



# **Town of Grand Valley Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review and Update**

## **Background Report**

## Table of Contents

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1.0	Introduction .....	3
1.1	Background .....	3
1.2	The Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review and Update Project .....	4
1.3	Purpose of the Report .....	6
2.0	Planning Context .....	7
2.1	<i>Planning Act</i> .....	7
2.2	Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS 2024) .....	7
2.3	Dufferin County Official Plan .....	9
2.4	Lake Erie Source Water Protection Region .....	9
3.0	Changing Climate .....	10
3.1	Background .....	10
3.2	The Official Plan .....	11
3.3	The Zoning By-law .....	12
4.0	Growth and Settlement .....	13
4.1	Background .....	13
4.2	Demographics .....	16
4.3	The Official Plan .....	16
4.4	Zoning By-law .....	17
5.0	Housing .....	18
5.1	Background .....	18
5.2	The Official Plan .....	20
5.3	Zoning By-law .....	21
6.0	Natural Environment .....	22
6.1	Background .....	22
6.2	The Official Plan .....	24
6.3	Zoning By-law .....	26
7.0	Rural and Agricultural Areas .....	27
7.1	Background .....	27
7.2	The Official Plan .....	28
7.3	Zoning By-law .....	29
8.0	Economic Development .....	30
8.1	Background .....	30
8.2	The Official Plan .....	31
8.3	Zoning By-law .....	32
9.0	Recreational, Parks, and Open Space .....	33
9.1	Background .....	33
9.2	The Official Plan .....	34
9.3	Zoning By-law .....	35
10.0	Mobility .....	36
10.1	Background .....	36
10.2	The Official Plan .....	41
10.3	Zoning By-law .....	41
11.0	Servicing .....	43
11.1	Background .....	43
11.2	The Official Plan .....	43
11.3	Zoning By-law .....	44
12.0	Minerals and Mineral Aggregate .....	45
12.1	Background .....	45
12.2	The Official Plan .....	47
12.3	Zoning By-law .....	48

13.0	Protecting Public Health and Safety .....	49
13.1	Background .....	49
13.2	The Official Plan .....	52
13.3	Zoning By-law .....	52
14.0	Cultural Heritage .....	54
14.1	Background .....	54
14.2	The Official Plan .....	54
14.3	Zoning By-law .....	55
15.0	Other Considerations.....	56
15.1	Cannabis.....	56
15.1.1	Official Plan .....	56
15.1.2	Zoning By-law.....	56
15.2	Relationships with Indigenous Communities.....	57
15.2.1	Official Plan .....	57
15.2.2	Zoning By-law.....	57
15.3	Implementation and Structure .....	57
15.3.1	Official Plan .....	57
15.3.2	Zoning By-law.....	58
16.0	Public Consultation.....	58
16.1	Survey #1 .....	58
16.2	Focus Groups.....	60
16.3	Open House.....	61
16.4	Survey #2.....	61
17.0	Conclusion .....	61

## List of Figures & Tables

---

Figure 1. Project Work Plan: Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review and Update.....	5
Figure 2: Grand Valley Settlement Area (Existing and Adopted, Pending Approval) .....	15
Figure 3. Grand Valley Natural Heritage Features.....	23
Figure 4: Grand Valley Official Plan Schedule A1 Land Use .....	25
Figure 5: Proposed DCOP Schedule B1 Community Structure and Land Use .....	31
Figure 6. Grand Valley TMP 2017 Proposed Road Network.....	38
Figure 7. Dufferin County TMP 2023 Recommended Road Network.....	39
Figure 8. County TMP Proposed Active Transportation Network.....	40
Figure 9: Excerpt of DCOP Schedule D Mineral Aggregate Resources.....	46
Figure 10. Inactive Aggregate Sites in Grand Valley .....	47
Figure 11: Grand Valley Settlement Area Floodplain Mapping .....	50
Figure 12: Excerpt of DCOP Potential Forest Hazard Classification for Wildland Fire .....	51

# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

The Town of Grand Valley (hereafter, the Town) is a local municipality within Dufferin County situated along the Grand River, between the Townships of Wellington North and Amaranth. It comprises the former Village of Grand Valley and Township of East Luther. The Town includes many scenic natural features including the Grand River Valley and part of the Luther Marsh. Grand Valley is home to approximately 3,851 people<sup>1</sup> and includes a significant agricultural land base, the Settlement Area of Grand Valley and the two hamlets of Monticello and Colbeck.

