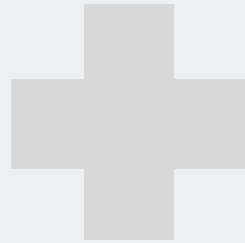
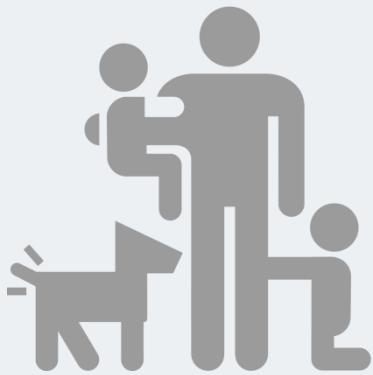


WELLINGTON COUNTY

PLANNING REVIEW THROUGH A PUBLIC HEALTH LENS



Prepared By:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The role of public health in land use planning can be traced back to the industrial revolution. At this time, newly urbanized areas needed the infrastructure to provide healthy and sanitary conditions, which resulted in public health, land use planning and civil engineers coming together.ⁱ Over time, however, there began a separation of planning and public health. This was partially due to the emerging specialization in the planning field (e.g. environmental planning, transportation engineering and urban planning) and a concentration on individual health practices and conditions in the medical field.ⁱⁱ

Recent research in health has returned to the thinking that health is not always decided by individual health behaviours but, rather, is largely determined by the environment in which one lives. For instance, many of today's looming health concerns revolve around chronic disease, such as obesity, heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer. These conditions are often associated with lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating, and some with environmental exposure to air pollutants (e.g. certain types of cancer).ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to specific connections with chronic diseases, the built environment and land use planning policies have the potential to impact certain populations disproportionately at the community level, thus becoming a health equity issue. For example, studies demonstrate that individuals and families living in lower socioeconomic status (SES) neighbourhoods are more likely to live close to a highway or major industrial area, hence exposing them to higher levels of air pollution and increasing their risk of suffering associated health conditions. Additionally, research has shown an association between food deserts – areas with limited access to fresh groceries – and lower SES neighbourhoods.^{iv}

As age is also an important social determinant of health, designing communities that meet the “8-80 cities” concept is critical. As a non-profit community development organization based in Toronto, 8-80 Cities has four areas of focus: Parks and Public Spaces, Sustainable and healthy mobility, People friendly public realm, and Open Streets programs.^v Each of these is linked to the concept of building a healthy community or, in this case, city. A community that is built with the 8-80 concept in mind is one that promotes and enables healthy behaviours regardless of whether you are eight (8) or 80 years old. Such a community is designed to prioritize human interaction through interconnected streets and public places where people work, learn and play.^{vi} Ultimately, “8-80 cities encourages sustainable and healthy lifestyles for people regardless of age, gender, ability and social status”.^{vi}

The Healthy Communities movement pre-dates 8-80 Cities, however. The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC), which was itself established in 1992, has identified that the broader healthy communities movement has roots in the 1980's in Ontario.^{vii} Arguably, the term itself became popularized after the World Health Organization's “Healthy Cities Project” was initiated in Europe in 1986.^{viii} That same year, the First International Conference on Health Promotion was held in Ottawa. The Conference resulted in the “Ottawa Charter,” which was intended “to achieve Health for All by the year 2000 and beyond.”^{ix} The Charter indicates that “Health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life; where they learn, work, play, and love.”^x Today, the importance of a given place, including its intersecting natural, built, social and cultural environments, is widely understood as being a determinant of the social, health and economic outcomes of local people.

In summary, designing and building healthy, safe and complete communities has the potential to support the health of an entire population, including that of Wellington County. Healthy communities promote active transportation, recreation and healthy food choices; improve access to jobs, schools and health care; create strong social networks; and ensure good air and water quality.^{xi}

1.2 Key Developments Leading to the Study

Locally, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's (WDGPH) mandate is to improve the health of the population through activities that promote and protect health, and prevent disease and injury. To accomplish this mandate, it is important to work collaboratively with municipalities, school boards, health and social service agencies to create and sustain healthy communities. Municipalities can play a big role in enabling healthy decisions through their land-use design policies and practices. Nevertheless, WDGPH's understanding and experience with land use planning policies continues to evolve.

In an attempt to inform the future direction of public health's role in land use planning, public health staff completed a needs assessment in 2014 with municipal planners in Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph. From the assessment, the majority of planners indicated that reviewing Official Plans would be a useful role for Public Health.

1.3 Purpose of WDG Official Plan Policy Review

Using funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Healthy Communities Partnership, WDGPH hired a planning consultant to review municipal and county Official Plans, and other appropriate planning-related documents, in order to identify local strengths and areas of opportunity. This will help WDGPH make an effective contribution to the development of healthy communities throughout the region.

This report provides an assessment of the strengths and areas of opportunity contained within the Official Plans and related planning documents for municipalities within Wellington County from a public health perspective. Subsequently, the report recommends considerations for future Official Plans and related policies that would help contribute to planning for a healthy community. The researchers note that, generally speaking, the Wellington County Official Plan is used by local area municipalities.

1.4 Anticipated Outcomes of the Review

There are several anticipated outcomes of this review. The review and suggested considerations could encourage local municipalities to adopt Official Plan amendments, or to further study the prospect thereof, whether in the short-, medium- or long-terms. It is hoped that this work will support future collaborations between WDGPH and Wellington County; between WDGPH and local planning officials; between the County and municipalities; and, between local municipalities. As such, an anticipated outcome of this work is fuel for capacity building in the area of healthy communities. Lastly, this work is intended to provide food for thought for both public health and planning officials who serve the public interest both within and across Wellington and Dufferin counties, and the City of Guelph.

1.5 Methodology & Assessment

The built environment requirement of the Ontario Public Health Standards (2008) suggests that public health units work to address the following risk factors: healthy eating, healthy weights, tobacco, physical activity, alcohol use and UV radiation. Nonetheless, when preparing for the Official Plan review process, WDGP recognized that these are health outcomes of community design, but may not be the language of how planning decisions are made. As such, the internal built environment committee at WDGP decided to select a planning-oriented framework that would guide consistency for the Official Plan review process across all 16 municipalities and 2 counties.

After reviewing several documents, the committee decided to adapt the framework outlined in *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*, produced by British Columbia's Provincial Health Services Authority.^{xii} In this document, physical features of the built environment were separated into 5 domains:

- Healthy Neighbourhood Design;
- Healthy Transportation Networks;
- Healthy Natural Environments;
- Healthy Food Systems; and
- Healthy Housing.

These domains are each described in the following sub-sections. WDGP worked with the planning consultant to develop a planning checklist that contained several planning policy principles within each domain. These were then used to guide the Official Plan review for strengths and areas of opportunity. Referencing back to the checklist, successful examples from other communities and additional best practice literature were referenced and subsequent recommended considerations were developed. It should be noted that many of the suggested considerations and case examples may be relevant in a more urban community, as the literature does not always provide examples within a rural context.

1.6 Five Domains

Below we describe each of the aforementioned domains in some detail.

1.6.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

Safe and healthy neighbourhood design can encourage active transportation and physical activity by considering mixed land use development, density, and efficient street connectivity^{xiii,xiv}. These considerations can indirectly impact a community's physical and mental health via cycling, walking and accessible physical activity opportunities^{xv,xvi}. Convenient access to a range of amenities, such as recreation facilitates, through mixed land use development has been shown to increase active transportation and overall physical activity^{xvii,xviii}. High density neighbourhoods increase proximity to work, school, amenities and recreation options, having multiple positive impacts, such as improved air quality, active transportation and physical activity^{xix,xx}. Research also suggests that compact and connected street design promotes safe use of active transportation, therefore encouraging community members to walk or cycle^{xxi}.

Community design can also moderate climate change impacts. The links between climate change and human health are numerous and diverse. For example, extreme weather events (heat waves, flooding,

droughts, tornadoes), which are expected to increase in frequency and severity, may lead to increased risks of injury and illness, as well as increased risks of damage to critical infrastructure (water and sanitation systems, power grids, etc.)^{xxii}. Communities can increase their resiliency to climate change impacts by understanding local needs and vulnerabilities. Adaptation efforts may include increasing green spaces, decreasing impervious surface runoff, and designing infrastructure to withstand severe weather events^{xxiii}.

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xii} as the criteria used to review municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

1.6.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The design and connectivity of transportation networks can make it either easier to get around by walking or biking or simply easier to drive^{xxiv}. Communities can build healthy transportation networks by including features that improve streetscapes, including sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and benches, which have been shown to be associated with an increase in physical activity among older adults^{xxv}. Meanwhile, in rural settings, physical activity among adults is found to be associated with trails and parks with pleasant aesthetics^{xxvi}. There are also various design features that can help improve safety and consequently potentially encourage walking and cycling, for example, traffic calming measures^{xxvii,xxviii} and cycling infrastructure (such as dedicated cycle routes, both on and off road)^{xxix,xxx,xxxi}. Evidence suggests that biking or walking to school may not only be influenced by proximity, but also by supportive infrastructure, and that active transport to school may also increase habitual physical activity among children^{xxxii}.

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxxiii} as criteria used to review municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

1.6.3 Healthy Natural Environments

Healthy natural environments serve to enhance public health through improved air quality and cooling effects, as well as by providing opportunities for community member to engage with nature. Research indicates that urban trees have the potential to clean the air of air pollutants^{xxxiv}, which in turn can help prevent the onset of cancer^{xxxv}, cardiovascular disease and respiratory difficulties^{xxxvi}. Preliminary studies

also suggest that urban trees and green spaces can have cooling effects^{xxxvii,xxxviii}, mitigating the impacts of extreme heat events which are linked to increased mortality, in particular for those with pre-existing cardiovascular and respiratory conditions^{xxxix}. Meanwhile, studies have demonstrated that exposure to nature is not only associated with increased physical activity, but is also linked with increased general wellbeing, including improved cognitive function and reduced stress and anxiety^{xl,xli,xlii}.

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xliii} as the criteria used to review municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

1.6.4 Healthy Food System

The local food system impacts a community's access to, and choice of, food options^{xliv}. Land use planning can directly influence factors within the local food system, such as production, distribution and procurement^{xlv}. A community is more probable to reap the health benefits of nutritious foods when healthy and affordable local food options are easily accessible^{xlvi}. Individuals who do not have convenient neighbourhood access to a healthy food retail outlet, like a grocery store, may be more likely to choose costly and less nutritious options (e.g., processed food)^{xlvii}. Research also suggests that this unequal distribution of food retail outlets in residential areas occurs more in lower income neighbourhoods^{xlviii}. When a local food system is adequately supported to provide development initiatives like community gardens and kitchens, healthy local food options are made accessible, while bolstering community members' food skills, social and coping skills, and overall community empowerment^{xlix,l}.

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{li} as the criteria used to review municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure

1.6.5 Healthy Housing

Housing affordability and quality impact health in numerous and diverse ways. Access to affordable housing reduces the frequency of moving and improves the chances of having disposable income available, both of which reduce stress and allow people and families to take better care of themselves and stay healthy^{1,lii,liii}. Additionally, living in quality housing may be associated with an improved sense of safety and decreased fear of crime, which in turn reduces stress and improves social connections^{liv}. And high quality housing with appropriate ventilation and moisture control leads to improved indoor air

¹ Cohen R (2011). The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A Research Summary. Centre for Housing Policy.

quality, which can have impacts on general and respiratory health, particularly for children with asthma^{lv, lvi}. Moreover, providing energy efficient housing helps people to afford living in their homes, while reducing risks of illnesses aggravated by cold and damp conditions^{lvii}.

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lviii} as the criteria used to review municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

1.7 Layout of this Report

The next three chapters in this report provide: an overview of the roles of the public health and planning professions in supporting the development of healthy communities; description of the Provincial planning framework; and, review of relevant Provincial policy directions. The subsequent chapters correspond to the review of planning documents developed by the County and each of its local municipalities. Please note that, since several of Wellington County's municipalities utilize the County's Official Plan, we have prepared and included summaries of the County Official Plan's strengths and areas of opportunity within the relevant local reports; however, we would refer readers to the County's own report for a more comprehensive review, including policy considerations and other suggested strategies and actions. In cases where the local municipality uses the County Official Plan and a local Official Plan, both were reviewed. In cases where the County Official Plan is used alongside other local plans, we have tried to provide suggested strategies and actions (rather than policy considerations, since there would be no Official Plan for the local municipality itself to update), but we were limited in doing so because we do not know, at this point, what the status is on the implementation of those plans. As is indicated in the Next Steps section towards the end of this report, we look forward to meeting with the local area planners to gather additional information that would help us to formulate more detailed suggestions.

Guelph/Eramosa was a unique case in that the County Official Plan was the only document reviewed and the report, therefore, only provides a summary of the County Official Plan's strengths and opportunities, as noted above. In the case of Centre Wellington, the policy considerations and suggested strategies and actions pertain to the local Official Plan, even though the County Official Plan is also used (this is, again, because the comprehensive Wellington County report is available in another section).

2.0 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Although planning is a responsibility of municipalities, within a Provincial policy framework, public health professionals, including those based in Ontario's 36 local public health units such as Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, can play a key role in advancing positive population-level health outcomes by providing health-evidence, knowledge translation, input into planning decisions and collaboration at municipal planning tables.^{vi} Ultimately, municipalities and public health can work together to achieve a common health goal, while also addressing economic viability, environmental sustainability and public preferences.^{vi} To that end, both the planning and public health professions have taken initiatives in recent years to influence healthy policy and planning at the local and provincial levels. The timing is right to align these efforts and work in collaboration to make a meaningful difference in Ontario's communities, including those within Wellington County.

2.1 The Roles of Professional Planners

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (Official PlanPI) is the province's professional association for planners. In 2006, OPPI launched its healthy communities initiative, in recognition of the fact that the Institute could play a leadership role in achieving healthy and sustainable communities. OPPI has contributed direction and ideas to its membership and the broader public through its Calls to Action and Policy Papers. These resources have addressed topics such as active transportation, walkability, complete streets, transit planning, food systems, age-friendly community planning, and planning for the needs of children and youth,² each of which is applicable to planning for healthy communities in Wellington County.

2.2 The Roles of Public Health Officials

The built environment has come to be recognized as such an important factor for one's health that *the promotion of healthy environments – both natural and built*, is a strategic goal of the Ontario Public Health Sector Strategic Plan, which was released in April 2013.^{lix} The Plan highlights the importance of: active transportation and public transportation to reduce care use and make communities more walkable; of well-designed roadways, sidewalks and stairways and the removal of obstacles to prevent falls and associated injuries; and, supporting air quality, safety and connectivity, which all impact individual and community health. It is noted that local public health units, including Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, are well-placed to influence municipal policy and planning decisions through existing relationships with municipalities. The Strategic Plan encourages public health units to build capacity to advocate for the development of healthier environments to benefit all Ontarians.

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS, 2008)^{lx} set out the minimum requirements for public health programs and services to be delivered across Ontario's 36 health units. The Standards were revised in 2008 to include requirements around the built environment. This is found in two sections of the OPHS, 2008: Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Hazard Prevention and Management. The requirements include working to improve the design of the environment across a multitude of risk factors.

² Resources available here: <http://ontarioplanners.ca/Policy/Healthy-Communities-bull-Sustainable-Communities>

Chronic Disease Prevention

Requirement #6: The board of health shall work with municipalities to support healthy public policies and the creation or enhancement of supportive environments in recreational settings and the built environment regarding the following topics:

- Healthy eating;
- Healthy weights;
- Comprehensive tobacco control;
- Physical activity;
- Alcohol use; and
- Exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

Health Hazard Prevention and Management

Requirement #4: The board of health shall assist community partners to develop healthy policies related to reducing exposure to health hazards. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Indoor air quality;
- Outdoor air quality;
- Extreme weather; and
- Built environments

3.0 PROVINCIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Land use planning for Wellington County unfolds within a Provincial policy and planning framework. Below we describe some of the most important Provincial policy and planning documents in terms of their relevancy to designing healthy communities in Wellington County.

3.1 Planning Act of Ontario

The *Planning Act of Ontario* sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario and describes how, and by whom, land uses may be controlled. Vis a vis the *Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act* (2004), it ensures that Provincial interests are reflected in municipal land use planning decisions, and provides for a balance of economic growth and environmental protection. The *Act* requires that all municipalities and Counties in Ontario adopt Official Plans, with the approval of the appropriate Planning Authority in Ontario, and review them at least every five years to ensure their currency. In Ontario, regional municipalities and counties are considered “Upper Tier” municipalities, in accordance with the *Municipal Act*. Local municipalities, which make up a County or region, are considered “Lower Tier” municipalities. In Wellington County, several local municipalities use the County’s Official Plan as their own, or in conjunction with their own.

Upper Tier and Local Official Plans are statutory documents that establish policies to implement a municipality’s vision and expectations for the built and natural environment. They provide guidance for the physical development of the municipality over a minimum 20 year period while taking into consideration a wide range of social, economic and environmental conditions that are important in building a healthy, safe and sustainable community. The scale of policies and plans ranges from community-wide to neighbourhood level, but can also include individual developments. These policies provide the basis for public and private sector investment decisions. Upper Tier Official Plans in WDGPH’s jurisdiction include the Plans for Dufferin County and Wellington County. All municipalities within these Counties must ensure that their local Official Plans are consistent with and support the policies of the respective County Plan.

3.2 Provincial Policy Statement

The *Provincial Policy Statement* establishes the Provincial Government’s vision for how Ontario’s landscape should be settled; how the built environment should be created; and how the province’s lands and resources should be managed over the long term, in order to achieve livable and resilient communities. The *Statement* identifies areas of Provincial interest in planning matters in order to provide guidance in the development of Official Plans and other related local planning documents. Section two of the *Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act* (2004) into effect alongside the *Provincial Policy Statement* and required municipal planning decisions to be consistent with the *Statement*, in order to ensure, rather than encourage, the implementation of provincial policies. In many ways, the Provincial Policy Statement promotes the principles associated with developing healthy communities.

The *Planning Act* requires that the *Provincial Policy Statement* be reviewed at least every five years. There has so far been one review of the *Statement*, which began in 2010 and was completed in February 2014 with the announcement of a new-and-improved *Statement*. The reviews involve consultation with

a multitude of stakeholders, including public and ministerial health officials. Below we discuss the improvements made in several policy areas relevant to healthy communities: Healthy, Active Communities; Northern and Rural Communities; Climate Change; Natural Heritage, Wetlands and Water; and, Agriculture.³

Healthy, Active Communities

Whereas, within the “Healthy, Active Communities” policy area, the *Statement* (2005) provided for efficient development and land use patterns and the promotion of accessibility; safe public spaces, streets and facilities; compact form; and, transit / alternative modes of transportation, the *Statement* (2014) goes farther to name active transportation, transit and transit-supportive development and connectivity between modes; community design and planning for all ages; and, recognizing institutional uses as important elements of communities. Moreover, while the previous version broadly encouraged coordination among stakeholders dealing with planning matters, the revised *Statement* specifically encourages coordination of emergency management and public facilities, including co-locating different forms of the latter (such as libraries, schools and recreation centres).

Northern and Rural Communities

Whereas, within the “Northern and Rural Communities” policy area, the *Statement* (2005) provided for focused growth in settlement areas and flexibility to reflect local characteristics, the *Statement* (2014) goes further and recognizes the diversity of settlement and rural areas; that some municipalities are experiencing no growth or population decline; a new section on rural policies to support healthy, integrated and viable rural areas; and, clarification of the types of uses that may occur on rural lands; guidance on studies needed to support settlement are expansions and employment area conversions; and, clarity that municipalities can determine areas for intensification and redevelopment, and that local targets should be based on local conditions.

Climate Change

Whereas, within the “Climate Change” policy area, the *Statement* (2005) provided for a mix of densities and use in settlement areas to minimize negative impacts on air quality and climate change, and otherwise indirectly addressed climate change, the *Statement* (2014) goes further and requires consideration of impacts on climate change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change, and encourages green infrastructure and requires stronger stormwater management.

Natural Heritage, Wetlands and Water

Whereas, within the “Natural Heritage, Wetlands and Water” policy area, the *Statement* (2005) provided various environmental protections and the maintenance / restoration of diversity / connectivity of features and the long-term ecological function / biodiversity of natural heritage systems, the *Statement* (2014) goes further in refining protections for woodlands and valleylands in southern Ontario, requiring identification of natural heritage systems and of shoreline areas and supporting consideration of cumulative impacts of climate change, and ensures consideration of environmental lake capacity (where applicable). The *Statement* reads, in section 2.1.2: “The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage

³ Summaries based closely on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s summary document: “Provincial Policy Statement, 2014: Key Changes by Policy Area,” available here: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=10546>

systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.”

