will follow the work program and phasing for the new Official Plan. The Scoped Secondary Plan will be developed based on the policy direction for Wellesley's New Official Plan and the findings of the Technical Studies being prepared for the Official Plan that include:

- Residential Growth, Housing, and Intensification Strategy;
- Commercial Needs Analysis; and,
- Employment Projections and Land Needs Analysis.

In addition, a Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Servicing Strategy and a Roads and Transportation Report are being prepared for the Scoped Secondary Plan.

Detailed and context-specific policies will be prepared to guide growth in these defined areas and will establish permitted uses, height and density requirements, road networks, park and trail systems, and protection for the surrounding agricultural uses. The following is a summary of the Secondary Planning process:

1. Technical reports will identify issues and opportunities and provide key directions for the Secondary Plan area.
2. A draft land use plan will be prepared based on the findings of the transportation and servicing technical work, along with the recommendations on Township land needs from the Residential Growth, Housing, and Intensification Strategy, Commercial Needs Analysis, and Employment Projections and Land Needs Analysis. The draft

land use plan will illustrate proposed land use designations, road layout, stormwater management, open space, and urban design.

3. The draft land use plan, opportunities and constraints, and principles will be presented to the project team and community to gather their input.
4. Based on feedback received and conclusions of the draft technical reports, a Final Draft Land Use Plan will be prepared. The Final Draft Land Use Plan will be the foundation for preparing the Draft Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas. The Draft Secondary Plan and mapping will be presented at an open house for feedback.
5. The Draft Secondary Plan and Technical Reports will be presented at a statutory public meeting and refined and finalized based on consultation and Council feedback.

4.3 Secondary Plan Draft Guiding Principles

Guiding principles for the Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas will help guide the development of the Secondary Plan policies and articulate a vision for complete neighbourhoods that meet the needs of the community and addresses public health, climate change, mobility options, servicing, and the quality of the built environment.

4.3.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. The principles should align with the vision and guiding principles of the new Official Plan.
2. The following are recommended guiding principles for consideration:
 - Create a healthy, pedestrian-oriented environment that supports opportunities for daily physical activity and social interaction in a safe, inclusive, and accessible community.
 - Promote an adaptive and resilient community through the responsible use of resources, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and demands on energy, water, and waste systems.
 - Protect, maintain, and enhance the rural character and function of lands outside of the settlement area to foster a vibrant agricultural community.
 - Protect and conserve the cultural heritage and archeological resources of the Township.
 - Provide for an appropriate mix and range of housing options, including more affordable housing types, to meet the projected needs of present and future residents throughout all stages of their lives.
 - Ensure the provision of a multimodal transportation network that facilitates walking and cycling, and the efficient movement of vehicles.
 - Promote efficient and phased development through the coordinated planning for transportation and municipal services.
 - Provide for an accessible, connected, and integrated system of parks, open spaces, and trails that are linked to existing natural features, parks, and trails.

4.4 Secondary Plan Priorities

4.4.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. Sustainability and Climate Change

- There is clear direction from the Province to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate by planning for efficient land use and development patterns, supporting the use of alternative transportation modes, supporting water and energy conservation, and embracing the use of green infrastructure and natural areas for water infiltration.
- Sustainable development principles and practices should be a fundamental priority of the Scoped Secondary Plan for Designated Growth Areas. Applying conservation objectives including water conservation, energy conservation and generation, emissions reductions, and waste management will be important considerations in development of the plan.
- Becoming resilient to changing weather patterns and extreme weather events requires a multifaceted approach that addresses integrated stormwater management, green infrastructure, energy supply and distribution, and precautionary land use planning.
- A well-rounded approach also incorporates climate change mitigation strategies that are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by promoting multimodal transportation systems and a supportive, mixed-use, compact urban structure.

2. Servicing and Stormwater Management

- The approach will be based on a pragmatic understanding of delivering services to Designated Growth Areas that are efficient, cost-effective, and meet Provincial and Regional policy requirements. Infrastructure development must support the goals of the Township and be implemented in a logical and well-planned manner.
- Infrastructure continues to play a key role in mitigating the impacts of climate change through the promotion of compact and efficient communities and the incorporation of

green infrastructure, low-impact development techniques, and stormwater management strategies.

