

Puslinch by Design

EMPLOYMENT LAND STUDY



Final Scope of Work

Prepared by the County of Wellington

January 31, 2024

Puslinch by Design

Employment Land Study

FINAL SCOPE OF WORK

1 Background

Rural communities like Puslinch deserve the opportunity to prosper and thrive. Maintaining the right amount and type of employment lands in the right location is vital to the economic competitiveness of Puslinch and Wellington County as a whole. This cannot be accomplished with a one-size-fits-all solution or on an ad-hoc basis. The Township of Puslinch needs a plan.

The Township and County have an established track record of working together in the past by developing Puslinch Design Guidelines, the Highway 6 Streetscape Strategy (Morrison), and a Community Safety Zone Designation (Morrison). More recently, the County funded an analysis of rural employment land need by Watson & Associates Land Economists as part of the Official Plan Review. Watson’s analysis determined that Puslinch needs a minimum of 30 ha of additional industrial designated land.

Recognizing this need and the complex policy environment, the County consulted with the Province to find a way to develop a roadmap for employment growth in Puslinch. This led to the creation of a new policy in the County Official Plan for a “Regionally Significant Economic Development Study Area” in Puslinch. The boundary for the Study recognizes the strategic importance of lands near the Highway 401 and Highway 6 corridors.

The Township is ready to initiate the Study, but first needs to work with the County to prepare detailed terms of reference. The Study is required to incorporate a transportation analysis, a servicing strategy, an agricultural and environmental review. Subject to Council approvals, the County and Township both have budget set aside to share the cost of the Study. The County will also partner with the Township through formal and informal means to pool limited staff resources.

The Scope of Work document has been prepared by the County to seek feedback from Puslinch Council and staff to:

- Create a shared understanding of the project;
- Use as a basis for Township and County staff to prepare and issue the terms of reference for the Study; and
- Avoid future changes that might delay Study completion or increase Study costs.

The Study will commence in early 2024.

2 Policy Framework

A number of policies provide direction for the preparation of this planning study.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Province of Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) provides specific direction for the identification and protection of employment lands. The Growth Plan encourages municipalities to designate and preserve lands "...located adjacent to or near major goods movement facilities and corridors, including major highway interchanges, as areas for manufacturing, warehousing and logistics, and appropriate associated uses and ancillary facilities." However, this policy applies to lands within settlement areas. Different policy approaches will need to be considered to support needed rural employment growth in Puslinch.

Provincial Policy/Planning Statement

The Province has released a draft Provincial Planning Statement (to replace the Provincial Policy Statement) which does not carry forward many of the more restrictive policies from Growth Plan. The Study will need to consider the current/new policy framework.

County of Wellington Official Plan

The County of Wellington Official Plan serves as the local plan for the Township of Puslinch and applies to the Study. The Official Plan also includes a "Local Planning Policy" section for individual municipalities to develop policies that reflect local differences or preferences, where appropriate. The following local policies, in particular, will need to be reviewed as part of the Study:

- Wellington Road 46/Brock Road (9.8.1)
- Puslinch Industrial Policy (9.8.3)
- Regionally Significant Economic Development Study Area (9.8.4)
- Puslinch Economic Development Area (9.8.6, PA7-1)

