

Township of Woolwich New Official Plan

Public Meeting

October 6, 2026



Introduction

The New Official Plan will guide growth for the entire Township

This Public Meeting is an opportunity to share what the Official Plan is about and hear your feedback.

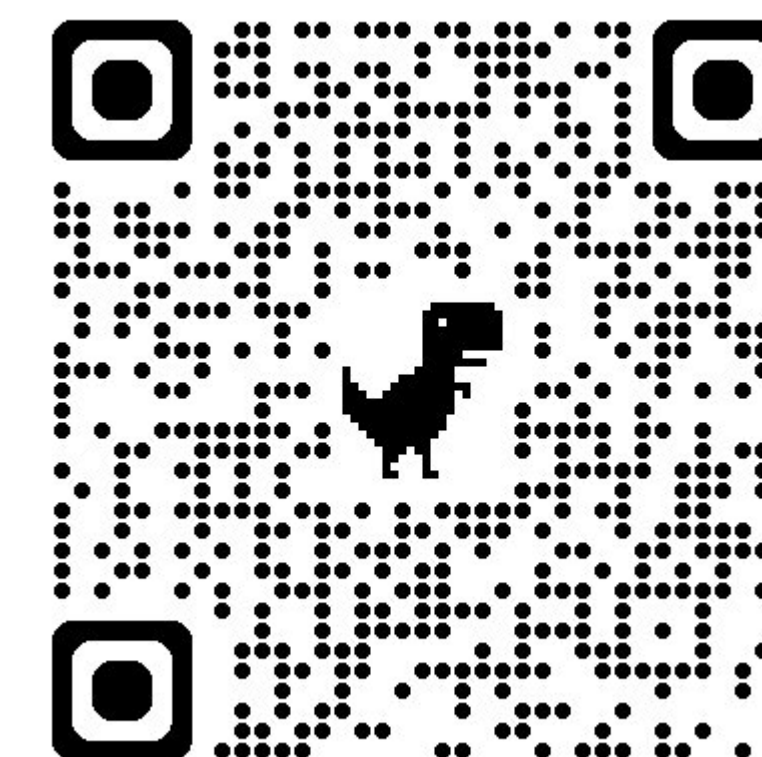
We welcome your questions and comments.

No decision on the New Official Plan is being made today.

In addition to comments or feedback provided at this meeting, written submissions will be accepted until November 30.

You can follow the project at the webpage below or scan the QR code:

<https://www.engagewr.ca/official-plan-review>



What is an Official Plan?

An Official Plan is an important land-use planning policy document that will:



Why a New Official Plan?

A New Official Plan is being prepared to:

- **Ensure consistency** with changes to Provincial Legislation such as the *Planning Act* and Provincial Planning Statement (PPS).
- **Integrate** the Region of Waterloo Official Plan (ROP) into the Township's OP.
- **Align with updated growth forecasts** to 2051.
- **Address settlement area boundary changes** in Elmira, St. Jacobs, Breslau, and Maryhill, with minor refinements to the other smaller settlements.
- **Implement Council direction** from Council approved plans, studies, and initiatives.
- **Incorporate policy direction, reflective of community priorities** based on feedback from the community, Council, and Township Staff.

What is driving the New Official Plan?

Planning Act

The *Planning Act* is the main planning legislation in Ontario that provides authority on land-use planning decisions. A number of changes were introduced to the *Planning Act* over the recent years that need to be considered in the New Official Plan.

Recent Legislative Changes:

- *Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022*
- *Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*
- *Bill 97, the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*
- *Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build more Homes Act , 2024*
- *Bill 17, the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025*

Key Changes

- Permissions for Additional Residential Units (ARUs)
- New definition of “Employment Areas” which is limited to clusters of business and economic activities and supporting uses
- Changes to processes to expand urban boundaries

What is driving the New Official Plan?

Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

- The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) came into effect on October 24, 2024. This policy document sets the policy foundation for regulating development and the use of lands across the province.
- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was repealed.
- The PPS (2024) introduced policy changes related to the following key topics:

Cultural Heritage

Planning for People and
Homes

Servicing

Employment Areas

Housing

Agriculture

Land Use
Compatibility

Settlement Area and
Boundary Expansions

Rural Areas

What is driving the New Official Plan?

Region of Waterloo Official Plan

- The Region of Waterloo no longer has planning responsibilities due to changes to the *Planning Act*. The Region’s Official Plan is now the Official Plan of each of the seven Area Municipalities to administer.
- The New Official Plan integrates Township and Regional Official Plan policies and mapping into a consolidated plan, including important changes made by Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 6 (ROPA 6).

Growth Forecasts

Projections	2051	Change
<i>Population</i>	+68,000 people	140% increase from 2021
<i>Employment</i>	+20,000 jobs	118% increase from 2021

ROPA 6

- Extend the planning horizon to 2051
- Address updated population and employment growth forecasts
- Promoting an intensification first approach to development and community-building
- Building vibrant complete communities
- Advancing climate change action
- Settlement area changes to Elmira, St. Jacobs and Breslau

What is driving the New Official Plan?

Township of Woolwich Studies and Plans

- There are existing studies and plans that provide important direction on various land use planning matters that were reviewed and considered for incorporation into the New Official Plan.

Studies and Plans

- Strategic Plan
- Core Asset Management Plan
- Housing for All Report
- Architectural and Design Guidelines
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Conservation and Demand Management Plan
- Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Green Infrastructure Report
- Elmira Core: Urban Design Study

Key Considerations

- Implement key policy directions and priorities
- Update population, housing and employment targets
- Support development of a broad range of housing options, including affordable housing, “missing middle” housing, and Additional Residential Units (ARUs)
- Facilitate age-friendly and accessible communities, and enhanced urban design
- Environmental sustainability and climate change action

Growth Management

- Planning for the Future
Updated population, housing, and employment growth targets in the Official Plan based on recent forecasts.
- Directing Growth
Updated policy framework to ensure growth is directed where it can be supported by infrastructure and services.
- Developing “Complete Communities”
Policies to facilitate compact, well-connected places and support access to necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities.



Housing

- Support a Wider Range of Housing Options
Policies support a range of housing options and longer-term diversification of housing supply.
- Condominium Conversion Protection
Provides stronger protection for tenants.
- Gentle Intensification
Permits context-specific intensification.

What kind of housing types are supported?

“Missing Middle” Housing

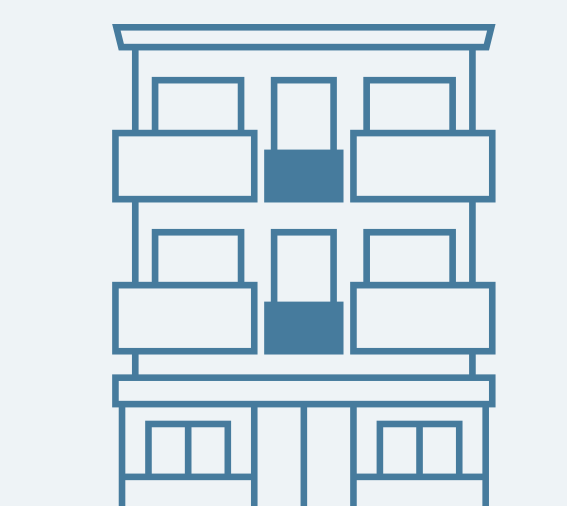
Any multiple-unit housing type that contains a higher density than a single-detached dwelling but a lower density than a mid-rise apartment building.