Agriculture

Whereas, within the “Agriculture” policy area, the *Statement* (2005) provided for long-term protection of prime agricultural lands and small-scale agriculture uses directly related to farm operations, the *Statement* (2014) goes further and requires the designation of agricultural areas, as well as better protection of agricultural lands from non-agricultural uses and supporting agricultural uses in rural areas. The updated *Statement* also permits on-farm diversified uses including agri-tourism, and greater flexibility for larger agriculture-related uses.

3.3 Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* delineates the areas that will experience different levels of intensification in the area of the province that extends from Niagara across the Greater Toronto Area, including the area serviced by WDGPH. It allocates population and employment forecasts to upper-tier and single-tier municipalities. The development of the *Plan* was supported by an extensive engagement process, which included consultations with public health officials.

3.4 The Greenbelt Plan

Enabled by the *Greenbelt Act* (2004), the *Greenbelt Plan* is Ontario’s plan to provide permanent protection of agricultural lands and ecological features from urban development. It builds on the policy framework established in Section 3 of the *Statement* and relates to the provisions of the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act*. The area of the Greenbelt coincides with the Greater Golden Horseshoe and, as such, the *Greenbelt Plan* is seen as a cornerstone of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. The *Greenbelt Plan* includes policies laid out in the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* and the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*, as well as the Protected Countryside areas identified within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The areas of land covered by the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine, as well as designated Protected Countryside areas, which are aimed at enhancing the extent of the escarpment and moraine lands while connecting them to one another and the Greenbelt’s major aquatic features, collectively comprise the total protected area of Ontario’s Greenbelt.

Land use planning in Wellington County is impacted by the Greenbelt Plan. As outlined in Section 9.9 of the Wellington County Official Plan:

Within Wellington, the Greenbelt includes the headwaters of watersheds that drain to Lake Ontario: the Credit River watershed in Erin, and the Bronte and Spencer Creek watersheds in Puslinch. The Greenbelt also contains some of the best farming areas in Canada as well as smaller urban areas and rural settlements. Within Wellington, the Greenbelt includes the Hillsburgh, Erin and Morriston Urban Centres and the Hamlet of Ballinafad. Below we highlight some of the key goals and elements of the *Greenbelt Plan*, as they relate to planning activities in Wellington County and the focus of this Review.

Strategic Goals⁴

Agricultural Lands

In terms of its goal to protect agricultural lands, the *Plan* specifically protects specialty crop and prime agricultural areas. It also offers flexibility for agriculture, agriculture-related and secondary uses of these lands, as well as greater certainty for the agricultural sector to invest and manage these lands in the long-term.

Natural Systems

In terms of its goal to protect the environment, more broadly, the *Plan* offers a number of protections for ecological features, as well as for the protection and restoration of natural and open space connections between the Moraine, Escarpment and aquatic features, as well as to natural systems outside the Greater Golden Horseshoe. There are particular goals around the protection, improvement and restoration of water and waterways, and the *Plan* offers guidance on the management of natural heritage and water resources when contemplating various decisions relating to land use planning and the built environment.

Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Broadly, the *Plan* supports conservation and promotion of natural heritage resources, as well as the provision of a “wide range of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and water-based/shoreline uses that support hiking, angling and other recreational activities.” It also supports sustainable tourism development.

Settlement Areas

In terms of its goals, the *Plan* supports a range of land uses in rural areas, particularly within settlement areas. The *Plan* links mixed-use development to the development and maintenance of strong rural economies.

3.5 Municipal Act

Under the *Municipal Act*, municipalities have broad powers to pass bylaws (subject to certain limits, and except when superseded by higher level legislation) on matters such as community health, safety and well-being and the protection of persons and property. In terms of designing healthy communities, some examples of relevant types of bylaws include:

Housing

- Zoning Bylaw
- Density Bonusing Bylaw
- Rental Housing Licensing Bylaw
- Second Suites Bylaw
- Lodging House Licensing Bylaw
- Green Building Bylaw
- Energy Conservation Bylaw
- Increased Height and Density Bonusing Bylaw

⁴ The Plan’s goals are summarized, beginning on page 5 (section 1.2.2) of the document.

Environment

- Tree Protection Bylaw
- Anti-Idling Bylaw
- Drive-Through Bylaw
- Green Roof Bylaw

Transportation

- Bicycle Lane Bylaw
- Parking Bylaw
- Streets Bylaw

Food Systems

- Street Food Vendor Bylaw
- Farmers' Market Bylaw
- Outdoor Market Bylaw
- Hobby Beekeeping Bylaw

Accessibility

- Accessible Planning Bylaw
- Accessible Public Facilities Bylaw
- Accessible Parks Bylaw
- Accessible Streets Bylaw
- Accessible Parking Bylaw
- Accessible Taxi Bylaw
- Accessible Gasoline Stations Bylaw
- Adaptable Design and Accessible Housing Bylaw

4.0 PROVINCIAL POLICY DIRECTIONS

In the 2014/15 Speech from the Throne, Premier Wynne announced, under the heading “Building a Fairer and Healthier Ontario” that:

Your government will place an added focus on community wellness. By expanding the student nutrition program, creating opportunities for all students to participate in 60 minutes of physical activity a day, supporting community hubs, implementing a cycling strategy, and reinforcing these measures with cross-ministry initiatives and a new associate minister's portfolio focused on Long-Term Care and Wellness, Ontario will become the healthiest place to live, work and grow old.^{lxi}

The former Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport (previously the Ministry of Health Promotion, which was established in 2007), now integrated within Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, announced its Healthy Communities Framework in 2010. Its goals included: create a culture of health and wellbeing; build healthy communities through coordinated action; create policies and programs that make it easier for Ontarians to be healthy; and, enhance the capacity of community leaders to work together on healthy living. The Framework articulated six strategies and outcomes, which included promoting active transportation and safe environments, and access to healthier food, among others.

This language was reiterated in the 2014/15 mandate letters: the Premier communicated to the Associate Minister for Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) that, among their priorities, would be to develop a strategy on community wellness and a culture of health, partner with community organizations and develop policy on community hubs. Indeed, the language of “community” is common in the language of government today.

The Healthy Communities Fund, which was a grant program administered by the Province, provided “non-capital funding [from the Province] to organizations for the delivery of integrated health promotion initiatives in communities across Ontario.”^{lxii} The Partnership Stream was one of three funding streams and it was through this funding stream that WDGP received funding for this study.

The Province has also introduced policies and plans in particular areas that support the development of healthy communities in areas such as: Accessibility and Age-Friendly Communities, Active Transportation, Affordable Housing and Food Systems.⁵ These are described below.

4.1 Accessibility

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*^{lxiii} is aimed at making Ontario accessible by 2025. The Act is being implemented in phases and is accompanied by a variety of standards and guidelines. The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment and Policy Guidelines for the Design of Public Spaces are among the most relevant to this work. These Standards and Guidelines align well with the “Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings” dimension of the World Health Organization’s eight dimensions that describe an age-friendly community and are among the five standards that are now law in Ontario. The

⁵ Note: this is not a complete or comprehensive literature review. It is meant to highlight key policy directions that are specifically relevant to this review.

other four standards include: Customer Service, Employment, Information and Communications and Transportation.

4.2 Age-Friendly Communities

In 2013, Ontario issued Guidelines on Age-Friendly Community Planning in Ontario. These are based on the World Health Organization dimensions mentioned in Section 4.1 above. The Guidelines suggests a basic process for communities to follow in developing an age-friendly community plan. The Guide emphasizes the importance of ‘person-environment fit’ in age-friendly community planning, which refers to “the relationship between a person’s physical and mental capacity and the demands of his or her environment.”^{lxiv} Universal Design is highlighted as one approach to achieving person-environment fit. A number of municipalities in Ontario have developed Age-Friendly Community Plans or Seniors’ Strategies, in light of the demands and opportunities associated with the aging population. These plans and strategies can also contribute to the achievement of healthy communities, since many would say that a community designed to meet the needs of seniors would meet the needs of anyone. This, again, relates to the “8-80 Cities” concept mentioned in the Introduction, above.

4.3 Active Transportation

The Ontario Cycling Strategy recognizes and supports the growing number of cyclists in Ontario. It aims to create a cycling-friendly province to protect the safety of cyclists and promote cycling as a form of active transportation. The Strategy’s Action Plan prioritizes the implementation of policies outlined in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and policy directions contained within the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2014). The Action Plan indicates opportunities for the Province to work closely with municipalities on various areas of implementation. The Plan also indicates that the Province will look for and consider opportunities to support cycling as part of the review of the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*.

4.4 Climate Change

The Ontario government recently completed a consultation process to inform the development of a provincial strategy on climate change.^{lxv} The strategy – a new cap and trade system – was announced on April 13, 2015 and aims to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.^{lxvi} Other actions taken by the Provincial government to advance environmental sustainability include closing down coal-fired electricity plants, protection of land and eliminating the use of cosmetic pesticides.^{lxvii} Ontario is set to host a Climate Summit of the Americas this July.^{lxviii} Numerous pieces of legislation govern Ontario’s management and use of the natural environment and its renewable and non-renewable resources.

4.5 Affordable Housing

Volumes of research exist to demonstrate that, as a social determinant of health, an adequate supply of affordable housing is essential to the development of healthy communities. In Ontario, the policy framework in place to support the provision of affordable housing is extensive and the role of municipalities, particularly Upper Tier municipalities as Housing Service Managers, is important. Below we describe several of the key policies and strategies that impact community planning at the local level.

4.5.1 Ontario Housing Policy Statement

The *Ontario Housing Policy Statement* was issued by the Province to set out policy guidance for the *Housing Services Act*. In that regard, the *Housing Policy Statement* is specifically intended to provide additional policy context and direction to Service Managers to support the development of the local housing and homelessness plans.

The *Policy Statement* identifies seven policy directions that correspond to provincial interests:

- Accountability and outcomes
- Goal of ending homelessness
- Non-profit housing corporations and non-profit housing cooperatives
- The private market
- Coordination with other community services
- A broad range of community needs
- Environmental sustainability and energy conservation

Under the *Ontario Housing Policy Statement*, the needs of various populations must also be considered as part of the housing and homelessness planning process, including people with disabilities, participants in the Special Priority program and Aboriginal people, as well as other specific local groups such as seniors, youth, women, immigrants, Franco-Ontarians, persons released from custody or under community supervision and Crown Wards.

4.5.2 Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy

In 2010, the Province launched Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS). The vision of the LTAHS is: "To improve Ontarians' access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing, and provide a solid foundation on which to secure employment, raise families and build strong communities". The strategy was developed within the context of other policy tools to help provide general guidance and expectations in terms of the Province's interest in affordable housing. As a result, the strategy speaks to issues beyond the land use planning dimensions of the *Planning Act* and more to the housing responsibilities that municipalities have assumed under the *Housing Services Act*.

The long-term strategy is intended to provide municipalities with a clear sense of the Province's vision and objectives for affordable housing. As such, the strategy speaks to enhanced flexibility for municipalities in using existing resources to meet the diverse housing needs of their communities. The strategy references amendments to the *Planning Act* that include requiring municipalities to establish policies allowing second units in new and existing developments, and adding affordable housing as a matter of provincial interest. The strategy also frames the broad elements of the housing and homelessness planning requirements established under the *Housing Services Act*.

The components of the Strategy include:

- Consolidating housing and homelessness programs
- Simplifying rent-geared-to-income calculations
- Local housing and homelessness plans
- More accountability, better reporting
- Asset creation

- Improving the tenant selection system
- Helping victims of domestic violence
- Protecting non-profit and coop housing
- Fair process for housing providers

4.5.3 Housing Services Act

As per the *Housing Services Act* (2011), Wellington County is a Housing Service Manager. The *Act* came into effect on January 1, 2012 and effectively replaced the *Social Housing Reform Act* (2000), the original legislation devolving social housing responsibilities to municipalities. It also amended sections of the *Municipal Act*, *Planning Act*, *Residential Tenancies Act*, and the *City of Toronto Act*, providing necessary adjustments in housing authorities. The HSA provides a new legislative framework for the delivery of housing and homelessness programs in Ontario. The purpose of the HSA is to provide for community-based planning and delivery of housing and homelessness services in the context of general Provincial oversight and policy direction. It is also intended to provide flexibility for service managers and housing providers in meeting their obligations, while retaining requirements with respect to social housing programs that predate the *Act*.

The HSA outlines ten Provincial interests that must be addressed in local housing and homelessness plans. These provincial interests signal the province's continued role in the housing and homelessness service system, despite its devolution to the municipal level.

The main changes in the HSA include:

- Service Managers are required to develop a ten-year local housing and homelessness plan that will be reviewed periodically
- Areas of provincial interest must be included in the local housing and homelessness plan
- Some forms of ministerial consents have been eliminated in favour of Service Manager consents
- Waiting list systems now permit Service Managers to design their own local systems and permit waiting applicants to cross over from one Service Manager wait list to another
- The change in name of the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) to the Housing Services Corporation and providing them with more flexibility to offer new optional services and supports.

The HSA continues to prescribe operational rules and obligations with regards to the funding and administration of social housing programs at the municipal level. However, the *Housing Services Act* also recognizes the goal of Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) in consolidating Ontario's housing and homelessness programs, thereby giving municipalities more flexibility in addressing their local needs.

4.6 Food Systems

Ontario's policies on food systems are limited. That said, there is an extensive range of federal and provincial policies in place to govern and regulate farming^{lxix}, food production and farmers' markets. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has prepared fact sheets on these topics.^{lxx} From a farming perspective, the only piece of legislation that seems to directly impact land use planning in

Ontario is the *Farming and Food Protection Act* (1998), which exists to protect farmers from nuisance complaints and from restrictive municipal bylaws that might constrain normal farm practices^{lxxi}. What constitutes a ‘normal farm practice’ is decided by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board, which was established by the *Act*.

A variety of studies have been done on the regulation of local food systems. Stakeholders in Cambridge, Waterloo and Halton Region have been especially engaged in this work. Various research papers have been prepared to outline policies and practices in place in municipalities across Ontario and Canada. Some of these are referenced as practical guidance and examples to support suggested considerations in Sections 6.0-13.0 below.

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5.0 HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IN WELLINGTON COUNTY

5.1 Socio-demographic and Health Profile of Wellington County

The charts below provide statistical information that helps illustrate the socio-demographic profile of Wellington County, compared to the rest of the Province.

Table 1: Profile for Wellington County compared with Ontario

Indicator	Wellington County	Ontario
Population (Census, 2011)	86,672	12,851,820
Population Growth (from 2006-2011) (Census, 2011)	1.4% increase	5.7% increase
Median 2010 Family Income After Tax (NHS, 2011)	\$76,891	\$71,128
Unemployment Rate (NHS, 2011)	4.9%	8.3%
Percentage of Children <6 years of age Living in Low-income Households (NHS, 2011, Statistics Canada)	15.1%	14.8%
Transportation to Work (NHS, 2011)		
Total Employed Population aged >15 years	39,125	5,841,815
Percentage of Employed Population >15 years of age Driving to Work	85.7%	72.5%
Percentage of Employed Population >15 years of age Commuting to Work as a Passenger in a Vehicle	6.4%	6.1%
Percentage of Employed Population >15 years of age Taking Public Transit to Work	1.3%	14.0%
Percentage of Employed Population >15 years of age Walking to Work	5.2%	5.1%
Percentage of Employed Population >15 years of age Biking to Work	0.7%	1.2%
Median commuting duration from home to work in minutes (for employed population >15 years of age)	20.5	20.8
Shelter Costs: Owner (NHS, 2011)		
% of owner households spending 30% or more of household income on shelter costs	17.4%	20.9%
Shelter Cost: Renter (NHS, 2011)		
% tenant households in subsidized housing	15.1%	16.3%
% of tenant households spending 30% or more of household income on shelter costs	35.8%	42.3%

Table 2: Local Health Conditions and Behaviours (2009-2013)¹

Indicator	Wellington County	Ontario
Health Conditions		
Asthma	6.1%	8.0%
COPD	4.6%	4.1%
Diabetes	7.7%	6.7%
Heart Disease	7.0%	4.9%
Overweight or Obese ²	58.0%	50.2%
Health Behaviours		
Leisure and transportation activity, moderate active or active	61.8%	53.4%
Walk to and from work or school	12.6%	16.7%
Bicycle to and from work or school	2.5%	3.3%

Data Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2009-2013

¹ All reported values are estimates derived from samples and are subject to sampling variation.

² Variable calculated population aged 18 years or older (excludes those aged 12-17 years)

** Numbers are too small to be reported for this region

Table 3: Local Youth Health Conditions and Behaviours, 2012

Indicator	Wellington County		Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph	
	Grade 7	Grade 10	Grade 7	Grade 10
Overweight or obese ¹	21%	22%	19%	21%
Meet physical activity guidelines ²	63%	47%	62%	43%
Walk, cycle, or rollerblade to/from school everyday	24%	22%	33%	23%

Source: Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Youth Survey, 2012

¹ Approximately 24% if grade 10 respondents had missing or incomplete responses to the question required to make BMI calculations.

² Physical activity guidelines at the time of the survey were 90 minutes per day. These have since been modified to 60 minute, 5 or more days per week.

5.2 County Policies & Plans

Wellington County has, in recent years, introduced several key municipal plans that will influence positive health outcomes for local communities: Wellington County Active Transportation Plan, 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Guelph-Wellington, Wellington County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and Economic Development Strategic Plan.

5.2.1 Wellington County Active Transportation Plan

The Wellington County Active Transportation Plan (2012) is the result of a collaborative, multi-stakeholder effort. The Plan aims at creating an environment supportive of pedestrians and cyclists for the benefit of residents and tourists. As noted in the introduction to the Executive Summary: “An important part of the plan is an Active Transportation Network that will provide residents and visitors with on-road and off-road trails and active transportation corridors connecting the County’s communities.” This plan incorporates Wellington County’s Five Year Trail Plan (2011-2015). The vision for the Active Transportation is: “Create and improve opportunities through the County for active recreation and active transportation.” It was noted by County planning staff that budget constraints have made its implementation challenging to date. The high cost of implementing the Plan is driven by the focus on long-distance bike routes. Staff commented that the County will likely have to focus on shorter distance routes (i.e. to schools, from suburbs to local centres). One element of the Plan that is going forward in the foreseeable future is to complete the Trans Canada Trails link.

5.2.2 A Place to Call Home: A 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Guelph-Wellington

A Place to Call Home was published in 2014 and constitutes a 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Guelph-Wellington, incorporating Wellington County. The Plan outlines eight (8) goals for Guelph-Wellington in addressing local housing and homelessness issues. The Plan was informed by previous research and strategies, and supported by an extensive consultation process. The Plan identifies persons with disabilities and victims of domestic violence as provincial priority populations. In order to support progress, the Plan includes an emphasis on performance management and research-to-action, the latter of which comprises the Plan’s eighth goal. The Plan identifies and encourages local partnerships.

5.2.3 County of Wellington Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The County’s Accessibility Plan was implemented in 2012 and sets out a plan, and commitment, to remove physical, attitudinal and social barriers to accessibility across the County by 2021, in keeping with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) legislation that aims to make Ontario accessible by 2025. The Plan cites the Accessible Built Environment Standard, which accompanies the AODA legislation, and the County commits, as part of its Plan, to conduct a review to ensure that compliance with the Standard is met or exceeded. It is also stated that all renovation and construction projects will comply with the Facility Accessibility Design Manual, which represents a regional approach to accessible design and is noted as exceeding many of the design requirements articulated in the Ontario Building Code. Clearly, the Plan represents an ambitious and important undertaking to make Wellington accessible for all its residents, including those who are differently abled.

In 2014, the County released a status update as to the implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. It lists accessibility improvements that have been made to local buildings (since 2005), as well as some strides made by the Town of Erin and the Township of Puslinch. While it seems that most local achievements relate to information and communications, this is likely because the corresponding provincial Standard, along with the Employment Standard and Transportation Standard, which were combined under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation in 2011, have now come into force and compliance is mandatory. Still, the County confirms that construction projects continue to comply with the above noted FADM, which is meant to advance accessibility of the built environment. Economic Development Strategic Plan

5.2.4 Wellington County Economic Development Strategic Plan

The County's Economic Development Strategic Plan was published in 2012 and is the first of its kind in the County. Its purpose is to help foster a more coordinated approach to regional economic development. Appropriately, the Plan was developed through a highly collaborative process, which engaged representatives of local area municipalities and the community at large. At the time, the County had recently created an Economic Development Office, which played a lead role in stakeholder engagement. The Plan was informed by many planning-related documents, including *Places to Grow*, which is described above. The authors of the Plan see economic development strategy as being linked to the overall development of livable communities and a good quality of life for the local population.