3. Mobility

- Recent trends in land use and transportation planning, as well as public health research, emphasize the importance of ensuring the provision of a well-connected, attractive, and functional multimodal system to provide more balanced access to active transportation options.
- There is the opportunity to support a full spectrum of mobility options for all residents and improved connectivity within a fully integrated network. This is an essential element of planning for sustained transportation methods and healthier lifestyles.
- It is important to consider the changing mobility needs of the population and find opportunities to encourage older adults to age in place. There is an opportunity to ensure the Township's transportation network is accessible to users of all ages and abilities, ranging from parents with strollers to seniors using wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- Active transportation involves the use of physical activity to get around, including walking and cycling, among other modes. There is a need to explore opportunities to enhance safety and reduce conflict between motorists and active transportation users.

While methods of delineating uses such as providing dedicated travel lanes for active transportation users can improve safety, these methods require significant road space. In the absence of additional available road space, it is important to consider how roadways can be designed to safely accommodate mixed traffic. By designing safe road infrastructure that accommodates varied mobility needs, communities promote equity, encourage active transportation, and support healthier lifestyles.

4. Rural Character and Compatible Development

- It will be important that an appropriate policy framework is in place which ensures that new development provides a positive contribution to the Village of Wellesley and fits within the surrounding neighbourhoods. Balancing new growth through compatibility ensures positive contributions to the community without disrupting existing neighborhoods.
- As more intense forms of development are considered, the concept of compatibility becomes important. New development should integrate with the established context and maintain the integrity of the rural character of the Village of Wellesley. Policies for new development should consider high-quality design, building heights, sensitivity to heritage (built and natural), appropriate transitions to stable neighbourhoods, the character of neighbourhoods and community identity, and fit within the streetscape and overall vision for Wellesley.

4.5 Secondary Plan Structure

4.5.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. **Transportation Network:** With the Strohvest Phase 2 lands having completed preliminary design work, future recommendations should focus on Designated Growth Area lands earlier in the process. Future road networks should be characterized by highly interconnected streets with short block lengths to support active transportation and disperse traffic movements. Interconnected streets reduce congestion, promote walkability, and improve emergency vehicle access.
 - Consider a complete streets approach in the development of the new road network to accommodate appropriate facilities for the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.
 - Ensure connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, through street network connections, sidewalks, and trails.
 - The physical orientation of streets and newly built development should maximize solar energy gain opportunities through passive solar orientation—by orienting a building to maximize solar heat gain in the winter.
 - Consider the needs of road users of all ages and abilities when designing streets and roadways to ensure safe mobility.
 - Implement traffic-calming policies/strategies.
 - Enhance crossings near schools, parks, and other community hubs to help ensure that users of all ages and abilities can move through the neighbourhood with ease.
 - Consider how road and public space design can be shared by those of all ages and abilities to fully participate in society.
 - Consider the presence of horse-drawn vehicles within the urban area and ensure signage, traffic-calming measures and shelters are in place to support them.



Support traffic-calming measures within neighbourhoods for safety and to contribute to a quieter, more peaceful atmosphere that promotes active transportation and strengthens the sense of place and community identity. Neighbourhood streets are shared spaces that can enhance community interaction, not just a connection from point A to point B.

2. **Residential Neighbourhoods:** The Residential Neighbourhoods will include a mix and diversity of housing types to ensure variety and choice.

- Provide low-rise and mid-rise housing forms with a range of detached, semi-detached, street townhouses, and multiple residential units.
- Support and encourage innovative lot configurations, housing designs, and construction techniques.
- Support Additional Residential Units to expand the range of dwelling types, choice, and tenure.

3. **Mix of Uses:** The Secondary Plan will support a range of uses that may include commercial, institutional, and employment to support a complete community.

- Commercial uses should be small-scale, local-serving commercial uses that will relate to the surrounding residential area in scale and character. If identified as a use by the Commercial Needs Analysis, consider mixed-use development that includes commercial on the ground floor and residential above.

