

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

New Official Plan: Project Framework and Work Plan

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Community Planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That County Council receive the report regarding the proposed project framework and work plan for the preparation of a New Official Plan, as generally outlined in Report CP 2026-41 for information;
2. And further, that Report CP 2026-41 be circulated to the Area Municipalities for their information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Developing a new Official Plan (OP) will be a multi-year process to establish an updated policy framework aligned with the current Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), that will help to direct where and how growth occurs, while supporting complete communities, farmland protection, environmental stewardship, and efficient use of infrastructure and public services.
- The process will include robust Area Municipal and broader community engagement and completion of supporting background studies to help ensure a new OP reflects local priorities; economic, social, environmental and technical considerations; and current provincial planning requirements.
- The proposed project framework will provide the flexibility for Planning staff to move forward with the development of a new OP, while also continuing to deliver on various ongoing planning initiatives, including agricultural zoning updates, improvements to development review processes, implementation of density-related policy updates, further review of rural 'dry industrial' opportunities, and secondary and/or area planning studies.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Staff will proceed with the work plan, related studies and background work, as well as the associated community engagement, as described in this report, following its receipt.

Financial Impact

No immediate implications beyond this year's approved budget.

Communications

Community engagement will be an important component of developing a new OP. The exercise of preparing a new Official Plan also presents a unique opportunity to have robust community engagement at key points throughout the process (e.g. input on visioning, feedback on background studies and draft policy directions, draft OP policies, etc.) to help inform and shape the overall outcomes. Engagement processes will also incorporate early and meaningful outreach to Indigenous communities to fulfill Provincial consultation requirements, as well as the County's own expectations with respect to such engagement.

Communication of the proposed engagement opportunities will be provided through a combination of local newspaper and radio advertising, the County website, social media, and digital marketing.




Overall, the scope of engagement measures being contemplated will meet and exceed the minimum statutory requirements under the Planning Act. This framework is described in further detail under the heading 'Developing a new County Official Plan' within the 'Comments' section of this report.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council's vision of "Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future." These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendations in this report support the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
<p>Goal 1.1 – 100% Housed</p> <p>Goal 1.2 – Sustainable infrastructure and development</p> <p>Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being</p> <p>Goal 1.4 – Connected people and places</p>	<p>Goal 2.1 – Climate change mitigation and adaptation</p> <p>Goal 2.2 – Preserve and enhance our natural environment</p>	<p>Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions</p> <p>Goal 3.2 – Collaborate with our partners and communities</p> <p>Goal 3.4 – Financial sustainability</p>

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

The approval of the 2026 Business Plan and Budget on December 10, 2025, included a new initiative regarding the preparation a new County Official Plan (OP). The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the work plan/program, background studies, and engagement approach that Planning staff are currently proposing to move ahead with this multi-year project.

An OP is the primary municipal document for establishing locational and development review requirements for various land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, parks, etc.), setting out how agricultural land and other natural features and cultural heritage resources are to be protected, and providing direction on how environmental constraints (e.g. flood, and erosion hazards) are to be addressed. The OP also helps to guide municipal decisions with respect to infrastructure, public services and other investments.

The OP sets out the long-term vision for how land will be used and developed in the County and Area Municipalities. As a statutory planning document required under the *Planning Act*, it guides every land-use decision in the County, including any required updates to Area Municipal zoning by-laws to effectively implement the policies and ensure consistency. More specifically it sets out the policy framework for guiding growth in the County over the next 20 to 30 years by addressing such matters as:

- Where growth and intensification of existing uses should happen (and where it shouldn't);
- What types of uses go where (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, parks, etc.);
- How dense development can/should be, which also influences walkability, suitability, and infrastructure needs;
- How planning for infrastructure such as roads, transit, water, and sewers is coordinated with planning for growth;
- How agricultural areas, natural heritage systems, and cultural heritage resources are protected; and,
- How communities are structured with well connected uses and a mix of uses and housing unit types to promote objectives, such as the creation of complete communities, intensification and efficient use of land and services, increased housing choice and affordability, etc.