In terms of the 'areas of interest' outlined in the report by municipality, we note that several constituencies are interested in agriculture and local food as economic development opportunities. As noted above, 'Healthy Local Food Systems' is one of the planning dimensions this review has considered. In the SWOT analysis, "Value-added agriculture, local food, and on-farm diversification" was noted as an opportunity⁶.

Also as part of the SWOT analysis that was completed to inform the development of the Plan, the report notes the area's natural and cultural heritage are noted as key strengths. Aspects of transportation are noted as both strengths and weaknesses within the analysis: proximity to highway 401 a strength, and a high commuting population, ranging from 55% in Erin to 16% in Wellington North, as a weakness. The need to improve collaboration between the County and local municipalities was also noted. The analysis notes that there is an opportunity for the County to play a "facilitative role in developing regional partnerships and project-based collaboration."⁷ In terms of local development, the analysis notes that the County could consider offering "Support for incentives and redevelopment,"⁸ as per the numerous Community Improvement Plans that had been developed by lower tier municipalities in the region. In terms of 'threats'⁹, the analysis cited an aging population and slow growth; a need for infrastructure investment and renewal; unintended negative impacts of provincial policies and plans, including the Greenbelt Plan and Provincial Policy Statement, on rural areas; and, increased traffic congestion due to the rapid growth of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, of which Wellington County is a part.

5.3 Recent and Ongoing Initiatives

In addition to the aforementioned County plans, Wellington has been involved, as a key stakeholder, in at least two larger healthy communities initiatives; one of them provincial in focus, the other looking at the Headwaters Region (or, the Hills of Headwaters). We are sure there are more such examples, but these emerged through our research as being particularly noteworthy and relevant.

5.3.1 Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions

Transportation barriers are common in rural Ontario, which can be to the detriment of individual and public health. In view of this, the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition and Rural Ontario Institute recently collaborated on a rural transportation research initiative. The study involved identifying and

⁶ Pg. 19, <http://www.wellington.ca/en/business/resources/WellingtonCountyEconomicDevelopmentStrategy.pdf>

⁷ Ibid, pg. 20,

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid Section 3.4, pg. 22-23

documenting community-based solutions aimed at addressing transportation barriers common in Ontario's rural locales, where the development of public transit networks is rarely feasible. Given the aging population in rural Ontario, transportation solutions are often particularly needed to connect seniors with social, economic and health opportunities, which are often located at a significant distance from their homes.

The study's report "Towards Coordinated Rural Transportation: A Resource Document" was released in August 2014 and is aimed at providing practical assistance to stakeholders who might be seeking to design their own rural transportation solutions. It documents a selection of existing local innovations and identifies the key features of effective models. A case study of Wellington County was completed as part of the study and is featured in the report. Representatives from Wellington County participated in the stakeholder engagement process and the County itself served as a study region. The report notes that, during the engagement process, stakeholders from Wellington County conveyed a strong interest in improving transportation services for residents and supporting employers who have indicated that a lack of public transit service is a challenge for employees. It is also noted that the Town of Minto wanted to enhance transportation services to help employees get to work; Centre Wellington indicated that transportation is a municipal priority; and, Guelph/Eramosa stressed the need for improved rural transportation in general. Focus group participants representing local agencies expressed an interest in building on coordination efforts already in place.¹⁰

5.3.2 Guelph & Wellington Task Force on Poverty Elimination

According to a Vibrant Communities bulletin posted by Guelph-Wellington in April 2015, the Guelph & Wellington Task Force on Poverty Elimination ("the Task Force") recently released a 2014 Report to Community and 2015 Action Plan. The following statement was made by the Co-Chairs of the Task Force at the time of the latest report's release:

As we contemplate the next year, words like 'excited' or 'anticipation' seem out of place. The effort to lift individuals, families and children out of poverty has moved much too slowly and, more frustratingly, sometimes in the wrong direction. In response, the Poverty Task Force has become a place where our community can voice their collective resolve for addressing the root causes of poverty and shine a light on policies and systems that perpetuate poverty. With a shared and informed voice, we will direct our message and efforts to the issues that matter most locally, while aligning with others across the province and country who agree that the status quo for people living in poverty is completely unacceptable.¹¹

¹⁰ Pg. 112, <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=b5980041-d1ce-4618-b742-1d62c39208f1>

¹¹ <http://vibrantcanada.ca/blogs/guelph-wellington/eliminating-poverty-guelph-and-wellington>

6.0 REVIEW OF WELLINGTON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for Wellington County. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations and a list of emergent questions for each of the five domains is also provided.

Documents reviewed include the County's Official Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Guelph-Wellington Housing and Homelessness Plan, Accessibility Plan, and Economic Development Strategic Plan.

6.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{boxii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

6.1.1 STRENGTHS

The County Official Plan includes a number of policies related to higher densities, a mix of land use, access to a range of community facilities and services, as well as policies related to active, complete and healthy communities. The Official Plan has residential intensification targets (Section 3.3.1), including targets for Greenfield areas:

- Residential Intensification Target: By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 20% of all residential development occurring annually will be within the built-up area
- Greenfield Density Target: the designated greenfield area of the County will be planned to achieve an overall minimum density of not less than 40 residents and jobs per hectare

These targets are somewhat below overall Provincial guidelines for 40% intensification and higher densities within new greenfield development (which are aimed at reducing urban sprawl and making better use of existing infrastructure), but are highly appropriate for the smaller, more rural communities of Wellington County.

Furthermore, the following objectives that promote a range of development are stated in Section 3.3:

- to provide choice for residents and businesses by providing a variety of growth opportunities, housing types, services, recreation and cultural activities, and public open space

- to encourage mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development in appropriate locations

As well, Section 8.4.2 and 8.4.3 aims for the following in the Central Business District:

- To maintain and promote a compact and people-oriented downtown by establishing a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment which encourages movement by foot and bicycle rather than by automobile
- Residential development may be permitted within this designation provided that retail, office or service commercial uses are located at street level

The Official Plan also encourages adding housing above commercial uses in and near the downtown, in residential transition areas, and in other main commercial areas (Section 4.4.3).

In Section 4.4.3 there are several policies relating to residential intensification in stable areas, rural areas and hamlets, and Greenfield areas, as well as a policy to “require that new developments achieve densities which promote the overall greenfield density target of 40 persons and jobs per hectare and specifically:

- i) strive to attain at least 16 units per gross hectare (6.5 units per gross acre) in newly developing subdivisions;
- iv) encourage the introduction of medium density housing types in new subdivisions and the Greenfield areas.”

There are numerous policies related to intensification through infilling and in stable areas within the building boundary while still retaining the character of these communities, such as:

- 8.3.2(g) – Residential Objectives – to encourage intensification provided they maintain the stability and character of existing neighbourhoods
- 8.3.11 – Wellington will encourage the development of vacant and under-utilized properties for residential uses which are compatible with surrounding uses in terms of dwelling type, building form, site coverage and setbacks.

In Section 7.3 where land use patterns are discussed, policy directions provide for mixed use development, efficient use of resources, and leveraging infrastructure and public services while promoting environmental sustainability. In Sections 2 and 10 there are various policies that provide for convenient access to commercial uses and services; health care, educational and cultural facilities; and, community facilities. Section 7.5.12 states that:

- Urban Centres shall provide adequate parks and open space areas to serve their population and may provide recreational opportunities for a larger regional population.

Other policies include:

- 2.2.5 – Ensure that county residents have convenient access to commercial uses and services
- 2.2.19 – Ensure that County residents continue to have convenient access to health care, education and cultural facilities

There are a variety of policies pertaining explicitly to healthy active communities, which reference parkland, open space and recreation opportunities. In addition to policies on developing a Parks, Culture

and Recreation Master Plan, there are also policies that encourage active transportation, such as walking and biking:

- 8.1.4(k) – The major objectives of all urban centres are: to provide for a safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation system in the community
- 4.11(b) – The County will promote healthy, active communities by: providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and where practical and appropriate, water-based resources
- 10.1.3(e) – Creating New Lots – that public streets, spaces and facilities will be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians and non-motorized movement, including but not limited to walking and cycling

The Active Transportation Plan also has recommendations related to connectivity and mixed land use.

The objectives in the Official Plan also encourage conservation and energy efficiency in neighbourhood design through:

- 2.2.22 – Promote energy efficient land use and servicing decisions
- 2.2.23 – Ensure responsible waste management practices, which emphasize waste reduction, reuse and recycling
- 8.3.2(i) – Residential Objectives – to encourage residential developments which incorporate innovative and appropriate design principles which contribute to public safety, affordability, energy conservation and that protect, enhance and properly manage the natural environment.

6.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The Official Plan outlines a strong focus on encouraging intensification and more compact, mixed use development in urban areas. Planning staff noted that intensification is generally accepted by the community, although some local residents express concerns when new denser developments are proposed in their area. The County has had some success in addressing such concerns by noting that their situation is not unique, that the Province has set density targets for all communities and intensification is happening across Ontario. The Official Plan highlights the importance of being a complete community by providing a diverse mix of land uses and a range and mix of employment and housing types, including special needs housing, high quality public open space and convenient access to local services. However, the Official Plan does not appear to include policies directly related to increased neighbourhood connectivity, nor policies related to designing communities to encourage social interaction. The County could use this opportunity to link neighbourhood design with the culture and heritage of the area in ways which foster social interaction and community/neighbourhood connection and to encourage neighbourhood connections by all modes of transportation as the area develops. There is also an opportunity to promote all- season recreational opportunities.

From a sustainability perspective, the Official Plan does not encourage the development of infrastructure that is resilient to climate change.

6.1.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The County could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<p>1. Consider the use of planning tools, such as financial incentives to support existing policies (3.3, 8.3, and 8.4) aimed at increasing residential intensification and mixed land use within urban areas. Incentives could be provided to encourage infill development on vacant and deteriorating properties. The County could also consider encouraging local municipalities to implement incentives as well.</p>	<p>City of Barrie (ON) Financial Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following loan and grant packages are available for commercial and residential projects that increase the functionality of existing building, promote the development of vacant and underutilized sites, and improve or restore exterior building facades and signage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax Increment Grant Program Application Fees, Permit Fees, and Special Fees Grant for Program Adaptive Re-use and Upgrade to the Building Code Program Facade and Signage Loan Program Cash-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Grant Facade Improvement Loan Renovation Loan <p>http://www.barrie.ca/Doing%20Business/PlanningandDevelopment/Pages/incentives.aspx</p>
<p>2. Encourage local municipalities to link safe neighbourhood design with the culture and heritage, including natural heritage, of the area in ways that foster social interaction and increase neighbourhood connectivity (including walking, and cycling)</p>	<p>Prince Edward County (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.10.4: The County will provide an attractive environment for cyclists because of its well-planned trails, facilities, attractions and suitable terrain. The beautification of tourist roads, including the Loyalist Parkway, will be undertaken and more picnic and viewing areas provided. <p>Town of Ajax (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4.1.2e: Protect for the needs of vulnerable road users such as children, youth, persons with disabilities and seniors as part of the development review process and as part of the design of all facilities; <p>Halton Region (ON) Official Plan - Healthy Communities Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.1: Build compact mixed use developments that create walkable and connected communities. This will provide the community with a wide range of densities and housing opportunities. Section 2.2: Provide connected street networks that are accessible to all modes of transportation to create a safe, convenient and accessible environment for walking.
<p>3. Encourage local municipalities to introduce policies that specifically encourage the design and development of safe neighbourhoods, possibly through</p>	<p>City of Saskatoon (SK) Official Community Plan – Policies Supporting Safe Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.1.1: CPTED - The reduction of the opportunity for crime to occur and the increase in perceptions of safety in an area through the modification of the built

employing policies and principles associated with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).	<p>environment and the management of space.</p> <p>Simcoe Muskoka (ON) - Healthy Community Design Official Plan Policy Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.3: Consider through the design review process, community security and safety features that impact social interaction and increase physical activity. Ensure policy includes Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.
4. Encourage local municipalities to adopt Universal Design standards for public space.	<p>Town of Caledon (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.5.3.8 Universal Design: When making planning decisions, the Town will encourage the use of universal design features for new residential development, redevelopment and intensification.
5. Promote sustainable communities resilient to the effects of a changing climate by using data obtained as to the impact of climate change on local governments in Southern Ontario (such as impacts on snow clearing, gravel road maintenance after severe rain storms, home heating, transportation and water supply) as the basis upon which to perform a vulnerability assessment of municipal utilities in local County municipalities and develop climate change models to include in the County's Official Plan	<p>Town of Mono (ON) Strategic Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance Official Plan policies to protect the environment and adapt to future climate trends and pressures for development. 1.1.3. Draw upon the resources of the Federal and Provincial governments to access data on impacts of climate change on local governments in southern Ontario, i.e. impacts on snow clearing, gravel road maintenance after severe rain storms, home heating, transportation and water supply.

6.1.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- In partnership with GoTransit, and other stakeholders, identify transportation needs through the County and work towards identifying solutions.
- Work with municipalities to encourage the development of local area policies that consider climate change in neighbourhood design (i.e. maximizing opportunities for sun and shade in public buildings)

6.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxiii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

- Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
- Make active transportation convenient and safe

3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

6.2.1 STRENGTHS

The Official Plan has policies related to ensuring safe transportation and facilitating pedestrian and bicycle movement throughout the communities:

- 12.2(a) – Pedestrian Facilities – sidewalks will be required in all new developments in all urban centres and will be encouraged in hamlets whenever practical
- (c) – Pedestrian Facilities – pedestrian friendly facilities such as pedestrian crossings, signalized intersections, curb cuts, pedestrian bridges and lighting will be incorporated into community design practices to encourage walking
- (d) – Pedestrian Facilities – pedestrian trails, particularly those which re-use abandoned railway right of ways will be encouraged
- 12.3(c) – Cycling – review zoning bylaws to provide bicycle parking standards for uses such as apartments, shopping facilities, industrial uses and community facilities

There are also policies aimed at ensuring pedestrian safety. While the Official Plan acknowledges that implementing a public transit system is currently not feasible (12.4), stakeholders did identify, through the “Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions” consultations, that finding a way to provide transportation to work for local residents is a local priority. Several recommendations in the County’s Active Transportation Plan speak to pedestrian and cyclist safety, enhancing opportunities for active transportation and taking active transportation into account when making decisions or developing policy:

- 4-9 – Where proposed Active Transportation facilities identified in the Active Transportation network are within the study area of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for other municipal infrastructure projects, the Active Transportation facility or trail shall form an integral component of these projects for review and implementation.
- 6-9 – As part of demonstrating leadership the County and local municipalities should provide bicycle parking facilities at public buildings under their ownership

The Active Transportation Plan also recommends a number of policies to include in the next Official Plan review, specifically: (a) Overarching policies in the Transportation Section of the Official Plan that reference pedestrian, cycling and other forms of active travel as suggested in Section 4.1 of the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan ; and (b) References to the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan as the guiding document for detailed policies and guidelines related to Active Transportation in Wellington County. This Plan also recommends enabling Development Charges funds for building new and upgrading existing routes and trails, ensuring there are policies that incorporate Active Transportation facilities as part of the development process, and including the active transportation network as identified in this plan as part of the County and local Official Plans (Sections 4 and 5).

The Active Transportation Plan also specifically states that WDGPH, the County and local Municipal partners should consider the implementation of cycling and pedestrian/trail education programs to

educate residents on walking and cycling, especially youth (6-12). Initiatives may include enhancements of existing programs and/or the development of new ones. Another recommendation for includes working with WDGP and the Wellington County Official PlanP to develop a safe cycling campaign modeled after the “Safely Sharing Halton’s Roadway” campaign (6-16).

The County’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan speaks to design guidelines to ensure accessibility of the built environment:

- Accessible Built Environment – The County of Wellington will strive to make sure that facilities are designed and built in accordance with the Facility Accessibility Design Manual (FADM). Once the Accessible Built Environment Standard has been passed by the Province of Ontario, the County will review the standard to make sure that compliance is met or exceeded

6.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

There are a number of policies aimed at encouraging more active transportation and as noted, there may be opportunities for WDGP, along with other stakeholders, to assist in further defining and implementing these policies. It was suggested that a greater focus on how to get people to walk locally could generate significant benefits to local health, such as a local trail program. There is an opportunity to work with the County to encourage alternative and more sustainable forms of transportation, such as carpooling or car sharing. Safety concerns have been expressed about encouraging biking on high-speed roads. It was noted that there will not be a lot of movement on bike lanes on County roads, particularly until the Province revises legislation around bikes as vehicles.

The County could also consider adopting Universal Design standards for public spaces and there is also an opportunity to add policies related to alternative parking standards for some developments, such as affordable housing developments.

Pursuing the provision of sidewalks along urban walking routes would also be a good place to start in encouraging more pedestrian activity.

6.2.3 CONSIDERATIONS

Wellington County could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. Encourage local municipalities to develop policies to support appropriate infrastructure to promote safe walking and cycling. Incorporating principles associated with accessibility (inclusive, universal design) and age-friendly community planning, as well as foundational elements of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (see also Neighbourhood Design considerations #2 and #3).	City of Thunder Bay (ON) Official Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 4.5.5 Other Strategies and Actions Outside of the Official Plan Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Continue or enhance the process for reviewing parking provisions, locations of active transportation routes (e.g., onstreet bike lanes, shared lanes, paved shoulders), and enhanced urban design strategies as part of the development

	<p>approval process that would further minimize competing interests between automobiles and cyclists.</p> <p>Town of Caledon (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 5.9.5.9 Active Transportation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Town will encourage the development of a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link major public open spaces, activity centres and the transportation network in a manner that enhances the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors. Consideration will be given to multi-use paths as part of the transportation system in the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Consideration will be given in all new subdivision and development proposals to provisions for multi-use links with transportation networks. The Town will work with the Region and school boards to promote the use of active transportation by students and to support the safe and active routes to school sites. <p>City of Guelph (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 8.18 Safety: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and community trails should be visible, accessible and aligned along well-used public spaces. New development should be designed in a manner that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> provides opportunity for informal surveillance of outdoor spaces (“eyes on the street”), including public parks, streets and parking areas; clearly marks the transition or boundary between public and private spaces; includes materials that allow for the built environment to be effectively and efficiently maintained; provides adequate lighting in accordance with Sections 8.14, 8.15 and 8.16 of this Plan; and provides for multiple walking routes, where appropriate.
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<p>2. In order to encourage the development of affordable housing in larger settlement areas, encourage local municipalities to reduce parking standards for affordable housing.</p>	<p>City of Ottawa (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.5.2.9 Affordable Housing: The City will implement alternative development standards for affordable housing development such as reduced parking standards in areas serviced by transit.
<p>3. Develop policies that encourage the exploration or development of alternate public transportation service delivery options in the County</p>	<p>County of Frontenac Official Plan 4.1.2 Rural Public Transportation 4.1.2.3 Policies The County will explore alternatives and consider various rural transportation models that could be effective in the context of the rural density of the Frontenacs, including community-based models.</p>
<p>4. Encourage or require new County road infrastructure projects to incorporate bikeability and walkability, such as paved shoulder. Note: Other jurisdictions have operational guidelines that mandate the inclusion of cycling lanes when arterial roads are rebuilt. Advocate to Province for changes to legislation around bikes as vehicles.</p>	<p>Prince Edward County Official Plan 4.7.5 Proposed major bicycle trails along the County Roads and the Loyalist Parkway are shown on Schedule 'D'. When the County or Province improves these road surfaces, they will endeavour to add a paved bicycle path along the shoulders in order to provide increased traffic safety. Trailside resting stops and small picnic parkettes may also be provided on suitable sites along the trails.</p>
<p>5. Introduce language that supports, encourages and facilitates children and youth to walk or cycle to school by providing for continuous access to schools through trails, pathways and sidewalks from surrounding land uses.</p>	<p>York Region Official Plan Package (2013) 7.2 Moving People and Goods Active Transportation It is the policy of Council: 12. That mobility plans shall be completed to ensure that: e. all schools and community centres shall be integrated into the community mobility system and provide the ability to walk, cycle, transit and carpool to these locations; It is the policy of Council: 16. To partner with the York Region District and Catholic School Boards to implement the Active and Safe Routes to School program, and to design and locate school campuses to promote walking, cycling and transit as a primary means of transportation.</p>

6.2.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Work with local agencies and stakeholders to promote policies which encourage car-sharing and car-pooling businesses, organizations and programs as well as promoting active transportation and advocating for the Active Transportation Plan.
- Promote the installation of sidewalks along urban walking routes to encourage more pedestrian activity and safety

6.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxxiv} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

6.3.1 STRENGTHS

The Official Plan has policies related to the protection and preservation of natural features and natural resources as well as policies related to the preservation of agricultural land, such as:

- 5.3 – The Greenlands System is a composite of many natural heritage features, flood prone areas and hazardous lands. It will be maintained or enhanced. Activities which diminish or degrade the essential functions of the Greenlands System will be prohibited. Activities which enhance the health of the Greenlands System will be encouraged where reasonable.
- 2.2.10 – Protect the agricultural land base for farming
- 2.2.11 – Ensure that farmers, following normal farming practices, are not hindered by conflicting development

It is noted in the Official Plan that the major objective of urban centres is to ensure that development and development-related activity proceeds in an environmentally responsible manner (8.1.4).