- Schools are centrepieces of social infrastructure that achieve the PPS objective for complete communities and efficient land use patterns. If needed to accommodate new growth, school sites should be identified in consultation with the appropriate school boards, including consideration of active transportation routes to and from schools, and co-location opportunities.
 - Maintain and reinforce permissions for institutional uses, i.e. school sites, and ensure policy flexibility to accommodate future needs (such as expansions or additions) and avoid prescriptive limitations on site design, accessory uses, or redevelopment that could constrain school board ability to respond to changing needs.
 - Consideration should also be given to providing Employment Areas if appropriate and warranted based on the findings and direction of the Employment Projections and Land Needs Analysis.
4. **Parks and Open Space:** The Parks and Open Space system is typically comprised of parks, trails, and stormwater management ponds. Together, they provide spaces that support ecological and hydrological functions and serve as venues for outdoor community and recreational life. Within the existing Official Plan mapping, there are no identified core environmental features within the expansion areas. Key considerations for this system include the following:
- Through the new Official Plan, establish a parkland classification system which can be reflected in the Scoped Secondary Plan. The provision of parks should be a key planning principle and will assist with delivering parks in new developments.
 - Ensure parks are located so residents are within a short walking distance of an open space. This encourages daily physical activity and creates a central focus and gathering space for the community.
 - The trails system connects the parks and open spaces within the community, as well as connecting to existing trails outside of the community. New trail connections should be planned with accessibility as a guiding principle, incorporating gentle

grades, firm surfaces, and adequate width where possible. Existing trails should also be reviewed and upgraded to meet AODA standards, ensuring that recreational and active transportation routes are inclusive and welcoming to all.

- Ensure parks and open spaces are beautiful, highly visible, accessible, and linked. Parks and open spaces need to be visible and accessible from, and integrated with, the street system, and include a full array of opportunities from recreation and play to quiet contemplation.
- Consider naturalized open spaces. Naturalization is an ecologically-based approach to restore environmental integrity to the urban landscape and promote passive recreation. Utilize plant species native to the area to create a sustainable landscape.
- Improving integration begins with linking existing trails and identifying opportunities for new connections between developments, neighbourhoods, community hubs, and regional destinations.

4.6 Urban Design Policies

Urban design gives form, shape, and character to the physical elements that will comprise the neighbourhood areas of the expansion area. Good urban design contributes to the vitality and health of a community in terms of aesthetics, architecture, and compatibility, and also to vibrant and successful public spaces.

4.6.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. Consider urban design policies to guide site development to achieve a desired level of prescribed quality in both the private and public realms. Urban design will be an integrated component of the Secondary Planning process. As such, urban design policies will speak to considerations for the different stages of the development approvals process.
- Policies should consider the design of elements within the public realm, including the design of roads, parks, trails, streetscape design elements, street trees and landscaping, and stormwater management facilities.
 - Private Realm policies will relate to building design and site planning.
 - Sustainability policies should be developed and relate to energy and water conservation, waste management, green infrastructure and building practices, and urban agriculture.

4.7 Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources Policies

Cultural heritage and archaeological resources are important elements of the Township of Wellesley, contributing to the Township's identity, history, and sense of place. These resources, including cultural landscapes, built heritage, and archaeological sites require recognition and conservation.

4.7.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. Consider cultural heritage and archaeological resource policies to identify and address any resources or artifacts, such as:
 - Conserving, protecting and rehabilitating resources where possible.
 - Clear requirements for cultural heritage impact assessments and archaeological assessments in development applications.
 - Align policies with Sections 4.6 and 6.2.2 of the PPS that indicate early consultation with Indigenous communities in planning and development applications that may affect Indigenous interests, such as cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

4.8 Transportation Policies

The Township of Wellesley supports a range of transportation modes, from motorists to horse-drawn vehicles. Ensuring safety of all road users is essential, especially given the shared function of rural roadways and local streets.

Sustainable Transportation

Consistent with the Region of Waterloo's Transportation Master Plan, there should be a focus on encouraging and shaping sustainable travel. While residents may continue to rely on personal vehicles for longer-distance trips, the implementation of transportation networks and infrastructure that promotes active travel may influence residents to shift their travel behaviour, especially for shorter, more local trips.

Given the Township's rural character and population, some essential services may not be available. Expanding transit service to support the mobility of all residents and visitors can support barrier-free access to vast destinations, as well as urban services that may not be available in the Township.

4.8.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. Investments into encouraging active travel can not only reduce emissions but also promote healthier lifestyles and create more vibrant public spaces.
2. Enhancing connectivity between neighbourhoods, community hubs, and recreational areas through multi-use trails and safe pedestrian and cycling routes can encourage residents to choose active transportation when feasible.
3. Services like Kiwanis Transit play a vital role in providing accessible transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, and future planning should explore ways to strengthen and expand these offerings. Integrating accessible transit with pedestrian and cycling infrastructure such as barrier-free bus stops, safe crossings, and user-friendly trail access can help ensure that all residents can freely move through the community.