The current OP was approved in December of 1995. While the document has been very effective at positively shaping growth and development in the County over the past 30 years, it has well surpassed the original planning horizon it was intended to serve and is now in need of review and update to ensure it remains current and effective.

Preparing a new OP provides an opportunity to evaluate and, where necessary, update the overall structure and content of the document and how the policy direction in it is communicated. Further, it provides an opportunity to ensure the OP policies appropriately consider and address current growth related challenges, recent changes in legislation and policy, and community objectives. At the same time, this process will allow the approaches and policies within the current OP that have been more recently updated, and/or otherwise worked well, to be recognized and carried forward into the new document, where appropriate.

Comments

The County currently has a population of approximately 140,000 residents spanning eight area municipalities and a mix of both urban and rural communities.

Oxford County has a historical average growth rate of 1.1% and experienced robust population growth from 2016-2021. Based on housing construction and permits since 2021, the forecast growth rate for the County is 1.6% which is expected to be largely sustained through the forecast period. By 2061, the County's population is forecast to grow by approximately 96,900 people from the 2021 population of 126,700 to a total population 223,600 and the number of households is forecast to grow by approximately 42,000, based on an average yearly increase of 1,050 new housing units. A new OP will help guide and direct this growth to help inform how and where this growth occurs over the long term, focusing on a 20-to-30-year growth horizon.

As the County and Area Municipalities continues to grow, they are also facing a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges like housing affordability, creating complete communities, protection of farmland and other environmental features, and the timely and fiscally sustainable provision of supporting infrastructure and public services. At the same time, there are also numerous opportunities, like new and emerging technologies, a highly skilled workforce, strong existing neighbourhoods and communities, a rich and diverse culture, a growing desire for healthy, walkable and interconnected urban spaces, and vibrant rural and agricultural areas. The preparation of a new OP presents an opportunity to better position the County and Area Municipalities to be able to address these challenges and opportunities and to establish a clear shared vision for the desired future.

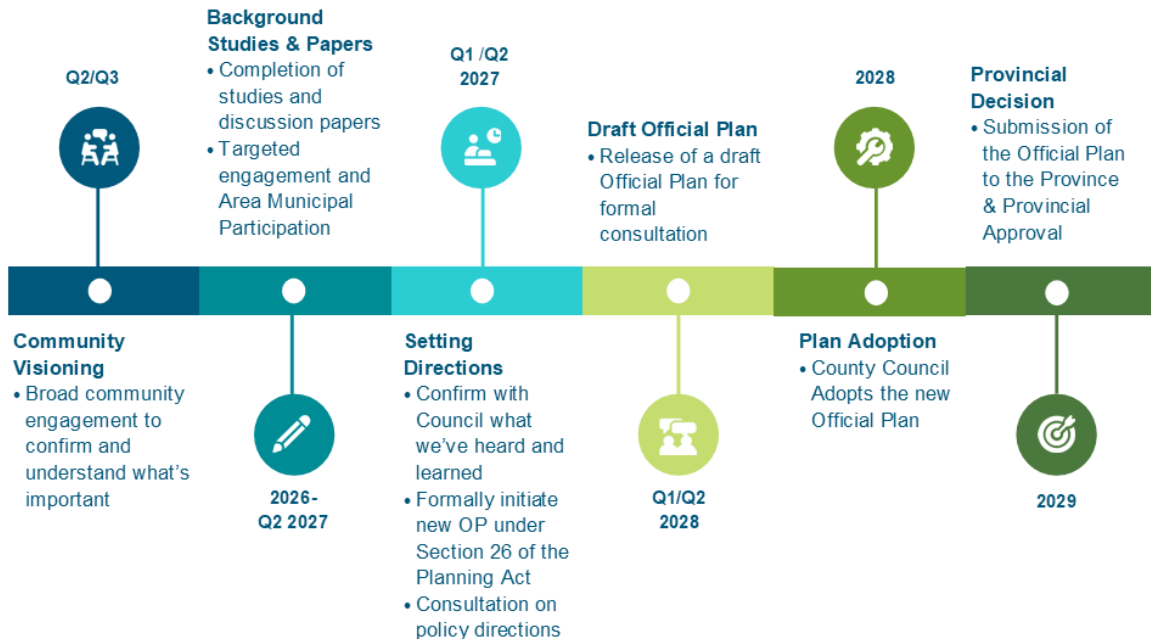
It will also ensure a stronger and clearer alignment with the Provincial direction provided through the PPS 2024 and the overall legislative planning framework in Ontario, which has seen significant change within the past five years and continues to evolve. Further, consideration of recently completed master plans for the County and Area Municipalities, and incorporation of appropriate references to those documents into the OP, will help to create a more comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary County and Area Municipal policy framework.

