ATTACHMENT B



Wilmot's New Official Plan

What We Heard Report #2

June 2026

NETHERY Planning

The Planning Partnership

SL Indigenous Advisory Services

Contents

1.0 Introduction 1

Project Process 1

1.1 Township of Wilmot Official Plan Engage Page 2

1.2 Overall Summary of What We Heard Since March 2026 3

2.0 Input from Emails 4

2.1 Emails from Residents 4

2.2 Emails from Developers 5

2.3 Emails from Agencies 6

3.0 Engagement with Indigenous Communities 8

4.0 Council Presentation 10

5.0 Statutory Public Meeting 11

6.0 Public Workshop and Open House 13

NOTE TO READER

This document presents the results of what has been heard by the consultants during the consultation phases of this engagement. The various perspectives and statements contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the consulting team; rather they are a faithful summary of the opinions and suggestions offered by the various individuals and groups consulted. While they are crucial input to the ***new Township of Wilmot Official Plan***, the resulting plan cannot address all the issues raised here.

1.0 Introduction

The Township of Wilmot is preparing a new Official Plan to replace the current Township Official Plan and Regional Official Plan.

The project is organized into 4 phases: consultation on vision and principles, background research and technical studies, draft policies and land use maps, and finalizing the Official Plan's policies. This Report summarizes the input received on the new Township of Wilmot Official Plan from March to May 2026.

Project Process

1 Consultation Vision and Principles

- **July 2025** Pre-Engagement Letter to Indigenous Communities
- **August 12, 2025** Councillor One-on-Ones
- **August 18, 2025** One-on-One Community Conversations
- **September 13, 2025** New Hamburg Fall Fair
- **September 23, 2025** Public Visioning Workshop

2 Background Research and Technical Studies

- **October 2, 2025** Virtual Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
- **October 2025** Follow-up Meetings with Indigenous Government
- **October 2025** Councillor Visioning Discussions
- **October 22, 2025** Background Studies Public Workshop
- **November 17, 2025** Special Meeting of Council to Introduce the Project

3 Draft Policies and Land Use Maps

- **March 23, 2026** Council Workshop on the Draft Official Plan
- **April 2026** Follow-up Meetings with Indigenous Communities
- **April 15, 2026** Public Workshop on the Draft Official Plan
- **April 28, 2026** Statutory Public Open House on the Official Plan
- **May 21, 2026** Statutory Public Meeting Before Council

4 Finalize Plan and Policies

- **July 2026** Presentation to Council to Submit the Official Plan
- **July 2026** Forwarding of the Adopted Official Plan for Ministerial Review
- **July 2026** Notice of Official Plan Adoption Provided