Semi-Detached



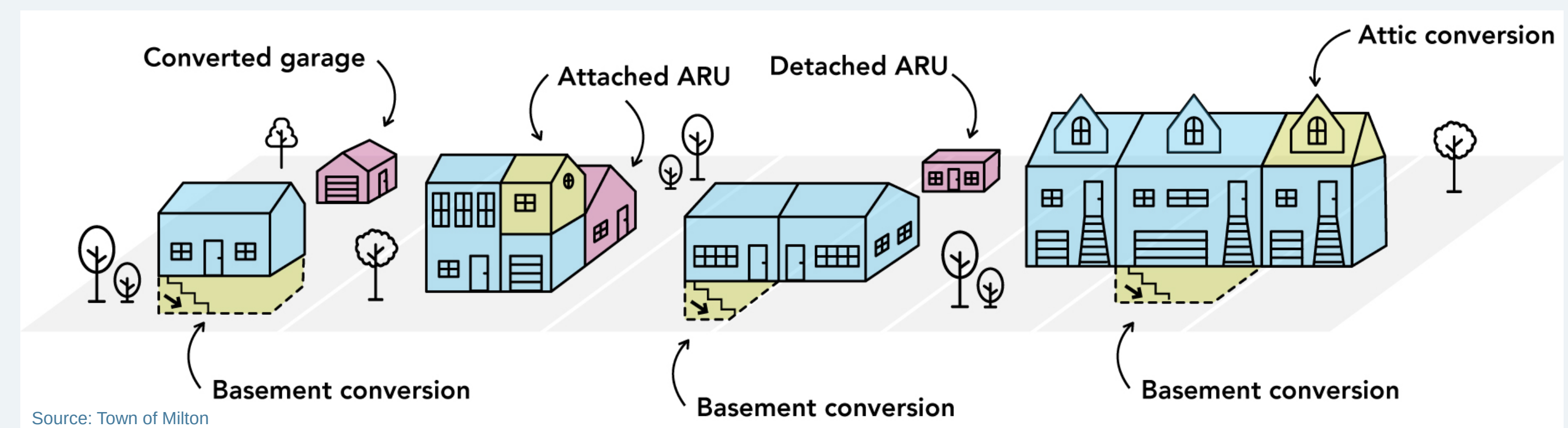
Townhouses



Low-Rise Apartment



Mixed-Use (Commercial and Residential) Building



Additional Residential Units (also known as Accessory Dwelling Unit, Secondary Suites, Granny Flats, Garden Suites, etc.)

Intensification

- **Intensification Targets**
Implements the intensification target rate for Elmira, St. Jacobs, and Breslau.
- **Transit-Supportive Development**
Ensures compact built forms with a mix of uses and an interconnected multi-modal street pattern to support walkability and safe, vibrant places.
- **Infill and Redevelopment**
Plans for intensification through infill, redevelopment, brownfield sites, greyfield sites, or the expansion or conversion of existing and underutilized buildings.

Natural Environment

- **Natural Heritage System**
The Township Natural Heritage System substantively carries over the Greenlands System from the Regional Official Plan and protections for natural heritage.
- **Water Resources and Source Water Protection**
Updated policies and mapping to address changes to the Grand River Source Protection Plan.



Agricultural Areas

- Prime Agricultural Areas
Maintain protection for prime agricultural areas.
- Agricultural Impact Assessments
Enables Agricultural Impact Assessments.
- Agricultural Systems Approach
Supports the agricultural systems approach per Provincial direction.