This process also provides an opportunity to look at ways to better communicate the technical information that is contained within the OP, improve accessibility and readability of the document, as well as consider options to make the document easier to maintain and update to streamline ongoing administration.

Developing a new County Official Plan

Completion of a new OP will be a multiyear project that includes multiple steps and components. Staff have broken the project into the steps shown below with approximate project timing, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Project timeline for development of a new Official Plan



The structure of the project allows for:

- Advancing engagement for Community Visioning this spring/summer, which includes providing opportunities to hear from the current members of County Council and Area Municipal Councils to help provide early input into the project;
- Commencing necessary and supporting background work in 2026, through to 2027;
- Returning a Report(s) to County Council in the first half of 2027 regarding overall directions, feedback to date, and undertaking further community engagement on how to move from ideas and directions to draft policies, while also fulfilling *Planning Act* requirements;
- Multiple opportunities for engagement with the Area Municipalities and broader community, to provide input into the development of the new OP;
- Time to understand and navigate uncertainty with respect to Provincial expectations regarding the structure and content of OPs and incorporate these expectations into a new OP; and,
- The development of the new OP to be led by Planning staff, with select input and support from consultants for certain planning matters requiring specific technical experience and expertise.

Engagement

Engagement will occur at various points throughout the project, as further detailed below, including targeted opportunities as part of various background study processes.

Community Visioning

Community Visioning presents a unique opportunity to have robust community engagement at the beginning of the OP review process to educate the community about the OP and to obtain feedback to help inform the development of goals and objectives for the OP. It is anticipated that this visioning exercise will include:

- Information sharing and dialogue with the Area Municipalities (i.e. both staff and Council);
- Meetings with and/or presentations to various groups, associations and committees (e.g. Agriculture and Planning Advisory Committee, Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation, Conservation Authorities, Southwestern Public Health, Area Municipal Advisory Committees as requested, etc.);
- Online/digital opportunities for participation (e.g. through *Speak Up Oxford*); and,
- Other opportunities for stakeholder/public participation/input (e.g. workshops, etc.).

Feedback from community visioning sessions will help to: develop a vision, goals, and objectives for a new OP; inform various background studies and work; and help to confirm key topic areas, themes, and matters of interest.

Additional engagement as part of background studies

It is anticipated that the process for completing certain background studies (i.e. based on their specific scope/technical nature), will include additional opportunities for targeted engagement, to solicit study specific feedback and input. This will help to inform the technical basis for policy updates, including revising or revisiting planning approaches as necessary to address matters that have seen policy or legislative changes (e.g. employment areas, strategic growth areas).

This additional engagement will be planned for as part of the study process for each of the particular background studies, as appropriate.

Engagement on draft directions and draft OP policies

The overall engagement approach is intended to allow planning staff to consult with the Area Municipalities and various other stakeholder groups and the broader public, on various components, topic areas, and background studies at key stages throughout the process, as appropriate. This multipoint approach will help to facilitate meaningful on the development of the various policy directions and technical details, which will, in turn, help to guide and shape the development of the draft OP policies.

This early and ongoing collaboration will help inform the preparation of the draft OP and ensure Area Municipal staff have multiple opportunities to review and provide input on the development of the policies, prior to its release, and will aim to manage the demands on County and Area Municipal staff by limiting the number and scope of policy components being consulted on at any given time.