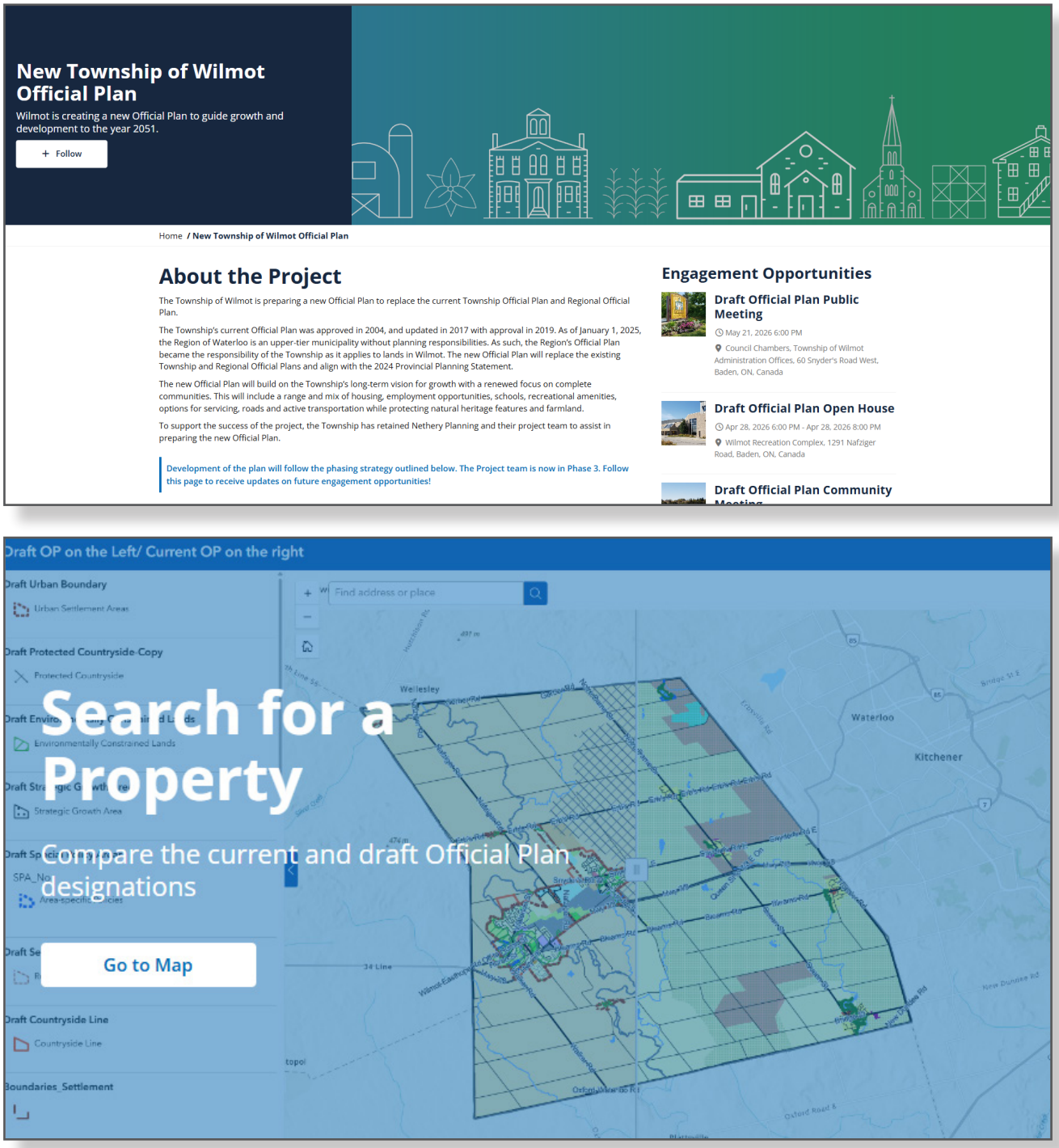


1.1 Township of Wilmot Official Plan Engage Page

A dedicated project web page for the Township of Wilmot Official Plan was launched in August 2025.

Information about the project, updates, and related documents and materials can be found on the web page, as well as information about engagement opportunities and engagement activities.

A map tool on the web page allows for residents to search for a property or compare the current and draft Official Plan designations.



Screenshots of the New Township of Wilmot Official Plan Engage Page.

1.2 Overall Summary of What We Heard Since March 2026

The following themes have emerged from the feedback received:

Agricultural Preservation and Rural Identity

- Protecting prime agricultural areas and the "Countryside Line" permanently is a top priority for residents.
- There is a strong desire for Wilmot to remain a rural community where agriculture is the largest industry and economic driver.
- Clarify the Township's evolving rural character and consider including simpler terms like "villages" instead of rural settlement areas.

Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change

- Emphasis on making environmental health the overarching goal of the entire Official Plan.
- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and require development applications to show their GHG impact.
- Concern regarding the protection of the Waterloo Moraine and groundwater sources.
- First Nations communities and agencies emphasized the protection of natural heritage features and hazardous lands.

Housing, Growth, and Density

- Need to balance intensification within villages against greenfield development.
- There is support for mid-rise housing to allow seniors to age in place and for public spaces that are inclusive of or designed for teens.
- Developers requested specific land inclusions in settlement boundaries and clarified density targets for New Neighbourhoods.
- Concerns regarding whether existing wastewater and road infrastructure can handle the growth rate.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Create complete communities, expanding public transit, and improving e-bike infrastructure.
- Increased traffic congestion on main roads and requested proactive traffic calming.
- Requests from the Region of Waterloo for the plan to align with the Integrated Mobility Plan and define Regional Roads as multimodal corridors.