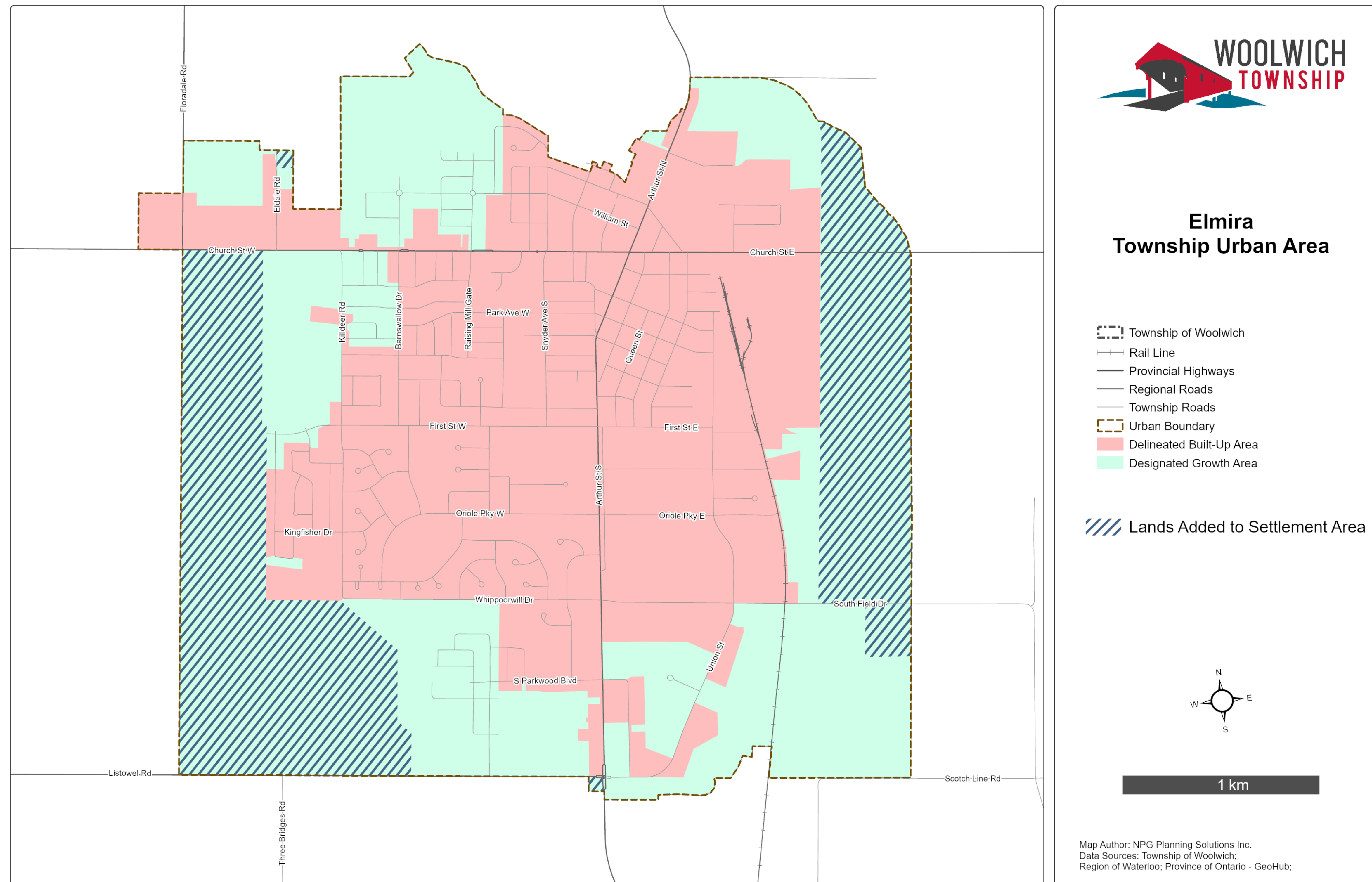
Countryside Line

The Countryside Line was a subject of discussion and many questions at the recent Open House for the New Official Plan.

- **Status:** it exists in the Township's current Official Plan and was in the Region of Waterloo Official Plan.
- **ROPA 6:** the Region of Waterloo undertook a review and adopted ROPA 6 to update their growth management and housing policies.
- **Provincial Modifications:** ROPA 6 was approved with modifications. This included expanding settlement areas in Woolwich that eliminated the Countryside Line. The provincial modifications exempted Wellesley and Wilmot from elimination of the Countryside Line.