Advancing OP Background Work

The preparation of a new OP will also need to be informed by a number of background studies and related analysis and technical review. These background studies will also build from and be informed by recent updates to the [County Growth Analysis and Land Needs Assessment by Watson and Associates](#) (the 'Watson study').

The completion of background studies will be informed by the requirements of the PPS 2024, available provincial guidance, and ongoing work of Planning staff. Extensive background review and research, including consideration of other municipal approaches and best practices, and additional targeted consultation, as appropriate, will also inform the preparation of these studies/reports.

Urban structure and identification of strategic growth areas

Building from the preliminary review of intensification potential completed as part of the Watson study, an Urban Structure Study is intended to provide a comprehensive, policy-driven, framework to guide where growth should be directed, how it will be connected to existing areas, and what form it will take.

The study will evaluate the existing land use hierarchy and structure of existing fully serviced settlement areas (i.e. transportation corridors, activity areas, parcel sizes, opportunities and constraints, etc.) in the context of the PPS 2024. The objective would be to ensure local growth management approaches are aligned with the most recent provincial objectives and policy direction.

This includes confirming the role and function of fully serviced settlement areas, clarifying requirements for growth and intensification, and ensuring that future development patterns support efficient infrastructure use, complete communities, and long-term sustainability. This study will confirm priority intensification locations, such as nodes, corridors, and central areas, and identify potential locations for Strategic Growth Areas, as defined in the PPS 2024. The study will also assess options to further increase intensification within existing built up areas, with a particular focus on the large urban centres of Woodstock, Ingersoll and Tillsonburg.

The study will help support the development of clear policy criteria for each identified intensification area including built form, density, and land-use mix, as well as criteria to inform the review of planning and development applications. The study will also provide County-wide recommendations to support intensification and redevelopment opportunities, inform updated strategic policies and objectives in the Official Plan, and establish long-term, policy-based direction to facilitate additional housing supply while maintaining community character and supporting orderly and efficient growth.

Employment Policy Review

An Employment and Commercial Policy Review is also proposed to evaluate the existing hierarchy of commercial and employment (industrial) uses and provide recommendations for a coordinated policy framework that aligns with the PPS 2024. Further this study will be coordinated (or combined) with the Urban Structure Study to ensure the County's communities function as complete communities that provide residents with convenient access to goods, services, and employment opportunities to satisfy their daily needs.

The County's last commercial policy review was completed in 2012, and many of the planning considerations and policy recommendations from that work remain applicable. Therefore, part of this review will include a review of the existing hierarchy of commercial areas, such as downtowns, main streets, community commercial areas, and highway-oriented commercial uses and the associated policy directions, with the goal of clarifying roles, strengthening performance, and improving flexibility to respond to evolving market and community needs.

The study will also examine opportunities to integrate with the urban structure review to support increased mixed-use development within appropriate areas, including the incorporation of residential and institutional uses where compatible, to promote walkability, efficient land use, and more vibrant activity nodes. Building on existing industrial and business park designations, the review will identify "areas of employment" in accordance with the updated definition in the *Planning Act*, and develop corresponding definitions and policy frameworks for "employment areas," while also recognizing other employment lands consistent with PPS direction. As part of this work, the study will assess compatibility between industrial uses and sensitive land uses, and provide recommendations to guide permitted uses, transitions, buffering, and design considerations to support long-term employment viability, while protecting public health and safety.

Housing

The County completed an updated Housing Needs Assessment in 2024 to support the updates to the 10-year shelter plan and the Housing for all Housing and Homelessness Plan 2024-2033. Planning staff are proposing a further update/addendum to the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment to look at market rate housing and associated vulnerabilities and complete further analysis to help inform and reinforce possible planning approaches to support infill and intensification opportunities that could increase the unit mix within existing communities and support the concept of complete communities. This would include examining land use planning tools to help support housing opportunities and options across the housing continuum and to help address challenges the County is facing with housing affordability.

