

Puslinch By Design - Employment Lands Study

# DETAILED PLANNING STUDY REPORT

County of Wellington & Township of Puslinch  
February 2025



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## Executive Summary

The County of Wellington and the Township of Puslinch are undertaking the *Puslinch By Design: Employment Lands Study* (hereafter referred to as “*Puslinch By Design*”) with the purpose of identifying areas for future rural employment growth in Puslinch. Employment Areas are designated for businesses and jobs and are typically used for industrial activities like manufacturing or warehousing but can include associated offices. Employment Areas support economic growth through job creation and provide space for industries to operate away from residential areas and other sensitive land uses.

The need for an Employment Lands Study was identified through the County of Wellington’s Municipal Comprehensive Review Process for the County Official Plan. Through that process it was identified that Puslinch is particularly suited to accommodate new and needed employment land with its strategic location along major transportation routes. Puslinch is poised to take advantage of current market conditions with its opportunities and needs for employment areas and *Puslinch By Design* is the Study that will drive this process.

The unique characteristics, opportunities and constraints to accommodate future employment lands and uses in Puslinch warrants a tailored approach to the identification of suitable areas for future employment uses. The name for this Employment Lands Study “*Puslinch By Design*” captures the specific needs and context within Puslinch so that it is well-positioned to anticipate, accommodate and adapt to provide for future employment growth areas within the context of a largely rural community. To achieve a made-in-Puslinch approach for the identification of rural employment lands, *Puslinch By Design* examines existing conditions within the project Study Area and considers how existing community needs, land uses and conditions will affect the selection of suitable location(s) for future employment growth areas.

Key factors within Puslinch that will strongly influence the identification and future success of rural employment growth in the Study Area include:

- current and future market conditions and needs with the GGH
- access to Highway 6 and Highway 401
- compatibility with existing uses including active agricultural operations and other sensitive land uses<sup>1</sup> such as residences and schools, natural heritage conditions and topography, aggregate operations, cultural heritage resources and proactive planning for good community design
- Integration with existing industries and aggregate operations

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<sup>1</sup> The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 provides the following definition for Sensitive Land Uses: means buildings, amenity areas, or outdoor spaces where routine or normal activities occurring at reasonably expected times would experience one or more adverse effects from contaminant discharges generated by a nearby major facility. Sensitive land uses may be a part of the natural or built environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to: residences, day care centres, and educational and health facilities.

These factors have been reviewed in the *Phase 2: Background Report for Puslinch By Design* and inform this *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Study*.

The purpose of the Phase 3 Report for *Puslinch By Design* is to understand the existing legislative and policy framework for rural employment growth in the Township, as well as recent changes to legislation (changes to the PPS in October 2024) and their effects, and to recommend land use and policy directions to accommodate future needed employment growth based on an understanding of existing conditions. To achieve this, the Phase 3 Report establishes Principles of Land Use arising from analysis synthesized from previous phases to guide future employment growth.

The “Puslinch Employment Context” set out in Section 3 provides background context to understand existing conditions in the Study Area. Section 4 “Employment Growth in the Planning Framework” outlines the existing planning framework for employment growth, including best practice guidance, and breaks down key considerations for employment planning in Puslinch. Sections 5 and 6 of this Report break down the key focus areas to be addressed and recommend future policy directions to facilitate successful employment growth. Given the importance of maintaining rural character in the Study Area with future employment uses this report recommends design solutions in Section 6 to protect rural character.

Future phases of *Puslinch By Design* will identify specific land options for employment growth using the evaluation criteria outlined in the *Phase 2: Background Report* and implementing the Principles of Land Use from this *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Study*.

*Puslinch By Design* is led by a team of consultants with a wide range of expertise to address the specific needs of Puslinch. NPG Planning Solutions Inc. (NPG) are the lead consultants for this Study and are assisted by the expertise of Parcel Economics, MobilSafe Solutions, King EPCM, and Colville Consulting Inc.

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# **1.INTRODUCTION**



# 1. Introduction

The title of this Study, *Puslinch By Design*, recognizes that planning for employment growth in Puslinch must be premised on the specific conditions and needs of the Township of Puslinch and the County of Wellington to plan for a competitive new Rural Employment Area(s). The County of Wellington and Township of Puslinch are undertaking *Puslinch by Design* in partnership given forecasted employment growth in Puslinch to 2051, and the Township's economic importance to the County as a whole. Recognition of this economic importance resulted in the County of Wellington Official Plan designation of a "Regionally Significant Economic Development Area" in Puslinch, which generally serves as the Study Area for employment growth. The Study Area is largely comprised of secondary agricultural areas, rural residential uses, existing rural employment areas, aggregate operations, and contains the Puslinch Economic Development Area, which provides economic activity and employment opportunities.

This *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Report* for the *Puslinch By Design: Employment Lands Needs Study ("Puslinch By Design")* synthesizes information from the *Phase 2: Background Report*, from input gained at the public Open House for this Study (held on September 25, 2024) and provides key information that will be necessary for the formulation of land use options in Phase 4. Phase 2 of *Puslinch By Design* included the completion of Background Papers on specific topics outlining the opportunities and constraints posed by existing conditions and uses within the Study Area that will impact planning for new employment growth. The Phase 2 analysis indicates that the Study Area for *Puslinch By Design* is situated to take advantage of market trends and leverage its strategic position along transportation corridors such as Highway 401 and Highway 6 and close access to population centres. It also recognizes that employment growth must be strategically located to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential impacts on existing land uses and conditions.

Since preparation of the Phase 2 report, significant provincial policy changes have been implemented through the 2024 "Provincial Planning Statement," which came into force and effect on October 20, 2024. The effects of these policy and legislative changes are considered within this *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Report*.

This *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Study* outlines the Principles of Land Use for employment growth in Puslinch, the existing employment context, the existing legislative and policy context and provides key focus areas and proposed policy directions for employment growth. It is anticipated that the policy directions in this Report will inform draft County Official Plan policies to implement this Study and guide employment growth in the Study Area. Draft policies may be further refined through the Study process and through formal circulation of the implementing Official Plan Amendment by the County after the conclusion of the Study.

Phase 4 of *Puslinch By Design* will include preliminary identification of land options for employment growth.

The figure below represents the project phases for *Puslinch By Design*, with Phase 3 highlighted as the current Phase.



## 1.2 Purpose of the Phase 3 Study

The purpose of the *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Study* is to build the planning and policy framework for employment growth in the Study Area with consideration for existing conditions and opportunities.

This Study recommends Land Use Principles for employment growth in the Study Area to guide decision-making for employment growth. The Study outlines the existing legislative and policy framework for employment uses so that recommended policy direction can be understood within the larger planning framework. This Study synthesizes information and analysis from previous phases of *Puslinch By Design* so that the unique conditions of the Township of Puslinch are understood, protected and, so that employment growth is planned to be successful and competitive. The report concludes with identification of key focus areas and recommended policy directions and urban design direction for new employment uses in the Study Area.



## **2. PRINCIPLES OF LAND USE**



## 2. Principles of Land Use

The Principles that have been developed for *Puslinch By Design* are premised on the Planning Vision established within the County Official Plan including planning for: sustainable development, land stewardship, healthy communities and complete communities. The Principles are further informed by the findings of the *Phase 2: Background Report for Puslinch By Design* which recognizes that in order to provide for competitive and functional employment growth in the Township of Puslinch certain Principles must be upheld.

The Principles of Land Use will guide decision-making for the establishment of future employment growth within the Study Area. These foundational principles will be applied in the formulation of suitable land use options for new employment growth in the Study Area through subsequent phases of *Puslinch By Design* as well as future phases including the recommended final draft Official Plan Amendment to the County of Wellington Official Plan.

### **Principle 1: Priority locations for new Rural Employment Area(s) will be in proximity to major infrastructure and existing Employment Areas**

**Rationale:** With access to major transportation corridors, Puslinch is an important area of economic growth in the southern part of Wellington County. Ensuring the Rural Employment Area(s) support job growth means identifying Rural Employment Areas that can be developed to achieve the future job growth that is planned for the County and the Township into 2051 and beyond.

There are important transportation routes within the Township such as Highway 401, Highway 6, County Roads, and Township Roads. There are also on-going transportation investments, such as the Highway 6 By-pass and the Hanlon Expressway investments, that will benefit the County and Township. Locations for future Employment Area(s) should prioritize proximity to crucial transportation infrastructure, existing and planned for safety and efficiency of employee access and goods movement. Proximity to crucial transportation infrastructure is also an opportunity to attract high profile national tenants along these key transportation networks.

The County has several existing Rural Employment Areas within Puslinch as identified in the County Official Plan. The County Official Plan also includes a Special Policy Area (PA7-1) – the Puslinch Economic Development Area. Within the Puslinch Economic Development Area are lands zoned for Rural Employment use. Together these areas provide opportunities to connect future Rural Employment Area(s) with existing Rural Employment Areas – providing connectivity and compatibility of development.

Puslinch has two Settlement Areas in proximity to, but outside, the Study Area – Aberfoyle and Morriston. Proximity to Settlement Areas is a component of this principle as there are employment serving uses (restaurants, business supplies, printers,

equipment suppliers) that will benefit the businesses and employees in the future Rural Employment Area(s).

## **Principle 2: Large parcels that are relatively free of development constraints are prioritized to meet market demands.**

**Rationale:** Ensuring the Rural Employment Area(s) support job growth means identifying Rural Employment Areas that can be developed to achieve the future job growth that is planned for the County and the Township into 2051 and beyond. A key principle of this study is to identify the location of new Rural Employment Area(s) to implement the County Official Plan which identified a need for a minimum of 30 hectares of additional Employment Area(s). A second component of this principle is the configuration of land within the identified location. This includes identifying the minimum 30 hectares, while confirming that land parcels can be developed with efficient existing or new road access as needed, and addressing compatibility with both agriculture and natural heritage. The component of this principle that addresses size of land parcels is founded in the results from the Phase 2 Report and market sounding interviews. The information from the Phase 2 Report identified the need for a mix of parcel sizes to provide a range of employment opportunities.

## **Principle 3: Rural Employment Area(s) will be planned with consideration for proximity to Employment Serving Uses**

**Rationale:** The Rural Employment Area(s) will provide the location for investment in jobs in the County and the Township. Successful development of Rural Employment Area(s) requires the County Official Plan to identify the land uses that will be permitted. There are existing uses identified and these will be updated to reflect a forward looking approach. In addition to the permitted uses, or principle uses, accessory and supportive uses as an accessory to the principle use such as restaurants, offices, automobile related uses and more will be identified. These are important to have in proximity to the employment uses to support the business functions.

## **Principle 4: Rural Employment Areas will be planned and designed to be compatible with the Rural Character of the area.**

**Rationale:** Preservation of rural character means recognizing the existing character of Puslinch – a rural community with agriculture and natural heritage as well as existing houses/clusters of houses, some of which are recognized cultural heritage resources. The rural character includes larger lots with significant open areas such as farm fields and large yards. Rural character also includes the local road network recognizing that roads serve multiple functions – for residents, for farmers, for existing business and in some instances for trucks for aggregate operations.

Design directions for the Puslinch Rural Employment Area will reflect and incorporate its rural character while promoting high quality standards for both the private development and roads through excellent landscape treatment, site and building design, as well as an

integrated approach to connecting the design of the private development with the design of the roads.

**Principle 5: Rural Employment Area(s) will be planned to be compatible with residential uses and other sensitive land uses.**

**Rationale:** There are existing houses and clusters of houses in the Study Area and adjacent to the study area. Future Rural Employment Area(s) and the permitted land uses are to be “good neighbours” with existing residential uses and other sensitive land uses such as schools. This is known as land use compatibility. Separation of employment areas from existing houses using existing guidelines from the Province of Ontario will be utilized.