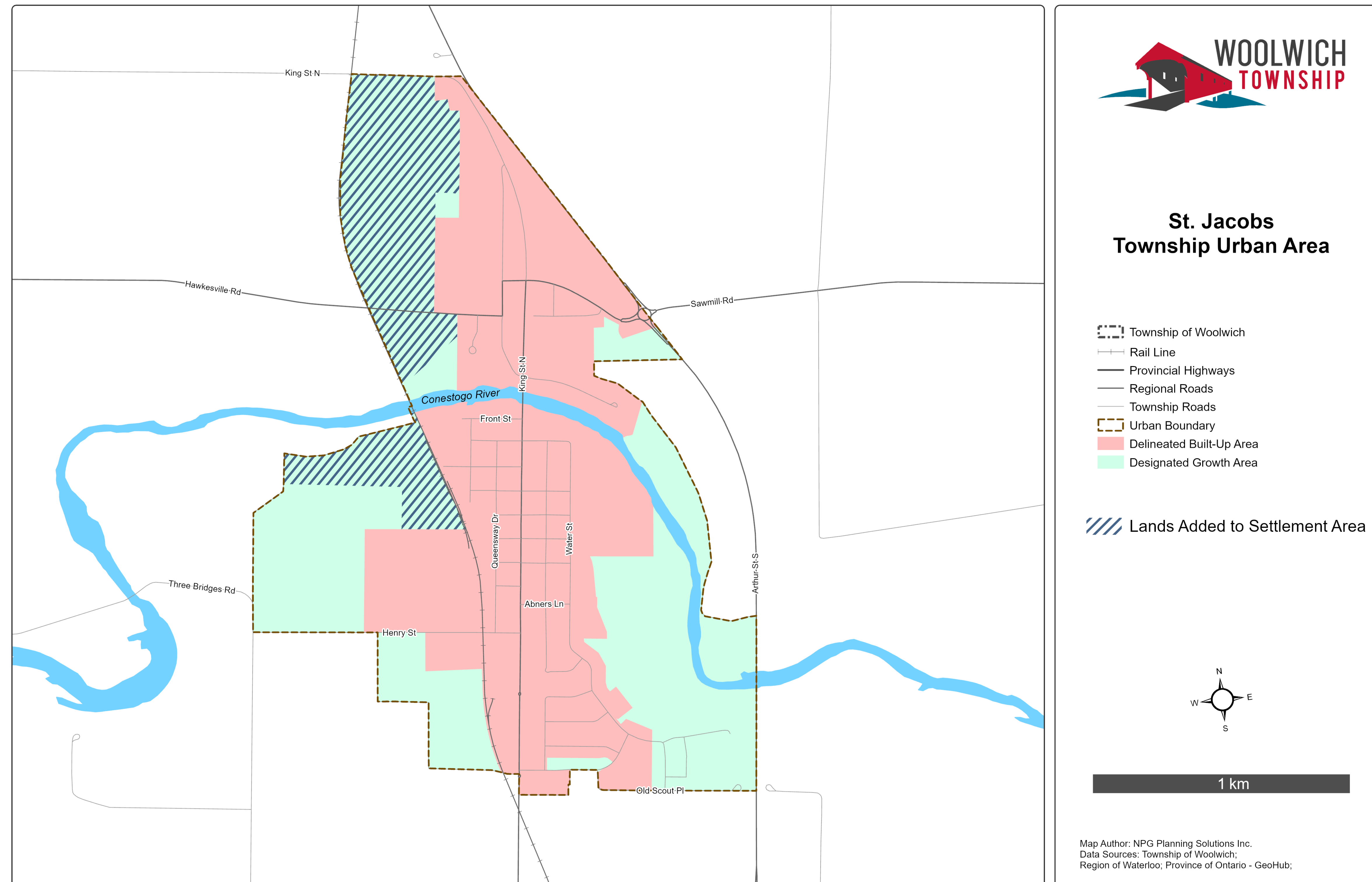
Settlement Area Changes

Elmira



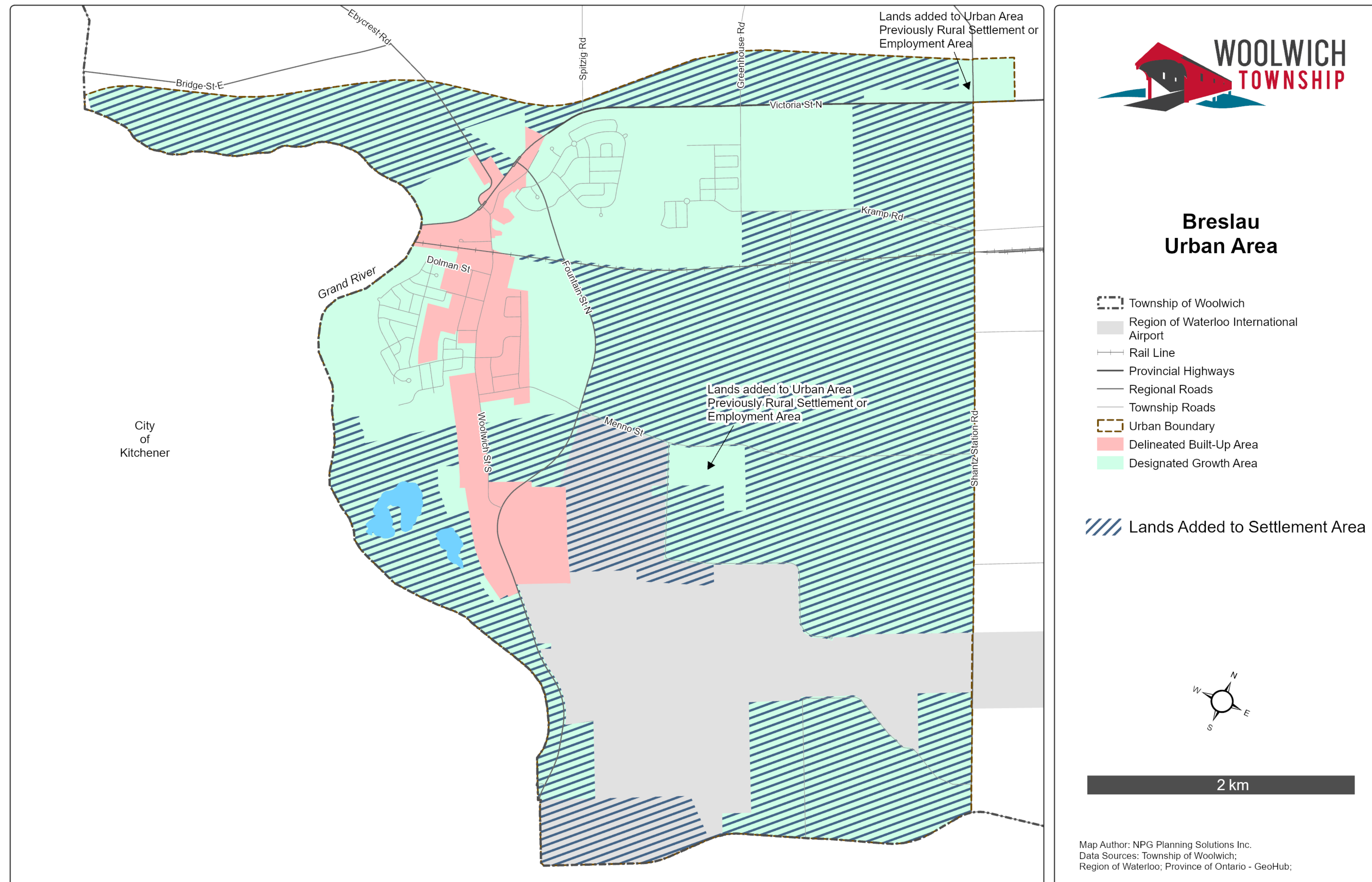
Settlement Area Changes

St. Jacobs



Settlement Area Changes

Breslau



What's Next?

We are in the final stage of the New Official Plan project.

All comments and feedback received will be reviewed and addressed, as applicable. Written submissions on the New Official Plan will be accepted until November 30.

The New Official Plan will be finalized and brought to a future Council meeting for adoption.

We encourage you to stay involved and up-to-date through the project webpage.