Indigenous Engagement

- First Nations communities and agencies requested that proof of engagement be a mandatory requirement for complete development applications.
- Engagement should follow specific community protocols (e.g., Wiindmaagewin) and may require capacity funding for technical reviews.

Trust

- Some residents expressed a lack of trust in the planning process, desiring more transparency to ensure community values are genuinely protected.



2.0 Input from Emails

18 emails

Emails from residents, developers, and agencies were received to the Township's dedicated project email WilmotOP@wilmot.ca.

This is what we heard:

2.1 Emails from Residents

Official Plan Structure/ Terminology

- Some comments highlighted some inconsistencies in policy and section references throughout the document
- Need clarification on “Open Space”, it does not appear to be a defined term nor illustrated on a map.
- Clarify the meaning/ include a definition of “land use planning”, as the draft Official; Plan does not specify the term “land use” while using it many times.
- Clarify the meaning and intent of the “Township’s evolving rural character”.
- Expand on the explanation of “agri-food”.
- Clarification on housing clusters/ small family campground in the Countryside.
- Sec. 1.4 Planning Act: Suggest that the Provincial government has an “oversight” function of municipal planning as opposed to “overarching”.
- Comment expressing satisfaction with the current draft.

Engagement

- Some residents feel discouraged to participate in providing feedback from the Official Plan process due to the perception that the Official Plan no longer provides real guidance or protection for major development decisions, concluding that the planning framework is being selectively applied or ignored all together.
- Residents want to know that the Official Plan will genuinely reflect and protect Wilmot’s community values, natural environment, and rural character, want transparency about its influence on future land use decisions to restore public trust and engagement.
- Suggestion to revise some of the cumbersome terminology for simplicity (e.g. “rural settlement areas” should be “villages”)

Climate/Environment

- There is a need for environmental health and sustainability to be the overarching goal for which all parts of the Official Plan should incorporate.
- Suggestion to include a section on addressing climate change, and regular reporting on the results of action on greenhouse gas reduction must be mandated.
- Official Plan should include a statement on importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (target 80% reduction from 2010 levels by 2050).
- All new development applications in the Township must show the impact they will have on both corporate and community greenhouse gas emissions.
- Incentivize developments with no natural gas connections to dwellings.
- Township should create an action plan to meet 2050 targets within one year of approval of the Official Plan.
- Protect groundwater sources.
- Suggestion to identify the Waterloo Moraine and its importance in protecting water resources and natural resources, and to include reference under Section 2.3 Countryside Land Use System.

Transportation

- Prioritize creating complete communities.
- Work with the Region to ensure the availability of public transit in existing and new developments.
- Provide appropriately paved shoulders on urban streets for the increased use of e-bikes.
- Suggestion for parking signs prohibiting long-term parking on streets in residential areas (as is done in other locations), and to consider providing a definition for “adequate”, especially in terms of snow storage and on-site parking.

Agriculture

- Suggestion to carry forward Chapter 3 of the existing Official Plan, Wilmot should remain a rural, agricultural community with agriculture as its largest industry, employer and economic driver.
- Official Plan should facilitate the investigation, planning and implementation of better farmland protection be it the creation of a "Foodbelt", expansion of the regional Protected Countryside, provincial Greenbelt expansion, or other land protection strategy.
- Protect the Countryside Line permanently.

Housing and Density

- Build complete communities within the Countryside Line, on non-agricultural lands.
- Higher densities to support public transportation and reduction of GHG emissions.
- Support energy efficiency and infrastructure for EV vehicle charging and solar panels in residential buildings.
- Some comments expressed concerns with road access, traffic, building height, and density of some proposed developments in the Township.
- Concern with increased traffic and road capacity, population growth beyond existing planning assumptions, infrastructure capacity and readiness, and impact on community character and livability for a high-density development.
- Inquiry regarding adding a dwelling unit on a property within the floodplain.