Other background studies/discussion papers

Several other topic areas (e.g. Agriculture, Environment, Cultural Heritage, Infrastructure, Resource Extraction, and Man-Made Hazards, etc.) have also been identified as needing background review work and/or additional research. In some cases, this work has already commenced (e.g. environmental policy updates) or will build from other existing reports and studies (e.g. various Master Plans). More information and a high-level overview of the types of proposed background studies/components is provided in Attachment 1. Staff may also revise or identify additional subject areas/matters to be considered based on consideration of the feedback received through the visioning exercise.

Delivering on Ongoing Projects

The overall approach proposed for the preparation of a new OP will also ensure staff maintain the flexibility to be able to accommodate and deliver on various other ongoing and planned projects, including, but not limited to:

- completion of agricultural zoning updates for the rural Area Municipalities;
- completion of implementation and density related OP policy updates, and any other related zoning updates;
- identification of potential further improvements to development review processes;
- initiating further study of potential opportunities to accommodate rural 'dry-industrial' uses;
- ongoing or planned settlement area boundary reviews/secondary planning studies and/or area studies; and,
- monitoring and responding to ongoing Provincial legislative and regulation changes and development of related implementation tools (e.g. standardization of Official Plans, Provincial guidance to support the implementation of the PPS 2024, etc.).

This approach will fully leverage the existing CPO staff compliment, minimize reliance on consultants for the development of a new OP (i.e. to those areas where additional technical knowledge/support is required) as much as possible, and ensure that planning staff are able to continue to deliver on other planning projects and commitments identified in the business plan.

Working with Southwestern Public Health

On September 10, 2025, County Council directed staff to work with Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) Staff to determine how their Public Health & the Built Environment Report could be implemented to the benefit of all Oxford residents. Many of the themes highlighted in the SWPH Report recognize the intersection of health, sustainability, and the built environment (e.g. agricultural and food systems, walkability and connectivity, complete communities that are planned to be inclusive for all ages and abilities, addressing the impacts of a changing climate, etc.).

While the current OP already includes policies related to many of these public health related topics and themes, the development of a new OP provides an opportunity to further expand, better align, and incorporate areas of shared interest, where they are applicable in a land use planning context. Attachment 2 summarizes some of the areas of interest that have been identified by SWPH to date and how they relate to existing OP content and how they might be further addressed through the preparation of a new OP. SWPH staff have already been participating and providing input into related planning projects, including the review and update of the environmental policies for the OP. Similarly County staff have provided input into SWPH projects/reviews that interface with land use planning objectives, and other County staff regularly meet to discuss matters where there are other areas of overlap (e.g. discussions regarding climate change and health vulnerability).

Staff will ensure the SWPH is aware of the ongoing OP related work and that they are included within community engagement opportunities, including community visioning.

CONCLUSIONS

The preparation of a new OP represents a key opportunity to proactively guide new growth, as well as revitalization of existing built-up areas, as Oxford's various settlement areas continue to grow. By establishing a clear long-term vision and land use policy framework for the County and Area Municipalities, the new plan will help ensure that development occurs in a thoughtful, sustainable, and fiscally responsible manner, that is consistent with Provincial policy direction and applicable legislation, while also being tailored to address Oxford's unique local context and community goals and objectives.

The proposed multi-year process emphasizes early and ongoing engagement with Area Municipalities, other key stakeholders (e.g. public agencies, community groups, etc.) and the broader community. Community visioning, the preparation of various background studies, and close collaboration with the Area Municipalities, will help to ensure that the new OP reflects local priorities, the full range of land use and technical considerations, and evolving provincial direction. Key supporting studies, such as the Urban Structure Study, Employment and Commercial Policy Review, and additional housing analysis identified in this report, will provide the technical foundation necessary to inform updated policies related to growth management, intensification, employment lands, housing supply, and complete communities.

Overall, the development of a new Official Plan will help to ensure Oxford County and the Area Municipalities are positioned to effectively manage anticipated growth, while also addressing emerging challenges such as housing affordability, environmental concerns, infrastructure demands, and evolving economic conditions. Through a coordinated and collaborative planning approach, the development of a new OP will help to ensure Oxford's rural and urban communities are resilient, vibrant, and sustainable and support the wellbeing of current and future residents, while also protecting valuable agricultural lands and natural systems.