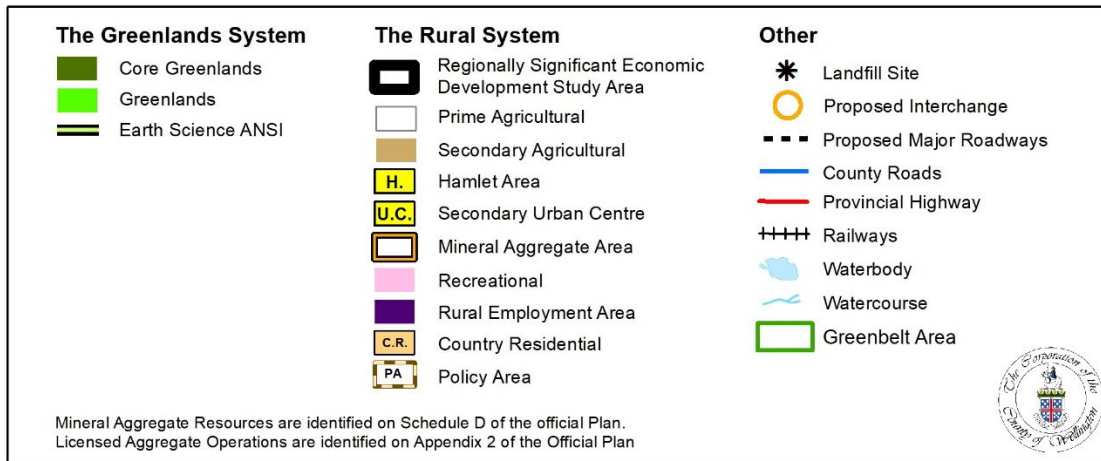
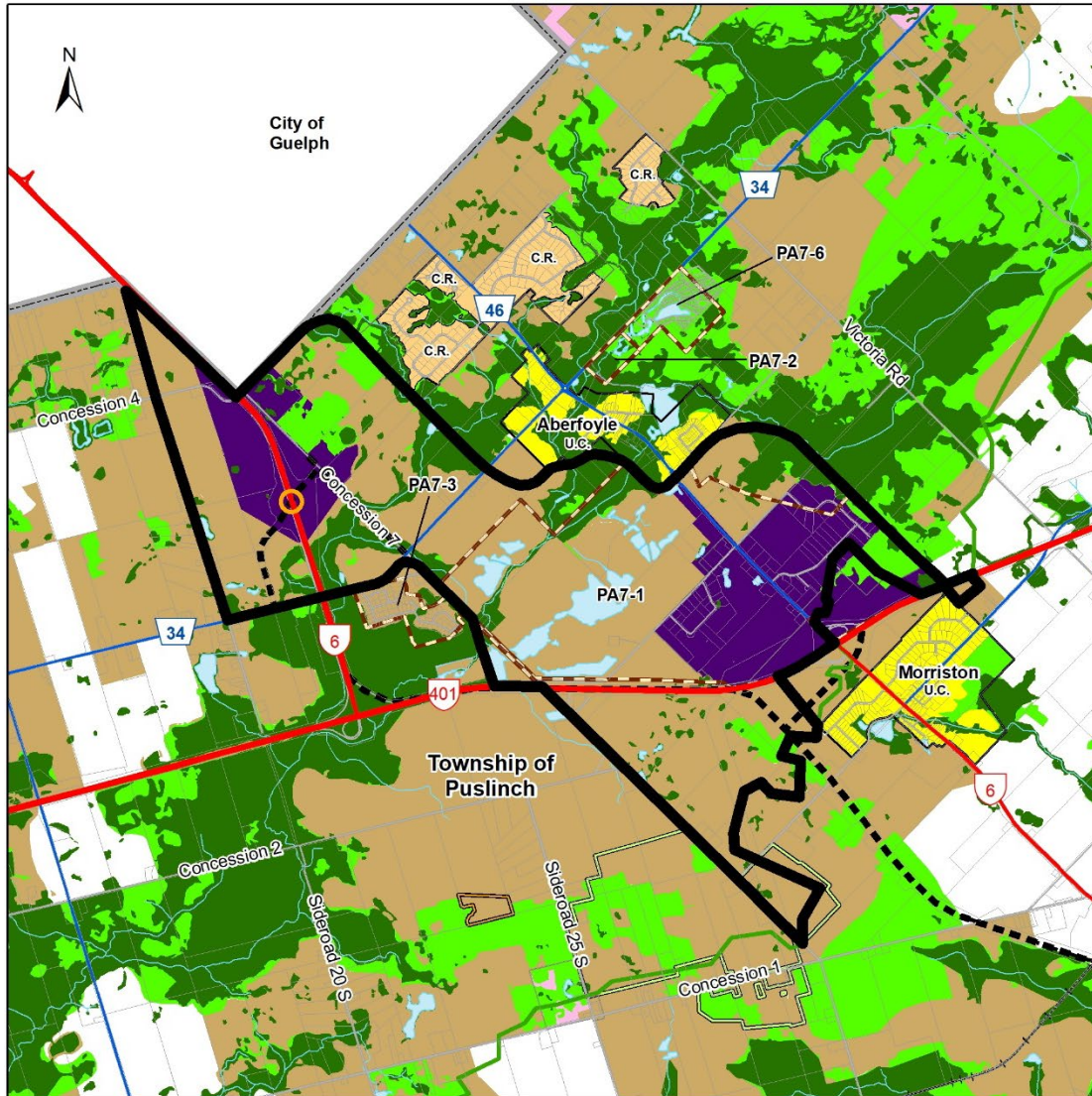
The Study should make recommendations about any necessary changes to existing policies and/or creation of new policies.