There are policies related to providing open space and linkages between trails, parks and between different neighbourhoods:

- 12.3(d) – Cycling – support the development of recreational trails that allow for cycling
(e) provide linkage between intensification areas and adjacent neighbourhoods, including dedicated land space for bicyclists on the major street network where practical and feasible

There are policies related to alternative energy and encouraging green building, including policies on siting alternative and renewable energy systems, including micro wind energy systems, to minimize impact (4.13).

There are also policies that aim to protect development from natural hazards, such as floods, and that address both groundwater and surface water protection. Surface water features are normally protected through the inclusion in the County's Greenlands System, and water stewardship is promoted. Examples of policies include:

- 2.2.24 – Ensure the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water are protected as an essential resource for urban and rural water supplies, agricultural production, the maintenance of the Greenland system, and future growth
- 4.9.3 – Groundwater – It is the County's intent that the development of public and private uses will not significantly alter groundwater recharge or discharge; impair groundwater or surface water quality; and negatively impact municipal groundwater supply. Groundwater is not confined to municipal boundaries. As such, the county will work collaboratively with local municipalities and municipal neighbours to ensure effective groundwater protection.
- 4.9.4(a) to (n) – Policy Direction – ensure land use planning contributes to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of water and related resources and aquatic systems; ensure land use decisions promote water conservation efforts and support the efficient use of water resources
- 4.9.5.11 – Water Quality – Protection Measures – Council shall encourage the use of alternative protection measures within highly sensitive Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs); encourage local municipalities to implement a program to establish a system of monitoring wells within municipal well WHPAs; undertake a public education program; consider development of programs offering financial incentives to protect and maintain groundwater and surface water quality; Local Councils are encouraged to adopt guidelines or regulate the proper maintenance and regular evacuation of septic tanks to assist in the proper maintenance and operation of septic systems.

There are also a number of policies that encourage the reduction of the reliance on development that depends upon private well and septic systems:

- 3.1(1) – the majority of growth will be directed to urban centres that offer municipal water and sewage services
- (2) – growth will be limited in urban centres and hamlets that offer partial, private communal or individual on-site services
- 11.2.2(c) and (d) – Water and Sewage Objectives – to encourage development to use the highest level of service practical based on a priority of municipal then private communal and then individual on-site services; to make optimum use of existing infrastructure
- 11.2.4(a) – municipal services are the preferred method of servicing in all urban centres and reasonable efforts will be made to provide for municipal services in all urban centres

6.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

There are a number of Official Plan policies to protect the natural environments and trails across the County, although the Official Plan could benefit from encouraging local municipalities to permit

recreational trails in all land-use designations. As the urban areas of the County grow, policies and guidelines for local by-laws and programs that minimize air pollution could be explored, such as an anti-idling by-laws. More rural municipalities could consider idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students and staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

There is also an opportunity to work with local municipalities to ensure that there is sufficient tree cover throughout the different communities and not just in parks. This will also help provide spaces for social interacting within neighbourhoods.

6.3.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The County could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage local municipalities to permit recreational trails in all land-use designations while respectively environmentally sensitive areas 	<p>Town of Aurora (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.2.1 Permitted Uses General to all Residential Designations: e) Neighbourhood Park facilities, including linear trails in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 herein <p>Town of Collingwood (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.2.3: It is the intent of this Official Plan that utility, communication and publicly-owned transportation, park and playground facilities, including pedestrian trails, and other uses deemed to serve a similar public function be permitted in all land use designations. • Section 5.3.10 Trail Systems: While Collingwood already has a well-established system of trails, as shown on Schedule D1 - Collingwood Trail System, Council will have regard for the long-range trail opportunities, particularly regional opportunities, explored through the Simcoe-Grey Trails Strategy. To facilitate implementation of the Strategy, lands already owned by the municipality and those obtained by donation, dedication and direct purchase shall be developed as they become available at the direction of the recreation department. In addition the

	<p>municipality may obtain easements and/or enter into agreements with private landowners for the use of lands for temporary or permanent trail purposes.</p>
<p>2. Consider developing incentives for using green building features and encouraging local municipalities to do the same.</p>	<p>Town of Ajax (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.1.1: The Town will also encourage, through educational and/or incentive programs, the production of forms of housing that are innovative and/or incorporate green building technologies.
<p>3. Consider providing urban municipalities in the County guidance on developing anti-idling by-laws.</p>	<p>Town of Huntsville's (ON) Idling By-Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GENERAL CONDITIONS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No person shall cause or permit a vehicle to idle for more than five (5) consecutive minutes except when the outside temperature is more than 27°C or less than 5°C. No person shall cause or permit a vehicle to idle for more than five (5) consecutive minutes on Payne Drive regardless of the outside temperature stated above. <p>Exemptions include emergency vehicles, in cases of emergency, etc.</p> <p>Town of Bracebridge (ON) By-law No. 2011-078</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.1 General Provisions: No person shall cause or permit a stopped vehicle to idle for more than three minutes. <p>Exemptions include emergency vehicles, in cases of emergency, when loading/unloading, traffic conditions, etc.</p>
<p>4. Encourage rural municipalities to develop idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton – Bylaw 15982</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles are prohibited from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals.
<p>5. Encourage local municipalities to develop a tree conservation by-law and to promote by-law through community awareness and education initiatives</p>	<p>City of Brampton Tree Preservation By-Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City's Tree Preservation By-law is intended to encourage good forestry practices to protect and promote the value of trees in our community. The by-law provides clear guidelines on the circumstances under which trees on private property may or may not be removed, and when permits are required.

	<p>The Tree Preservation By-law's focus is on individual trees. It works in tandem with the Woodlot Conservation By-law which protects woodlots/woodlands in the City.</p> <p>Simcoe Muskoka (ON) - Healthy Community Design Official Plan Policy Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment 1.6: Develop a community-wide Urban Forestry Management Plan to maximize the environmental and community health benefits of having healthy trees, with particular attention to protecting the community's stock of existing trees, supporting the growth of new trees and expanding the tree canopy in the community.
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6.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxxv} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure

6.4.1 STRENGTHS

As mentioned above in earlier sections, the County's Official Plan strongly emphasizes protecting agricultural land. Non-urban areas are predominantly agricultural, rural, not deemed necessary for urban development, and as such any new development is focused on infill. An example of other relevant policies includes:

- 6.3 – Prime agricultural areas will be protected for farming uses. While farming will be the main land use activity in these areas, a broader range of residential, employment and community uses will be allowed so long as the use does not adversely impact existing agricultural operating and is in keeping with the rural character of the area. While existing Country Residential and Lifestyle Community areas in the rural system are recognized, they will not be allowed to expand and new locations will not be permitted.

The County's Official Plan also strongly emphasizes environmental sustainability and complete community principles.

The County promotes local food in its operations, rather than through Official Plan policies. For example, Economic Development staff are actively engaged in local food promotion.

6.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

While the County does not appear to have specific policies to promote urban farming, these may not be applicable to many areas of the County. The County's policies do encourage future development within existing developed areas only and maintaining the current non-urban land uses (including agriculture). There is an opportunity to add policies that specifically support access to healthy food and improving community-scale food infrastructure and services within future Official Plan reviews.

Furthermore, there may be some opportunities for encouraging 'buy-local' initiatives, and healthy food education within schools and community centres. Identifying opportunities for greater accessibility of existing grocery stores and markets would also help promote access to healthy foods in particular for people with disabilities and seniors.

6.4.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The County could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider adding a healthy food system as an objective in the Official Plan 	<p>Town of Ajax (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2.1.7 Urban Agriculture: Promote fruit and vegetable gardening in the yards of residential, "clean" commercial and "clean" industrial properties, greenhouses, and containers on balconies and porches, and on rooftops. <p>City of Guelph (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2.2 Strategic Goals: 1. Planning a Complete and Healthy Community: g) Foster sustainable local food systems. <p>City of Thunder Bay (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 4.7.2 Policy Guidelines for Healthy Eating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protection of spaces for community gardens ○ Provide greater allowance for local food production, processing, and sale ○ Encourage the development of healthy community food sources ○ Protect agricultural land for food growing and production. ○ Safeguard against potential "food deserts" <p>Waterloo Region (ON) Food Charter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision: A healthy, just, and sustainable food system is one in which all residents

	<p>have access to, and can afford to buy, safe, nutritious, and culturally acceptable food that has been produced in an environmentally sustainable way, and that supports our rural communities. Such a food system promotes social justice, population health, and profitable farms, reflects and sustains local culture, and supports ecological viability.</p>
<p>2. Encourage local municipalities to promote and encourage local food production (i.e. community gardens, rooftop gardens, farmers markets). For example, the Official Plan could recommend that local urban municipalities explicitly permit temporary farmers' markets in all land use designations. The County could also encourage local municipalities to re-purpose some vacant, undeveloped or under-utilized lands for community garden sites.</p>	<p>City of Cambridge (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.0: The City will recognize and encourage the use of the Community Core Areas as: h) locations where residents can access local food through farmers' markets. • Section 7.10: The City supports a strong local food system through its Farmers' Market, temporary farmers' markets, and community gardens. The City recognizes that community gardens contribute to the overall parks and open space system and access to locally grown food. <p>City of Waterloo (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.9.2: 2) The City will plan for neighbourhoods that provide safe and healthy living environments, and promote healthy lifestyles by: f) Supporting access to locally-grown food by planning for community gardens, where appropriate <p>Municipality of Wawa (ON) Municipal Plan Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2.3: Encourage community gardens and rooftop gardens and promote community gardens on all land uses where appropriate. Press for the prohibition of new fast food outlets and encourage locations for healthy food alternatives.
<p>3. Encourage local municipalities to develop policies that direct retail of healthy foods, as through farmers' markets, near residences, workplaces, commercial and industrial areas, educational institutions, places of worship, and places of recreation. If licensing were to be required for temporary</p>	<p>Halton Region (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 101.4: Recognize, encourage, protect and support Halton's farmers and agricultural operations and to this end: h) Support a farm-fresh produce network that promotes direct sales of farm produce and related products to residents, local

<p>farmers' markets, the licensing fee could be reduced or waived to avoid creating a barrier to participation for local farmers.</p>	<p>businesses and visitors. j) (iii) permit or provide permanent or temporary facilities for farmers' markets in the Urban Area or Hamlets.</p> <p>Simcoe Muskoka (ON) - Healthy Community Design Official Plan Policy Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.7: Encourage accessibility to healthy food through the promotion of locally grown food and farmers markets. The establishment of urban agriculture as well as Community Food Centres help create healthy food systems. Create policies to ensure that healthy food is available in every neighbourhood. Recommend policies that allow mixed-use zones to facilitate small and medium sized food retailers. These retailers will be located next to new and existing residential and especially in areas that are currently underserved.
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6.4.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Promote 'buy local' initiatives and healthy food education within private (local businesses and restaurants) and public sectors (schools and community centres).
- Partner with other community food organizations (i.e. community kitchens and school gardens) to support the development of a healthy food system
- Consider, in partnership with local stakeholders, assisting local municipalities with conducting an assessment of neighbourhood accessibility to healthy food retailers
- Consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>

6.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxvi} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

- Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
- Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
- Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
- Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

6.5.1 STRENGTHS

The County's Official Plan includes policies related to the provision of a diverse range of housing options, including affordable housing:

- 2.2.4 – Provide opportunities for housing which accommodate a wide range of need and affordability
- 8.3.2(b) – Residential Objectives – to provide a variety of dwelling types to satisfy a broad range of residential requirements and ensure that affordable housing is available
 - (d) to support the development, at appropriate locations and densities, of residential facilities that meet the housing needs of persons requiring specialized care
 - (j) to monitor the housing supply by reviewing new development, demolitions, intensification, and the number of affordable housing units brought on stream.
- 4.4.2 – Variety – The County will provide for a variety of housing types to satisfy the present and future social, health and well-being requirements of residents of the regional market area. New residential developments will be promoted at densities which efficiently use available servicing and are appropriate to site conditions and existing patterns of development

The Official Plan also has a policy that defines what is considered affordable housing, and states that 25% of new housing developed in the County be affordable (4.4.5). The Official Plan also states that in the County, accessory residences, semi-detached, duplex, townhouse and low rise apartment units will provide the bulk of affordable housing opportunities. These units will almost always be located in urban areas with appropriate levels of servicing (4.4.5). In terms of supply, Section 4.4.1 states that “[t]he County will ensure that residential growth can be accommodated for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification, redevelopment and if necessary, lands which are designated and available for new residential development.”

There are also policies related to the provision of housing for seniors and persons with disabilities:

- 4.4.6– Special Needs and Seniors Housing – The County will provide opportunities for special needs housing to address the needs of seniors and persons with physical, sensory and mental health disabilities.... Small scale senior's projects may be considered in Hamlets and Secondary Agricultural Areas based on private services. Prime agricultural land will not be used for seniors housing, other than garden suites.

The Official Plan also has policies regarding affordable housing for rural areas that state that: “In the Rural System affordable housing opportunities are not readily available. Accessory residences will be the most likely means of increasing housing affordability in the Rural system.” (4.4.5).

In Section 7.5.5 of the County's Official Plan it is stated that: “Urban Centres shall provide a broad range of residential uses to provide a diverse supply of housing, including affordable housing. In Wellington, the single-family residence will continue to be the dominant use of urban lands. Other forms of housing at densities appropriate to the servicing and the nature of the community will also be developed including semi-detached, duplex townhouse and apartment units. Accessory apartments in single family residences will normally be allowed unless there are physical constraints in an area such as inadequate services or on-site parking. Building code requirements must be met.” (7.5.5).

There are also a number of policies that provide for buffers between residential/sensitive land uses and sources of noise and air pollution, including using planning impact assessments to evaluate proposed use compatibility (4.6.2).

The Housing and Homelessness Plan also has goals related to increasing the supply of affordable housing and providing housing for vulnerable populations:

- Goal 1 – To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses
- Goal 2 – To provide a range of supports to assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed
- Goal 3 – To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions
- Goal 4 – To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income households
- Goal 7 – To preserve the existing social and affordable rental housing stock

6.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The County's Official Plan and Housing and Homelessness Plan outlined a number of policies aimed at providing an adequate supply of housing with a range of sizes, types, densities, tenure, and price level. There are, however, opportunities for further implementation such as regulations to prevent the conversion/demolition of rental housing, establishing a formal incentive policy and/or program, and looking more closely at targets for affordable housing for local municipalities. The Official Plan could also encourage the more urban local municipalities to promote affordable housing in their downtown areas and to look into mixed-income housing developments.

There may be an opportunity for the County to help facilitate partnerships with private, public and non-profit sectors to provide affordable housing.

There is an opportunity to work with local municipalities to add policies related to providing spaces for social interaction within neighbourhoods, as discussed in the Neighbourhood Design section.

6.5.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The County could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. Encourage local municipalities to develop policies that reduce barriers to forms of supportive and shared accommodation (i.e. group homes) such as length of stay and distancing requirements.(4.4)	Town of Markham (ON) Official Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 8.13.9 Shared Housing: b) in considering an application to amend the zoning by-law to permit the establishment of shared housing, Council shall be satisfied that the following requirements, where applicable, will be fulfilled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. that shared housing small scale (where 3 to 10 persons share accommodation with

	<p>or without support services) shall be accommodated within a permitted building type in accordance with all applicable codes, by-laws and regulations; and</p> <p>ii. that the location of shared housing large scale and shared housing long-term care and shared housing supervised shall be restricted to permitted building types on an arterial or collector road and built in accordance with all applicable codes, by-laws and regulations.</p>
<p>2. Encourage local urban municipalities develop policies that provide incentives to develop affordable housing in their downtown areas. (4.4)</p>	<p>City of Ottawa (ON) Affordable Housing Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some affordable housing incentives are available to developers "as-of-right". These are incentives that were created through By-laws of Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relief from development charges (DC) and building permit fees is available for all residential development in the downtown core area of the City.
<p>3. Encourage local urban municipalities to develop policies that promote mixed-income housing developments. (4.4)</p>	<p>Brantford-Brant (ON) Housing Stability Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal 1.5: Encourage mixed-use housing and mixed-income development in all urban neighbourhoods by increasing rental, social, and affordable housing options in areas with limited supplies
<p>4. Consider developing conversion policies within Section 4.4 as a way of protecting existing rental housing, and encouraging local municipalities to do the same. The conversion policy should include a statement noting that all housing must be maintained in safe and healthy condition before conversion would be considered.</p>	<p>City of Cambridge (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 8.4.4.2.: The conversion to condominiums of any rental units will only be permitted where the following conditions have been satisfied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the owner/applicant submits a detailed inspection report on the physical condition of the property by a qualified architect or engineer to the satisfaction of the City and Region which indicates that the building proposed for conversion meets the City's minimum standards of maintenance and occupancy, and Provincial life safety and exiting standards; b) parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland has already been dedicated or paid to the City with respect to the site upon which the building proposed for conversion is

	<p>located, or the proponent dedicates, or pays to the City cash-in-lieu, as a condition of the conversion;</p> <p>c) a public meeting has been held on the proposed conversion, to which the owner and all tenants of the subject building were invited;</p> <p>d) tenants have the option to continue to lease their units following the approval of the conversion to condominium in accordance with the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act; and</p> <p>e) tenants are given the right of first refusal to purchase a condominium unit in the building proposed for conversion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 8.4.4.3.: The City will monitor the cumulative impact of condominium conversion on the supply of rental housing.
5. Consider providing financial incentives to encourage affordable housing (i.e. waiving fees) and encouraging local municipalities to consider incentives as well.	<p>City of Ottawa (ON) Action Ottawa Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Ottawa's Action Ottawa initiative for affordable housing waives development charges, planning fees, and parkland levies for affordable units.
6. In order to encourage the development of affordable housing in larger settlement areas, encourage local municipalities to reduce parking standards for affordable housing.	<p>City of Ottawa (ON) Official Plan</p> <p>Section 2.5.2.9 Affordable Housing: The City will implement alternative development standards for affordable housing development such as reduced parking standards in areas serviced by transit.</p>

6.5.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- The County could explore options to develop an education/communication campaign with local partners to explain and promote the benefits of intensification.

7.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWN OF ERIN OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Town of Erin. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations and a list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

Documents reviewed include the include *Official Plan (2007)*, *Strategic Plan (2015-2020)*, */ Servicing and Settlement Master Plan (SSMP) (2014)*, *Wellington County Active Transportation Master Plan (2012)*, *Property Standards By-law*, *Zoning By-law (2014)* *Wellington County Official Plan (2014)*.

7.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxxvii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

7.1.1 STRENGTHS

Most recently updated in 2012, the Town of Erin's Official Plan recognizes the need to achieve high standards in the physical design of the built form in its villages. The high design standards described in the Official Plan apply to both individual sites as well as to new subdivisions and the community in its entirety (3.13).

There are two urban areas in the Town of Erin (the villages of Erin and Hillsburgh) and six hamlets. Major limitations exist with respect to water wastewater and transportation infrastructure, which have implications on the Town's ability to accommodate growth and increase density (3.6.6). The recently completed Servicing and Settlement Master Plan (SSMP) identifies strategies for building and paying for the necessary servicing and infrastructure.

Although the majority of new residential development in Erin is expected to be low-density, medium density (i.e. apartments and townhouses) is also permitted in some areas subject to certain requirements (4.7.5). Residential development will be primarily focused in the areas of Erin and Hillsburgh with limited expansion of other hamlets (4.7.1). As a result, some increased density and intensification of these areas is expected.

The two Central Business Districts (i.e. the downtowns areas of Erin and Hillsburgh) are the focus for commercial, retail, cultural and administrative uses. The Town's objective, as described in the Official Plan, is for these areas to be compact, people-oriented downtowns that provide a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment. Policies in the Official Plan also support safe pedestrian and vehicle movement in the downtowns by:

- a) Requiring sidewalks when new development is proposed in an area not adequately served by sidewalks;
- b) Developing a sidewalk construction program with emphasis on providing sidewalk access to the downtown, schools, major institutions and along major streets;
- c) Requiring proper signage and/or traffic control devices where warranted by major pedestrian movements; and
- d) The development of a walking trail system within the Town making use of various natural amenities such as the West Credit River valley lands, rolling hills and other physical features and utilizing existing and future parks, sidewalks, and the Elora Cataract Trailway. The development of walking trails may be obtained by the Town through dedication under the Planning Act, purchase or expropriation.