SIGNATURES

Report author:

Original signed by _____

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Departmental approval:

Original signed by _____

Paul Michiels
Director of Community Planning

Approved for submission:

Original signed by _____
Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Key Project Components and Background Studies/Discussion Papers
- Attachment 2 - Summary of Areas of Overlap Between SWPH Report and the Official Plan (OP) and proposed New OP work plan

Attachment 1: Key Project Components and Background Studies/Discussion Papers for development of a new Official Plan

The following tables outline the preliminary key planning issues/components that have been identified by County Planning staff for consideration as part of developing a new Official Plan (OP):

Study Component	Component Overview/Summary	Related Comments
<p>Employment Policy Review</p>	<p>This study will help to inform potential updates to the OP employment polices and designations by expanding on the employment forecasts and related findings from the recently completed Growth Analysis and Land Needs Assessment and ensuring an appropriate mix and range of employment uses are provided throughout the County.</p> <p>The policy changes introduced through the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024, place a greater focus on creating ‘complete communities’, which includes providing for employment and goods, services, and amenities within neighbourhoods and mixed-use areas to facilitate access to jobs and services, support walkability, enhance quality of life etc. Important ‘employment areas’ (i.e. traditional industrial areas) are meant to be delineated and protected from compatibility issues that can result from proximity to residential and other sensitive land uses.</p> <p>It is generally intended that this study will serve to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the overall OP employment policy approach with current PPS direction. • Review the existing hierarchy of commercial areas and related policy approaches and provide recommendations on how best to update and enhance these approaches. • Provide recommendations regarding the treatment of commercial areas to support increased mixed-use approaches (e.g. incorporation of residential), where appropriate. • Building from the existing industrial and business park designations, identify ‘areas of employment’ based on the new definition in the Planning Act, and corresponding definition and policies for ‘employment areas’, while also identifying other employment lands (per the PPS). This will include recommendations related to types of permitted uses. • Assess matters of compatibility between industrial uses and sensitive uses and provide related policy recommendations. • Consider how employment in un-serviced rural settlement areas can complement employment in serviced settlement areas. <p>The ultimate scope and deliverables expected from this study will be established by Planning Staff through a detailed terms of reference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will involve consultant support, with project management by County Planning staff. • Area Municipalities will have opportunities to provide input through the study process. • Will also incorporate opportunities for focused community engagement.

<p>Urban Structure Study</p>	<p>Building from the preliminary review of intensification potential and opportunities completed as part of the Growth Analysis and Land Needs Assessment, this study is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the overall OP policy approach to growth with the PPS, 2024 • Reviewing the existing OP hierarchy of settlement areas and provide recommendations to improve and clarify the approach. • Identification of Strategic Growth Areas, to confirm priority intensification areas (e.g. nodes, corridors, and other intensification areas, including Central Areas, for Woodstock, Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg, as well as other fully serviced settlements) consistent with PPS directions. • Recommend clear policy criteria for each identified intensification area to guide future development and the related review of planning and development applications. • Inform development of updated strategic policies and objectives in the Official Plan to guide future growth. • Providing long-term, policy-driven direction for facilitating additional housing supply. <p>The ultimate scope and deliverables expected from this study will be established by Planning Staff through a detailed terms of reference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will involve consultant support, with project management by County Planning staff. • Area Municipalities will have opportunities to provide input through the study process. • Will also incorporate opportunities for focused community engagement.
<p>Housing Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Review the overall OP policy approach to planning for housing with specific consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation/integration of the County's 10 Year Shelter Plan: "Housing for all" into the Official Plan. • Identify potential additional measures and options to increase the range of housing unit types, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supports the provision of affordable and stable housing opportunities across the housing continuum. ○ Is focused particularly on areas within fully serviced settlements, but outside of areas intended for intensification (e.g. strategic growth areas), to help support 'missing middle' housing opportunities, building from existing/completed updates and approaches (e.g. additional residential units). • Identify approaches/recommendations to implement the housing policies in the PPS, 2024. • A component will include a further update/addendum to the Housing Needs Assessment, 2024, including the development of recommendations for market housing and with a land use planning lens, to help support this work. <p>The ultimate scope and deliverables expected from this study will be established by County Staff through a detailed terms of reference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will involve consultant support, with project management by County Planning staff. • Will also involve ongoing consultation with Housing Services staff. • Area Municipalities will have opportunities to provide input through the study process.