Employment

- Employment should be within existing urban boundaries, near housing and recreation, and aligned with available infrastructure.
- Employment Lands Background Report does not meaningfully reference the need for farmland protection as the Township identifies new industrial lands. The Official Plan should reference jobs lost from the agricultural sector.

Finances

- Development applications should show financial impacts on taxpayers and benefits of the development to the community.

2.2 Emails from Developers

31 Hunter Street and 225, 233, 251-253 Huron Street, New Hamburg

- Received GRCA approval recently for a Two-Zone Floodplain Study
- Aligns with comments received by the public through Official Plan consultation, such as support for revitalizing downtown New Hamburg and higher density development in the downtown.

1145 Christner Road

- Request for considering these lands in the New Hamburg settlement area boundary.

1012 & 1149 Snyder's Road West

- Clarify if density target of 45 persons and jobs per hectare is intended to be minimum density for New Neighbourhoods under Policy 2.6a).
- Suggestion for Region to conduct servicing analysis for the Baden-New Hamburg Wastewater Treatment Plant as part of their infrastructure and capacity analysis.

<u>1012 Snyder's Road</u>

- Request confirmation that the Township supports the location of the proposed Park and Stormwater Management Facility on lands designated Prime Agricultural.
- Request that the submitted Official Plan Amendment redesignations be applied to the new draft OP and that the lands within the Baden Boundary are designated as Urban Residential in Map 4 of the new OP.

<u>1149 Snyder's Road</u>

- Request that Map 4 of the draft new OP is revised to limit the extent of the Strategic Growth Area to only the portion of the property with frontage on Synder's Road West and west of the Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School property line.

- Request that policy 7.1e) is reworded to exclude ‘Mid-Rise Buildings’.
- Request confirmation that the intention of the SGA is to provide for mixed use sites and that within the SGA building types with a single use are permitted.

Tri-Country Mennonite Homes

- Request that a portion of their lands be looked at to encompass that entire property in the Official Plan to allow future development.

Estate of Enid Schmidt

- In support of the Staff Report, Community Area, Employment Areas and evaluations relating to parcels 17, 18, and 19 owned by the Estate.
- Existing infrastructure that is in place and continues to expand to bring Baden and New Hamburg closer together, promotes the inclusion of these parcels within the Community Area.

2.3 Emails from Agencies

Grand River Conservation Authority

- Suggestion to avoid using the word “regulate” for Section 3, paragraph b), substitute with a different word (e.g. manage, direct).
- Suggest to refine sections 3.3 and 3.8 to focus on its Natural Heritage System objectives with respect to Core and Supporting Environmental Features
- Recommend broadening Section 3.2:
  - Include breakdown of hazardous lands vs. hazardous sites, the one-zone/ two-zone special policy area floodplain concepts (pull from glossary)
  - One-zone policies should borrow from general PPS direction
  - Consider more specific criteria for two-zone policy areas
- Recommend general alignment with some of the PPS policies with regards to draft Official Plan policies involving natural hazards.
- Pay attention to definitions as the New Hamburg SPA has two different flood standards
- Recommend bringing New Hamburg SPA policies within section 9 into section 3.2, and relocating section 3.2(f) into a different appropriate section.

Region of Waterloo

Identify specific Regional Official Plan policies that should be integrated into the Township’s Official Plan:

Policy 2.1 - Population and Employment Forecasts

- The draft Official Plan forecast of 5,000 jobs is much lower than the 12,000 jobs required by the Regional Official Plan (ROP) and the 10,980 to 17,580 jobs suggested by technical studies.
- Use the word "forecasts" instead of "targets" to clarify that these are technical projections for planning, not just goals.

Policy 2.7 - Settlement Area Expansion Policies

- Reinsert a policy that prohibits expanding urban areas into Regional Recharge Areas to protect groundwater quality and quantity.
- Any future expansions must stay within the Countryside Line shown on the Map 1.

Policy 3.10 - Source Water Protection

- Correct references to the "Vulnerable Area Risk Assessment Table" (it is a table, not a map) and update old terms like "Wellhead Protection Area".
- Include missing Source Protection Mapping, the Vulnerable Area Risk Assessment Table, and the associated Category A, B, and C land use classifications.
- Ensure all outdated terminology is updated to reflect Clean Water Act standards.
- Add language ensuring that source water protection rules take precedence over other conflicting policies.
- Require studies for permitting private services for infill.
- Update Regional Recharge Area policies to align with ROP.