The Town's Strategic Plan also encourages the planning of communities to be supportive of 'local lifestyles' and promote local shopping, recreation, sport and cultural activities that nurture an active and healthy lifestyle (s3).

The downtown areas of Erin and Hillsburgh are the primary gathering places within the Town, as they are the focus for retail, entertainment and public realm improvements. In residential areas, churches, schools, parks and other accessible community spaces are permitted and can provide places for community gathering (4.7.3). New developments are required to have amenity and park space (3.11.1 and 4.7.5).

The Official Plan gives the Town the authority to develop Urban Design and Site Planning guidelines and states that such guidelines could be developed to 'provide links with the pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes...' (3.13.2), among other objectives.

With respect to creating infrastructure resilient to climate change, the Servicing and Settlement Master Plan (SSMP) acknowledges climate change and recommends that future development proposals recognize the potential for climate change to contribute to the complexity of storm water management. (8.7.5). The SSMP and the Official Plan also identify opportunities for working with the Conservation Authorities to help the town understand, adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change.

7.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

A lack of municipal sewer capacity as well as other key infrastructure gaps make higher residential density and intensification difficult, even if it is supported broadly by the Official Plan (s2.2). Lots sized to include septic systems will not allow for projected future development to occur in a manner consistent with the need for smaller, less expensive homes in the community as identified in the Town's Vision Statement for residential development. Implementation and support for the recommendations

in the SSMP will be essential to ensuring higher-density, mixed-use, walkable developments are possible.

Despite an overall commitment to increasing density in Erin Village, the Town is “strongly committed” to preserving the character and integrity of existing residential areas (4.7.1). This suggests new development will be primarily ground level single family homes. The Town also anticipates that most of the new housing will be built in areas that are currently undeveloped (3.5.5). While maintaining the rural character of the Town is reasonable and certainly desirable in a rural town, it can be a barrier to achieving greater density and more walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Currently, the Official Plan suggests that the downtown areas of Erin Village and Hillsburgh are the main commercial and retail areas (although residential is permitted). Stronger policies that encourage and direct residential development to the downtown would help to create more mixed-use neighbourhoods and reduce automobile reliance. Incentives could also be provided to encourage more commercial development and intensification in the downtown areas.

Non-residential uses (schools, churches, stores, services) in the Town must be located on arterial roads (i.e. roads with high volumes of local traffic at moderate speeds) or in the downtown areas (4.7.11), suggesting that the key daily life amenities can be significant distances from most homes. Ensuring such community amenities are well connected to trails and easily accessible by various modes of transportation is key for creating healthy neighbourhoods. The implementation of the recommendations in the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan will also help to enhance connectivity between neighbourhoods, community facilities, as well as amenities and retail, reducing the need to rely on the automobile. There is also an opportunity to add policies related to providing spaces for social interaction within neighbourhoods.

It appears that currently no Rural Design Guidelines exist for the Town of Erin. Such Guidelines could be developed to help promote walkability, safety and connectivity within the downtowns as well as new developments.

The public realm is not explicitly addressed within the town’s key policy documents and few references are made to places for social interaction. A stronger focus on the public realm and the promotion of public squares, parks, community gardens, public art and a comfortable environment for pedestrians would certainly contribute to healthy neighbourhoods. The Official Plan suggests that a Parks and Recreation Master Plan could also be developed. Developing a plan would help to encourage/support safe, affordable and quality recreation programs, spaces and facilities for residents and visitors.

7.1.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Erin could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. In line with Official Plan policy statement 3.13.2ciii, establish Rural Design Guidelines that promote walkability, safety and	Ottawa Official Plan Volume 2A. Richmond Secondary Plan 3.0 Land Use

connectivity within the downtowns as well as new developments.	3.2b. Through the appropriate design analysis, development addresses the provisions of the Village Design Guidelines and Demonstration Plans as contained in the Community Design Plan.
2. Add development criteria to the 3.11 Parkland and/or 4.12 Recreational sections of the Official Plan that describe design criteria for parks and public spaces, such as including shading, and opportunities for winter recreation and elements that encourage social interaction (i.e. picnic facilities, outdoor music facilities, benches, etc).	<p>City of Peterborough (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5.7.3: Off-road pedestrian trails will be constructed to link major open space areas and may be extended through them to improve public accessibility and mobility in areas of new development. • Section 6.3.2: Maximum effort will be made to consolidate parkland and to provide a continuous linked system of open space using linear parks to connect larger blocks of parkland. Council will promote where ever practical, opportunities to link parks and open space by development of pedestrian pathways, sidewalks and bicycle routes
3. Develop a policy that ensures surplus lands (school boards, libraries etc.) are made available for public benefit (i.e. parks of community facilities).	<p>There are few precedents for this policy, however it is being explored by a number of municipalities. See:</p> <p>Town of Halton Hills School Sites Background, Issues & Options Paper</p> <p>City of Mississauga Master Plan for Recreation Final Report – May 2014</p>
4. In support of Official Plan Community Design Policy 3.13 and to promote inclusiveness and support the development of an age-friendly community, the Town should consider introducing policies and guidelines / standards that encourage the development of accessible neighbourhoods and community spaces, as per the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment and Policy Guidelines for the Design of Public Spaces that accompany the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> ¹²	<p>Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D5.8 Barrier-Free Access • Town supports improving accessibility for all people and therefore, it is a policy of the Town to ensure through the review of development applications that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barrier-free access for persons using walking or mobility aids shall be provided in all public and publicly-accessible buildings and facilities and along major pedestrian routes. Such barrier-free access features may include level surfaces, ramps and curb

¹² More information and examples available at:
http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/built_environment/

	<p>cuts, railings, automatic door openers and rest areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barrier free features shall be integrated with the functional and design components of the site and/or buildings; and, ○ The private sector be encouraged to be proactive in modifying existing private buildings and facilities to improve accessibility.
<p>5. Consider the use of planning tools, such as financial incentives to support existing policies (D3.2.1) aimed at increasing residential intensification and mixed land use within the downtown and surrounding areas. Incentives could be provided to encourage infill development on vacant and deteriorating properties.</p>	<p>City of Barrie Official Plan Financial Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following loan and grant packages are available for commercial and residential projects that increase the functionality of existing building, promote the development of vacant and underutilized sites, and improve or restore exterior building facades and signage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tax Increment Grant Program ○ Application Fees, Permit Fees, and Special Fees Grant for Program ○ Adaptive Re-use and Upgrade to the Building Code Program ○ Facade and Signage Loan Program ○ Cash-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Grant ○ Facade Improvement Loan ○ Renovation Loan

7.1.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Encourage public bodies to concentrate their new buildings to create a critical mass of activity. As per policy 3.11.5, develop a Parks and/or Facilities Master Plan to encourage safe, affordable and quality recreation programs, spaces and facilities.

7.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxviii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

7.2.1 STRENGTHS

The Town of Erin has set the following objectives with respect to its transportation networks in its Official Plan (s.3.7):

- provide appropriate linkages between local, County and Provincial road systems;
- encourage the development of safe and efficient pathways and trails in the Town which promote walking/biking, reduce dependency on motor vehicles and minimize the conflict between pedestrian and vehicular traffic; and
- provide a transportation network for pedestrians and automobiles safe from hazards such as flooding and erosion.

With respect to pedestrian traffic, the Official Plan states that the overall transportation system shall accommodate the safe movement of people who choose to walk (s 3.8.9). Other policies that support safe pedestrian movement include:

- a) Requiring sidewalks when new development is proposed in an area not adequately served by existing sidewalks (3.8.9a)
- b) Develop a sidewalk construction program with emphasis on providing sidewalk access to the downtown, schools, major institutions and along major streets;
- c) Requiring proper signage and/or traffic control devices; (3.8.9c)
- d) Develop a walking trail system within the Town making use of various natural amenities.

Specific policies also exist for road widening, turning signals, intersection improvements, pedestrian crossings and pedestrian traffic signals in order to ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists.

The Wellington County Active Transportation Plan is a long-term strategy developed to create a pedestrian and cycling supportive environment and encourage both utilitarian and recreational travel by walking and cycling. Wellington County in association with the seven local area municipalities and WDGP have committed to implementing the Plan.

7.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Safe connections and pedestrian environments are promoted in the Town's planning documents; however, greater detail/direction could be provided on this in the Official Plan or in rural design guidelines.

The Wellington County Active Transportation Plan makes a number of planning-related recommendations to improve the policy framework for a healthy transportation network. These recommendations represent gaps and opportunities for improving Erin's active transportation network and are worth noting in this report: (s 7.2-7.11)

- Develop local trail master plans to complement and connect seamlessly with the countywide active transportation network.
- Examine development charges by-law to ensure it is sufficient to pay for Active Transportation routes

- Examine the potential to use unopened road allowances, abandoned railway corridors and utility corridors in urban and rural areas as Active Transportation routes
- Review and revise annual maintenance budgets to accommodate the maintenance of Active Transportation Infrastructure

There are also a number of programmatic opportunities for the WDGP to engage with both the Town and the County to work on implementing.

Some guidance on accessibility exists in the Wellington County Active Transportation Master Plan. There is an opportunity to further promote or prioritize accessibility in the Town's planning policy documents or through other initiatives/programs.

7.2.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Erin could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<p>1. Develop a new section of the Official Plan that encourages and describes an active transportation network, using the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a suite of policies that encourages safety and accessibility of the Town's active transportation network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy-efficient lighting included wherever possible for new street design or during street upgrades. ○ Mobility-friendly curb cuts ○ Wide sidewalks ○ Signed walking & pedestrian routes ○ Sidewalks maintained all year round ○ Universal design • Include suite of policies that ensures cycling is convenient and safe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Road signed routes for cyclists ○ Bicycle parking at major destinations ○ Bike lanes on all main arterial roads or on all County roads • Include a section or sub-section that provides direction for the development 	<p>Oxford County (ON) Official Plan Section 7.6.5 Pedestrians City Council shall make the pedestrian environment safer and more convenient to use in both new and existing development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the existing pedestrian network is maintained, and replaced, where appropriate. • Ensuring adequate lighting to Illuminating Engineering Society (I.E.S.) standards is provided for pedestrian networks including sidewalks, pathways and footbridges and in open space areas, where necessary. • Ensuring that sidewalks are sufficiently setback from adjacent roadways and adequately drained. • Ensuring that new or replacement pedestrian facilities provide barrier-free access from the road network for the disabled and elderly and persons pushing a stroller or cart and provides for the safe crossing of roads. <p>Town of the Blue Mountains Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D2.5: Active transportation Active transportation (walking and cycling) is an important component of

<p>of the Town's trail network, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trail signage ○ Rest areas ○ Clear connections to streets ○ Trail maintenance 	<p>building active communities and reducing dependence on single occupant vehicles. In order to plan for and encourage walking and cycling, Council shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) promote a connected, safe and well designed active transportation network which can include exclusive facilities for pedestrians and cyclists (sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails, etc.) that are connected to origins and destinations within and beyond the Town; • b) support the provision of safe and convenient cycling and walking routes in the review of all development applications; • e) require the provision of sidewalks in settlement areas and hamlets, where appropriate; • f) encourage mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood design that supports connections between land use and transportation infrastructure; • g) investigate and provide for bicycle lanes wherever possible in the construction or reconstruction of roads and bridges; • h) encourage and support measures which will provide for barrier free design of pedestrian facilities; • i) support an accessible network that allows for use by all members of the community, which includes barrier-free design of pedestrian facilities which considers the location and width of sidewalks, use of curb cuts, pedestrian crosswalks and signals, etc.; • j) ensure that lands for bicycle/pedestrian paths are included with the land requirements for roads; • k) encourage pedestrian and cycling amenities, both on the active transportation network and at key destinations, and can include shower facilities and lockers at major employers,
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	<p>appropriate pedestrian and cyclist signaling, and water fountains and benches along trail networks;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • l) ensure that the rights and privacy of adjacent property owners are factored into the design process for pedestrian and cycling routes; • m) ensure that all pedestrian and cycling routes are designed to be safe; and, • n) consider implementation of these policies through community design guidelines, zoning, street design manuals, etc.
<p>2. In coordination with the County, develop policies that encourage the exploration or development of alternate public transportation service delivery options relevant for Erin.</p>	<p>County of Frontenac Official Plan 4.1.2 Rural Public Transportation 4.1.2.3 Policies The County will explore alternatives and consider various rural transportation models that could be effective in the context of the rural density of the Frontenacs, including community-based models.</p>
<p>3. Require subdivision applications to demonstrate how new developments make connections to trails and sidewalks.</p>	<p>Town of Stratford Official Plan 5.2 Demand Management 5.2.1. Active Transportation Require the inclusion of walking and cycling facilities in all future private development projects and insure that connectivity of these facilities is given priority 5.2.4. Automobiles Require developers of new subdivisions to provide active transportation linkages as part of the development process, and allow emergency access where deemed necessary</p>
<p>4. Encourage or require new local road infrastructure projects to incorporate bikeability and walkability, such as paved shoulder. Note: Other jurisdictions have operational guidelines that mandate the inclusion of cycling lanes when arterial roads are rebuilt.</p>	<p>Prince Edward County Official Plan 4.7.5 Proposed major bicycle trails along the County Roads and the Loyalist Parkway are shown on Schedule 'D'. When the County or Province improves these road surfaces, they will endeavour to add a paved bicycle path along the shoulders in order to provide increased traffic safety. Trailside resting stops</p>

	and small picnic parkettes may also be provided on suitable sites along the trails.
5. Explicitly permit recreational trails in all land-use designations (subject to certain requirements).	Town of Collingwood Official Plan 3.2.3 It is the intent of this Official Plan that utility, communication and publicly-owned transportation, park and playground facilities, including pedestrian trails, and other uses deemed to serve a similar public function be permitted in all land use designations.

7.2.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Work with community partners to identify accessibility issues across the Town and explore potential solutions. Consider conducting an accessibility audit of the Town.
- Support/develop public awareness initiatives that encourage active transportation for utilitarian and leisure uses.
- Support implementation of the recommendations listed in the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan, such as:
 - Develop local trail master plans to complement and connect seamlessly with the countywide active transportation network.
 - Examine development charges by-law to ensure it is sufficient to pay for Active Transportation routes
 - Examine the potential to use unopened road allowances, abandoned railway corridors and utility corridors in urban and rural areas as Active Transportation routes
 - Review and revise annual maintenance budgets to accommodate the maintenance of Active Transportation Infrastructure.
- Work with WDGPH and other community partners to promote active transportation throughout the Town. Consider the programming related recommendations listed in the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan.

7.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxix} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

7.3.1 STRENGTHS

Planning policies provide a solid basis for actions that would protect the natural environment. The Official Plan includes a Core Greenlands component (wetlands, habitat of endangered species, floodways and hazardous lands) where no development is permitted and a Greenlands component (other significant natural heritage features) where some development may occur subject to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (4.3.1).

The majority of land within the Town is also protected by Greenbelt Plan policy. The Greenbelt Plan identifies the villages of Erin and Hillsburgh as ‘towns/villages’ contained within a Settlement Area, while most of the agricultural land has been designated as Protected Countryside. Development is permitted to occur within the Settlement Area but locations for development are restricted in the Protected Countryside. Expansions to Settlement Areas may occur only following an extensive review. These policies work to promote agriculture, but also help to protect important natural features and open space in the Town.

Several other key policies contribute to a healthy natural environment in Erin:

- Parkland requirements for new residential, industrial and commercial developments. (3.11.1)
- General policy statement that encourages development of continuous greenspace corridors throughout the Town by connecting parks and open space lands with natural heritage features. (3.11.6)
- An objective to develop a walking trail system making use of various natural amenities. (3.8.9d)
- A requirement that as many trees and other vegetation as possible are retained on site during development. (3.13.3)
- A statement that permits the Town to require developers to submit a tree inventory and tree saving plan. (3.13.3)
- Minimum distances (setbacks) between development and adjacent watercourse requirements for vegetated riparian buffers in the zoning by-law. (3.1.10)

The Town’s Official Plan also includes several policies directing Council and staff to work jointly with other applicable agencies, in its review of development applications, to protect and enhance the water quality and aquatic eco-system.

The County of Wellington has a Green Legacy Programme. The key objectives of the program are:

- Educating the public about the value of trees and the natural environment.
- Actively involving the public in community forest process - the gathering of seed, growing of nursery stock, and planting and caring for young trees.
- Providing an ongoing supply of young trees to meet demand.

7.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The Town’s Official Plan gives Council the authority to develop a ‘Parks and Recreation Master Plan’; however a Plan does not appear to currently exist. Developing a parks master plan could contribute significantly to a healthy natural environment in Erin.

The Town's Official Plan currently protects trees primarily as part of significant woodlots. The Town may also require the submission of a tree study and saving plan from developers. There is an opportunity to strengthen the Town's policies in order to further protect trees in the development process (i.e. a tree by-law).

Local organizations, especially the two Conservation Authorities, are key partners in the development and implementation of policy for a healthy environment. Continued collaboration and partnership with such agencies is important for Erin and could be further facilitated by WDGPH.

Two other operational plans could be valuable in ensuring a healthy natural environment in Erin: 1) A natural heritage plan promoting the protection and enhancement of the Town's natural heritage system and 2) an urban forest management plan focused on maximizing the Town's urban forest cover and ensure it is practicing tree protection, tree establishment and tree maintenance best practices.

As the Town grows, policies, by-laws and programs that minimize air pollution could be explored, such as an anti-idling by-law customized for a rural setting, such as idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students, staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

7.3.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Erin could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop policies to maximize the environmental and community health benefits of having healthy trees, with particular attention to protecting the community's stock of existing trees, supporting the growth of new trees and expanding the tree canopy in the community. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop an Urban Forestry Management Plan. b. Require a local landscaping plan c. Include general policy statements about tree protection/canopy. 	<p>Healthy Community Design – Policy Statements for Official Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EN 4.4: Develop an urban forestry plan and associated implementation program to increase the health of the urban forest and expand the tree <p>Town of Blue Mountains Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D8.2 Tree Canopy: Supporting the protection and enhancement of tree canopies can contribute to improvements to air and water quality, reductions in greenhouse gases, the support of biodiversity, and enhancement of natural features and systems. It is a policy of the Town to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ encourage the planting of native or non-native non-invasive tree species and vegetation that are resilient to climate change and provide high levels of carbon sequestration,

	<p>particularly through new development and on municipally-owned land;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ implement measures to protect, enhance, and expand the tree canopy ○ consider the establishment of a forest resource stewardship strategy and plan; ○ require reimbursement, in the form of new trees or financial compensation, for all healthy trees proposed to be removed in development applications, based on the findings of a Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan; and, encourage tree planting by local residents and organizations, and educate residents about the benefits of planting trees on their property and the environmental impact of removing trees. <p>City of Guelph Official Plan</p> <p>6A.5.4.1 Vegetation Compensation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The detailed requirements for a Vegetation Compensation Plan will be developed by the City through the Urban Forest Management Plan. The requirements, once developed, will be applied to determine appropriate vegetation compensation for the loss of trees through development and site alteration.
2. Support the development of green building guidelines for residential development, within the Official Plan, in Rural Design Guidelines and/or encourage as part of the Site Plan Control Agreement.	<p>Town of Mono</p> <p>Green Building Checklist</p> <p>An evaluation checklist that contains a number of green building standards and criteria ranging from third party certification standards and programs to Energy Star requirements to energy efficiency programs</p>
3. Develop a natural heritage plan to protect the protection and enhancement of the Town's natural heritage system	<p>See Town of Richmond Hill Natural Heritage Strategy.</p>

<p>4. The Town could consider an anti-idling bylaw that includes idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton – Bylaw 15982</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles are prohibited from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals.
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7.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxx} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure

7.4.1 STRENGTHS

The Town's Official Plan has a strong agricultural vision statement, which helps to support a healthy food system. The vision statement for agriculture states that: (2.2.1)

- Agriculture will continue to be an important component of the Town's economy and prime agricultural soils will be preserved for agricultural use by protecting them from non-farm uses.
- The rural character of the Town will be maintained by keeping large tracts of land workable and in production, and directing new development to existing developed areas.
- Planning policies for non-prime agricultural areas will be more flexible to permit agricultural activities and other non-agricultural uses.

Specific policies for agricultural land in Erin are found within the Wellington County Official Plan. Generally, the policies serve to protect the valuable soil and encourage ongoing agricultural and related land use. In Prime Agricultural Areas, agricultural uses and farm practices are promoted and protected. In Secondary Agricultural Areas, agriculture continues to be the dominant use but a range of other uses is also allowed. The creation of new lots is restricted, further protecting the agricultural land (4.3). The protection and promotion of agricultural land are important to the Town's policy framework for a healthy food system.