<p>Agriculture</p>	<p>Building from the recently updated Agricultural policies (Provincially approved in 2024) review will focus on aligning the County’s overall approach for the long-term protection of agriculture with changes made through the PPS, 2024, this will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating an Agricultural Systems based approach. • Exploring further opportunities to support local food and near-urban and urban agriculture to address potential gaps in the agri-food network. • Developing recommendations on where other existing policies may need to be adjusted in consideration of newly released Provincial guidance (e.g. Agricultural Impact Analysis, Additional Residential Units). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Paper to be developed by County Planning staff. • Area Municipalities will have opportunities to provide input through development of discussion paper.
<p>Environment</p>	<p>Utilizing the existing discussion paper and draft policy directions, 2023 ONHSS report, and supporting materials to update policies related to natural heritage, water resources, natural hazards, open space, soils, energy, and impacts of a changing climate, including further consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the PPS and related Provincial guidance/standards. • Consider alternative approaches for open space planning. • Complete additional studies for refinement of ecological linkages and restoration/enhancement opportunities and approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant support anticipated for a broader ecological linkages analysis and analysis on natural heritage restoration/enhancement opportunities. • Area Municipalities will continue to have opportunities to provide input through draft policies and mapping.
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Align the County’s overall approach with respect to cultural heritage resources with the PPS, 2024 and updates to the Ontario Heritage Act, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities and policy directions for cultural heritage planning including insuring that the policies reflect the full range of potential cultural heritage resources (i.e. archaeology, built heritage, and cultural heritage landscapes) and that the area municipalities have a complete set of tools available for the conservation of resources (e.g. inventories, heritage impact assessments, grants and loans). • Update requirements for archaeological assessments to reflect current practices and standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Paper to be developed by Community Planning staff. • Area Municipalities will have opportunities to provide input through development of discussion paper.

<p>Infrastructure (transportation, sewage, water, wastewater, energy, waste)</p>	<p>Review overall approach to infrastructure requirements within the Official Plan, with specific consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates required to reflect various current legislative requirements and processes. • Ensuring appropriate references to applicable County and Area Municipal Master Plans and related standards, by-laws, and policies. • Ensuring that any policies regarding potential forms of non municipal servicing (i.e. private on-site services, private communal services etc.) include consideration of appropriate Provincial direction and requirements to support County’s overall growth management objectives and ensure that, where/if such infrastructure is permitted, it is financially viable and/or feasible, supports protection of the environment, avoids negative impacts, and minimizes potential risks to human health and safety. • Align policy approaches with the PPS, 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Paper to be developed by Community Planning staff. • Input from County and Area Municipal Public Works staff. • Area Municipalities will have opportunities to provide input through development of discussion paper.
<p>Resource Extraction, Man Made Hazards</p>	<p>Building from the existing OP policies, align the overall approach with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and related guidance on these planning considerations, while also addressing any applicable legislative changes. Resource extraction policies were last reviewed in 2017 and there have not been any substantive changes to applicable PPS policies or legislation since that time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Paper to be developed by Community Planning staff.
<p>Planning Implementation Framework and Approach</p>	<p>Continue to monitor for any further Planning Act and related legislative requirements (including the recently released Bill 98 - <i>Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act</i>) that would need to be addressed as part of the development of a new Official Plan, over and above the interim updates to the implementation policies that were recently approved by County Council, or submitted for Province for review and ‘approval’ (i.e. complete application requirements).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be undertaken by Community Planning staff.