Land use compatibility also involves design that plans for the ways in which new development will compatibly integrate with the existing built form and transportation networks. For Puslinch By Design, this includes recommendations for amendments to the Design Guidelines to address built form, landscaping and screening of some employment uses. This principle includes good design to be a good neighbour.

**Principle 6: Rural Employment Areas will be planned to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to agricultural uses and natural heritage.**

**Rationale:** Compatibility with agricultural uses is an important component of this principle. This means ensuring that the location of future Rural Employment Area(s) recognizes and addresses agricultural lands and livestock facilities, that the transportation network continues to support agricultural needs, and that there is an appropriate interface that respects on-going agricultural operations.

Environmental stewardship of natural areas and protection of natural features and the linkages between them is a priority for the County and the Township. Natural areas are a valued part of the landscape that contribute to an understanding of the history of the County and Township and support the natural beauty of the area. Natural areas support ecological biodiversity within the County, including many rare floral and faunal species, and contribute to the overall attractiveness and quality of life in the County. Natural areas also contribute to climate resilience.



# **3. THE PUSLINCH EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT**

## 3. The Puslinch Employment Context

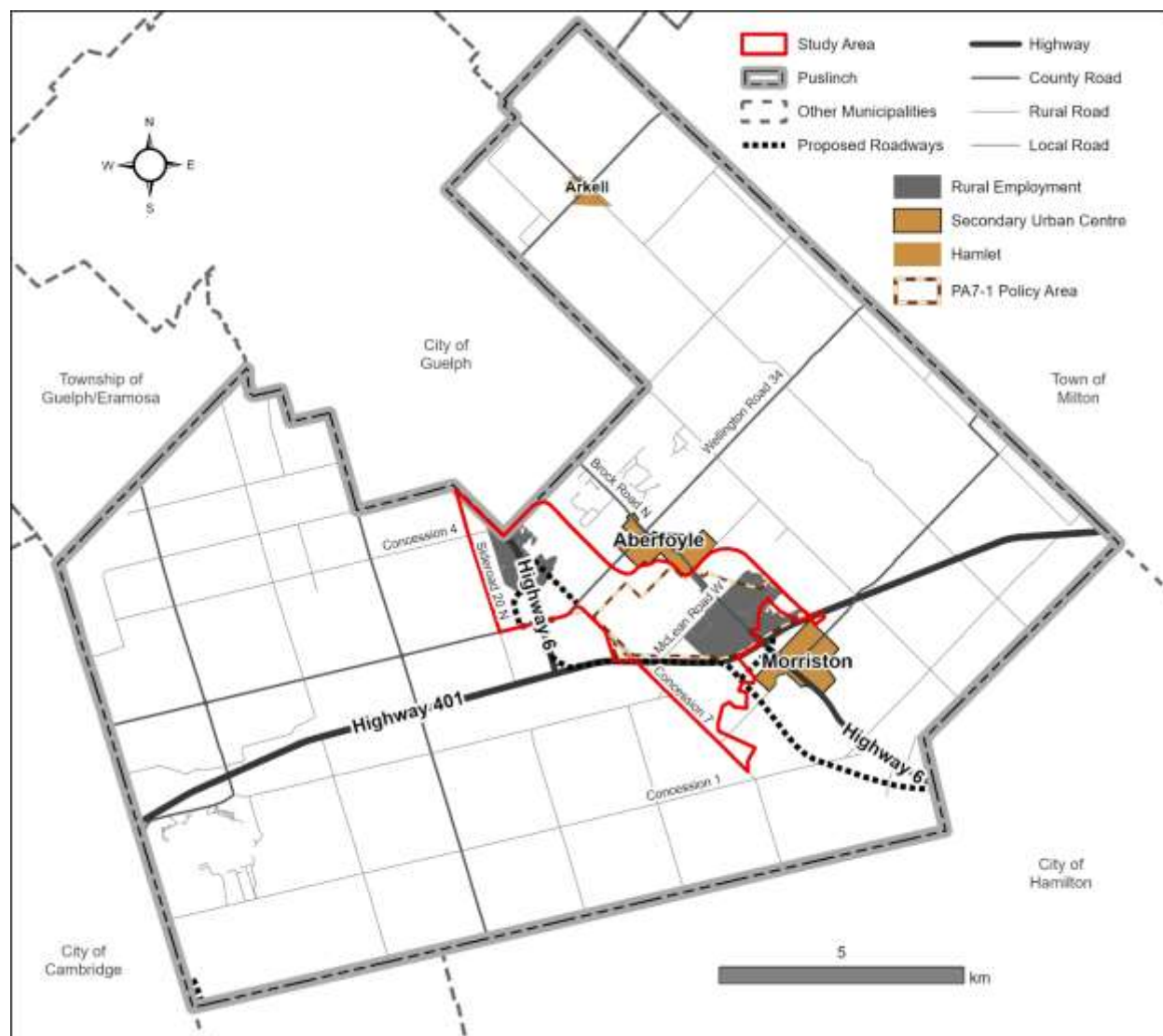
### 3.1 Township of Puslinch

The Township of Puslinch is a rural municipality within the County of Wellington. Puslinch is characterized by an extensive agricultural area, with the southern portion of Puslinch within the boundaries of the Greenbelt Plan Area. The Township is largely rural but has three small communities: Aberfoyle, Morriston and Arkell. There are rural residential uses outside of these communities associated with current or former farm uses. Puslinch has significant natural features and natural areas, including wetlands and lands that are mapped as part of the Greenlands System. Puslinch also has an active aggregate industry.

Within the County of Wellington, Puslinch features 15% of the County's employment (jobs) and 7% of the County's employment land, which makes Puslinch a key economic priority for the County. Employment uses in Puslinch are supported by their proximity to highway infrastructure. Puslinch has Provincial Highway 401 – an east to west corridor – traversing the municipality with an interchange at Provincial Highway 6 – a north to south link connecting Puslinch to the City of Hamilton (at the south) and the City of Guelph (at the north). Planned road and highway improvements, such as the Highway 6 midblock interchange and the Morriston By-pass, will augment employment success in Puslinch.

Puslinch has several existing rural "Employment Areas" in the Study Area as shown in Figure 3-1, which sets an example for compatible rural employment growth. "Employment Areas" are areas designated for clusters of business and economic activities as will be discussed further in this Study.