Secondary uses such as farm businesses or home businesses are permitted on agricultural land (subject to certain provisions in the zoning by-law), which can include farmers markets and pick-your-own/catch your own operations. Such secondary uses can help to enhance access to healthy, local food within the Town, as well as drive economic development.

7.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The Town of Erin has the benefit of being in close proximity to a great deal of agricultural area, which means healthy food is likely easy to access. There is an opportunity for the Town to further promote

this accessory farm businesses such as pick-your-own farms, produce stands and farmers markets could be further promoted. More direction could be provided on these uses to ensure they function effectively. Potential transportation and parking impacts would need to be carefully considered.

Interestingly, the zoning by-law restricts food processing facilities in the Town. Food processing is often considered a noxious use; however, such facilities can be valuable components of a robust local food system. There may be opportunities to work with community partners on promoting healthy, local food within schools and community centres. The promotion of hobby farms and home gardening would also help to ensure a healthy food network.

7.4.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Erin could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. Add a healthy food system as an objective or vision statement in the Official Plan (Section 2.0).	City of Guelph Official Plan 2.2 Strategic Goals of the Plan: 1. Planning a Complete and Healthy Community 7.5 g) Foster sustainable local food systems.
2. Promote farmers markets as a permitted use in the Central Business Districts (4.8).	City of Cambridge Official Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.0: The City will recognize and encourage the use of the Community Core Areas as: h) locations where residents can access local food through farmers' markets. Section 7.10: The City supports a strong local food system through its Farmers' Market, temporary farmers' markets, and community gardens. The City recognizes that community gardens contribute to the overall parks and open space system and access to locally grown food. Halton Region Official Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 101.4: Recognize, encourage, protect and support Halton's farmers and agricultural operations and to this end: h) Support a farm-fresh produce network that promotes direct sales of farm produce and related products to residents, local businesses and visitors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j) (iii) permit or provide permanent or temporary facilities for farmers' markets in the Urban Area or Hamlets.
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7.4.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Promote and encourage hobby farms and home gardening throughout the Town.
- Partner with other community food organizations (i.e. community kitchens and school gardens) to support the development of a healthy food system.
- Promote 'buy local' initiatives within the private (local businesses and restaurants) and public sectors (schools and community centres) to support local farmers and encourage healthy eating.
- Consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>

7.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^[xxxi] and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

7.5.1 STRENGTHS

The Town of Erin's Official Plan (Official Plan) recognizes the need to provide a greater variety of housing types and neighbourhoods. Semi-detached, townhouse and apartment development are anticipated and may eventually account for at least one quarter of all housing units in the Town. The Official Plan also states that prior to approving new development, Council must consider the housing need within the community and the housing market area to ensure opportunities for a range of housing types (3.5.1). However the Official Plan and the SSMP also recognize the limitations on housing imposed by the predominantly rural character of Erin and the lack of municipal sewage treatment infrastructure.

Several other policies contribute to a healthy mix of housing types and tenures in Erin:

- Townhouses and apartments are allowed in areas designated residential, subject to the requirements of the zoning by-law
- Garden suites (i.e. small secondary units built on residential properties) are permitted, provided that they meet a number of specific criteria (i.e. they must be temporary and portable, less than 100 square m) (3.5.8).

Garden suites are important in the Erin context, as they provide opportunities for more affordable units, without interfering with the rural character of the town.

With regards to the quality and design of housing, the Town's Official Plan encourages residential developments which incorporate 'innovative and appropriate design principles' which contribute to public safety, affordability, energy conservation and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment (4.7.2i). The Property Standards by-law (#14-33) also contains requirements for building ventilation, heating, and housing structure, which contributes to healthy housing in Erin. Policies are also included in the Official Plan to ensure adequate noise attenuation is provided in residential development, and residential areas are buffered from sources of air pollution, including highly-trafficked roadways and drive-thrus. (3.12.1) On-site amenity areas for occupants of the residential units are required for townhouses and apartments.

Residential development is permitted in the urban centres (provided that retail, office or service commercial uses are located at street level). (4.8.3) Senior housing (such as senior citizen's complexes, homes for the aged, rest homes, nursing homes and residential communities) are also encouraged to locate in the urban centres where additional services are available. (3.5.7), which helps to ensure vulnerable populations have adequate, affordable housing and lifestyles.

A Place to Call Home, a 10 year housing and homelessness strategy plan for Guelph Wellington was developed in 2013 to provide a roadmap for achieving the County's desired vision that, "Everyone in Guelph Wellington can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home." The Plan identifies high-level strategies for the County to address housing gaps and ensure seniors and other vulnerable populations have adequate housing.

7.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Beyond the two villages, affordable housing isn't possible until new wastewater management is built.

The current policy to encourage affordable housing focuses on the two villages. Promoting higher-density/midrise development in the villages would help to ensure aging in place.

While it is positive to encourage affordable housing in close proximity to amenities the Town may not want to limit development to these areas and could look for affordable options outside the core as well (i.e. affordable homeownership options). The Town could adopt affordable housing targets and standards.

Emphasis could also be made within planning policy to support housing for vulnerable populations. A broad policy statement could help ensure housing options for seniors, low-income individuals and families, persons with disabilities etc. are prioritized.

There may be opportunities to encourage green building features for residential developments, especially within affordable housing. Guidelines for green buildings could be included in the Official Plan, in Rural Design Guidelines or other local by-laws (i.e. Property Services By-law). Green building features could also be encouraged as part of the Site Plan Control Agreement.

7.5.3 CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Erin could consider adopting Official Plan amendments that reflect the following policy directions and best practices:

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<p>1. Establish minimum affordable housing targets and standards once adequate service infrastructure is in place.</p>	<p>City of Peterborough Official Plan <i>4.2.3 Housing Production</i> 4.2.3.4 The City recognizes the definition of “affordable” as stated in the Provincial Policy Statement (2005). Notwithstanding the Provincial definition of affordable, the City will establish, as a priority, greater levels of affordability for various affordable housing programs and local housing production targets. The City will annually establish local affordable housing targets in accordance with this definition.</p>
<p>2. Work with the County and other sectors to ensure an adequate supply of housing options for vulnerable populations (i.e. seniors, low-income individuals and families, persons with disabilities etc).</p>	<p>City of Markham Official Plan Affordable and Shared Housing Strategy 4.1.1.3 To work, in partnership with the Region, the non-profit sector, the development industry, community partners and senior levels of government, to develop a strategy for affordable and shared housing and coordinate efforts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensure a diverse range of housing choices; b) increase the supply of affordable housing including social and assisted housing; c) increase affordable housing options for seniors, youth, new immigrants, and single person households; d) provide a range of affordable housing options for families; e) increase the supply of shared housing including housing for persons with special needs; and f) increase the supply of accessible housing
<p>3. Add a general policy statement to reflect the Town’s commitment to seniors housing.</p>	<p>Town of Caledon Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.5.3.5 Diverse Housing Types and Tenure: 1. A full range of housing types and densities will be planned as an integral part of each Rural Service Centre. • Within the context of the other objectives

	and policies of this Plan, the Town will support alternative kinds of private market, rental and special needs housing to meet the demands of the Town's changing demographics by: facilitating applications that would provide housing for moderate and lower income households; encouraging life-cycle housing and encouraging the work of the Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation and any community based groups in the provision of special needs housing.
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8.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWN OF MINTO OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Town of Minto. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations and a list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

The Town of Minto uses the County of Wellington Official Plan as its Official Plan and that document was reviewed for this phase of the study. The Town's Strategic Plan (2013), Cultural Plan (Building a Creative Rural Economy: A Cultural Plan for Minto, June 2011) and Community Improvement Plan (as amended May 2015) were also reviewed, as well as the Town's "Areas of Interest" articulated within the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan (November 2012).

Please note that a comprehensive review of the Wellington County Official Plan with accompanying "policy considerations" is contained in Section 6.0 of this report. In this section, we provide "Other Strategies and Actions" for the Town of Minto to consider based on the additional documents that were reviewed.

8.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxxxii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

8.1.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Town's Strategic Plan and Cultural Plan include policies to support flexible zoning that allows mixed use development. The Strategic Plan also includes policies on increased density, focusing new development in settlement areas, and linking walkable community and trails initiatives to capital projects. The Strategic Plan states that the Town should also "promote awareness of local trails through association membership, brochures and website." Section 4.1 of the Strategic Plan indicates that the Town will: "Promote sustainable growth and development and strategies that make Minto an attractive place for families to

live and for businesses to prosper, and pursue development in settlement areas consistent with the character of the area.”

The Strategic Plan also promotes neighbourhood connectivity via a local trail systems. It is stated that the Town will “Promote and pursue in partnership with trail groups and landowners a trail link from Palmerston to Harriston to Clifford, and develop additional trails, paths and walking tours throughout each area to link parks, natural and historic areas.”

We also note that the following are the Town’s “Areas of Interest” regarding economic development: Tourism, business retention and expansion, creative cultural industries, employment lands, downtown revitalization, local food, physician recruitment, many of which relate to neighbourhood design and use. Many of these themes are echoed in Section 4.0 of the Town’s Strategic Plan, which addresses the theme of Economic Development. The Town’s Community Improvement Plan, which is supported through an annual budget allocation of \$15,000, also contributes to the economic health of the community through incentives such as façade and signage grants.

8.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County’s Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Additionally, while we identified an area of opportunity to adopt Universal Design standards for public spaces in the County Official Plan, the Town’s Strategic Plan has a policy to ensure access to community facilities is available for persons of all abilities. Finally, there is also an opportunity to add policies related to providing spaces for social interaction within neighbourhoods.

In addition, leveraging the local trail system to connect the Town’s streetscapes, parklands and open space areas with residential areas, schools, commercial and employment areas, and conservation areas, where permissible, within and between neighbourhoods or communities, and making a commitment to supporting active transportation would be beneficial. This would support Action 7.1 of the Strategic Plan, which seeks to create a “supportive pedestrian and cycling environment” and Action 7.7, which states that the Town should: “Develop design plans in consultation with the public, for urban areas that link parklands, trail systems, facilities and identify future works needed to improve recreation infrastructure.” Encouraging active transportation could also assist Minto in addressing the need for infrastructure to support transportation to work, which was identified as a priority by stakeholders from Minto who participated in consultations as part of the recent study “Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions.”

Also, in support of the Town’s Strategic Plan and to promote inclusiveness and support the development of an age-friendly community, the Town should consider introducing policies, where applicable, and guidelines / standards that encourage the development of accessible neighbourhoods and community spaces, as per the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment and Policy Guidelines for the Design of Public Spaces that accompany the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*¹³. Public and open spaces that are designed to foster social interaction within neighbourhoods should also be made accessible.

¹³ More information and examples available at:
http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/built_environment/

8.1.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider adding policies related to providing spaces for social interaction within neighbourhoods.
- Leverage the local trail system to connect the Town's streetscapes, parklands and open space areas with residential areas, schools, commercial and employment areas and conservation areas
- Make a commitment to supporting active transportation.
- Consider introducing policies, where applicable, and guidelines / standards that encourage the development of accessible neighbourhoods and community spaces

8.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxxiii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

8.2.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Official Plan. Stakeholders did identify, through the "Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions" consultations, that finding a way to provide transportation to work for local residents is a local priority. To that end, the Town's Strategic Plan's Actions around promoting walking and cycling, and connecting communities via a local trail networks, will prove invaluable, though active transportation is unlikely to solve, on its own, the Town's transportation challenges.

8.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. As indicated above, there is an opportunity for the Town to increase public awareness and use of active transportation. This could be done in partnership with WDGPH and/or others. Also, while there are some supportive policies and actions in the County's Official Plan and the Town's Strategic Plan, respectively, there is an opportunity to enhance the infrastructure and design measures needed to make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists. There is also an opportunity to work with community partners to encourage alternative forms of transportation, such as carpooling, which, in conjunction with promoting active transportation, could help address the Town's transportation challenges. There may also be a need to further investigate the feasibility of developing a community-based transportation solution, in addition to active and alternative transportation modes. Note that any solution should be developed in collaboration with community members, including local organizations. If there is a need to develop community-based transportation options for particular population groups, such as workers or seniors, the Town could

refer to the “Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions” resource document, prepared by Dillon Consulting for the Rural Ontario Institute and Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, to learn more about potentially viable models and their feasibility

8.2.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider working in partnership with local organizations and/or WDGP to promote active transportation and its trail system, as well as alternative modes of transportation such as carpooling
- Active transportation, alternative transportation and community-based transportation solutions could be explored through a Town-led local consultation process
- Accessibility should feature prominently in the plans for any community-based transportation solution
- Consider linking its plans to the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan

8.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxxiv} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

8.3.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County’s Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. As part of its mission statement, the Town includes respect for the natural environment. The Town’s Strategic Plan has policies related to developing a Green Energy Plan, supporting solar energy initiatives, encouraging urban forestry and low maintenance landscaping. There is also a policy on environmentally friendly development through subdivision and site plan control.

Natural and cultural heritage conservation is cited within the Town’s Cultural Plan as one of Minto’s key values. The Town’s Cultural Plan, which is linked with Economic Development Goals (i.e. “Creative Rural Economies”) makes mention of both natural and cultural heritage. The cultural plan advocates for using a “cultural lens” in examining any planning decisions, in order to ascertain the impact of those decisions on local cultural resources. The Cultural Plan recommends mapping the Town’s ‘cultural assets’, and goes on to identify, preliminarily, that Minto has 15 assets in the Natural Heritage category. The concept of ‘natural heritage’, and the stated need to promote it, is linked with the Town’s trail system.

8.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County’s Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. There is also an opportunity to work with the County to ensure that there is sufficient tree cover throughout the different

communities and not just in parks. This will also help provide spaces for social interacting within neighbourhoods.

The Town could consider passing a bylaw to establish idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students and staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

8.3.3 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider collaborating with the County to advance policies aimed at creating infrastructure that is resilient to climate change and generally exploring and developing plans to adapt to the effects of climate change
- Consider whether an anti-idling or tree cover bylaw would be applicable locally, in order to maintain or enhance air quality and tree cover, particularly in urban areas where development is concentrated.
- As per the Town's Cultural Plan, consider collaborating with local organizations and businesses in order to advance objectives around culture and heritage, including natural heritage.
- Consider whether there are any opportunities to strengthen or expand the Town's network of relationships in order to advance any specific goals of its Cultural, Strategic or Community Improvement Plans

8.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xxxv} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure

8.4.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Town's Strategic Plan has several policies on supporting agricultural initiatives and access to locally grown food. In addition, "local food" is identified as an "Area of Interest" for the Town of Minto within the County's Economic Development Strategy.

Finally, "Agricultural assets – organic, local food, farms, markets, Savour the Flavours, commodity boards (working regionally with Taste Real Guelph Wellington)" are identified within the Town's Cultural Plan as being among the Town's greatest opportunities. The Cultural Plan recommends the Town hold an annual "Cultural Rally," which could showcase various aspects of local culture, including food. An existing event, "Savour the Flavours," showcases local foods and chef's creations. "Savour Minto", under the Minto Chamber of Commerce, is a local food initiative. The most recent "Savour Minto Dinner" was held on April 21, 2015. In the Cultural Plan, C & M Seeds is cited as a local example of cultural

innovation, within the agriculture sector. In Minto, local food is closely linked with culture and economic development, especially tourism (including agro-tourism).

A clear strength of the Town's Strategic Plan is Action 10.5, which is to: "Improve accessibility and awareness of local food by continuing to maintain and enhance Farmers' Markets, facilitating a Clifford Farmers' Market (where there is sustained local interest) and continuing to promote buy local food campaigns in partnership with the County and others." There are several Farmers' Markets in Minto, each of which is promoted via the "Minto Farmers Market" website (www.mintofarmersmarket.ca). It is unclear as to whether there is a Farmers Market in Clifford, despite the specific direction given in the Strategic Plan to that end.

8.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. There may be opportunities for the Town to work with WDGPH and other community stakeholders to deliver healthy food education within schools and community centres. As aforementioned, stakeholders appear to have a sophisticated understanding of the interrelationships between local food, cultural experiences and economic development opportunities; however, there may be an opportunity to build a stronger narrative in town about the importance of healthy food and food security, from a Public Health or "healthy communities" perspective..

8.4.3 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Leverage partnerships to deliver healthy food education within schools and community centres
- Ensure that through Town-led initiatives that local food is not only linked with economic development and culture, but also to healthy, sustainable food systems and food security

8.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxvvi} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

8.5.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. In Minto's Strategic Plan, Action 9.5 states that the Town will: Support a suitable supply, type and variety of housing at a range of prices in Minto including ownership or rental options and encourage residential infilling in upper floors of commercial buildings and intensification adjacent to downtown areas keeping in mind the character and needs of the community. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan notes that, during a public workshop held as part of the 2012 review of its Strategic Plan, the addition of an action to "Create affordable housing"

was recommended as the fifth most important new Action. Interestingly, the most important new Action item proposed through the workshop was to “Address absentee landlord issues,” which strongly suggests that there may be landlord-tenant challenges in Minto’s rental market.

8.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County’s Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. There is an opportunity to work with the County to add policies related to providing spaces for social interaction within neighbourhoods, as discussed in the Neighbourhood Design section.

Additionally, there may be a need for the Town to study challenges and opportunities within the local rental market, given that addressing absentee landlord issues was most important to residents a few years ago. The Town could contemplate passing by-laws to better regulate the local rental housing market, or aspects of the local rental market.

8.5.3 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- The Town could contemplate how to best reconcile the County’s support for affordable housing with its focus on single-family dwellings.
- The Town could consider researching the challenges and opportunities in the local rental housing market, including affordable rental, to see if the Town could assist in resolving any challenges through introducing by-laws or taking other action.
- The Town could encourage the development of spaces for social interaction within new affordable housing projects and new residential subdivisions.
- The Town could consider introducing incentives and otherwise encouraging the development of green building features, particularly for affordable housing developments.

9.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CENTRE WELLINGTON OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Township of Centre Wellington. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations, which are compared to some similar Official Plan policies in place in other municipalities. A list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

The Township of Centre Wellington's Official Plan (2013) only applies to the Elora and Fergus Urban Centres, including Salem and Belwood. The rest of the Township, including its Greenlands and Rural Systems, is governed by the County's Official Plan. Both the County and Centre Wellington Official Plans were reviewed, along with the Township's Strategic Plan (2004)¹⁴; Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2009); Trails Master Plan (2014) and Urban Centre Community Improvement Plan (2014).

Please note that a comprehensive review of the Wellington County Official Plan with accompanying "policy considerations" is contained in Section 6.0 of this report.

9.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxxxvii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

9.1.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. While there is no mention in the Township's Official Plan of "complete communities" per se, several principles of Healthy Neighbourhoods are reflected in the "Major Goals" of the Plan and its policies. For example, the Plan's Major Goals include:

¹⁴ We believe that the eight (8) programs and their 91 services, and some other content, outlined in the Township's Strategic Plan have changed since it was published in 2004.

3. Ensure that adequate lands and services are available to allow for the future needs of the community.
4. Provide opportunities for housing, shopping, employment and recreation to serve the needs of a growing community.
6. Provide an adequate supply and diversity of housing to satisfy the varied needs of the community.
7. Promote a safe and efficient road and pedestrian system in the Township.
8. Set appropriate standards for development that encourages controlled growth that will represent a long-term benefit to the community.
9. Ensure that adequate parks and open spaces are available to meet the recreation needs of all ages.
10. Provide improved municipal services and community facilities to serve the needs of the community and to anticipate future needs.

There are various policies in place that control for urban area expansion and, instead, promote intensification to manage growth. Under the Township's Official Plan Section C.5.5, Residential Intensification, it is stated that "The strategic approach to intensification intends to retain small town character and revitalize downtown areas..." The Plan encourages the re-use or redevelopment of brownfield and greyfield sites, as well as encouraging increased densities in newly developed residential areas and modest intensification in stable residential areas. Seemingly in reference to both mixed use development and urban intensification, the Plan states that the downtown could be revitalized in part through "encouraging added housing above commercial uses in and near the downtown, in residential transition areas, and in other main commercial areas." While intensification is primarily to be concentrated in Urban Centres, the policy direction also encourages "small-scale intensification in rural areas and hamlets," as through adding accessory suites. There are also provisions for increased densities in greenfield areas.