Figure 1 shows the study area within the context of the Land Use Schedule for Puslinch in the Official Plan.

3 County of Wellington Official Plan Review

The County has been completing a municipal comprehensive review (MCR) as required by the Growth Plan as part of the Official Plan Review. The Phase 2 MCR Report identified the shortfall of Rural Employment Area lands in Puslinch. The Puslinch by Design Study is being undertaken as part of Rural Phase 3B of the MCR.

**Figure 1 Puslinch Schedule B7 Land Use - Excerpt
County of Wellington Official Plan**



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4 Puslinch Design Guidelines

Puslinch Design Guidelines published in 2010 apply to commercial, industrial and institutional development and redevelopment proposals throughout the Township to:

- Develop an enhanced streetscape along Brock Road (Wellington Road 46), Highway 6 N (Hanlon Expressway) and Highway 6 S (Morrison);
- Improve the quality of site and building design; and
- Protect what makes Puslinch unique.

The Design Guidelines are meant to be a living document which can be revised at Council's discretion to respond to changing needs. The Study should recommend changes to the design guidelines such as any additional geographic priority areas and new/enhanced approaches.

5 Study Name

Early feedback on the current study name (Regionally Significant Economic Development Study Area) is that it is complicated, too long and difficult to understand. We are suggesting that it be renamed to "Puslinch by Design: Employment Lands Study" to represent the following:

- **Puslinch by Design:** the study will result in a made-in-Puslinch plan, based on local feedback and will address design elements (e.g. rural character, compatibility, buffering, transitions, sustainability, built-form).
- **Employment Lands Study (ELS):** the study will focus on identifying new employment lands such as light industrial, manufacturing and warehousing uses that do not produce noxious emissions and that do not require outside storage ("prestige" type of industrial land) and those which need outside storage and possibly produce noise, odour or other emissions that are not compatible with other uses ("general" type of industrial land). Only "dry" industrial uses are permitted by the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