Policy 5.1 - Road Hierarchy

- Define the planned function of Regional Roads as multimodal corridors (for walking, transit, and trucks) managed by the Region.

- Since the old ROP is being repealed, update policy language to refer to Regional By-laws and Guidelines instead.

Policy 5.2 - Road Widths

- Update the reference from the Regional Transportation Master Plan to the new Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP).
- Instead of saying development must be consistent with the IMP, it should support the objectives of the IMP.

Policy 5.7 - Active Transportation and Complete Streets

- The Region is moving away from standalone master plans for individual transportation modes - remove references throughout the Official Plan.
- Expand the list of safety measures to include things like raised crossings, pedestrian islands, tactile surfaces, and street trees.

Policy 5.8 - Transportation Impact Studies (TIS)

- Recommend language that recognizes that the Region must be the authority that approves the scope and results of studies involving Regional Roads.
- Studies should not just focus on car traffic, they must examine how to support walking, cycling, and transit.

Policy 7.1 - Future Development Designation

- Remove the redundant phrase "within the Countryside Line," as these lands are already inside the established settlement area.

Policy 8.13 - Complete Application Requirements

- Ensure the Region is consulted early in the process and that their required studies are finished before an application is considered complete.
- If a peer review is needed for technical issues like hydrogeology, the Township and Region should work together to avoid double work.

Policy 8.14 - Public Meetings and Notification

- Explicitly list the Region as a key agency to be notified and coordinated with on matters like transit, source water protection, water and wastewater servicing, Regional Road corridors, and other matters.

Appendix A - Glossary

- Any term defined in the Glossary should be bolded or italicized throughout the Plan so readers know it has a specific technical meaning.

Additional Policy Considerations

- Add policies to ensure the Township works closely with the Region, adjacent municipalities and other agencies on growth and infrastructure.
- Add a policy to protect the Region of Waterloo International Airport from land uses that could interfere with its safety or operations.
- Include a new section requiring noise studies for homes built near busy roads, highways, or railways, including specific noise limits.

3.0 Engagement with Indigenous Communities

Letters were sent to the local Indigenous communities in July and September 2025. Sara Jane Souliere, Owner of SL Indigenous Advisory Services, is the lead Indigenous engagement consultant for the project. SL is a 100% Indigenous-owned and operated business, rooted in Anishinaabe values and recognized for its culturally grounded and inclusive engagement practices.

On April 3, 2026, the Township of Wilmot distributed correspondence to First Nation communities to re-engage as part of the Township's ongoing engagement on the new Official Plan, and invite them to upcoming community meetings and public open houses.

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN)

- The Township distributed correspondence to re-engage MCFN, thanking them for previous feedback and providing the Draft Official Plan for review.
- Correspondence clarified that the Official Plan guides land use, infrastructure, and natural/ cultural heritage planning through the year 2051.
- MCFN acknowledged the draft and requested a written response detailing how their September 19 input was specifically incorporated, consistent with October 2025 discussions.
- MCFN's Department of Consultation and Accommodation (DOCA) requested capacity funding and a Technical Review Agreement to support their experts' review.
- The Township provided a written response to MCFN's previous input and noted that the project consultant could reallocate budget to support their funding request.
- The Township explained that specific Nations are not named in the document to ensure equitable treatment, though the plan includes commitments to Indigenous involvement in cultural and archaeological planning.
- The Township proposed a working meeting with MCFN leadership as a complementary approach to the review process.

Six Nations of the Grand River (SNGR)

- The Township invited SNGR to review the draft document and participate in upcoming community and statutory public meetings.
- SNGR has prioritized the protection of natural environmental and archaeological resources within the planning process.
- Advocating for language in the Official Plan that requires proof of First Nation engagement as a mandatory component of a complete development application.
- Questioned why the Township has not yet advanced their previous recommendation regarding this proof of engagement.