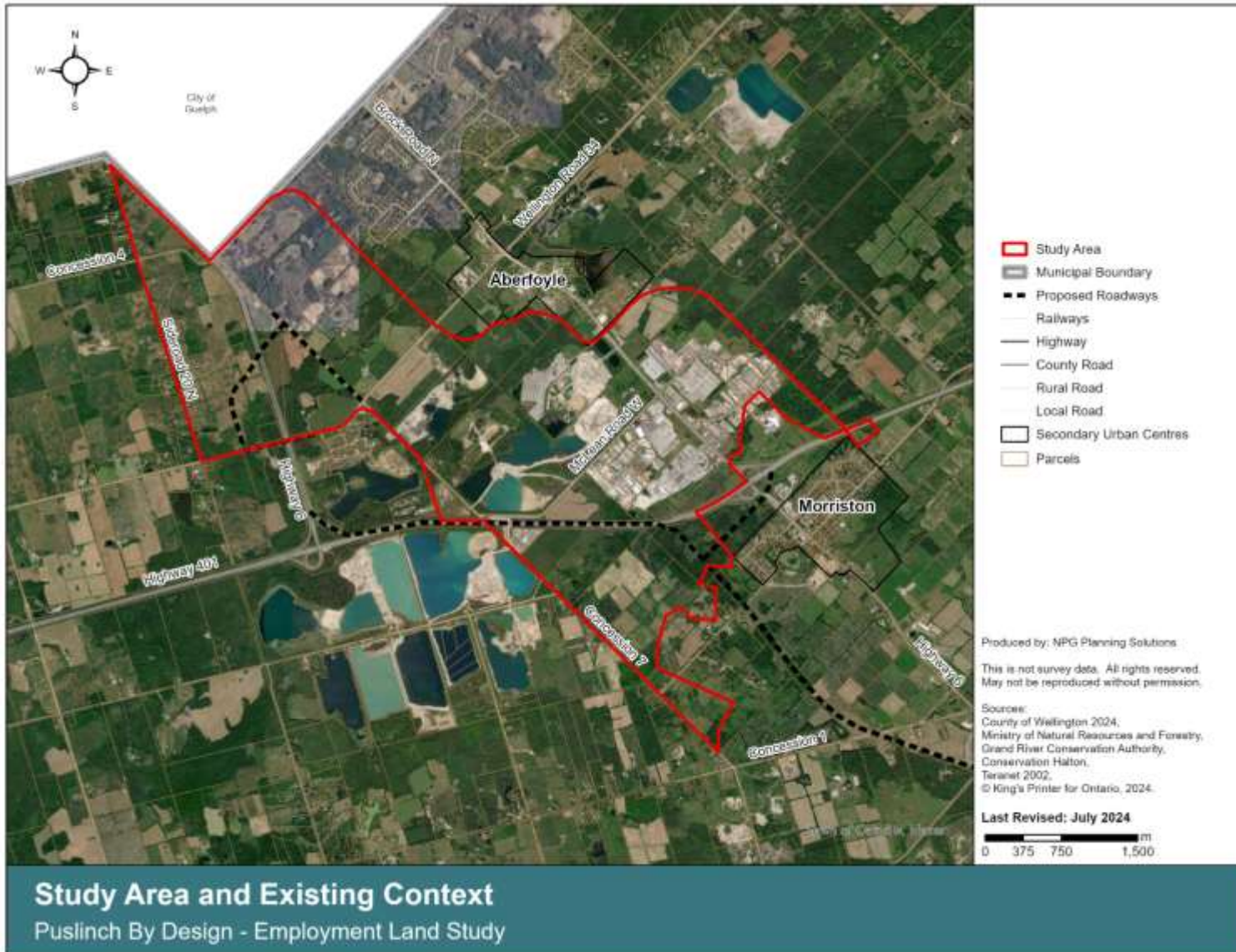
**Figure 3-1: Township of Puslinch**



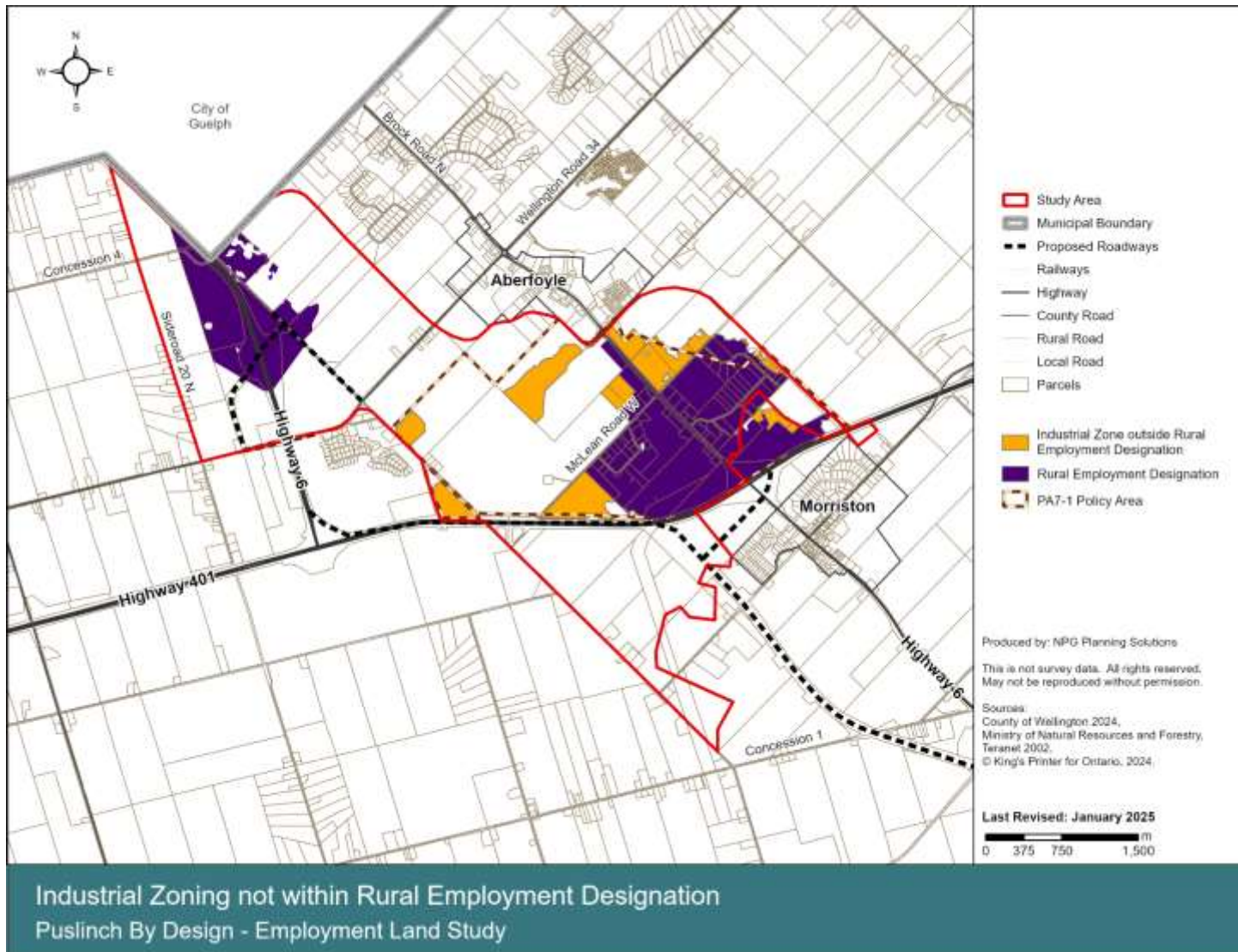
### 3.2 Study Area for Employment Growth

The Wellington County Official Plan identifies a *Regionally Significant Economic Development Study Area* as a Special Policy Area (Schedule A7) in the Township of Puslinch. The *Regionally Significant Economic Development Study Area* is intended to accommodate future employment uses and forms the Study Area for *Puslinch By Design*. The existing land use designations and boundaries of the Study Area are shown in **Figure 3-2**.

Figure 3-2: Study Area for Puslinch By Design



**Figure 3-3: Lands Designated for Rural Employment and Lands Zoned Industrial**





The Study Area is generally comprised of Secondary Agricultural Lands as identified in the County Official Plan, with rural residential uses and active aggregate operations. The Study Area also contains existing and planned employment lands, some of which are within the Puslinch Economic Development Area (PA7-1), which is planned to accommodate economic activity and employment opportunities. Some lands have been zoned for Industrial uses and are not within the Rural Employment designation because the PA7-1 policies allow for industrial, commercial, institutional and/or recreational activities or natural areas as extractive after-uses without further amendment to the Official Plan (see **Figure 3-3**); these lands do not contribute to the 30+ hectares for future employment growth.

The Study Area also contains the Greenlands System as mapped in the County Official Plan. The Greenlands System outlines natural heritage features and areas where natural or human-made conditions may pose a threat to public safety. The policies addressing the Greenlands System recognize that protection of the natural environment plays an important role in providing healthy, prosperous and enjoyable communities while reducing risk to public health and safety. The Greenlands System is divided into two categories with “Core Greenlands” being the most sensitive and significant areas, and “Greenlands” being the areas outside the Core Greenland designation.

### **3.2 Background to Puslinch By Design: Employment Lands Study**

The County of Wellington Municipal Comprehensive Review plans for growth to 2051, and concluded that, at a minimum, an additional 30 hectares of employment land is needed in Puslinch to achieve the County’s jobs forecast. This minimum of 30 hectares is in addition to lands that are already designated and/or zoned for employment uses within the Study Area. The County of Wellington adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 119 (OPA 119) to implement the Municipal Comprehensive Review and associated policies. Included in OPA 119 is a local policy (section 9.8.4) establishing the need to complete a study within a specified area, to identify where future employment lands should be located in Puslinch.

Recognizing the specialized nature of employment land planning, the County of Wellington and the Township of Puslinch are undertaking the “*Puslinch By Design: Employment Lands Study*” to identify the best location for new Rural Employment Areas. The purpose of *Puslinch By Design* as established by the County and Township is to develop:

- a) Land use options for a minimum of 30 hectares of new employment growth within the Study Area (mainly industrial, but some associated/ancillary commercial uses);
- b) Preferred land use location(s); and,
- c) A local development framework, including Official Plan land use designations, policies and design guidance for the employment lands.

Phase 2 of *Puslinch By Design* contained Background Papers summarizing specific land use topics and existing conditions impacting on the identification of the future Rural Employment Area. The following discrete topics were covered in the Phase 2 Background Papers and inform employment planning for the Township of Puslinch: the employment land market, transportation, servicing, land use planning and land use compatibility, aggregates, agriculture, natural heritage, design, and cultural heritage. Each Background Paper outlined proposed evaluation criteria to assist in assessing preferred locations for future employment land growth areas. The *Phase 2: Background Report* summarized the key findings and analysis from the Background Papers and informs this *Phase 3: Detailed Planning Study*.

### **3.4 Key Findings from Phase 2 of *Puslinch By Design***

#### **3.4.1 Protecting What is Valuable in Puslinch**

Planning for employment growth must continue to protect what is valued in Puslinch. The County Official Plan identifies the importance of the rural character, rolling topography, natural heritage and cultural heritage, which contribute to community character and sense of place in Puslinch. Economic activities that bolster and sustain the local economy and County economy include agricultural and aggregate operations. Public input provided at the in-person Open

### **Public Input**

Common concerns from residents at the Open House Meeting on September 25, 2024, included:

- Concern about fragmentation and loss of farmland
- Concern about employment growth within a rural context rather than within settlement boundaries
- Concern regarding protection of wildlife habitats
- Questions regarding measures to ensure the protection of sensitive land uses
- Concerns regarding the scale and intensity of increased traffic resulting from the employment growth
- Concern regarding the protection of Puslinch's rural character
- General questions regarding conservation of cultural heritage resources in the Township
- Concern regarding proposed urban design strategies

House on September 25, 2024, reinforced the importance of these factors. The Open House highlighted common community concerns and questions related to the protection of natural heritage features, loss of agricultural lands mitigating potential negative impacts from new employment uses.

In formulating and selecting land use options for employment growth, it is important to ensure that community values, goals and priorities are protected and upheld. Community priorities should inform the selection of the land use options as they are key to the Township's long-term sustainability, prosperity, and quality of life. These priorities, together with the land use principles identified in Section 2, are the elements that make Puslinch unique. It is important that agriculture, natural heritage, and aggregates are protected, while ensuring land use compatibility with the existing community, and a high-quality of design excellence.

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is integral to the character and prosperity of the Township. Most of the Study Area is comprised of a variety of agricultural uses and include hobby farms and beef operations as well as remnant farms. Within the Study Area two existing Rural Employment Areas are within the agricultural land base and new employment growth should minimize fragmentation. Protecting the long-term agricultural condition and function of the lands should be a key priority in determining land use options.

## NATURAL HERITAGE

The Study Area contains natural heritage features comprised of the County's Greenlands System, Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) regulated natural heritage features, and Provincially significant wetlands as mapped in the *Phase 2: Background Report*. Natural heritage features are crucial for their environmental and social value. Natural heritage features and areas provide for long-term ecological function and biodiversity, and as such, their protection, enhancement, and restoration are key.

## AGGREGATE RESOURCES

Aggregate resources and active aggregate operations are prevalent throughout and adjacent to the Study Area. Conserving and managing natural resources and the mineral resource base is a key public policy requirement of the Province, and it is critical to ensure that aggregate operations do not negatively impact future employment lands. Land use compatibility considerations should ensure an appropriate interface with aggregate operations through separation distances, buffering, and intentional design, along with appropriate transportation considerations for a safe, shared use of the road network.

## LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

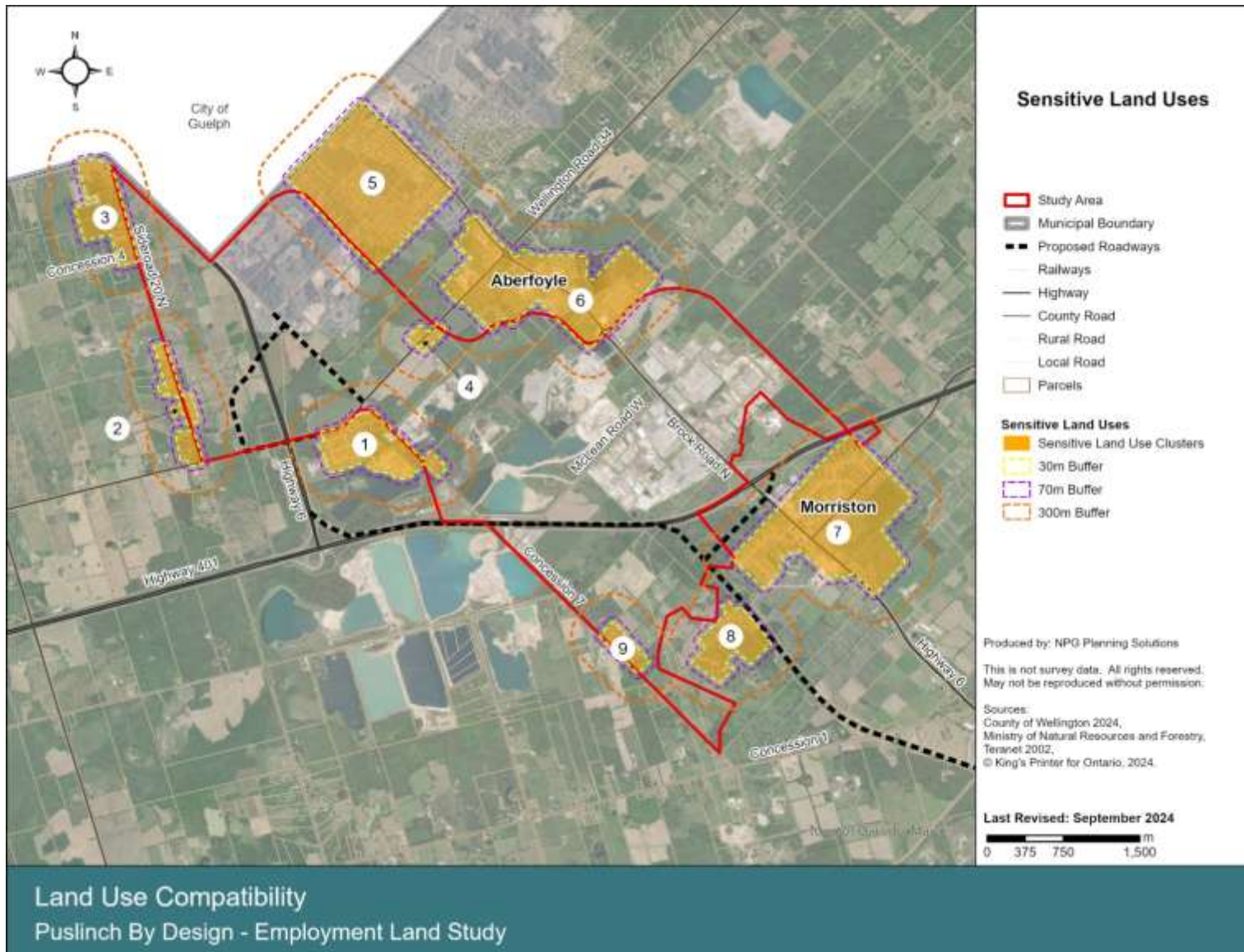
Ensuring land use compatibility with established uses and communities, and a high standard of design excellence, are key priorities that contribute to maintaining the

Township's rural character and a vibrant quality of life. It is critical for land use options to consider the existing and surrounding context (see **Figure 3-4**), to ensure potential adverse impacts are minimized and appropriately mitigated, while ensuring a high-quality of built form that contributes to a consistent and cohesive streetscape/employment community. Although Aberfoyle and Morriston are outside the Study Area, both communities are defining elements of the Township rural structure. The importance of the interface between different land uses to ensure appropriate transition and buffering is a key component of this aspect of the Study.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Township of Puslinch is committed to conserving its cultural heritage resources and is undertaking an on-going process of listing and designating property of cultural heritage value. Cultural heritage resources contribute to the unique sense of place and rural community character of Puslinch. Proactive identification of properties of cultural heritage value will ensure that these resources are considered with any proposals for future development.