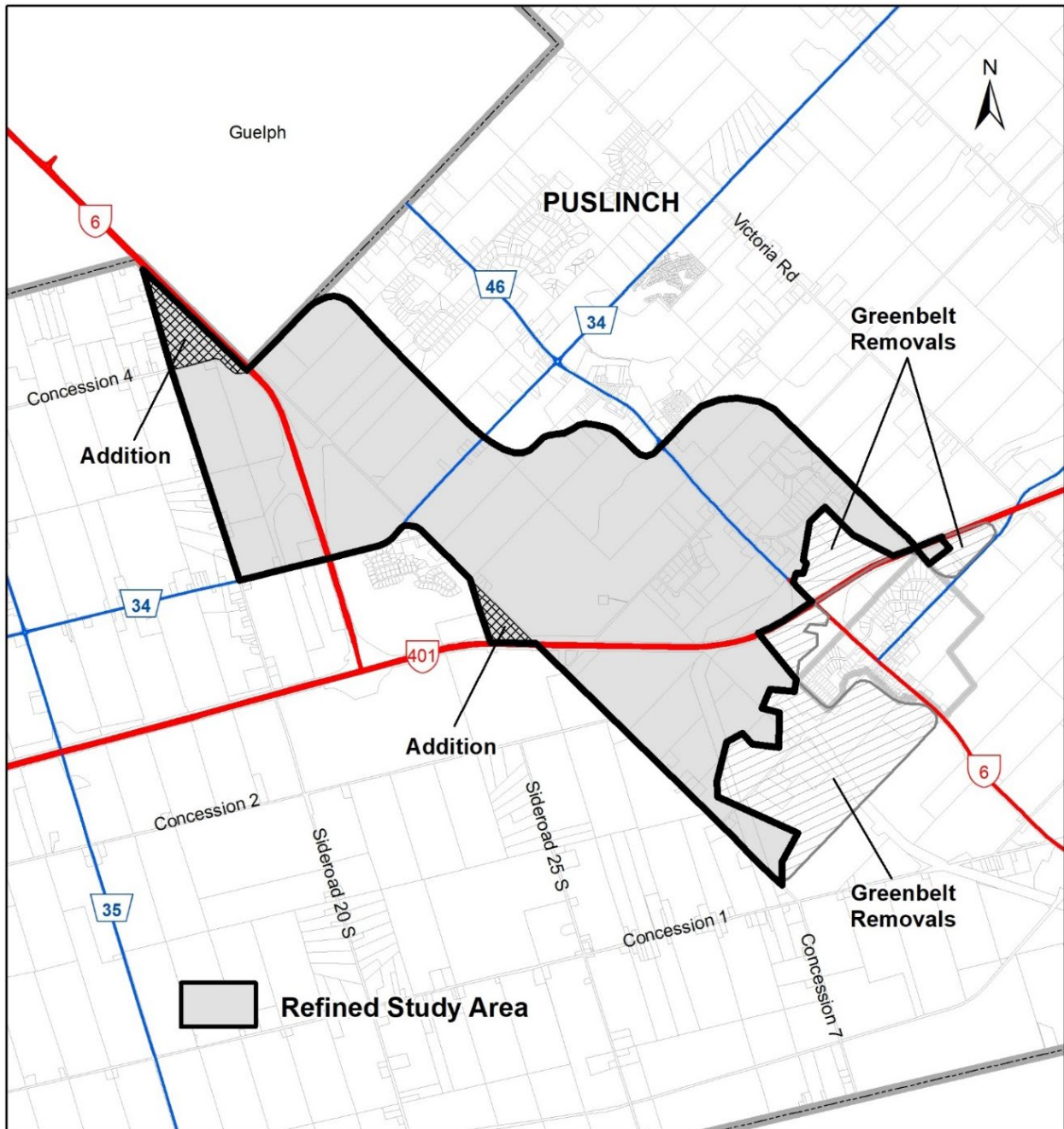
6 Refined Study Boundary

The Official Plan policy which establishes the Study allows for minor refinements to be made to the limits of the Study Area before it begins and without amendment to the Official Plan. Such refinements are shown as Figure 2. There are two areas which have been added:

- Northeast corner of Concession 4 and Sideroad 20 N (Estill), and
- North side of Hwy 401, east side of Sideroad 25 and west side of Concession 7 (Farhi)

Removals at the southern limit generally follow the Greenbelt Plan boundary, which is consistent with Provincial modifications to OPA 119 and recent legislation.

Figure 2 **Refined Study Area**



7 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this Study is to develop:

1. land use options for a minimum of 30 ha of new employment growth within the Study Area (mainly industrial, but some associated/ancillary commercial uses);
2. a preferred land use concept; and
3. a local development framework including Official Plan land use designations, policies and design guidance for the employment lands.

8 Goals

Three key goals have been developed to guide the preparation of the Study.

A Made-in-Puslinch Approach

The Study should address the Township's need for a diverse employment area. Existing industrial uses, in-effect zoning/land use designations and in-progress development applications should factor into this review. Appropriate locations within the Study Area should be identified to accommodate a variety of industrial development (both prestige and general industrial types), with a range of parcel sizes and suitable road access.

Leverage Improvements to Highways 6 and 401

The Ministry of Transportation continues to make progress with improvements to Highways 6 and 401. The new Hanlon Expressway interchange and connecting roads have the potential to improve the viability of designated rural employment lands and unlock potential locations for new lands. The Township has been meeting with Ministry staff to confirm access to adjoining and nearby lands. Written confirmation of the Ministry's position will be shared with the project consultants so that it may be incorporated into their analysis.

High Quality and Sustainable Design

The appearance of employment areas should be attractive as they are the places where major investors in the Township may choose to locate. They are also a permanent addition to the landscape which should be located and designed to:

- be compatible with the surrounding area,
- help maintain the rural character of the area,
- provide enhanced buffering, screening and landscaping as needed, and
- encourage a higher level of building and site design, where appropriate.

Design of sites and buildings that also pay close attention to water, energy and land efficiency are more environmentally sustainable. The Study should deliver simple but effective approaches to meet these and other design objectives within the local context.