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN)

- COTTFN noted the project is located within their Traditional Territory and the Big Bear Creek ATR area.
- Confirmed that consultation must follow their Wiindmaagewin protocol, which includes invoicing the Township for engagement activities.
- The Township notified COTTFN via Nations Connect that it is unable to provide capacity funding or reimburse participation-related invoices for this review process.
- Despite the funding status, COTTFN has indicated they will provide suggested language regarding archaeology for the Plan.
- The Township continued to invite COTTFN to participate in the public open house and statutory meetings to provide feedback on the 2051 growth strategy.

Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN)

- WIFN's key interests include cultural heritage, archaeology, environmental stewardship, and asserted and Treaty Rights.
- The Township responded to earlier information requests and advised that a new phase of engagement had begun following the release of the Draft Official Plan.
- WIFN requested that all engagement follow their specific Consultation and Accommodation Protocol and include designated contacts, and that their participation in the review and upcoming meetings will be based on their current availability.

Kettle and Stony Point First Nation

- A meeting was held on October 6, 2025, where presentation materials were shared with the community.
- No further communication has been received from KSPFN since that time.
- The Township reached out via Nations Connect to invite input on the Draft Official Plan and offered direct meetings with leadership and staff.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation & Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council

- No response has been received from either Aamjiwnaang First Nation or the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council to date.
- The Township sent correspondence to both groups outlining the 2051 planning scope and inviting them to review interests, concerns, and priorities prior to the Plan's adoption.
- In both cases, the Township emphasized its commitment to respecting community-specific protocols and offered to align next steps with each group's preferred process.

4.0 Council Presentation

A presentation was made at a Council meeting on March 23, 2026 on the draft Official Plan growth targets intensification.

The following is a summary of what we heard from members of Council:

Growth and Density Targets

- Some are concerned about potential density increases and prefer to remain at the lower densities.
- Some members advocate for balanced growth that reflects Wilmot's specific identity rather than rapid, non-incremental expansion.
- Noted that a 110% growth rate is already putting pressure on wastewater constraints.

Development and Housing Types

- Council members highlighted the need to balance greenfield development with intensification within villages.
- There is support for lowering proposed growth targets in certain areas to acknowledge the difference between rural settings and urban centers.
- A member highlighted it is better to go up rather than going out to preserve land, suggesting that higher density along main roads is a responsible approach.
- Density and mid-rise housing types are seen as essential tools to allow seniors to age in place within their own community.

Zoning and Council Oversight

- Discussion surrounding removing specific 4-6 storey designations from the Official Plan (OP) to avoid "pigeonholing" and the need to designate areas clearly for investors and developers.
- Ultimately, members recognized the importance of making it easier for developers and investors to develop in Wilmot.
- Suggestion for using a sliding scale to allow additional floors if the ground floor is used for commercial purposes.
- Concerns were raised regarding the impact of development and zoning on specific areas like Waterloo Street and the Baden Mill area.

5.0 Statutory Public Meeting

A Statutory Public Meeting was held on May 21, 2026 on the draft Official Plan at Council Chambers.

The following is a summary of what we heard from members of Council and the Delegates (4 delegates):

Council

Q: Is the Region no longer present regarding Source water protection?

A: The Township has been delegated the responsibility for land-use planning around these source water protection matters.

Q: There are policies regarding wayside pits. Does the Township OP talk about receiving soil and dumping?

A: Effectively permitted in the PPS and responsible by the Ministry of Environment.

Q: This OP is supposed to protect rural character, but with building heights of 4 or 6 stories. How many municipalities do you know that have this high of a measurement?

A: The province is generally gearing most development towards intensification, but we have draft policy text that limits said heights to very specific locations, the strategic growth areas on the map.

Q: Because these strategic growth areas are somewhat remote, is it normal to expect a drug store or a pharmacy to be located on the first floor to ensure convenient access to these amenities in Strategic Growth Areas?

A: It is fairly common to have first storeys be protected for such. We seek to have certain areas within these Strategic Growth Areas designated for mixed use, as requested. The Zoning by-law already has these provisions established in many places.