4.9 Stormwater Management

The Municipal Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance Approval (CLI-ECA) is a municipal document for a stormwater management system that provides a single, consolidated environmental approval. The Province recently implemented the CLI-ECA process for approval of stormwater infrastructure, replacing the previous ECA process for Provincial approval through MECP and conferring approval authority on the respective municipality. This process also requires, among other things, that municipalities monitor the stormwater management infrastructure for performance and submit regular reports to MECP regarding the findings of the monitoring program and any operation and maintenance which may have been undertaken. Moreover, it requires that municipalities adhere to new stormwater management criteria in reviewing and approving new stormwater management infrastructure.

Based on discussions with Township staff, it is understood that the Township has submitted the CLI-ECA application to MECP and that the final CLI-ECA is pending. Nevertheless, it is suggested that the requirements under the CLI-ECA be acknowledged in the new Official Plan, as it contains important information related to stormwater management and the upkeep of stormwater infrastructure. There is limited coverage on policy for funding for stormwater management infrastructure, as well as monitoring requirements and reporting. Without a CLI-ECA, important policies in relation to the implementation and maintenance of Low Impact Development (LID) are also missing. It is further suggested that the policies provide a framework for the Township to develop a funding mechanism to support the monitoring and maintenance requirements specified in the CLI-ECA. Maintenance for stormwater management facilities are addressed through the municipality's Asset Management Plan. That said, general enabling policies relating to the Township's Asset Management Plan will be reviewed to ensure alignment with long-term infrastructure needs and regulatory obligations.

Source Water Protection

The Township of Wellesley relies primarily on ground water resources for its drinking water supply, which represents approximately 75% of the Region's total, as outlined in the ROP. Section 4.4 of the Land Use Policies Background Report highlights the relevant policies and maps associated the Township's source water protection areas and regional recharge areas. To protect and maintain the quality and quantity of groundwater aquifers and drinking water, the Plan provides comprehensive source water protection guidelines. Source water protection is related to stormwater management, specifically with respect to the implementation of LID infiltration BMPs, which provide stormwater quality treatment and maintain groundwater recharge.

4.9.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. Stormwater management continues to evolve past traditional flood control, erosion mitigation, and quality control measures. The MECP has put in place guidelines for source intervention of stormwater to help with maintaining water balance. These criteria can be found in the CLI-ECA. While the Township is responsible for maintaining water balance through its source water protection policies, stormwater approvals for industrial sites are provincially granted.
2. The requirements under the CLI-ECA should be acknowledged in the Secondary Plan, as it contains important information related to stormwater management and the upkeep of stormwater infrastructure.
3. Incorporating Regional policies on source water protection into the Secondary Plan is essential for the ongoing protection of source water.

4.10 Servicing

Availability of water supply and treatment and wastewater treatment capacity can be a significant constraint to growth (or opportunity for growth). The work to identify sources of water supply, determine required expansion of water, and wastewater treatment are extensive—and include significant Municipal Class EA components, complex design and construction processes—as well as often including significant requirements for additional property taking/availability, and associated infrastructure projects. The projects are some of the largest undertakings for municipal water and wastewater infrastructure with significant study, design, construction, and operations costs. These major infrastructure projects also require extensive coordination between the Township and Region, as the supply and treatment facilities are studied, designed, constructed, commissioned, and operated by the Region.

Wastewater Conveyance Capacity to Support Growth

Capacity constraints within the existing sanitary sewer network can be optimized through reduction of inflow and infiltration (I&I) to better “seal up” existing sewers identified to be taking on rainwater/stormwater or groundwater through fixing typical issues such as leaky joints, damaged pipe, downspout connections, or other areas identified through review. This work can provide affected catchments within the Village of Wellesley with freed-up sanitary capacity that can be allocated to new growth on full municipal services.

Water Conveyance Capacity Impacts on Land Use Type

Required water storage and larger trunk watermains to convey fire flow to service areas with higher available fire flow needs can also have significant impact on growth areas. Higher-density, industrial, or other similar areas with high available fire-flow requirements drive the need for more complex water projects including additional storage—which requires more complex Municipal Class EAs along with more complex

and costly design and construction. Available fire flow is typically the primary “water-system”-based constraint for new development areas.