In terms of mixed use development, it is stated in Section D5 of the the Township's Official Plan that "Residential uses may be permitted within mixed use developments provided that commercial uses are located at street level, and land use compatibility can be addressed." There are also specific policies outlined for "Special Policy Areas" such as Little Folks in Section D.10, where mixed use development is referenced extensively. The land use map contained within the Official Plan shows very little land area zoned for mixed use development, although we understand that some mixed use development would be permitted in areas zoned as "Highway Commercial."

In terms of neighbourhood connectivity, it is mentioned in the Official Plan that parklands, such as those created in new residential subdivisions, should be linked wherever possible by walkways, bike paths and/or trails. Additionally, Policy C.12.6 notes that "The Township encourages the development of continuous greenspace corridors throughout the Township by connecting parks and open space lands with natural heritage features and trailways. Greenspace corridors shall generally be used for passive recreation." There is a target of 3 hectares of parkland for every 1,000 people in Centre Wellington, in keeping with the Township's Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan. There is a Section of the Official Plan that specifically links the document to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan ("Parks Plan") outlines the Township's interior and exterior

recreation and culture facility needs. The Parks Plan encourages the Township to develop a Trails Master Plan, which was subsequently developed and published in May, 2014.

The Trails Master Plan indicates that Centre Wellington has 12 trail connections, including the Elora Cataract Trailway, which is operated by the Conservation Authority. The Plan references the Wellington County 5 Year Trail Plan (2011-2015). The vision for the Township's Trail Plan is as follows:

"Build upon the success of the Elora-Cataract Trailway, and connect neighbourhoods, schools, work places, recreation facilities in Centre Wellington while linking the municipality to communities within the county and surrounding municipalities."

Community Safety is one of the Township's program areas outlined in its Strategic Plan but we have not found current reference to this program on the Centre Wellington website.

The overall goal of the Community Improvement Plan is to support a healthy Urban Centre and to encourage local economic development. A specific goal pertaining to the built environment is "to support remediation and redevelopment", both of which would enhance the planning and development of a healthy community.

Urban design guidelines are currently being drafted. Centre Wellington has an accessibility plan that is not listed in their Official Plan. They currently sit on the County Accessibility Committee.

9.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. While the Township does encourage intensification, and sees intensification as a welcome opportunity to expand the supply of affordable housing in urban areas, there may be an opportunity to encourage mixed use development more widely as a means of creating complete communities. Such a concept could, and should, be linked with the Township's first Major Goal of "maintaining the high quality of life that residents of Centre Wellington currently enjoy." While the Official Plan acknowledges that trails and parklands should be expanded and diversified; that greenspace corridors should be connected; and, access to open space should be improved where appropriate, there may be an opportunity to build on and leverage these key features to strengthen connectivity between neighbourhoods and communities. This would also support the findings of the Township's Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan, which notes, in the Section on Trails and Pathways (5.1) that these contribute to neighbourhood connectivity and their expansion would, therefore, support corresponding Official Plan policy directions.

Furthermore, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and its accompanying Built Environment Standards are not referenced within the Township's Official Plan. There may be an opportunity to increase the Township's focus on incorporating accessibility into planning and building decisions, particularly as related to developing age-friendly communities.

9.1.3 CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<p>1. Consider linking safe neighbourhood design with the culture and heritage, including natural heritage, of the area in ways that foster social interaction and increase neighbourhood connectivity (including walking, and cycling)</p>	<p>Prince Edward County (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.10.4: The County will provide an attractive environment for cyclists because of its well-planned trails, facilities, attractions and suitable terrain. The beautification of tourist roads, including the Loyalist Parkway, will be undertaken and more picnic and viewing areas provided. <p>Town of Ajax (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4.1.2e: Protect for the needs of vulnerable road users such as children, youth, persons with disabilities and seniors as part of the development review process and as part of the design of all facilities; <p>Halton Region (ON) Official Plan - Healthy Communities Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.1: Build compact mixed use developments that create walkable and connected communities. This will provide the community with a wide range of densities and housing opportunities. Section 2.2: Provide connected street networks that are accessible to all modes of transportation to create a safe, convenient and accessible environment for walking.
<p>2. Consider introducing policies that specifically encourage the design and development of safe neighbourhoods, possibly through employing policies and principles associated with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).</p>	<p>City of Saskatoon (SK) Official Community Plan – Policies Supporting Safe Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.1.1: CPTED - The reduction of the opportunity for crime to occur and the increase in perceptions of safety in an area through the modification of the built environment and the management of space. <p>Simcoe Muskoka (ON) - Healthy Community Design Official Plan Policy Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.3: Consider through the design review process, community security and safety features that impact social interaction and increase physical activity. Ensure policy includes Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.

<p>3. To promote inclusiveness and support the development of an age-friendly community, consider introducing policies and guidelines / standards that encourage the development of accessible neighbourhoods and community spaces, as per the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment and Policy Guidelines for the Design of Public Spaces that accompany the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i>¹⁵</p>	<p>Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D5.8 Barrier-Free Access • Town supports improving accessibility for all people and therefore, it is a policy of the Town to ensure through the review of development applications that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barrier-free access for persons using walking or mobility aids shall be provided in all public and publicly-accessible buildings and facilities and along major pedestrian routes. Such barrier-free access features may include level surfaces, ramps and curb cuts, railings, automatic door openers and rest areas; ○ Barrier free features shall be integrated with the functional and design components of the site and/or buildings; and, ○ The private sector be encouraged to be proactive in modifying existing private buildings and facilities to improve accessibility.
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9.1.4 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Check-in on the status of implementing the actions outlined in the Parks, Recreation and Culture implementation plan. By now, the Township should have implemented its short-term goals and be working on implementing its last mid-term goals while ramping up to implement its long-term goals (which should be implemented fully by 2018).
- Work with the County to encourage the development of policies that consider climate change in neighbourhood design (i.e. maximizing opportunities for sun and shade in public buildings)

9.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxxxviii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit

¹⁵ More information and examples available at:
http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/built_environment/

5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

9.2.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan speaks to design guidelines to ensure accessibility of the built environment, and refers to meeting or exceeding the Provincial Accessible Built Environment Standard. Interestingly, the Wellington Centre Policy B5.h) states that "The Township will plan to maintain or move significantly towards a minimum of one full-time job per three residents within or in the immediate vicinity of the urban centre." This implies that the Township hopes to create communities where residents can live and work, which would reduce average commuting time and likely also support active transportation to and from work.

The Township's Official Plan contains a Section on Transportation. As part of this Section, Road Design is discussed, with some provisions addressing pedestrian safety along roadways. There is a sub-section on Bicycling where it is stated that: "It is the objective of the Township to encourage cycling as an alternative mode of transportation within and between the Urban Centres, and to provide for the safe, convenient and easy movement of bicyclists." This Section goes on to suggest that the Township may develop a "bikeway plan" to encourage active transportation within and between Centre Wellington's urban areas. It is also stated that "The Township may establish accessible, sufficient and secure bicycle parking areas at municipally owned and operated facilities."

The Township's Strategic Plan mentions that, as an initiative within its Action Plan, the Township should develop a Transportation Plan.

"Transportation" is mentioned as one of the benefits of the Township's Trails Master Plan, which was published in 2014 (as mentioned above).

9.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The County and Township could also consider adopting Universal Design standards for public spaces and there is also an opportunity to add policies related to alternative parking standards for some developments, such as affordable housing developments.

While the Township's Official Plan does reference pedestrian safety and encourage cycling as an alternate mode of transportation, it does not directly reference or promote the concept of "active transportation" nor does the Plan link to the County's Active Transportation Plan. Also, while the Township's Official Plan indicates that Centre Wellington "may" take certain steps to advance relevant policy directions, there is no clear indication of whether or when it will follow through. There could be an opportunity for the Township to make a stronger commitment to creating and connecting active transportation networks within and between urban centres, and the broader community. This could include the development and maintenance of accessible trails to connect residents to residential and employment areas, natural heritage sites, parklands and open spaces. The Township also may wish to introduce measures to encourage ridesharing / carpooling as alternate modes of transportation, in addition to bicycling and walking.

As noted in the Natural Environments section below, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan (“Parks Plan”) mentions, within the Section on Natural Environmental Lands that the Township should “Continue to expand upon the existing natural parks and trail systems as a means to develop corridors that serve ecological, passive recreational and active transportation purposes.” The Parks Plan also contains a section on Trails and Pathways, in which it is stated that “The Township should place a high importance on developing municipal trail facilities by making multi-use trail development a high priority.” It is noted that this would also promote neighbourhood connectivity, which is discussed in the previous section.

9.2.3 CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a new section of the Official Plan that encourages and describes an active transportation network, using the County’s Active Transportation Plan and Official Plan policies as guides. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a suite of policies that encourages safety and accessibility of the Township’s active transportation network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy-efficient lighting included wherever possible for new street design or during street upgrades. ○ Mobility-friendly curb cuts ○ Wide sidewalks ○ Signed walking & pedestrian routes ○ Sidewalks maintained all year round ○ Universal design • Include suite of policies that ensures cycling is convenient and safe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Road signed routes for cyclists ○ Bicycle parking at major destinations ○ Bike lanes on all main arterial roads or on all County roads • Include a section or sub-section that provides direction for the development of the Township’s trail network, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promoting a continuous and integrated trail system ○ Trail signage ○ Clear connections to streets ○ Trail maintenance 	<p>Town of Caledon Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.9.5.9 Active Transportation: The Town will encourage the development of a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link major public open spaces, activity centres and the transportation network in a manner that enhances the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors. • 7.12.16.7.1 Consistent with the objectives of Section 5.9.2 f) of the Town’s Official Plan, a pedestrian and bicycle system shall be integrated within the road network and provide appropriate linkages between the Village Centre Area, residential neighbourhoods, the open space system, potential transit stops and places of employment, as well as to areas outside of the Plan Area. • 7.12.16.7.2 Pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes shall be required throughout the Plan Area, in accordance with the approved Community Design Plan, and shall utilize public streets and dedicated pathways established throughout the Plan Area. • 7.3.6 Vehicular and Pedestrian Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pedestrian movement shall be enhanced through the provision of sidewalks appurtenant to all development. ○ Provision of sidewalks and street lighting on existing Right-of-Ways throughout the Core shall be a priority to the Town. • 7.3.6.2 Transit

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requiring new developments to integrated connected trails within the neighbourhood and to other trail systems 	<p>d) Sidewalks should be integrated along all streets with bus stops; and, e) Safe crosswalks should be provided near bus stops.</p> <p>City of Guelph Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.18 Safety: 1. Sidewalks and community trails should be visible, accessible and aligned along well-used public spaces. 2. New development should be designed in a manner that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides opportunity for informal surveillance of outdoor spaces (“eyes on the street”), including public parks, streets and parking areas; ○ clearly marks the transition or boundary between public and private spaces; ○ includes materials that allow for the built environment to be effectively and efficiently maintained; ○ provides adequate lighting in accordance with Sections 8.14, 8.15 and 8.16 of this Plan; and provides for multiple walking routes, where appropriate. <p>Town of Ajax Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1.1j Climate Change Context And General Environment Policies: Advance environmentally responsible outdoor lighting and retrofits that reduce light pollution, energy usage, and glare, to restore unobscured views of the night sky, while maintaining sufficient light levels for a safe built environment.
<p>2. Consider incorporating principles associated with accessibility (inclusive, universal design) and age-friendly community planning into pedestrian, cycling, and road infrastructure, as well as foundational elements of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (see also Neighbourhood Design considerations #2 and #3). By incorporating these principles, the Township can help ensure that local</p>	<p>City of Thunder Bay (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 4.5.5 Other Strategies and Actions Outside of the Official Plan Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Continue or enhance the process for reviewing parking provisions, locations of active transportation routes (e.g., onstreet bike lanes, shared lanes, paved shoulders), and enhanced urban design strategies as part of the development

<p>infrastructure supporting active transportation, recreation and tourism is not only accessible, but deliberately designed to promote safety. Such infrastructure could include: bike parking, bicycle activated street lights, enhanced street crossings, and rest areas.</p>	<p>approval process that would further minimize competing interests between automobiles and cyclists.</p> <p>Town of Caledon (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 5.9.5.9 Active Transportation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Town will encourage the development of a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link major public open spaces, activity centres and the transportation network in a manner that enhances the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors. Consideration will be given to multi-use paths as part of the transportation system in the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Consideration will be given in all new subdivision and development proposals to provisions for multi-use links with transportation networks. The Town will work with the Region and school boards to promote the use of active transportation by students and to support the safe and active routes to school sites. <p>City of Guelph (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 8.18 Safety: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and community trails should be visible, accessible and aligned along well-used public spaces. New development should be designed in a manner that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> provides opportunity for informal surveillance of outdoor spaces (“eyes on the street”), including public parks, streets and parking areas; clearly marks the transition or boundary between public and private spaces; includes materials that allow for the built environment to be effectively and efficiently maintained; provides adequate lighting in accordance with Sections 8.14, 8.15 and 8.16 of this Plan; and provides for multiple walking routes, where appropriate.
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9.2.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- The Township could consider working with community partners to identify accessibility issues across the Township and explore potential solutions (see also Neighbourhood Design). This would include addressing issues associated with access to transportation, both traditional and active modes.
- Work with local agencies and stakeholders to promote policies which encourage car-sharing and car-pooling businesses, organizations and programs as well as promoting active transportation.

9.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{lxxxix} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

9.3.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

Among the Major Goals of the Township of Centre Wellington's Official Plan are:

11. Protect the unique cultural heritage resources of the community.
12. Ensure that new development is compatible with existing and approved land uses.
13. Create a culture of conservation, including water, energy and cultural heritage conservation and air quality protection.

The Official Plan includes policies to conserve, protect and enhance, and raise awareness of the Township's cultural heritage resources, including natural heritage resources. The Grand River, in particular, is noted as an important resource and a Canadian Heritage River. There are provisions for the designation of cultural heritage landscapes in the Township. Official Plan Policy C.2.21 indicates that:

Heritage Centre Wellington may record and identify significant cultural heritage landscapes, resulting in the creation of a mapped inventory of cultural heritage landscapes in Centre Wellington. The inventory may lead to the preparation of development design guidelines in identified cultural heritage landscapes, including preferred development types and densities, height restrictions, building styles and materials.

Section C.3 of the Township’s Official Plan deals with Natural Heritage. Herein it is stated that some natural heritage features are especially sensitive or significant and have been given the land use designation of Core Greenlands. Uses of Greenlands are detailed in Section D.8.1, and include “conservation and resource management, open space and passive recreation.”

There are also provisions in Section C.3 that discourage development in a “floodway”, in order to preserve the health and safety of residents. There are fairly extensive policies in place within the Plan to protect various natural heritage features. The Official Plan also supports and encourages the development of a Natural Heritage inventory, in order to determine their significance and develop a comprehensive management plan. There are particular provisions for water quality and groundwater management.

9.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County’s Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

While the Natural Heritage provisions in the Township’s Official Plan are significant, there may be opportunities to introduce policies or direction around air quality, particularly given that the local Plan targets the Township’s Urban Centres. Furthermore, the Township may wish to check-in as to the status and success of any initiatives undertaken to date to promote Centre Wellington’s natural heritage resources. There may also be an opportunity to include policy directions within the Official Plan that not only increase awareness of these features, and also of cultural heritage landscapes, but also to support and promote interaction with the natural environment where permissible. There is no explicit mention of climate change in the Township’s Official Plan.

As noted in the Transportation section above, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan mentions, within the Section on Natural Environmental Lands that the Township should “Continue to expand upon the existing natural parks and trail systems as a means to develop corridors that serve ecological, passive recreational and active transportation purposes.”

While the Township’s Corporate Strategic Plan mentions that the Centre Wellington has a transportation program “allowing for multiple modes (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit) of transport,” we could not find reference on the Township’s current website to such a program or to a public transit program in particular.

9.3.3 CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. Consider incorporating policies to permit recreational trails in all land-use designations while respecting environmentally sensitive areas	<p>Town of Aurora (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.2.1 Permitted Uses General to all Residential Designations: e) Neighbourhood Park facilities, including linear trails in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 herein <p>Town of Collingwood (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.2.3: It is the intent of this Official

	<p>Plan that utility, communication and publicly-owned transportation, park and playground facilities, including pedestrian trails, and other uses deemed to serve a similar public function be permitted in all land use designations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 5.3.10 Trail Systems: While Collingwood already has a well-established system of trails, as shown on Schedule D1 - Collingwood Trail System, Council will have regard for the long-range trail opportunities, particularly regional opportunities, explored through the Simcoe-Grey Trails Strategy. To facilitate implementation of the Strategy, lands already owned by the municipality and those obtained by donation, dedication and direct purchase shall be developed as they become available at the direction of the recreation department. In addition the municipality may obtain easements and/or enter into agreements with private landowners for the use of lands for temporary or permanent trail purposes.
2. Look into developing incentives for using green building features and encouraging local municipalities to do the same	<p>Town of Ajax (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.1.1: The Town will also encourage, through educational and/or incentive programs, the production of forms of housing that are innovative and/or incorporate green building technologies.
3. Develop a tree conservation by-law and promote by-law through community awareness and education initiatives	<p>City of Brampton Tree Preservation By-Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City's Tree Preservation By-law is intended to encourage good forestry practices to protect and promote the value of trees in our community. The by-law provides clear guidelines on the circumstances under which trees on private property may or may not be removed, and when permits are required. The Tree Preservation By-law's focus is on individual trees. It works in tandem with the Woodlot Conservation By-law which protects woodlots/woodlands in the City. <p>Simcoe Muskoka (ON) - Healthy Community Design Official Plan Policy Statements</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment 1.6: Develop a community-wide Urban Forestry Management Plan to maximize the environmental and community health benefits of having healthy trees, with particular attention to protecting the community's stock of existing trees, supporting the growth of new trees and expanding the tree canopy in the community.
4. The Township could consider an anti-idling bylaw that includes idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses.	<p>City of Edmonton – Bylaw 15982</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles are prohibited from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals.

9.3.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Review the status of the Natural Heritage Inventory and consider whether this could be further improved or better utilized in support of environmental stewardship
- Review the status of initiatives to promote engagement with natural heritage features and explore partnership potential
- Consider whether there is an opportunity to further develop relations between the Township and Conservation Authorities, and any other existing environmental groups in order to increase public knowledge and engagement with natural heritage features, and further the implementation of Recreation Objective #3, which encourages cooperation with the conservation authority and other local organizations with an interest in recreation
- Consider the development of a community-based transportation solution if there is a need and use the “Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions” resource document, prepared by Dillon Consulting for the Rural Ontario Institute and Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, as a guide

9.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xc} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

- Enhance agricultural capacity
- Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
- Improve community-scale food infrastructure

9.4.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

The Centre Wellington Official Plan discourages expansion of Urban Centres, particularly with respect to agricultural lands and, in cases where no reasonable alternatives exist, seeks to minimize impacts of development on agricultural operations. The Township's Official Plan also references an Economic Development Strategic Action Plan, which identifies "Agriculture and related" as a key sector or cluster that should be built on to increase the performance of the local economy.

Community gardens are mentioned in Section 5.11 of the Township's Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan ("Parks Plan"). The Plan recommends that the Township secure two sites for community allotment garden programs; one each in Fergus and Elora.. The Parks Plan encourages the Township to develop partnerships, where necessary, to create access to community gardens as they become more popular. This Section of the Parks Plan is the only one that makes mention of "local food," in describing some of the social benefits of community gardening.

9.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

Despite the strength and importance of the Township's agricultural sector, as referenced in the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan, the Official Plan does not make specific reference to enhancing agricultural capacity. There is also no specific reference to increasing access to healthy foods or to improving community-scale food infrastructure, such as farmers markets, even though there is a section and set of recommendations dedicated to the latter in the Township's Parks Plan.

There may be an opportunity to introduce policies to permit farmers markets in all land use designations and to include language and direction around creating a sustainable local food system within the Township's Official Plan. If food security is an issue of interest to the Township, municipal officials might consider leading the development of a local food charter. There may also be opportunities for the Township to collaborate with WDGPH and other organizations to deliver healthy food education in local schools and community centres, and to raise awareness, if necessary, of any local food security issues.

"Local food" is not mentioned in the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan; neither is "agriculture."

9.4.3 CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. Consider incorporating policies that promote and encourage local food production (i.e. farmers markets). For example, the Official Plan could permit temporary famers' markets in all land use designations.	City of Cambridge (ON) Official Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.0: The City will recognize and encourage the use of the Community Core Areas as: h) locations where residents can access local food through farmers' markets. Section 7.10: The City supports a strong local food system through its Farmers' Market, temporary farmers' markets, and community gardens. The City recognizes that community gardens contribute to the overall parks and open space system and access to locally grown food.