Like many communities, due to its proximity to larger urban markets, it is experiencing significant pressure to grow. The Town has full municipal water and sewer services within its Settlement Area and is one of only two municipalities in Dufferin County with the ability to expand its urban boundary to accommodate future growth. Given these factors, Grand Valley is navigating considerable changes in relation to growth management, housing supply and demand needs, adapting to climate change, the need to protect its agricultural base and preserve its natural environment and expanding its local commercial and employment opportunities.

Grand Valley's Official Plan (OP) is a key tool to assist the Town in navigating these changes. An OP is a comprehensive policy document that establishes a twenty-five (25) year vision for the community and contains policies to guide physical changes undertaken by the public and private sector.

The purpose of an OP is articulated in Section 16 of the *Planning Act*. This section states that an OP shall contain goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and its effects on the social, economic, built, and natural environment of the municipality; such policies and measures that are practical to ensure the adequate provision of affordable housing; and a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public when land use planning applications are advanced in the community.

Grand Valley's current OP was adopted by Council in 2006 and approved by Dufferin County in 2009. The OP is based on the following guiding principles:

- The agricultural community and resources will be protected in order to preserve the character, culture, and agricultural land base.
- Development will be focused primarily on the Settlement Area; and,
- The environmental features of the Town, including the Luther Marsh and Grand River will be maintained in their natural state for the enjoyment of future generations.

Grand Valley's Zoning By-law implements the OP through comprehensive regulations for development, as provided for in Section 34 of the *Planning Act*. Grand Valley's current Zoning By-law was adopted by Council on February 10, 2009. It was updated in 2021 to improve its structure, format, and usability. While it has been updated more recently than the OP, it requires updates to reflect the changing community context and reflect changes introduced through this OP Update. Since 2013, there have been 102 amendments to the Zoning-By-law. While the number of amendments may appear to be extensive, it should be noted that the Town does not have a Committee of Adjustment and therefore even minor requests for relief from the Zoning By-

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada (2023). 2021 Census for Grand Valley Census Subdivision. Retrieved January 8, 2024 from [Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Grand Valley, Town \(T\) \[Census subdivision\], Ontario \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-627-x/2023001/article/00001-eng.htm)



law must be addressed through a Zoning By-law amendment. Grand Valley's current OP and Zoning By-law can be found [here](#).

## 1.2 The Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review and Update Project

Given the long-term nature of an OP, the physical changes that can occur in the external environment and the evolving legislative, policy, and regulatory environment, it is a standard municipal practice to periodically review an OP and Zoning By-law. This is enshrined in Section 26 of the *Planning Act* which requires municipalities to revisit their OP no less frequently than 10 years after it comes into effect as a new OP and every 5 years thereafter, unless replaced by a new OP. Similarly, Section 26 (9) of the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to review and update their Zoning By-laws to conform with required statutory updates to the OP. The purpose of such a review is to ensure that the OP has regard to matters of provincial interest listed under Section 2 of the *Planning Act*; is consistent with policy statements issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*; and that it conforms or does not conflict with provincial plans. The review also represents an important opportunity to ensure the OP continues to represent Council's vision and goals for the community. Achieving a balance between local and provincial perspectives is of great importance.

There have also been several legislative and policy changes at the provincial and County levels that have occurred since Grand Valley's 2009 OP was approved. This includes:

- Several updates to the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.
- Issuance of the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS 2024) which replaces the Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- Various changes to other related provincial legislation, regulations, and practices, such as:
  - *Development Charges Act*, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 27.
  - *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18.
  - The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas.