Figure 3-4: Sensitive Land Uses Impacting on the Study Area



### 3.4.2 Market Context for Employment Growth

Understanding current market conditions and context is integral to planning for suitable employment uses in Puslinch, as it highlights market demand, the opportunities that Puslinch can offer over other municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and informs policy development. Market trends indicate an increasing need for large, contiguous land parcels and uses related to transportation and warehousing with easy access to core transportation arteries.

The Employment Land Market Study prepared by Parcel Economics for the *Phase 2: Background Report* included identified opportunities and constraints for employment lands in Puslinch and outlined types of employment sectors likely to locate in the Township.<sup>2</sup>

As outlined within the Background Paper, as of July 2019, approximately two-thirds of the Rural Employment Areas in Puslinch are considered developed and are occupied by a range of “dry” industrial uses.<sup>3</sup> A report to the County of Wellington Chair and Members of the Planning Committee<sup>4</sup> identified that the Rural Employment Area lands in Puslinch have a high concentration of employment, a high economic impact and play a strategic role in the south Wellington County area. In addition to these occupied Rural Employment Area lands, there are an additional 170 hectares of land that are vacant and available to accommodate future growth.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding this supply of vacant land, there is still a shortfall of employment land over the planning horizon.

The existing inventory of Rural Employment Area lands is spread over two primary industrial parks: Kerr and Nicholas Beaver Industrial Parks. They are located opposite one another at Brock Road South, bordered by McLean Road to the north and Highway 401 to the south. The Kerr and Nicholas Beaver Industrial Parks consist primarily of transportation and warehousing, wholesale trade, manufacturing, and construction uses. **Figure 3-5** below summarizes the breakdown of businesses located in the Kerr and Nicholas Beaver Industrial Parks, as well as the share of occupied lands associated with each of these uses. Transportation and warehousing account for the largest proportion of businesses and land area, which reflects the proximity of these lands to both Highway 401 and Highway 6. There are additional areas currently designated for employment use,

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<sup>2</sup> The detailed Paper is available as part of the Phase 2: Background Report available on the Township of Puslinch website. <https://puslinch.ca/puslinchbydesign/>

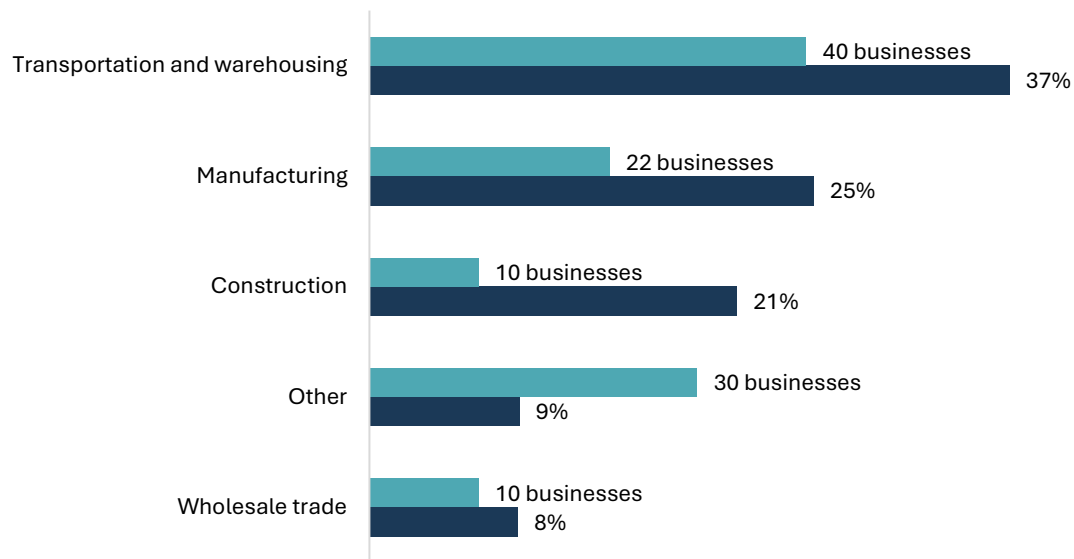
<sup>3</sup> Phase 2 M.C.R. Report: Urban Land Needs Assessment, County of Wellington, Final Report, prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., August 29, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Committee Report, May 13, 2021. Subject: County Official Plan Review – Regionally Significant Economic Development Area.

<sup>5</sup> Based on Figure 4-13 of the *Phase 2 M.C.R. Report: Urban Land Needs Assessment*, County of Wellington, Final Report, August 29, 2022, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. Vacant land area adjusted for 20% land vacancy to account for lands that could remain vacant over the long term.

namely near the intersection of Maltby Road W and Concession Road 7. These lands are undeveloped and represent a potential opportunity for future economic growth.

**Figure 3-5: Sectoral Distribution of Built Rural Employment Lands, hectares**



Source: Parcel Economics Inc.

Research and input into the Employment Land Market Study led to the identification of five key themes relevant for employment planning in Puslinch:

- 1 *Need for Large Contiguous Industrial Parcels*
- 2 *The Requirement for “Dry” Industrial Uses is Both an Opportunity and Constraint*
- 3 *Transportation and Access Will be Key to Supporting Industrial Uses*
- 4 *There is a Need for Employment Serving Uses to Support the Area*
- 5 *Provide for Flexibility in Built Form*

The SWOT analysis resulted in the following strategic recommendations:

- **Additional Rural Employment Area lands**  
The Township and County should be forward-looking and consider designating more than 30 hectares. This will allow for more market choice in the area and ensure that lands within the area are “market-ready” to respond to demand when it materializes.
- **Large blocks of contiguous land**  
When considering future Rural Employment Area lands, focus should be on areas with large contiguous parcel sizes and access / exposure to Highway 401 and Highway 6.
- **New land use designations (Prestige and General industrial uses)**  
Lands located in the Nicholas Beaver Industrial Park and the Kerr Industrial Park are zoned ‘Industrial’. To help create the ‘feel’ of a prestige industrial park, while still allowing for industries that require outdoor storage, consideration should be given to more than one Rural Employment Area designation for Puslinch. Using the Gormley Industrial Park in Whitchurch-Stouffville as an example, the lands designated ‘Prestige Industrial’ are adjacent to Stouffville Road, while lands designated ‘Industrial’ (heavier industrial uses) do not front Stouffville Road.
- **Policy direction for flexible zoning regulations to address height, coverage and outdoor storage**  
The area is likely to attract businesses engaged in logistics and warehousing, so it will be important for future zoning regulations to permit clear heights of at least 40-feet (interior). While it is becoming more common for new industrial buildings to accommodate site coverage of 30% or 40%, lands within the Regionally Significant Economic Development Study Area should be less prescriptive as it relates to site coverage. This reflects the possibility that some sites will require on-site sewage treatment, which could result in lower site coverages. Allowing some outdoor storage will be important in differentiating this industrial area from competitive municipalities where outdoor storage is not permitted or is significantly limited. The key will be allowing for outdoor storage in strategic locations, set back from property lines and behind the main building on the property.

Zoning details would need to be addressed after the conclusion of the implementing Official Plan Amendment for this Study.

### **3.4.3 Infrastructure to Support Employment Growth**

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in attracting, retaining, and supporting businesses and residents within a community. The Township of Puslinch features a variety of foundational services which can be optimized to support the proposed employment growth within the



community. The following section provides a summary of the infrastructure that can be used to support employment growth within Puslinch.

### **Transportation Infrastructure**

- Existing transportation systems within the Township consist of MTO highways (Highway 401 and Highway 6), Wellington County Roads, and Township roads.
- The MTO is completing upgrades to Highway 6 North (Highway 401 to Maltby Road as a 4-lane highway) with a new midblock interchange on Highway 6 / Hanlon Expressway north of Wellington Road 34. These upgrades will support employment growth.
- The County Road system also features future improvements, specifically along Wellington Road 46 between Maltby Road and Wellington Road 46 due to existing congestion.
- The proposed Highway 6 / Morriston Bypass as planned provides opportunities for changing land use and travel patterns.
- Ongoing and future transportation infrastructure improvements will support the employment growth within the Township by providing for access for employees and logistical services.

### **Servicing Infrastructure**

- In 2018, the Township completed a municipal water and sewage servicing study. After review by Council and the community, the Township decided not to provide municipal servicing for employment lands.
- There are no dedicated wastewater treatment plants or communal water wells within the Study Area.
- Private communal systems will be required for all employment land uses, and where not feasible, must have partial or on-site individual servicing.

### **Availability of Land (and topography of the land)**

- The Township of Puslinch features a varied topography (the Paris and Galt Moraine) with rolling hills, extensive farmland, active quarries, and areas of wooded land and wetlands.
- The southern portions of Puslinch (the Study Area location) are generally flatter and more suited to future employment uses, while the northern areas have more diverse elevations.

### **3.4.4 Summary of Key Findings to Date**

The following is a summary of the key considerations for employment growth as informed by the *Phase 2: Background Report*, which outlined conditions within the Study Area as it pertained to discrete topics.

## PROXIMITY TO MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Nearly all employment lands across southern Ontario are situated in proximity to major transportation infrastructure, including provincial highways, arterial roads, rail corridors, ports, airports, and international border crossings. Accessibility facilitates the movement of goods and commuting for employees.
- Due to the lack of ports, airports, and rail corridors in the Study Area, proximity to Highway 401 and/or Highway 6 is essential for employment lands in the Township.

## PROXIMITY TO OTHER EMPLOYMENT LANDS

- Employment lands are generally clustered, providing for a range of industries, employers and supply chains to be in proximity to each other, creating employment nodes. Concentrating employment lands serve to reduce potential conflicts with sensitive land uses.
- Having concentrated employment lands improves access to skilled trades/labour force.
- Locating employment lands in proximity to each other enables the employment uses to make use of shared services as the Township does not offer municipal services for employment uses.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVING USES

- Employment serving uses in proximity to employment areas reduces the need for employees to travel long distances during the workday to access basic amenities. Employment serving uses, such as restaurants, retail services, and personal services, provide essential amenities that support the day-to-day needs of employees. This contributes to decreased traffic congestion and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- Employment serving uses currently exist along Brock Road S (Highway 6) between Nicholas Beaver Road and Highway 401. These uses include gas stations, auto repair facilities, and dining establishments.