	<p>City of Waterloo (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.9.2: 2) The City will plan for neighbourhoods that provide safe and healthy living environments, and promote healthy lifestyles by: f) Supporting access to locally-grown food by planning for community gardens, where appropriate <p>Municipality of Wawa (ON) Municipal Plan Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.3: Encourage community gardens and rooftop gardens and promote community gardens on all land uses where appropriate. Press for the prohibition of new fast food outlets and encourage locations for healthy food alternatives.
<p>2. Add additional policies that promote accessory farm businesses such as pick-your-own farms, produce stands and roadside markets – either as new section or a sub-section under Agriculture (Section 5.1). Include criteria such as parking requirements to ensure these accessory uses function well.</p>	<p>Town of Caledon Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1.1.8 On-Farm Diversified Uses: In order to help ensure compatibility and no Adverse Effects, On-farm Diversified Uses shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the proposed use can be serviced with an appropriate water supply and means of sewage disposal; Ensure that the proposed use will not have an Adverse Effect on neighbouring wells; Ensure that the proposed use has adequate on-site parking facilities, in addition to the parking required for the principal use on the property, and such parking is provided in locations compatible with surrounding land uses; Ensure that the proposed use provides adequate setbacks and landscaping.
<p>3. Consider adding a healthy food system as an objective in the Official Plan</p>	<p>Town of Ajax Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.7 Urban Agriculture: Promote fruit and vegetable gardening in the yards of residential, “clean” commercial and “clean” industrial properties, greenhouses, and containers on balconies and porches, and on rooftops. <p>City of Guelph Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2 Strategic Goals of the Plan:

	1. Planning a Complete and Healthy Community; g) Foster sustainable local food systems.
4. Add policies to protect agricultural lands	<p>Town of Grand Valley (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2.7: The Town of Grand Valley has a significant agricultural land base that contributes to the local economy and character of the Town. Council is committed to protecting agriculture and allowing agricultural operations to adapt to changing market trends. • Section 5.1.2: Agricultural - The objectives of the agricultural designation are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to encourage a diversity of agricultural activities and protect the long-term ability of farming operations to adapt to changing markets conditions; b) to maintain the open rural landscape and agricultural heritage of lands and buildings in the agricultural area; c) to preserve the agricultural land base as a contiguous track of land, with limited fragmentation; d) to discourage the development of non-agricultural land uses and minimize land use conflict in the agricultural area; and e) to encourage a best management approach to farming a farm planning to avoid farming practices that may be harmful to the environment of health of residents. (5.1.2)

9.4.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- The Township could encourage dialogue about the importance of local food not only to local economic development, but also in building healthy communities
- Consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>

9.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{xc}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types

2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

9.5.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

One of the Major Goals of the Township's Official Plan is:

6. Provide an adequate supply and diversity of housing to satisfy the varied needs of the community.

The Plan also contains policies that promote a variety of housing types and a range of affordable housing options, including affordable rental. Some of the policies around residential intensification are linked with the need to add affordable housing options in urban areas, and also to more rural areas and hamlets, as through creating accessory units or secondary suites. There is a sub-section of policies that encourage the development of housing for seniors and persons with special needs. It is noted that these housing types should be located in urban centres near services. The Plan also defines affordable rental and ownership housing. Importantly, the Official Plan states that the Township will monitor and occasionally prepare a report to identify changing supply and demand patterns in the local housing market. The Township would then, in response to the findings and recommendations in the Plan, consider amending the Official Plan policies as necessary to better respond to local housing needs.

The Centre Wellington Zoning Bylaw has a specific section on accessory apartments (Section 4.1) and permits them in virtually all residential zones with a maximum floor area of 100 sq. metres.

9.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

The Township's Official Plan does not appear to reference the County's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. There may be an opportunity to ensure the housing monitoring reports are completed at regular intervals and that the Township has the capacity to ensure housing policies are responsive to community needs. There is also an opportunity to assess the special needs of seniors and persons with disability to ensure their current and emerging housing needs are being met. "Housing" is not referenced in the Township's corporate Strategic Plan.

9.5.3 CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested Official Plan Policy Considerations	Practical Guidance and Examples
1. Consider enhancing policies in section 5.7 (Community) using the County's Housing and Homelessness Plan as a guide to support an adequate supply of housing for vulnerable populations (i.e. seniors, persons with disabilities and low income individuals and families).	Town of Caledon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5.3.5 Diverse Housing Types and Tenure: Within the context of the other objectives and policies of this Plan, the Town will support alternative kinds of private market, rental and special needs housing to meet the demands of the Town's

	<p>changing demographics by: facilitating applications that would provide housing for moderate and lower income households; encouraging life-cycle housing and encouraging the work of the Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation and any community based groups in the provision of special needs housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5.3.6 Affordable Housing: The Town shall consider reviewing its development standards with the objective of identifying and implementing appropriate opportunities to support and facilitate affordable housing.
<p>2. Consider developing conversion policies as a way of protecting existing rental housing</p>	<p>City of Cambridge (ON) Official Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 8.4.4.2.: The conversion to condominiums of any rental units will only be permitted where the following conditions have been satisfied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the owner/applicant submits a detailed inspection report on the physical condition of the property by a qualified architect or engineer to the satisfaction of the City and Region which indicates that the building proposed for conversion meets the City's minimum standards of maintenance and occupancy, and Provincial life safety and exiting standards; b) parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland has already been dedicated or paid to the City with respect to the site upon which the building proposed for conversion is located, or the proponent dedicates, or pays to the City cash in-lieu, as a condition of the conversion; c) a public meeting has been held on the proposed conversion, to which the owner and all tenants of the subject building were invited; d) tenants have the option to continue to lease their units following the approval of the conversion to condominium in accordance with the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act; and e) tenants are given the right of first refusal to purchase a condominium unit in the building proposed for conversion. Section 8.4.4.3.: The City will monitor the

	cumulative impact of condominium conversion on the supply of rental housing.
3. Develop policies that promote mixed-income housing developments	Brantford-Brant (ON) Housing Stability Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal 1.5: Encourage mixed-use housing and mixed-income development in all urban neighbourhoods by increasing rental, social, and affordable housing options in areas with limited supplies
4. Consider providing financial incentives to encourage affordable housing (i.e. waiving fees)	City of Ottawa (ON) Action Ottawa Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Ottawa's Action Ottawa initiative for affordable housing waives development charges, planning fees, and parkland levies for affordable units.

9.5.4 OTHER SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Explore options for completing a housing monitoring report
- Explore opportunities to more closely align the Official Plan with the County's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan
- Assess shortages of affordable rental housing in the Township
- Explore the possibility of developing incentives the Township could offer to encourage the development of affordable ownership and purpose-built rental housing
- Assess the special needs of populations such as seniors and persons with disabilities to determine if needs are being met through the existing housing supply

10.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH/ERAMOSA OFFICIAL PLAN

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Township of Guelph/Eramosa. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations and a list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

The Township of Guelph / Eramosa uses the County of Wellington Official Plan as its Official Plan and that document was reviewed for this phase of the study. We have included summaries of the County Official Plan's strengths and opportunities. The detailed report, including policy considerations and other strategies and actions, is provided in an earlier Section.

Please note that a comprehensive review of the Wellington County Official Plan with accompanying "policy considerations" is contained in Section 6.0 of this report. In this section, we provide "Other Strategies and Actions" for the Township of Guelph/Eramosa to consider based on the additional documents that were reviewed.

10.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{xci}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

10.1.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xciii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

10.2.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xciv} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

10.3.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township could consider idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students and staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

There is also an opportunity to work with the County to ensure that there is sufficient tree cover throughout the different communities and not just in parks. This will also help provide spaces for social interaction within neighbourhoods.

10.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xv} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure

10.4.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township may wish to consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter (see <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>)

10.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xvi} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

10.5.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

10.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

11.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLETON OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Township of Mapleton. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations, which are compared to some similar Official Plan policies in place in other municipalities. A list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

The Township of Mapleton uses the County of Wellington Official Plan as its Official Plan and that document was reviewed for this phase of the study. The Township's Community-Based Strategic Plan (2013) and Township of Mapleton Rural Community Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan (April 2012) were also reviewed.

Please note that a comprehensive review of the Wellington County Official Plan with accompanying "policy considerations" is contained in Section 6.0 of this report. In this section, we provide "Other Strategies and Actions" for the Township of Mapleton to consider based on the additional documents that were reviewed.

11.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xvii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above).

11.1.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Town's Strategic Plan includes a policy to develop a long term strategy to meet the growth targets outlined in the County's Official Plan. Community stakeholders also agreed that local infrastructure needs to be maintained and sustained, including various community halls in the Township. Revitalization initiatives and investments in parks, trails and recreation are seen as important. Stakeholders would also like to see Mapleton encourage multi-generational engagement and for the Township to be family-friendly and inclusive of all ages. Recreation and leisure services were seen as critical to supporting healthy active living in

Mapleton. The Strategic Plan encourages the implementation of recommendations outlined in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012).

Through the SWOT analysis completed to inform the development of Mapleton's Strategic Plan, a number of strengths were noted by participating stakeholders. These strengths included natural and cultural heritage assets, community engagement and volunteerism, "first class farmland" and a variety of positive economic indicators, such as proximity to larger urban centres and reasonable/competitive land development costs.

Recognizing the potential of "culture led economic development" to bring greater prosperity to Mapleton, the Township is in the process of developing a new Cultural Plan. Currently, the Township uses a Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan (2012). The Plan seeks to support health, safety and accessibility related to leisure and recreation in Mapleton and, more broadly, to support the Township in addressing certain challenges, such as aging and population densification, which are uniquely experienced in rural contexts. The Plan was developed through a highly consultative process, and outlines a series of recommendations for the Township, including several noted as "high-priority," which were meant to be implemented over the next five years. The Plan seems to reinforce the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives around creating a healthy, active community inclusive of all ages. Two of its eight "high-priority recommendations," which are "Accessibility and Safety" and "Trails, Way finding and Signage" seem to support the development of an age-friendly community. To develop the Plan, the Township's recreation infrastructure was assessed to determine the extent of repair or replacement needed, if at all. Most facilities seem to require some or few, rather than many, repairs, which one could interpret as a strength.

11.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Interestingly, while community engagement was cited as a strength of the Township, public apathy was also cited as a weakness or threat by stakeholders consulted as part of the development of the Strategic Plan. Also, while there are several active volunteer groups, such as service clubs, who have been keen to collaborate with the Township on various projects, communication and collaboration are cited as areas of opportunity. The Strategic and Parks, Recreation and Culture Plans both offer ways to improve in these areas. The Township should consider whether such opportunities continue to exist, and how they could be built and leveraged to advance a 'healthy communities' agenda for the benefit of all community members. The Township could build on their commitments to creating safe, healthy and accessible neighbourhoods, which would be in keeping with the AODA.

11.1.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The Township should consider the following:

- Evaluate the status on progress towards relevant goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan
- Evaluate the status on progress towards implementing the "high-priority" recommendations in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan
- Assess the introduction of the Township's new Cultural Plan to augment existing planning documents

11.2 Healthy Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xcviii} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks.

11.2.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan has a strategy related to ensuring recreation buildings, built structures and facilities are physically accessible.

11.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The concept of active transportation and interest in improving the Township's trail system feature prominently in both Mapleton's Strategic Plan and Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan.

11.2.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- The Township should reflect on its progress towards implementing its Parks, Recreation and Culture Master plan, and determine where there are any gaps and where there are any new opportunities to improve the safety and accessibility of its neighbourhoods

11.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{xcix} and incorporated into the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate the urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape.

11.3.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Through the consultation process that informed the development of Mapleton's Strategic Plan, it was noted that "Mapleton's natural and rural setting is seen as its foremost important strength." The Conestogo River was cited as a particular example of the Township's valuable natural features.

11.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township could consider idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students and staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

11.3.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- The Township could consider whether policies or by-laws relating to air pollution and tree cover would be relevant / applicable.

11.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^c and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure.

11.4.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Town's Strategic Plan provides direction on supporting farmer's markets, farm gate sales and agri-tourism. Mapleton's "first class farmland" was noted by stakeholders during the consultation process designed to inform the Strategic Plan as a key strength. Another noted strength was "Promote agricultural products." Through the survey conducted as part of the same exercise, among the responses to the question about "the most distinguishing feature" of the Township were "Agriculture – best farmland in Ontario" and "Well kept farms."

11.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. There may be opportunities to work with the Township on healthy food education within schools and community centres as well as supporting food available locally. While "agri-tourism" was cited as an opportunity through the Strategic Plan consultation process, this relates more to economic development than to the promotion of healthy local foods or food security. The Township should ensure that a 'public health' narrative is also used when discussing and making decisions affecting the local food system.

11.4.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Identify or leverage local partnerships to deliver healthy food education in schools and community centres, and determine whether there is an opportunity to educate communities more broadly about the importance of a healthy local food system and food security, in addition to the value of local food as part of the Township's economic future
- Consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter (see <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>)

11.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{ci}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

11.5.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Through the consultation process that informed the development of the Strategic Plan, community members noted that "The Township has a good mix of housing and welcomes the addition of the new apartment building for seniors. More needs to be done to keep younger generation in the community and not move to larger centres." This appears to be the only mention of housing in the Strategic Plan document.

11.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. There is an opportunity to strengthen the policies in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan that are aimed at promoting physical accessibility by ensuring that new residential developments meet Universal Design standards.

11.5.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider whether the housing needs of young people, seniors and persons with disabilities are being met currently and, if not, what could be done to incentivize the development of suitable, affordable housing for them

12.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PUSLINCH OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Township of Puslinch. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations, which are compared to some similar Official Plan policies in place in other municipalities. A list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

The Township of Puslinch uses the County of Wellington Official Plan as its Official Plan and that document was reviewed for this phase of the study. The Township's Design Guidelines Study (2008) was also reviewed.

Please note that a comprehensive review of the Wellington County Official Plan with accompanying "policy considerations" is contained in Section 6.0 of this report. In this section, we provide "Other Strategies and Actions" for the Township of Puslinch to consider based on the additional documents that were reviewed.

12.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{cii}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above).

12.1.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

12.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

12.2 Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{ciii}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks.

12.2.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Recommendations in the Township's Urban Design Guidelines Study support alternative transportation options and ensuring that main streets are designed for pedestrians.

12.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

12.3 A Healthy Natural Environment

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{civ}* and incorporated into the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate the urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape.

12.3.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. As an Objective of the Urban Design Guidelines, it is stated that Puslinch will "protect, preserve and where practical, enhance the unique natural and cultural heritage resources of the community." The Guidelines go on to identify a number of the area's natural features, and suggest ways of preserving and protecting them as part of the design process.

12.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township could consider idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated

areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students and staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

12.4 Healthy Food Systems

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{cv}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure.

12.4.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Urban Design Guidelines provide specific guidance for design on agricultural lands, but are not relevant in terms of creating access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods or improving community-scale infrastructure.

12.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

12.4.1 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider whether there is a need to deliver healthy food education
- Consider whether there is a need to develop local policies or by-laws permitting farmers markets or community gardens, or to otherwise promote locally grown, healthy foods
- Consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>

12.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{cvi}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities
4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

12.5.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

12.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

12.5.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider whether the Township's housing needs are currently being met and, if not, whether there is a need to incentivize development of affordable and/or special needs housing

13.0 REVIEW OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WELLINGTON NORTH OFFICIAL PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

Below we provide a summary of the strengths and areas of opportunity identified through a review of key planning documents for the Township of Wellington North. Documents have been summarized according to areas of public health interest, denoted by the 5 identified domains: **Neighbourhood Design, Transportation Networks, Natural Environments, Food System, and Healthy Housing**. Please refer to sections 1.5 & 1.6 in the Introduction of this report for more details regarding the impact these five planning policy domains have on a public health. Suggestions are offered for Official Plan policy considerations, which are compared to some similar Official Plan policies in place in other municipalities. A list of other suggested strategies and actions to advance each of the five domains is also provided.

The Township of Wellington North uses the County of Wellington Official Plan as its Official Plan and that document was reviewed for this phase of the study. The Township's Municipal Cultural Plan (2013) was also reviewed.

Please note that a comprehensive review of the Wellington County Official Plan with accompanying "policy considerations" is contained in Section 6.0 of this report. In this section, we provide "Other Strategies and Actions" for the Township of Wellington to consider based on the additional documents that were reviewed.

13.1 Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The following Healthy Neighbourhood Design planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{cvi}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities
6. Create infrastructure resilient to climate change (addition to original toolkit referenced above)

13.1.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Neighbourhood design is not specifically addressed within the Cultural Plan.

13.1.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

13.2 Transportation Networks

The following Healthy Transportation Networks planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{cvi} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail and waterway networks

13.2.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Cultural Plan reinforces the importance of the Active Transportation Plan, particularly as a means to connect cultural and recreational assets and opportunities. It also states that there is a need to work towards a Coordinated Trails Committee for Arthur and Mount Forest, and surrounding municipalities.

13.2.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

13.2.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Check-in on status of the implementation of transportation-related items in the Cultural Plan and determine if there is a need to gather more momentum to move forward

13.3 Healthy Natural Environments

The following Healthy Natural Environments planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health*^{cix} and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
2. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment
3. Reduce urban air pollution
4. Mitigate urban heat island effect
5. Expand natural elements across the landscape

13.3.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. Natural Heritage features prominently in the Township's Cultural Plan. Its 23 noted Natural Heritage Features are considered among the three asset categories contributing to the Township's unique character. These features are also linked to recreational opportunities. One of the actions in the Township's Cultural Plan refers to developing a coordinated trail system.

13.3.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township could consider idle-free zones around schools, community centres and other sensitive land uses. The City of Edmonton, for example, passed a bylaw in 2013 (Bylaw 15982) that prohibits vehicles from idling in designated areas outside of schools and hospitals. The purpose of the bylaw is to create a healthier environment for school students and staff and hospital patients, staff and visitors.

13.4 Healthy Food

The following Healthy Food Systems planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{cx}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure

13.4.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. The Township's Cultural Plan refers to establishing a farmer's market and supporting local food. Indeed, we understand that, today, the Wellington North farmers market is held weekly between May and October.

13.4.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

13.4.3 SUGGESTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Consider whether there is an opportunity to work in partnership with local organizations to deliver healthy food education within schools and community centres
- Consider adopting the Guelph Wellington Food Charter <http://www.gwfrt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-charter.pdf>

13.5 Healthy Housing

The following Healthy Housing planning principles were adapted from *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health^{cx}* and used as the criteria for reviewing municipal planning documents:

1. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
2. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
3. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups and people with disabilities

4. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

13.5.1 STRENGTHS

Areas of strength in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0. "Housing" does not appear to be addressed in the Cultural Plan.

13.5.2 AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Areas of opportunity in the County's Official Plan are noted in Section 6.0.

14.0 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Wellington County is a primarily rural area characterized by a diverse range of smaller communities, long distances, limited capacity and lower density forms of development. The County's Official Plan sets out a wide range of policies which offer significant support to the development of healthy communities, while at the same time recognizing the many challenges of achieving healthy forms of development within small rural communities. Along with its Active Transportation Plan, 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan, the County has a strong foundation upon which to plan for healthy communities.

As noted in this report, most municipalities within the County utilize the County Official Plan to guide planning and development within their jurisdiction and therefore share the same approach and potential for development of healthy communities. Some opportunities have been identified at both the County and local level to further expand policies to provide additional support for healthy communities. In particular, moving forward with many of the recommendations contained in the County's Active Transportation Plan would provide strong direction in this regard. We would also encourage stakeholders to continue their involvement in future initiatives like *Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions* in order to gain, exchange and apply new knowledge and best practices to best support the achievement of positive health, social and economic outcomes for Wellington communities.

15.0 NEXT STEPS

Below we articulate some next steps both for this study, in the immediate term, and for public health and planning stakeholders within Wellington County going forward.

15.1 Establishing a Role for WDGPH in Collaborating on Health Community Planning Policies in Wellington County

The first Proposed Action articulated under the 'Built Environment' Collective Area of Focus in the Ontario Public Health Sector Strategic Plan (2013) is for public health units to "Define the scope and role for the public health sector in addressing and mitigating the health impact of the built environment." Currently, WDGPH enjoys positive working relationships with municipal planning officials at Wellington County, and with several local planning officials in area municipalities. WDGPH should focus on strengthening these relationships and, subsequently, on advocating for a public health lens to be used in making municipal policy and planning decisions, particularly in terms of land use planning and the built environment.

This review provides an excellent jumping off point for further conversation about how the County and each local municipality can best support the development and maintenance of healthy communities in Wellington County. In that space, it will be possible for local planning and public health officials to share knowledge and expertise, thereby increasing the overall capacity for making healthy policy and planning decisions and fostering powerful synergies between disciplines and communities within Wellington County for many years to come.

APPENDIX A: NOTES

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