Dufferin County recently completed a three-stage municipal comprehensive review (MCR) of its OP (DCOP). This review will also address several legislative and policy changes that have occurred since the DCOP's approval in 2015. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved County Official Plan Amendment (COPA) #2 and #3 with modifications on October 9, 2024. COPA #4 was adopted by County Council on March 14, 2024 and at the time of the writing of this report, the amendment await approval by the MMAH. Per Section 27 of the *Planning Act*, once the Province has approved the amendments to the DCOP, Grand Valley has one (1) year to amend its OP to conform to the changes to the DCOP.

Based on this context, Town Council has decided that it would be in the community's best interest to update the existing OP and Zoning By-law. Grand Valley retained J.L. Richards & Associates Limited to assist with the OP and Zoning By-law Review (project). The project includes five phases, which are illustrated below.

**Figure 1. Project Work Plan: Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review and Update**

### Phase 1 - Background Review and Research

- 1.1 *External Kick-Off Meeting*
- 1.2 *Internal Kick-Off Meeting*
- 1.3 *Preliminary Workplan and Public Consultation Plan*
- 1.4 *Finalize Workplan and Public Consultation Plan*
- 1.5 *Early Consultation with Dufferin County and Agencies*
- 1.6 *Early Consultation with Indigenous Communities*
- 1.7 *Background Review of Supporting Documents*
- 1.8 *Technical Review of the Current Planning Documents*

### Phase 2 - Workplan Finalization and Presentation to Council

- 2.1 *Confirm Work Plan and Public Consultation Plan*
- 2.2 *Draft Background and Directions Report and Base Mapping*
- 2.3 *Finalize Background and Directions Report*
- 2.4 *Present Background and Directions report to Council*

### Phase 3 - Official Plan and Zoning By-law Consultation and Preparation

- 3.1 *Online Survey # 1*
- 3.2 *Focus Group Interviews*
- 3.3 *Maintain Record of Public Consultation*
- 3.4 *Prepare Draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law*

### Phase 4 - Draft Document Review

- 4.1 *Staff Consultation on Draft Documents*
- 4.2 *Statutory Public Open House*
- 4.3 *Online Survey #2 with Draft Documents*
- 4.4 *Early Consultation with Dufferin County*
- 4.5 *Prepare Final Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments*
- 4.6 *Presentation to Council at Statutory Public Meeting*
- 4.7 *Submit adopted Official Plan to Dufferin County for Approval*

### Phase 5 - Finalization

- 5.1 *Prepare Final Consolidated Version of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment*
- 5.2 *Support Staff in Preparing Update to Council*
- 5.3 *Project Debrief and Closure Meeting*

This report summarizes the findings of the background and technical review. As part of our work to date, we have:

- Undertaken a technical review of the current OP and Zoning By-law.
- Undertaken a review of provincial plans and supporting documents including:
  - The Planning Act.
  - PPS 2024
  - DCOP and adopted DCOP Amendments 3, 4 and 5, and studies of the MCR.
  - Grand Valley Strategic Plan.
  - Grand River Source Protection Plan.

- Grand River Conservation Authority Flood Plain Policy.
- Grand Valley Transportation Master Plan.
- Dufferin County Transportation Master Plan.
- Dufferin County Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- Conducted a meeting with staff from the County of Dufferin and Grand River Conservation Authority.
- Sought input from the surrounding First Nations communities.
- Corresponded with Public Health Wellington Dufferin Guelph.
- Reviewed and analyzed 2021 Census of Canada data release for the community; and,
- Prepared a report and presentation for a Special Meeting of Council held in February 2023.
- Issued two surveys, one to evaluate the existing Official Plan and Zoning By-law and one to evaluate the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law.
- Conducted two focus groups with agricultural community and business community on July 30, 2024.
- Held a Public Open House on October 29, 2024.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Report**

This Background Report is the first of three reports that will be prepared as part of the OP and Zoning By-law Review project. This report summarizes key information from several different sources, and describes the existing provincial policy framework as well as the current OP policies.

The balance of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 summarizes the planning policy context for the OP Project.
- Section 3 speaks to the changing climate.
- Section 4 speaks to growth and settlement related considerations.
- Section 5 speaks to housing.
- Section 6 speaks to the natural environment, including source water protection.
- Section 7 speaks to rural and agricultural areas.
- Section 8 speaks to economic development.
- Section 9 speaks to recreational and open spaces.
- Section 10 speaks to mobility.
- Section 11 speaks to servicing.
- Section 12 speaks to minerals and mineral aggregate resources.
- Section 13 speaks to protecting public health and safety; and,
- Section 14 speaks to Cultural Heritage.
- Section 15 speaks to public consultation conducted to date.