## PROXIMITY TO SENSITIVE LAND USES

- Employment areas must be accessible to residents while maintaining adequate separation from sensitive residential uses. Separation ensures that sensitive land uses will be protected from potential noise, lighting, traffic, environmental, and other impacts from employment uses.

- Consideration must be given to nearby natural heritage areas, cultural heritage areas, recreational areas, and agricultural lands.
- Buffering through separation distances, landscaping, and other mitigation measures can be employed to achieve compatibility between different land uses.

## PRESERVATION OF RURAL CHARACTER

- Employment land uses should respect and preserve the rural character of Puslinch. Maintaining adequate separations from between incompatible uses is essential to maintaining the rural character of Puslinch.
- Ensure that employment developments integrate well with the surrounding landscape and maintain a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation.
- Ensure the protection of cultural heritage resources within the Township.
- Employment land expansion should carefully consider the impact on existing agricultural lands. Although there are no prime agricultural areas in the Study Area, there are secondary agricultural areas which should be protected while allowing for economic diversification through compatible employment uses.

## PROXIMITY TO SETTLEMENT AREAS

- Employment lands should be accessible to settlement areas, so residents have employment opportunities close to where they live, helping create communities and reduce vehicular traffic.
- Locating employment lands near settlements provides employment uses with a talent pool.

## AVAILABILITY OF LARGE LAND PARCELS

- Lands considered for employment should consist of large, unconstrained parcels of land with opportunities for a range of parcel sizes.
- Large flexible lots allow the Township and the County to respond to evolving employment needs.

## URBAN DESIGN

- Factors such as lot shape, lot depth, lot area and surrounding uses determine employment land parcels' ability to contribute to a high-quality built environment.

- Developments within employment areas should incorporate high-quality urban design to achieve a high level of built form compatibility with surrounding uses and with the adjacent streetscapes.
- Building and site design features of excellent standard such as universal design features, pedestrian-oriented approach and attractive architectural design should be promoted in employment and employment-serving buildings as much as possible.
- Urban design guidelines can outline how developments within employment areas can contribute to environmental sustainability and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Topics such as energy efficiency, tree retention, green building standards, water conservation, stormwater management, low-impact development at the minimum should be considered in new development.

## PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

- Protecting the agricultural land base in Puslinch is a key focus of *Puslinch by Design*. Agricultural resources are vital to the Puslinch economy and way of life.
- All potential employment lands have considered existing agricultural uses on the candidate lands and surrounding lands. The future location of the employment area will need to address requirements for minimum distance separation from livestock facilities.
- Protecting natural heritage features, such as wetlands, forests, and wildlife habitats, safeguards biodiversity and contributes to the ecological health of Puslinch and should be safeguarded.
- Any future development in areas featuring Natural Heritage Resources (wetlands, woodlands, etc.) will require studies to ensure the Natural Heritage Resource is protected.

Successful employment growth in Puslinch will be supported by effective land use planning to ensure that employment lands are strategically located and developed to support economic growth, preserve rural character, consider existing uses and environmental features. Prioritizing high-quality urban design within employment areas will enhance land use compatibility, foster safer environments, and improve overall aesthetics, while maintaining the community's rural identity.

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# **4. EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

## 4. Employment Growth in the Planning Framework

In Ontario, land use planning is guided by provincial legislation, including the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024, which collectively set the framework for how employment lands are identified, protected, and utilized. The *Planning Act* affords municipalities the authority to manage land use decisions, including the designation and zoning of employment lands. The PPS 2024 emphasizes the importance of protecting employment areas to foster economic opportunities, attract investment, and promote long-term job creation.

For Puslinch, with its unique blend of rural landscapes and growing economic activities, land use planning ensures that rural Employment Areas are safeguarded and optimized to attract businesses that are compatible within a rural setting. When planning for employment lands in Puslinch, it is crucial to recognize that the township's rural identity is a core element that contributes to the quality of life for residents and the sustainable growth of the local economy. The agricultural sector, combined with natural resources such as spring water and aggregate extraction, form the backbone of the local economy and must be protected.

Thoughtful, well-integrated land use planning will allow Puslinch to protect its rural character while strategically accommodating economic opportunities that align with its community values and long-term vision for sustainable growth. This section will delve into these considerations, guided by the overarching provincial policies and the County's and Township's strategic goals for sustainable development.

### 4.1 Policy and Legislative Context Overview

This section explains the different levels of government policies that direct employment growth. These policies come from the Province (Ontario), County, and the Township itself. These policy documents work together to create a framework that shapes how Puslinch grows, especially in terms of suitable employment locations.

The County and Township need to align with Provincial policies and guidelines, to ensure that employment areas are well-planned, accessible, and sustainable. By analyzing these policies, the Township can determine which locations are best suited for future employment uses. This approach helps ensure that Puslinch's employment lands are strategically placed to support local needs, attract new businesses, and strengthen the local economy.

In summary, understanding and applying these policies allows Puslinch to make informed decisions on where employment lands should be located to maximize community benefits and long-term economic growth.

#### 4.1.1 *Planning Act*

The *Planning Act* governs land use planning in Ontario. The *Act's* primary goal is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that land use planning contributes to

environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The Act establishes clear, fair, and efficient processes for decision-making regarding land use, emphasizing the importance of public participation to ensure that community needs and concerns are considered. The Act also plays a significant role in shaping the economy and employment within Ontario by ensuring strategic planning through municipal Official Plans consider economic development and areas of employment.

Section 1 of the Act, entitled Interpretation, provides the following definition for “area of employment”:

*“area of employment” means an area of land designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic uses, those being uses that meet the following criteria:*

*1. The uses consist of business and economic uses, other than uses referred to in paragraph 2, including any of the following:*

*i. Manufacturing uses.*

*ii. Uses related to research and development in connection with manufacturing anything.*

*iii. Warehousing uses, including uses related to the movement of goods.*

*iv. Retail uses and office uses that are associated with uses mentioned in subparagraphs i to iii.*

*v. Facilities that are ancillary to the uses mentioned in subparagraphs i to iv.*

*vi. Any other prescribed business and economic uses.*

*2. The uses are not any of the following uses:*

*i. Institutional uses.*

*ii. Commercial uses, including retail and office uses not referred to in subparagraph 1 iv;*

With regard to the implementation of this definition, the County of Wellington is in the process of updating its Official Plan to incorporate the above definition as well as the provincially identified approach to current employment lands which may have institutional uses or commercial uses as identified in paragraph 2 above. This work is being undertaken by the County outside of *Puslinch by Design* and is known as Official Plan Amendment 123 (OPA 123). Please refer to the later summary of OPA 123 (Section 4.1.5) for greater detail.

Section 2 of the *Planning Act* identifies matters of Provincial interest that Council shall have regard for when carrying out its responsibilities under the Act including the adequate provision of employment opportunities within municipalities and the protection of the

financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities. This ensures that municipalities consider employment lands and opportunities when developing land use policies in addition to more sensitive land uses.

#### **4.1.2 Provincial Planning Statement (2024)**

On August 20, 2024, the Province of Ontario released the final version of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS 2024) which came into effect on October 20, 2024. The PPS 2024 made significant changes to the land use planning framework in Ontario. The PPS 2024 has replaced *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 by integrating them into a single planning document applicable across the province (except within the Greenbelt).

Chapter 1 of the PPS 2024 establishes that a successful Ontario will be based on a strong and competitive economy which will mature into a centre of industry and commerce of global significance.

Chapter 2 of the PPS 2024 provides policies related to building homes and sustaining strong and competitive communities. Policy 2.1.3 provides that sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate growth for a horizon of at least 20 years but no more than 30 years. However, it is noted that planning for infrastructure, public service facilities, strategic growth areas and employment areas may extend beyond these timelines.

Subsection 2.5 of the PPS 2024 outlines policies for rural areas in municipalities. Rural areas are defined as “a system of lands within municipalities that may include rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas. Section 2.5 maintains that rural areas should be supported by promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products and the sustainable management of resources.

Subsection 2.8 provides employment policies, specifically, 2.8.1 requires planning authorities to promote economic development by encouraging a range of employment and industrial uses and maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses. This Chapter also includes policies to achieve land use compatibility between employment areas and sensitive land uses. Policies also direct that planning authorities are to plan for, protect and preserve employment areas for current and future uses, protect employment areas located in proximity to major goods movement facilities and corridors, and update employment areas identified in official plans to ensure the designation is appropriate to the planned function of employment areas. Further, PPS 2024 policy directs that that lands within 300 metres of employment areas shall avoid, or minimize and mitigate, impacts on the long-term economic viability of the employment areas. The policy emphasizes the importance of land use compatibility, ensuring that new development, including the creation of new lots and proposed land uses, do not compromise the operations of existing or planned employment uses. This should not be



interpreted as a mandatory distance separation but is to be carefully managed when new uses are introduced in proximity to employment uses.

Subsection 3.5 of the PPS provides land use compatibility policies and requires major facilities, and sensitive land uses to be planned and developed to avoid, as much as possible, any potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term operational and economic viability of major facilities in accordance with provincial guidelines, standards and procedures.

Chapter 8 defines the terms particularly relevant for this Study which include:

*Adverse effects: as defined in the Environmental Protection Act, means one or more of:*

- a) *impairment of the quality of the natural environment for any use that can be made of it;*
- b) *injury or damage to property or plant or animal life;*
- c) *harm or material discomfort to any person;*
- d) *an adverse effect on the health of any person;*
- e) *impairment of the safety of any person;*
- f) *rendering any property or plant or animal life unfit for human use;*
- g) *loss of enjoyment of normal use of property; and*
- h) *interference with normal conduct of business.*

**Employment area:** *means those areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office, and ancillary facilities. An employment area also includes areas of land described by subsection 1(1.1) of the Planning Act. Uses that are excluded from employment areas are institutional and commercial, including retail and office not associated with the primary employment use listed above.*

**Major facilities:** *means facilities which may require separation from sensitive land uses, including but not limited to airports, manufacturing uses, transportation infrastructure and corridors, rail facilities, marine facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries, energy generation facilities and transmission systems, and resource extraction activities.*

**Major goods movement facilities and corridors:** *means transportation facilities, corridors and networks associated with the inter- and intra-provincial movement of goods. Examples include: inter-modal facilities, ports, airports, rail facilities, truck terminals, freight corridors, freight facilities, and haul routes, primary transportation corridors used for the movement of goods and those identified in provincial transportation plans. Approaches that are freight-*

*supportive may be recommended in provincial guidance or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives.*

**Sensitive land uses:** *means buildings, amenity areas, or outdoor spaces where routine or normal activities occurring at reasonably expected times would experience one or more adverse effects from contaminant discharges generated by a nearby major facility. Sensitive land uses may be a part of the natural or built environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to: residences, day care centres, and educational and health facilities.*

The PPS 2024 introduced a new definition of “employment area” as outlined above, which does not include institutional or commercial uses, other than those associated with manufacturing uses and warehousing uses. This definition builds on the definition of “area of employment” within the *Planning Act*, which was updated as part of *Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*. The Township’s rural Employment Areas are Employment Areas within the meaning of the PPS 2024.<sup>6</sup>

Land use compatibility is fundamental in the PPS with dedicated policies on compatibility in Subsection 3.5, specific requirements for compatibility applicable for employment uses as provided in Subsection 2.8. The PPS also provides many definitions as outlined above to clarify how these elements interact within planning contexts, ensuring a shared understanding of potential impacts.