9 Areas of Focus for Technical Work

This Study will need to consider optimal new locations for employment growth based on applicable policies and within the context of the following:

<p>Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land use compatibility • adequate separation of sensitive uses and new employment uses • appropriate mitigation measures / buffers (including specific design elements and other measures) • protection of cultural heritage and mineral aggregate resources • consideration of cumulative impacts of existing/pending industrial uses (built, zoned/designated and in-progress development) and concentrations of uses such as logistics/warehousing • planning for a diverse employment area (both prestige and general industrial types) • need for a range of parcel sizes and suitable road access • identification of future studies to be required at development stage for new areas of employment growth recommended by the Study
<p>Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining rural character • enhanced buffering designs (increased setbacks, berms, landscaping, etc.) • higher level of building and site design • innovative approaches that address environmental sustainability, climate change and other matters arising through the Study process
<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment of current and future traffic conditions, including the need for future road improvements • implications of new locations for employment growth on transportation network and potential mitigation measures (including impact to agricultural-related transportation) • options to eliminate the need for/or reduce costs of new transportation infrastructure and its future maintenance • options for active transportation within newly developing areas (such as walking trails for employees) and to connect with the broader community • design and maintenance of new roads (urban vs rural standards)

Servicing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permissions for “dry” industrial and commercial uses (those uses which do not use significant amounts of water in their operations and which do not produce significant amounts of effluent, consistent with rural servicing levels which rely on private water and sewage systems) • other potential servicing options
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of agricultural policy, agricultural land use, agricultural investment, agricultural fragmentation and Minimum Distance Separation (MDS 1) calculations to determine level of impact and potential mitigation measures • review applicable to agricultural activities within and surrounding the Study Area
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of Provincial policies for protection of natural heritage features and areas and water quality and quantity, and mitigating risk from natural or human-made hazards • a review of County Official Plan policies including the designated Greenlands System of the Official Plan (which is a composite of many natural heritage features, flood prone areas and hazardous lands) to ensure that features and functions will be maintained or enhanced • consideration of County of Wellington Natural Heritage System • a review to ensure that the requirements of the Grand River Source Protection Plan would be met • protection of Paris and Galt Moraine processes and features (see OP Policy 4.9.7)

10 Phasing

The Study will be undertaken in six phases as follows:

- Phase 1 Project Initiation
- Phase 2 Existing Conditions
- Phase 3 Detailed Planning Study
- Phase 4 Land Use Options
- Phase 5 Preferred Land Use Plan
- Phase 6 Recommended local development framework
(Official Plan land use designations and policies, design guidance and future development application studies)

11 Consultation

The consultants will be responsible for designing a program for consultation and community engagement which includes the following:

- Township Council
- Steering Committee (Township and County staff)
- Grand River Conservation Authority
- Provincial staff
- City of Guelph
- A strategy for engaging with community members and other stakeholders, including a minimum of two public information sessions.

A range of options will be needed for both broad and targeted in-person and virtual public engagement at critical points of the Study.

12 Project Timeline

This project has a target completion date of the fourth quarter of 2024.

13 Reference Documents

Several documents are available to help support the completion of the policy review and technical review:

Township

1. Municipal Development Standards (2019)
2. Puslinch Design Guidelines (2010)
3. Puslinch Zoning By-law (May 2021 consolidation)
4. Roads Management Plan (2022)

County

5. County of Wellington Official Plan (2024 consolidation)
6. Mapping of a Natural Heritage System in Wellington County (September 2018)
7. Phase 1 MCR Report: Urban Structure and Growth Allocations Final Report (June 16, 2021 as amended January 31, 2022)
8. Phase 2 MCR Report: Land Needs Assessment (August 29, 2022)
9. Wellington County Active Transportation Plan (September 2012)
10. Wellington County Employment Land Inventory
11. Wellington County ROAD Master Action Plan (December 2021)

Province

12. Provincial Policy Statement (2020)
13. Draft Provincial Planning Statement (2023)
14. A Place to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)
15. Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document (2016)
16. MTO Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for improvements to Highway 6 and Highway 401 in the Township of Puslinch, Wellington County, and the City of Hamilton
17. Highway 6 (Hanlon Expressway) and Highway 401 Improvements from Hamilton North limits to Guelph south limits
18. Highway 6 Midblock Interchange – Concession Road 4 Closure (November 15, 2023 MTO correspondence)