Q: Is there a way to discourage larger mid-rise buildings within other residential areas, and rather, lock them into strategic growth areas?

A: Yes, we will work on it and receive this question as feedback for further analysis.

Q: Why does the Draft Official Plan include minimum employment and population growth targets?

A: The expectation that the minimum comes from the PPS, so the establishment is a minimum by the province, no matter the size. It is set this way for long-term infrastructure planning needs, serving as a foundational benchmark for many reasons.

Q: Under housing needs, the minimum of 10% of new ownership and rental to be affordable to low and medium income households is very general.

A: As part of the provincial guidance, it has a proper definition, so this will be included in the final draft. In terms of what can help achieve these targets, it is something to consider as a general target, not as a mandate.

Q: The minimums on growth targets suffice the region's data. How did you achieve said numbers?

A: The PPS 2024 provides 2 options: 1. Generate your own using the provincial methodology, or 2. Use a previously provincially accepted number. The project team chose the second option and picked in the middle. When an inherent capacity is hit, the holding provision can help restrain growth, among other options.

Q: Has there been any interregional coordination in these numbers?

A: The project team has been coordinating with other municipalities, and Township staff regularly coordinate on regional matters with other municipalities.

Additional comment from Council: Want more policies that focus on the municipality itself as opposed to be seemingly more overarching default provincial objectives.

Delegates

- Wants a policy hoping to promote and support the continued growth of the agricultural sector as a tourism, cultural, and economic pillar of the town. (i.e. Perth County has a similar policy).
- Worked on Official Plans, doesn't like the OP draft, while it is fantastic to see how it wants to keep Wilmot's small character; it wants to grow too much. Believes public engagement hasn't been enough, and has petitions to back this claim up.
- Argued that water security is the most critical issue facing the region and must underpin any future development. Regardless of how many new homes are built, the development is not successful if residents cannot perform basic daily tasks like brushing their teeth, flushing the toilet, or making food for their children.
- Wants more ability to make comments. Confusion regarding how this statutory public meeting actually facilitated any public comments and explained how changes had previously been made to address these issues.

6.0 Public Workshop and Open House

36
Participants

A public workshop was hosted on April 15th, 2026 at the St. Agatha Community Centre, which included a presentation, one-on-one conversations and individual reviews of the draft Official Plan schedules. A statutory open house was hosted on April 28, 2026 at the Wilmot Recreation Complex, with one-on-one conversations and individual reviews of the draft Official Plan schedules. There was a total of **36** participants across the two dates.

Below is a summary of what we heard:

Agriculture and Environment

- Protecting prime agricultural areas and the Countryside Line is one of the top priorities for some residents to ensure long-term food production and rural livelihoods.
- Support for economic growth through agri-tourism and a robust agri-food network.
- Policies should ensure that existing natural features are protected and that any new environmental features are identified for conservation.
- Concerns were raised regarding source water protection, the adequacy of well water, and the use of septic tanks versus holding tanks in certain developments.

Housing and Urban Design

- Focus on placing density in appropriate locations with proper transitions, including allowing up to four units per lot.
- Address affordability.
- Create spaces for both an aging population and younger residents, including "teen-designed" spaces like skate parks.
- Future zoning should consider private amenities, such as balconies for residents.

Economic Development

- Suggestion for removing specific references to the Waterloo Economic Development Corporation (EDC) from the Official Plan to maintain future flexibility.
- Wilmot has a history of small businesses growing into large employers, should try to strengthen this with the help of Provincial, Federal levels of government.
- Concerns for employment near sandhills.

Infrastructure and Transportation

- Residents expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion on Highway 7/8 and requested proactive traffic calming measures on main roads.
- Suggestion to reduce car trips by making transit accessible to everyone and providing local destinations for people to visit.
- Questions were raised about the impact of floodplain changes and how development can help with mitigation through stormwater management ponds.

Sustainability and Energy

- Discussions included moving away from natural gas in favor of heat pumps.
- Active drill rigs and aggregate mapping were noted as current points of interest for property owners.



Photo from the public workshop



NETHERY Planning

The Planning Partnership

SL Indigenous Advisory Services