The PPS mandates that planning authorities consider the coexistence of employment areas in proximity to sensitive land uses, such as residential areas, schools, parks, without adverse effects such as noise, odour, or pollutants. The PPS calls for strategic planning to prevent or minimize adverse impacts from industrial and other major facilities on nearby sensitive land uses, thereby ensuring that these facilities remain operationally and economically viable while simultaneously ensuring the protection of sensitive land uses. This alignment is crucial for ensuring a sustainable environment for both current and future development and for minimizing risk to public health and safety.

Within Subsection 2.6 ‘Rural Lands’ and Subsection 4.3 ‘Agriculture’ the PPS requires that new land uses in rural areas and prime agricultural areas shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae (MDS). MDS are the Provincial formulae and guidelines designed to address compatibility concerns about odour from livestock facilities and to support Ontario’s livestock industry. The PPS includes the use of MDS to maintain land use compatibility, helping to protect the viability of agricultural operations while reducing adverse effects on nearby residents and businesses. Section 4.3 of the PPS also provides policies related to the protection of the agricultural system. Specifically, via Policy 4.3.5(2) which requires the avoidance, or mitigation if avoidance is not possible,

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<sup>6</sup> This determination has been confirmed by the County of Wellington in consultation with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH).

of any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on the agricultural system.<sup>7</sup> Although this policy does not explicitly reference employment areas, the policy requires considerations of employment areas on adjacent or nearby agricultural lands to ensure their long-term viability.

In summary, the PPS emphasizes the importance of strategic planning to create employment lands that respect sensitive areas and support a balanced approach to growth that fosters economic strength without compromising public health and quality of life.

#### 4.1.3 Greenbelt Plan (2017)

The Greenbelt Plan is a legislative framework established by the Province of Ontario to protect over 2 million acres of environmentally sensitive and agricultural land around the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. Enacted in 2005, and updated in 2017, the Plan aims to curb urban sprawl and preserve the natural environment, agricultural lands, and water resources.

While portions of the Township of Puslinch are in the Greenbelt Plan, the Study Area does not include Greenbelt lands. However, natural heritage features outside the Study Area may have buffers that extend into the Study Area.

#### 4.1.4 County of Wellington Official Plan

The Study Area for *Puslinch By Design* contains two clusters of Rural Employment Areas that are ‘lands set aside for industrial and limited commercial uses which would benefit from a rural location’ and ‘provide diversity to Wellington’s land supply for business’ (County OP, Section 6.8.1).

Section 6.8.2 of the County OP further specifies that in all cases, the permitted uses will be ‘dry’ in nature, thus not using *significant* amounts of water or producing *significant* amounts of effluent. The County OP provides examples of uses that can be accommodated within the Rural Employment Area, as outlined in Table 4-1:

**Table 4-1: Permitted Uses as per Section 6.8.2 of the County OP**

Permitted Uses, County of Wellington Official Plan (prior to OPA 123)	
<b>Industrial Uses</b>	<b>Commercial Uses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing, processing, fabrication and assembly of raw materials</li> <li>• Repair, servicing, distribution and storage of materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business or professional offices</li> <li>• Farm machinery sales, farm supplies, farm produce sales</li> <li>• Small scale motels or inns, restaurants</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> The PPS policy reads: 4.3.5 Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas (2.) Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on the agricultural system are to be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance.

Permitted Uses, County of Wellington Official Plan (prior to OPA 123)	
<i>Industrial Uses</i>	<i>Commercial Uses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessory uses including the retail sale of products produced on-site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automobile sales and services</li> </ul>

Section 6.8.2 of the County OP states that retail commercial uses, and service commercial uses normally found in primary and secondary urban centres (such as medical offices, professional offices, small scale retail, etc.) are not permitted within employment areas.

Existing permitted uses contained within Section 6.8.2 currently do not conform to the *Planning Act* definition as commercial uses are currently permitted within the County OP but are not permitted within the PPS 2024 and the *Planning Act*. The County of Wellington is updating its Official Plan to ensure consistency with the provincially identified approach to employment lands. This work has been undertaken separately from *Puslinch by Design* through Official Plan Amendment 123 (OPA 123). OPA 123 has established that uses in the Rural Employment Area that do not conform with the new definition in the *Planning Act* are permitted where the use has been lawfully established before October 20, 2024. Please refer to the summary of OPA 123 below for greater detail.

#### 4.1.5 County of Wellington OPA 123

On October 31, 2024, County Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 123 (OPA 123). OPA 123 implements components of the County’s Growth Management Strategy at a policy level and in various local municipalities through site specific changes. The significant components of OPA 123 for *Puslinch by Design* are the incorporation of the new Provincial definition of employment from the *Planning Act* into the Official Plan as well as transition provisions for existing uses. OPA 123 is subject to approval by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing which will occur at a future date. OPA 123 is consistent with the PPS 2024 regarding Employment Areas and employment policies.

#### 4.1.6 Township of Puslinch Comprehensive Zoning By-law No. 023-18

The Township of Puslinch Comprehensive Zoning By-law No. 023-18 (the “Township Zoning By-Law”) regulates Industrial Zones in Section 9.0, which states “if a municipal water supply is not available, only dry industrial uses shall be permitted. Notwithstanding this requirement, an existing industrial use, which was permitted by a site-specific exemption under Zoning By-law 19/85 to utilize water is permitted.”

Dry Industrial Use is defined as:

*Any premises used for manufacturing, processing, fabrication and assembly of raw materials or repair, servicing, distribution and storage of materials, where:*

*a. No significant water requirements are necessary as part of the assembly, manufacture, fabrication, repair, packaging and storage activities; and;*

- b. No significant sewage disposal requirements are necessary as part of the assembly, manufacture, fabrication, repair, packaging and storage activities; and,
- c. For the purpose of this definition, significant water requirements are defined as water use requiring a Permit to Take Water and/or greater than 50,000 litres of water per day.
- d. For the purpose of this definition, significant sewage disposal requirements are defined as sewage disposal systems that exceed 10,000 litres per day of discharge.

The Industrial (IND) Zones in the Township Zoning By-law permits dry industrial and limited commercial uses as outlined in **Table 4-2**:

**Table 4-2: Permitted Uses for Industrial (IND) Zone as per Section 9.1 of the Township Zoning By-law**

Industrial Zone Permitted Uses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural service and supply</li> <li>• Motor vehicle body shop</li> <li>• Building supply store</li> <li>• Business or professional office</li> <li>• Caterer's establishment</li> <li>• Commercial fitness centre</li> <li>• Commercial self-storage facility</li> <li>• Contractor's yard</li> <li>• Dry cleaning plant</li> <li>• Factory outlet (accessory use)</li> <li>• Fuel depot</li> <li>• Grain operation</li> <li>• Industrial equipment rental establishment</li> <li>• Medical marijuana production facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor storage area or accessory processing area</li> <li>• Outdoor storage use</li> <li>• Postal or courier outlet</li> <li>• Equipment rental establishment</li> <li>• Restaurant (accessory)*</li> <li>• Sawmill</li> <li>• Service or repair establishment</li> <li>• Trade service establishment</li> <li>• Transport terminal</li> <li>• Warehouse</li> </ul>
<p>*Restaurants are permitted only as an accessory use. All accessory uses shall occupy a combined maximum of 30 percent of the floor area of the principal use.</p>	
<p>* Commercial and Retail uses are to be reviewed against updated Planning Act definition of area of employment and Wellington County OPA 123.</p>	

The Township Zoning By-law limits the types of Industrial Uses. Expanding the types of permitted Industrial Uses, specifically, permitting Prestige Industrial Uses, would allow for a greater range of compatible dry industrial uses. Prestige industrial uses are typically high-quality, low-impact industrial activities that contribute positively to the appearance and character of an area. Examples of Prestige Industrial uses which could be

implemented in Puslinch include research facilities, warehousing centres with minimal storage, and light manufacturing.

It is common for municipalities to recognize separate zones and land use designations for each industrial use. Recognizing multiple industrial zones within the Zoning By-law allows the Township to exercise greater control over the placement and intensity of industrial activities, ensuring they are effectively managed and maintain land use compatibility. For example, the City of Port Colborne features three separate industrial zones: Light Industrial (LI), Heavy Industrial (HI), and Gateway Industrial (GI). The LI zone features small scale uses such as light industry, car washes, and research facilities. The HI zone features more intensive uses such as heavy industry, bulk fuel depots, heavy equipment sales, along with all uses that are permitted within the LI zone. Lastly, the GI zone is the most restrictive, permitting light industry, research facilities, and storage facilities. The GI zone aims to protect the primary gateways into the City from large incompatible industrial uses. Similar zone categories are evident in the City of Sarnia (Business Park Zone, Light Industrial Zone, Heavy Industrial Zone) and the City of Woodstock (Prestige Industrial Zone, Restricted Industrial Zone, General Industrial Zone, Transitional Industrial Zone). While the aforementioned uses are not dry industrial uses, the Township can utilize a similar approach to differentiate suitable types of industrial uses within the Study Area.

Consideration of new zoning categories and standards are not within the scope of this Study but will be informed by the overarching Official Plan policies developed through future Study phases.

## **4.2 Guidelines for Employment**

### **4.2.1 Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks D-Series Guidelines**

The MECP D-Series Guidelines established by the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) are designed to manage land use compatibility between industrial operations and sensitive land uses such as, but not limited to, residential areas. The guidelines aim to minimize adverse effects like noise, dust, and odour from industrial facilities impacting nearby sensitive land uses using buffers and separation of uses, and the encroachment of incompatible land uses. The County of Wellington Official Plan specifically implements the D-6 Guidelines for the Clark / Heinmiller Residential Special Policy Area (PA5-9) given the proximity of the Palmerston Industrial Park to residential uses. It is recommended that Wellington County endorse the guidelines as part of any Official Plan amendments related to *Puslinch By Design*.

Within the D-Series guidelines, the D-6 guidelines provide Recommended Minimum Separation Distances and Potential Influence Areas. These guidelines are based on three industrial classifications: Class I, Class II, and Class III. Through case studies and past

experience, the MECP determined radii in which adverse effects *may* be experienced for industrial land uses as outlined in **Table 4-3**.

**Table 4-3: D-6 Guidelines and Potential Influence Areas<sup>8</sup>**

Classification	Recommended Minimum Separation Distance	Potential Influence Area
Class I (Light Industrial) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale operations with infrequent movement of goods or materials.</li> <li>• Examples include: small scale manufacturing, printing shop, food packaging, research and development facilities, etc.</li> </ul>	20 metres	70 metres
Class II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger scale operations with more frequent truck traffic and material handling.</li> <li>• Examples include: medium-scale warehousing or distribution facilities, furniture manufacturing, etc.</li> </ul>	70 metres	300 metres
Class III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large-scale industrial operations with frequent truck or rail traffic, raw material storage, and potentially hazardous processes.</li> <li>• Chemical manufacturing plants, steel plants, oil refineries, large-scale quarrying, etc.</li> </ul>	300 metres	1000 metres

The Recommended Minimum Separation Distance from industry represents the minimum distances between an industrial facility and a sensitive land use to avoid or minimize adverse effects. The Potential Influence Area represents areas where adverse effects from industrial activities may be experienced by sensitive land uses. Developing a sensitive land use within an industry’s Potential Influence Area requires detailed technical studies (e.g., air dispersion modelling, noise, vibration analyses) to demonstrate that the land uses can be compatible.