Attachment 2: Summary of Areas of Overlap Between SWPH Report and the Official Plan (OP) and proposed New OP work plan

<p>SWPH Report: Building Healthier Communities Together: Highlighting the Role of Municipal and Public Health Collaboration in Addressing the Social Determinants of Health</p>	<p>Integration with existing OP policies</p>	<p>Relation to new OP work plan (e.g. development of background studies/policy directions etc.)</p>
<p>Sustainable and equitable food systems – how communities are designed to improve physical food access, community supported agriculture, mobile markets and urban markets, promotion of sustainable food systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing commercial policy framework facilitate the integration of neighbourhood commercial uses (e.g. food stores) into existing and new neighbourhoods to facilitate access and support walkability, subject to appropriate scale and location criteria. Agricultural Policies 3.1 protect prime agricultural areas for long term food production, including allowing for various value added/value retaining agricultural uses, on-farm diversified uses, and agricultural related uses that support sustainable food systems and local production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of an agricultural systems approach into agriculture policies Urban structure and employment review (e.g. updates for requirements for commercial uses/mixed uses – would include consideration of food stores/retail/etc.) Updates to environmental policies – look at opportunities to better recognize community gardens/food forests in areas of open space/parks
<p>Climate Change and Health Vulnerability - how environmental shifts (e.g. rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changes in air and water quality) may disproportionately impact at-risk populations.</p> <p>Effective community planning plays a critical role in mitigating these risks by integrating climate adaptation strategies - such as green infrastructure, heat-resilient urban design, accessible healthcare systems, and emergency preparedness - into local development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing policies (3.2 Environment) include: support for the use of green infrastructure and protection of existing green space; direct development away from areas of natural hazards, where there is unacceptable risk to public healthy or safety or damage to property; and provide direction on various environmental and health community related urban design considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates to environmental policies considering changes to language/terminology and policies for: impacts of a changing climate, green infrastructure, complete communities, active transportation, etc. (also building from PPS policies) Will also be considering potential updates to urban design directions/requirements, including for public/private realm (e.g. walkability, vegetation coverage/green infrastructure, active transportation, etc.)

<p>Social Connectivity - a sense of belonging or social connectedness tremendously impacts physical and mental health. Social connection influences and is influenced by an individual's relationships and interactions with others, their communities, the physical environment, organized systems (public and private), and the policies created in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing transportation policies (5.1 County Transportation Policy) include policies for the transportation network, pedestrians, bicycling, inter-urban transportation. Urban structure (e.g. Chapter 6 Rural Settlements, Chapter 7 City of Woodstock, Chapter 8 Town of Tillsonburg, Chapter 9 Town of Ingersoll) provides direction on built form, height, density, typology, mixing of uses, etc. as well as requirements for parks and open space that all help to support this objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing and updating policies for infrastructure (including transportation) updating terminology and approaches (e.g. active transportation). Considering opportunities to better recognize how built form, building orientation, mixing of uses, transportation networks etc. can help reduce transportation costs and improve and support walkability, multi modal/active transportation, and how people live, work, and play. (including through the urban structure study)
<p>Age Friendly Communities - Age-friendly communities are communities where policies, services, and structures are implemented or built to support older adults in aging in place, staying involved in their communities, and remaining physically and socially active.</p> <p>Equitable age-friendly planning leads to informed and cost-effective decision-making, stronger community cohesion, and impactful and sustainable changes. The result is the creation of empowering and friendly communities for people of all ages to live healthier lives and experience healthy aging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing transportation policies (5.1 County Transportation Policy) include policies for the transportation network, pedestrians, bicycling, inter-urban transportation. Urban structure (e.g. Chapter 6 Rural Settlements, Chapter 7 City of Woodstock, Chapter 8 Town of Tillsonburg, Chapter 9 Town of Ingersoll) provides direction on built form, height, density, typology, mixing of uses, etc. as well as requirements for parks and open space that all help to support this objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policies will include an inclusivity/accessibility lens (including as part of other studies/reviews, as described in Attachment 1) Consideration of updates for urban design, accessibility, active transportation, etc. will provide opportunities to further address this objective.