Area municipalities have recently commenced studies to rethink how they provide available fire flow—including consideration for reduced fire-flow provision from the municipal water system and enhanced requirements for sites and development that requires higher available fire flows.

4.10.1 Preliminary Policy Directions

1. The WWWMP projects growth for the Village of Wellesley from its current population of 3,700 to approximately 5,600 by 2051. Further, it identifies the need to increase water supply capacity by 2034 to service growth. This includes studies to examine increasing capacity at the existing Wellesley wells, as well as supply from potential new wells. The existing Wellesley Wastewater Treatment Plant can be upgraded to service growth needs but requires new Municipal Class Environmental Assessment studies to determine the preferred approach which will outline the detailed design and construction requirements and phasing. Growth policies within the Township are to include consideration for these critical path measures and required timing to implement the required capacity increases. This may be future work, depending upon the final directions in the new Official Plan.
2. A better understanding of existing capacity updated water demand and wastewater flow projections, and coordination forecasting with the Region to establish available capacity and potential for constraints. These insights can inform triggers for infrastructure upgrade requirements based on growth projections and associated growth phasing opportunities within the Township.
3. I&I reduction can be targeted to improve sewers that will have potential to service key growth areas. The Region’s Water and Wastewater Master Plan has identified the Firella Creek Trunk Sewer as key wastewater infrastructure that can provide additional capacity through I&I reduction measures. I&I projects (including relining

and sewer spot repairs) can be efficiently constructed (both schedule and cost) with minimal neighbourhood disruption (works mostly underground within existing sewers—and limited construction vehicles located at maintenance hole locations). These types of projects can be less complex, timely opportunities to unlock growth potential within the Township.

4. The Region's Water and Wastewater Master Plan identified insufficient water storage to meet growth demands, along with requirement for a new storage facility to be located within the Village of Wellesley. The new facility will require extensive work ahead of implementation, including Municipal Class EA studies and subsequent design and construction works.
5. Access to available fire flow and proximity to existing infrastructure can be a key constraint to high-water use land use. Planning for required servicing works should be integrated into growth and land use policy. The Secondary Plan and new Official Plan can also establish a framework for future study requirements to evaluate how the Township provides available fire flow, with consideration for:
 - opportunities and constraints within existing water distribution infrastructure,
 - enhanced site requirements for fire-flow storage/provision,
 - encouragement for innovative construction, and/or
 - processes that reduce fire flow requirements or even restrictions to specific land use type that can offer benefit to the larger system.

5.0 Next Steps

This Discussion Paper is one of six papers that are being completed as part of Phase 2: Background Research and Study Preparation of the new Township of Wellesley Official Plan process.

This paper establishes a foundation from which the Township will develop policy directions. This is a starting point for generating discussion around key land use policies for the future of the Township of Wellesley. Policy directions will follow out of this engagement to outline proposed changes in the new Township of Wellesley Official Plan.

5.1 What We Heard Summary

The Discussion Papers were released in **DRAFT** form to inform public engagement in fall 2025. The Township and consulting team hosted an open public session, as well as a virtual meeting with agencies, in November 2025 to present the Discussion Papers and discuss revisions that may be required. These engagements were some of several opportunities throughout this project where public input is needed and welcomed. These papers have been updated to reflect additional insights or items arising from public engagement and include thematic summaries of input received (with a companion Engagement Report also being prepared).

Through engagement, we heard about the importance of the countryside line in protecting agricultural land, the desire for additional transit frequency and coverage to support growth, and the value of the trail network and diverse transportation modes. We also heard the desire to maintain the vibrancy of Wellesley Village and to support the development of complete communities. Through discussions, the importance of supporting aging in place and that new residential development provide a variety of building types and sizes that address the full spectrum of housing needs within the community was also highlighted. Based on feedback received, additional policy directions were added regarding school sites.

5.2 Township Council Presentation of Policy Directions

The **FINAL** reports include recommended policy directions that will inform the development of the new Official Plan. These papers will be presented to Township of Wellesley Council on December 9, 2025. The reports, together with public input, will serve as the basis for developing the Township of Wellesley's new Official Plan as part of Phase 3: Draft Policies and Land Use Maps. The **DRAFT** new Official Plan will be released for review in 2026 and includes public events in addition to the statutory *Planning Act* process.