



Development Services Staff Information Report

REPORT: DS40-2026

MEETING DATE: October 6, 2026

LOCATION: Virtual/ Council Chambers
24 Church Street West, Elmira

MEETING TIME: 7:00 p.m.

SUBJECT

LOCATION: All lands within the municipal boundary

OFFICIAL PLAN DESIGNATION: All designations

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSAL: The Township has initiated an Official Plan Review in response to the adoption of Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 6, updates to the Provincial Policy and other matters of regional interest in replacing the Region of Waterloo Official Plan.

LEGAL NOTICES

DATE OF NEWSPAPER NOTICE: September 3, 2026

DATE OF ENGAGEWR and WEBPAGE NOTICE: September 2, 2026

DATE OF PUBLIC MEETING: October 6, 2026

COMMENTS

The Township's Official Plan is an important policy document. It provides a broad range of objectives and policies intended to guide land use planning decisions by providing direction for how growth is to be managed, and resources protected.

The *Planning Act* requires that an Official Plan conform with Provincial Plans or not conflict with them; have regard for matters of provincial interest; be consistent with provincial policy statements; and address recent legislative changes. The Township Official Plan is also required to include matters of regional interest since the current Region of Waterloo Official Plan will no longer be in effect once this new Plan is in place.

The Township's Official Plan was adopted by Council in 2021 and approved by the Region in 2022. There have been subsequent changes to Provincial planning policies and legislation as well as a transfer of planning approvals from the Region Municipality of Waterloo to the Township which has necessitated a new Official Plan. This new Official plan will guide growth and development to 2051.

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024) and Legislative Changes

In the fall of 2022, the Province undertook a housing-focused review of the Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow—Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). This review led to the creation of a new Provincial Planning Statement that goes into effect on October 20, 2024. The new Provincial Planning Statement consolidates policies from the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan into a streamlined land use policy framework which carries over some policies, eliminates others, and introduces new concepts/defined terms. It includes key changes to policies pertaining to growth and intensification, settlement area expansions, employment land conversions, protection of employment areas, and prime agricultural areas.

Region of Waterloo Official Plan Amendment No. 6

In 2022, the Region of Waterloo adopted Regional Official Plan Amendment No.6 (ROPA 6) to the Region of Waterloo Official Plan. These changes establish a long-term framework for where and how the Region of Waterloo and its local municipalities should grow and develop to 2051. ROPA 6 was subsequently modified and approved by the Province in April of 2023 resulting in urban boundary expansions to Elmira, Breslau and St. Jacob. The new Plan will incorporate these urban boundary expansions and include other matters of regional interest in replacing the Region of Waterloo Official Plan.

Proposed New Official Plan

The proposed new Official Plan will bring the Plan into conformity with the current PPS, *Planning Act*, as well incorporate matters of regional interest. In addition, changes are proposed to improve the structure and organization of policies in the Official Plan, implement best practices, and make minor site-specific and housekeeping adjustments.

Since the Community Open Houses in the Spring, the New Official Plan has been updated to respond to comments and feedback. Notable updates are:

- Source Water Protection policies and mapping overhauled to address updates to the Grand River Source Protection Plan.
- Natural Heritage System policies and mapping modified to apply as an overlay Township-wide (provincially significant wetlands remain designated).
- Neighbourhood Plan has been replaced with evaluation criteria for development within lands designated Neighbourhood Development.
- Indigenous Communities/First Nations engagement requirements strengthened.
- Various adjustments to ensure policies better align with provincial policy and legislative changes.

NEXT STEPS

No decision will be made at this public meeting as its purpose is to solicit comments from the community and Council. After this public meeting Township Staff will work alongside the consultant to:

- Present a recommended Official Plan to Council for final adoption; and
- Forward the adopted Official Plan to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for final approval.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS - None.

PREPARED BY: Deanne Friess, Director, Development Services