The actual influence area (overall range within which an adverse effect would be or is experienced) for a particular facility is site-specific and may be beyond the potential influence area either before or after buffers have been used to reduce, eliminate or otherwise intercept adverse effects. Examples of buffers include setbacks from property lines, acoustic barriers, fencing and walls, berms, vegetation buffers, and more.

<sup>8</sup> The uses noted in Table 4-2 reflect examples of Dry Industrial uses which may be applicable within the Township of Puslinch. These uses do not represent an exhaustive list.

### 4.2.2 Puslinch Design Guidelines (2010)

The Township of Puslinch prepared the Puslinch Design Guidelines in 2010 to maintain the rural community character of the area. The guidelines also address concerns related to the speed of traffic on Highway 6 and through the communities of Morriston and Aberfoyle with the goal of supporting safe and strong main streets and compatible new built form. The Design Guidelines are particularly applicable for commercial, industrial and institutional development proposals along Brock Road / Highway 6 North and Highway 6 South in the Township.

The Design Guidelines are premised on three principles to support rural character as shown in **Table 4-4**:

**Table 4-4: Puslinch Design Guidelines (2010) Principles and Goals**

	Categories (Principles)	Goals
<b>A</b>	Enhancing the Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an appropriate relationship between new and existing development in the Central Business Districts in Aberfoyle and Morriston.</li> <li>To provide for a safe and efficient transportation system that also contributes to the livability of Puslinch.</li> <li>To provide for a safe, efficient, and pleasant pedestrian environment in Aberfoyle and Morriston.</li> <li>To provide effective identification for Aberfoyle and Morriston, and for the Highway 6 N (Hanlon) industrial area.</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	Promoting Quality Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide a high level of architectural design for commercial and institutional development, and for industrial developments visible from highways and arterials roads.</li> <li>To maintain strong main streets in Aberfoyle and Morriston.</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	Respecting Established Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To conserve heritage assets within Puslinch.</li> <li>To preserve, enhance and integrate natural heritage resources.</li> </ul>

Part 2, Section A of the Puslinch Design Guidelines provides detailed direction on ways to enhance specific sections of streetscapes in the Township including through regulation of setbacks, roads plantings, medians, planned bicycle routes, comfortable pedestrian environments, gateway features and families of banners or other street signage.

For commercial, industrial and institutional uses, Section B (Part 2) of the Design Guidelines provides detailed direction on architectural design, entry features, circulation routes, parking areas, screening and appropriate signage.



Part 2, Section C of the Design Guidelines highlights ways to respect the character of the area, with regard for respecting local landmarks, cultural and natural heritage resources through preservation and enhanced visibility. In addition, compatibility with existing uses is addressed with guidance for the use of complementary scale, proportions and materials with existing residential uses, as well as the use of landscaping and tree planting to enhance rural character and to screen the less attractive components of development.

The Puslinch Design Guidelines are a living document to be updated over time at Council's discretion. High-level direction to update the Design Guidelines will be proposed through *Puslinch By Design* to specifically address how new development in an employment area can be compatible with existing uses and maintain the identified rural character of Puslinch. Specific direction will also be provided for implementation of the updates to the Design Guidelines.

### **4.3 Land Use Planning Considerations**

The following section will highlight key land use planning matters to be addressed with employment growth given the existing conditions and uses in the Study Area and policy directions.

#### **4.3.1 Employment Areas**

As discussed earlier in this report, significant policy changes have occurred which impact employment lands in Ontario. *Bill 97* introduced significant amendments to the *Planning Act*, particularly affecting the definition of "area of employment." Previously, an "area of employment" was broadly defined, encompassing lands designated for manufacturing, warehousing, office spaces, and other industrial uses. However, with *Bill 97*, the definition has been refined to focus specifically on traditional employment lands and exclude commercial and institutional uses, such as retail and service industries, which are now encouraged to develop outside of designated employment areas. The intent of this policy change is to allow municipalities to better protect core employment lands from being converted to non-industrial uses, ensuring these areas remain dedicated to economic activities. In contrast, land outside employment areas allows for a broader range of uses, including commercial, and retail uses, which can also support nearby industrial uses. Non-employment areas provide flexibility for municipalities to accommodate a variety of land uses and a range of employment types. However, these areas can be less suitable for industries that generate high volumes of traffic, noise, or emissions.

The PPS 2024 is aligned with this updated definition, focusing employment areas on traditional industrial uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and related activities, while excluding commercial and institutional uses unless they are ancillary to primary employment functions.

Due to this change, municipalities are now required to revise their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to conform to this new definition. The County of Wellington has approved

OPA 123 to revise the County Official Plan to incorporate this new definition (subject to approval by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs).

It is recommended that employment growth in the Study be developed as a rural Employment Area, meaning the types of land uses would preclude institutional and commercial uses. Developing the lands as an Employment Area will ensure the lands are protected and preserved for projected employment needs and prohibit sensitive land uses in proximity that could curtail the ability for employment uses to be sustained.

### **4.3.2 Servicing Limitations and Dry Industrial Uses**

As the Township of Puslinch does not provide municipal servicing infrastructure employment uses must operate on private servicing systems, such as well and septic systems. Uses with high water and sewage demands that cannot be handled by private systems would not be permitted. Suggested dry industrial uses for the rural Employment Area within the Study Area include:

- Manufacturing, fabricating, printing, processing and packaging operations;
- Research and development facilities;
- Automotive uses, excluding motor vehicles sales, rentals or leasing agencies;
- Warehousing and wholesale operations;
- Open storage facilities;
- Public uses and utility operations;
- Transportation terminals;
- Contractor's yard, auctioneer's facility; and
- Public uses and utilities

The Township should consider flexibility for shared servicing to allow for some cost-savings for businesses (both capital and operating costs). The Township should also consider flexible building regulations and protection of larger land parcels so that private servicing needs can be accommodated on site. This approach will ensure that new employment uses can be appropriately serviced on suitable sized land parcels, attracting realistic employment uses while sustaining economic growth in Puslinch.

### **4.3.3 Land Use Compatibility**

In Puslinch, land use compatibility requirements for employment lands must be carefully considered to protect the rural character of the Township, especially considering policy 2.8.1(3) in PPS 2024, which mandates that developments within 300 metres of employment areas avoid, or if avoidance isn't feasible, minimize and mitigate potential impacts on the long-term economic viability of employment uses. This policy emphasizes the importance of protecting employment areas from encroaching developments that could lead to land use compatibility conflicts including noise, traffic, and environmental impacts. For example, locating residential lands near employment areas will result in land use compatibility conflicts due to increased truck traffic, operational noise, and emissions within residential areas. Buffers, landscaping, and urban design features can be used to

mitigate conflicts between these land uses and allow for both land uses to coexist in proximity to each other. Section 6 of this report provides urban design directions to assist with achieving land use compatibility between these uses.

Further, where employment lands interface with natural heritage resources, such as wetlands, forests, or wildlife habitats, it is crucial to ensure that industrial activities do not negatively impact these sensitive areas. Environmental buffers and adherence to ecological guidelines help protect natural heritage while enabling economic activities to proceed responsibly.

#### **4.3.4 Minimum Distance Separation**

The Township of Puslinch is a predominantly rural area with vast portions of land dedicated to agricultural, including livestock uses, which play a vital role in both the local economy and community identity. Given this strong presence, any new developments, particularly employment lands, must be carefully planned to respect the existing farming landscape. One critical factor is the application of Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) guidelines, which aim to prevent potential conflicts between agricultural and livestock operations and other land uses. MDS ensures that new developments maintain an adequate distance from active farms, reducing issues related to noise, odors, and other agricultural activities. This approach allows Puslinch to foster economic growth through new employment lands while still preserving the agricultural integrity and rural character that defines the Township.

Within the *Phase 2: Background Report* (released in September 2024) preliminary MDS setbacks were calculated for known livestock facilities within 1,500 metres of the Study Area. The factors used to determine the MDS I setback requirements for these facilities include: the type of livestock; the maximum capacity of the barn for livestock; the type of manure storage system; and the type of land use (Type A and Type B). The development of new employment growth areas will contain a mix of non-agricultural land uses, which are Type B (more sensitive) land uses. As such, separation is to be provided between existing livestock facilities and the location of future employment lands to maintain land use compatibility between these contrasting land uses. The preliminary MDS calculations from Phase 2 will need to be confirmed and updated as necessary for Phase 4, which will identify specific land parcel options for employment growth.



# **5. EMERGING POLICY DIRECTIONS**



## 5. Proposed Policy Directions

This section will identify proposed draft policy directions based on the forgoing information in this report. However, the County of Wellington will lead the future Official Plan Amendment process for the adoption of policies.

### 5.1 Purpose of the Policy Directions

The proposed Policy Directions are intended to guide future development and use of employment lands and respond to key considerations identified in the *Phase 2: Background Report*. The Phase 2 Report outlined the breadth of considerations and constraints within the Study that will impact employment growth. Planning for new employment areas must comprehensively consider existing conditions, constraints and opportunities within the Study Area.

This section provides recommendations to ensure the efficient use of employment lands is in alignment with the Township's economic and community objectives. The recommendations support future land use decisions to address County and Provincial planning policies and foster a cohesive approach to future development. The policy recommendations provide a framework for managing and supporting employment land use through policy changes, infrastructure investments, and other regulatory measures.

Ultimately, the Policy Directions promote sustainable economic growth, ensuring that employment lands contribute to the long-term economic vitality of the Township. It is vital for the Township to balance economic development goals with consideration for a variety of key issues addressed below, fostering a sustainable and prosperous future for the area.

### 5.2 Description of Proposed Policy Directions

This section synthesizes key areas of focus, identified within preceding phases of *Puslinch By Design* for employment growth. The focus areas are tied to the Principles of Land Use outlined in Section 2.

**Table 5-1: Recommended Directions – Mapping**

<b>Recommendation:</b>
Identify recommended location of Rural Employment Area(s)
Identify areas for Prestige Rural Employment and General Rural Employment Area locations
Identify Special policy area(s) if needed.

## 5-2: Recommended Directions - Policies

Recommendation:	Rationale:
Outline permitted uses in the Prestige and Rural Employment Area designations for Puslinch based on a review of existing Rural Employment Area uses in the Official Plan and consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024).	Planning for specific uses in the rural employment area allows Puslinch to better take advantage of market conditions and trends, plan for suitable land parcel sizes and needs, plan for safe and efficient transportation and plan for compatible uses with existing conditions
Encourage Prestige type industrial uses along with flexibility in communal services to provide alternatives for on-site sewage systems that meet health and environmental standards.	Prestige Industrial uses generally have a cleaner built form, providing a more cohesive and visually appealing built form along highways and regional roads.
Promote a range of parcel sizes, and particularly larger parcels sizes for the type of industrial demand.	The Phase 2 Market Study identified the need for bigger lot areas to accommodate industrial uses. The Township should strive to maintain a range of parcel sizes, and particularly large parcel sizes to accommodate future tenants. Given the size and scale of manufacturing businesses, an adequate supply of land, including various parcel sizes, is key to attracting future users the need for employment lands to accommodate transportation and warehousing uses is anticipated to continue, recognizing growth in e-commerce.
Prepare site-specific policies for studies required with development applications beyond those currently listed in the Official Plan.	Detailed studies with development applications addresses detailed on-site conditions.
Encourage employment planning in the Township beyond the PPS planning horizons.	This allows the County to plan ahead for continued employment growth.
Prepare site-specific policies to promote sharing of resources and services for the newly identified areas, buffer zones, transitional areas, etc.	This assists with optimizing private and shared water and wastewater services and planning for comprehensive and proactive infrastructure planning (i.e. – road upgrades, and safety).
Promote future employment lands to be located near crucial transportation infrastructure.	This will enhance connectivity and support the growth and development of employment lands.
Prioritize upgrades and proactive maintenance of key routes used for	On-going growth is projected for Puslinch. Several County and Township roads are

Recommendation:	Rationale:
<p>industrial transport, including improvements along Highway 6 such as widening roads, adding lanes, and improving intersections to accommodate current and future traffic volumes, and strategically plan for advanced traffic management systems to optimize traffic flow and reduce congestion where applicable.</p>	<p>already operating at capacity or will be with the growth projections into 2051. The County and Township will need to proactively plan for growth so significant infrastructure works can minimize impacts on key transportation routes serving employment areas.</p>
<p>Permit flexibility in built form to specifically accommodate servicing.</p>	<p>There is a need to provide flexibility in built form for the accommodation of private servicing on lots.</p>
<p>Plan for safe and connected on-site pathways for walking and cycling within large employment areas.</p>	<p>This policy supports a safe environment for walking and cycling with consideration for connectivity within the Employment Area.</p>

The Policy Directions provide a comprehensive framework for the strategic development and efficient use of employment lands in the Township of Puslinch. By addressing key issues and offering targeted policy directions, this section aims to ensure the sustainable economic growth and long-term vitality of the area.

The directions are intended to position the Township of Puslinch as a competitive and desirable location for businesses, fostering a thriving economic landscape. Through careful planning, on-going infrastructure investments, and regulatory measures, the Township can achieve its economic and community objectives, creating a sustainable and prosperous future for its residents and businesses. These directions are not meant to create duplication with existing Official Plan policies and may also be refined based on future input.

The page features two large, abstract teal shapes. One is in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner. Both shapes have rounded corners and a slight 3D effect with a darker teal shadow on the right side. The text '6. URBAN DESIGN' is centered in the white space between these shapes.

# **6. URBAN DESIGN**



## 6. Urban Design

The recognition and protection of rural character in the Study Area with future employment growth has been identified as a key issue by Council and residents. This section specifically outlines design issues emerging from the work of Phase 2 and provides design directions in response to the unique needs and context within Puslinch with reference to the existing Design Guidelines for the Township. The Puslinch Design Guidelines, published in 2010, apply to commercial, industrial and institutional development throughout the Township and should be updated because of this study to protect what makes Puslinch unique.

The emerging design directions provide guidance and considerations for future development and use of employment lands. The direction will form the foundation for detailed Design Guidelines that will be developed for future phases of *Puslinch By Design*. Recommended directions ensure that future land use decisions and developments achieve the design objectives established by the Township and adhere to Provincial planning policy and best practices.

This section recognizes that the important contribution of employment areas to the long-term economic vitality of the Township must be balanced with an attractive and high-quality built environment that respects the rural character in Puslinch. The protection of rural character is a key public concern as identified through input at the September 2024 Open House for this project, and as recognized within the existing Puslinch Design Guidelines. The Design Directions aim to support the development of employment lands with high design standards for the built environment while prioritizing pedestrians and incorporating sustainable practices among other considerations.

The following subsections provide a summary of key issues for future employment lands and respective design solutions. This is not an exhaustive list of key issues as not all issues have a related design solution. In addition, the following subsections synthesize the design solutions into Design Directions that will guide the land use options and the final Design Guidelines.

### 6.1 Key Issues and Design Solutions

**Table 6-1** identifies key issues for future employment lands and provides policy direction in response.

**Table 6-1: Key Issues & Design Solutions**

Key Area of Focus	Design Solutions
<p><b>Clear Implementation of Design Guidelines and Design Directions</b></p> <p>It is imperative to have Official Plan implementation policies for design guidelines. This is to ensure transparency</p>	<p>Council should consider adopting Official Plan policies that require all <i>Planning Act</i> applications for employment uses to demonstrate how development proposals are in alignment with design guidelines</p>

Key Area of Focus	Design Solutions
<p>for developers and the public, and also to ensure that design guidelines are given due regard through <i>Planning Act</i> processes.</p>	<p>and implement design directions that have been adopted by Council.</p>
<p><b>Identifying Rural Character</b></p> <p>It is a key objective of the Township to maintain the rural character and identities within the Study Area.</p> <p>Though the Study Area is largely characterized as rural, there are areas that have established distinct variations of rural character. For instance, the section of Brock Road North between Nicholas Beaver Road and the Duff's Presbyterian Church has a concentration of retail uses that differs from the rest of the Study Area.</p> <p>Another example is the intersection of Concession 4 Road and Maltby Road, which has been identified as a primary gateway. Developments fronting on this section of Highway 6 should give prominence to the location and a sense of prestige through elevation design and landscaping.</p>	<p>It is important to maintain the rural character of the Study Area, and to respect existing and distinct rural identities.</p> <p>It is recommended to expand the existing objective to recognize the various rural identities within the Study Area.</p>
<p><b>Need for more rigorous Architectural Design Guidelines</b></p> <p>Within the current policy and guidelines framework, architectural design guidance can be found in the Puslinch Design Guidelines. However, it is necessary to develop a more rigorous set of guidelines related to building exterior design and at-grade uses to ensure developments achieve enhance their adjacent streets and to improve the quality of the built environment within the Study Area.</p>	<p>It is recommended to incorporate architectural design guidelines for developments as they relate to the public realm in the design directions for the Study Area. It is also important to provide specific built form and architectural design guidelines that are appropriate with the character of the surrounding areas and the adjacent street type.</p> <p>New guidelines aiming to instill architectural excellence such as requirements for attractive and context-appropriate building materials and façade treatment that is adequately articulated and has limited extent of blank walls.</p>
<p><b>Need for guidelines that address environmental sustainability and climate change</b></p>	<p>It is recommended to introduce more guidelines that address environmental sustainability, mitigation of greenhouse</p>

Key Area of Focus	Design Solutions
<p>There are existing policies and guidelines in place that promote environmental sustainability such as tree management and landscaping requirement. However, more deliberate guidelines that directly focus on environmental sustainability and climate change should be introduced to address this objective more effectively.</p>	<p>gases impacts and climate change more effectively and innovatively.</p> <p>New guidelines should examine best practices across a wide range of factors such as building orientation and materials, water conservation, tree coverage retention, alleviation of heat island effects, and Low Impact Development among others.</p>
<p><b>Need for Built Form Guidelines that are tailored for Employment Uses within the Study Area</b></p> <p>The market sounding interviews conducted by Parcel Economics highlight the need for flexibility in built form requirements to accommodate the intended use of the employment lands and to reflect the context of the Study Area. Specific needs related to site coverage, ground floor ceiling heights and outdoor storage were raised as potential hindrances to development of employment lands.</p>	<p>Develop built form guidelines, design objectives and directions for the area that will not hinder the various employment use developments contemplated for the new employment growth area.</p>

## 6.2 Overall Design Approach

The Design Directions are premised on (4) design objectives established by the Township, namely maintaining rural character, enhanced buffering designs, higher level of building and site design, and incorporating innovative approaches that address environmental sustainability and climate change. The issues and design solutions provide additional insight that calls for new design objectives as well as modification and expansion of existing objectives.

## 6.3 Design Vision

Puslinch employment areas will be a centre of jobs, economic diversity and prosperity within a high-quality and well-designed built environment with distinct rural character and a full range of compatible employment uses.

## 6.4 Detailed Design Directions

The Design Directions provided in Table 6-2 are recommended for the new Rural Employment Area:

**Table 6-2: Recommended Design Directions**

No.	Design Directions	Discussion
1	<p><b>Respect and enhance the existing and planned established characters of the streetscapes, gateway areas and immediate areas.</b></p>	<p>The final Design Guidelines (DGs) prepared for the Study Area may include descriptions of the established and planned character for various areas and streets within the Study Area. This will assist the preparation and assessment of development plans in the future.</p> <p>Several design strategies related to building and site design, landscaping and outdoor storage would be developed as part of the final DGs to support this direction.</p> <p>This design direction also applies to the development of the public realm and streetscapes. Design strategies related to the public realm will also be included in the final DGs. In addition, typical cross-sections of Township roads and characters will be provided to communicate the vision and standards more effectively.</p>
3	<p><b>Promote high-quality architectural design that enhances the appearance and prestige of the built environment.</b></p>	<p>This design direction promotes excellent building and site design focused on exterior facades and how they relate to streetscapes and adjacent uses.</p> <p>It is important to retain and strengthen existing guidelines that promote excellent architectural design, such as those for buildings along the Highway 6 corridor.</p>
4	<p><b>Adopt approaches that promote environmental sustainability, mitigate impacts from greenhouse gas emission and prepare for climate change.</b></p>	<p>This direction aligns with provincial interests outlined in Section 2 of the <i>Planning Act</i> as well as the policies in Subsection 2.9 of the PPS (2024).</p> <p>The final DGs may incorporate a more comprehensive set of guidelines that address environmental sustainability, mitigation of greenhouse gases impacts and climate change more effectively and innovatively. These guidelines will address both green building design such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards as well as the overall site-specific measures to achieve</p>

No.	Design Directions	Discussion
		environmental sustainability such as Low Impact Development.
5	<b>Ensure compatible and appropriate interfaces between developments and their surrounding uses.</b>	The final DGs may contain specific guidelines for various land uses and built form types within the Preferred Land Use Option. This approach provides clarity for future developments on employment lands to minimize land use compatibility issues. Various buffering requirements and strategies including landscape treatment, fencing, separation distance, and architectural screening will be incorporated into the final DGs.
6	<b>Support the appropriate development of employment and employment serving uses</b>	<p>This direction recognizes the practical needs of various employment and employment serving uses that may not directly contribute to a higher-quality built environment in a typical context. The final DGs should be developed with these needs in mind and not hinder the development of employment lands unreasonably.</p> <p>This direction is a commitment to support the appropriate and desirable development of employment lands while balancing the intention to build an attractive and high-quality built environment.</p>



# **7. CONCLUSION**



## 7. Conclusion

This Phase 3 report for *Puslinch By Design* recommends a comprehensive framework for planning and managing future employment growth within the Township of Puslinch. The study emphasizes the importance of tailoring strategies to the unique characteristics and priorities of the Township, balancing economic development with the preservation of Puslinch's rural identity, agricultural integrity, and natural heritage.

Key Land Use Principles guide this Phase, including ensuring land use compatibility between potentially conflicting land uses, promoting high-quality community design, and advancing environmental stewardship. These principles aim to guide the future selection and management of employment lands, ensuring that new development aligns with both local and provincial policies, such as those outlined in the *Planning Act* and the new Provincial Planning Statement (2024).

This Study recognizes the strategic importance of Puslinch's location near major transportation routes like Highways 6 and 401, which provides a competitive advantage for attracting logistics, warehousing, and other dry industrial uses. However, there are also requirements for employment uses such as the need for land use compatibility with surrounding sensitive areas, and the importance of protecting agricultural and environmental assets. In addition, given recent policy changes in the PPS 2024, the County and Township will consider how best to approach specific uses for this rural employment area. The policy directions recommended in Sections 5 and 6 assist with planning for successful employment growth.

Phase 3 lays the groundwork for Phase 4, which will identify specific land parcel options for employment growth. By prioritizing sustainable development, investing in infrastructure, and the protection of agriculture the Township of Puslinch is well-positioned to foster long-term economic vitality while preserving its unique character and quality of life.