This report will remain in draft form throughout the OP and Zoning By-law review project. As the Province has not yet issued a decision on the recent DCOP amendments, there is the potential that some directions of the report may change as a result. It is anticipated that new information will be added to the report as the project proceeds. Once finalized, the report will provide the context and rationale for the proposed updated OP and Zoning By-law.

## 2.0 Planning Context

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The planning policy and regulatory framework for the Grand Valley OP and Zoning By-law Review and Update Project is formed by the *Planning Act*, the PPS, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, DCOP and the Lake Erie and Grand River Source Protection Plans. This section summarizes this framework.

### 2.1 *Planning Act*

The *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, provides the statutory authority for land use planning in Ontario and provides the basis for municipalities to prepare their OPs.

Decision makers shall “have regard to” matters of provincial interest as listed in Section 2 of the *Act* and land use planning decision making must be consistent with the PPS and must conform to / not conflict with provincial plans.

Several updates to the *Act* have occurred since the OP came into effect in 2013:

- *Smart Growth for our Communities Act, 2015 (Bill 73).*
- *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016 (Bill 7).*
- *Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act, 2017 (Bill 39).*
- *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139).*
- *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108).*
- *Covid-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 (Bill 197).*
- *Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021 (Bill 276).*
- *More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 (Bill 109).*
- *Build More Homes Faster Act (Bill 23); and,*
- *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act (Bill 97).*

The key changes to the planning framework through these updates include:

- the introduction of community benefit charges.
- the introduction of inclusionary zoning, in certain circumstances.
- modified parkland dedication requirements.
- permitting two additional residential units as-of-right in urban areas.
- modified timelines for appeals of non-decisions for certain development applications; and,
- the types of matters and reasons for appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal (formerly the Ontario Municipal Board).

### 2.2 Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS 2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024) is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and is intended to guide municipalities in making planning decisions. The Planning Act requires that municipal decisions in respect to the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter “shall be consistent with” the PPS. The PPS replaces both the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (PPS 2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The PPS 2024 came into effect on October 20, 2024.

The PPS 2024 is a consolidated statement of the Province’s policies on land use planning that guides decision making in municipalities. Similar to the PPS 2020, it promotes appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. However, the PPS 2024 has a stronger focus on



housing and providing municipalities with the tools and flexibility needed to build more housing and support the creation of complete communities.

The PPS 2024 makes the following changes to provincial planning policy as it relates to the Town of Grand Valley:

- Emphasizes building a greater range and mix of housing options for all Ontarians.
- Replaces concept of “healthy, safe and livable” with “complete communities” and includes a new definition for complete communities.
- Allows municipalities to continue to use forecast growth issued previously by the province, however moving forward municipalities will base population and employment growth forecasts on the Ontario Population Projections prepared by the Ministry of Finance.
- Greater focus on redevelopment opportunities for underutilized sites.
- Removes minimum density targets for the Designated Greenfield Area within Grand Valley (note: the County Official Plan includes a density target and therefore the Grand Valley Official Plan must include it as well).
- Permits settlement boundary expansions to occur outside of a municipal comprehensive review provided specific criteria is satisfied.
- Removes reference to delineated built-up area/built boundary and designated greenfield areas.
- Allows local municipalities to establish minimum intensification targets and density targets.
- Amends employment area definition per the Planning Act to exclude office, institutional and retail uses from the definition unless they are associated with the employment use.
- Requires municipalities to promote economic development and competitiveness by planning for a diverse mix of uses and addressing land use compatibility concerns.
- Permits the removal of lands from an employment area outside of a municipal comprehensive review, subject to criteria.
- Permits the consideration of opportunities to allocate or reallocate, underused municipal water or sewage capacity to meet current and future needs for housing.
- Permits 2 additional residential units as-of-right where an existing dwelling is located on a lot within the rural and prime agricultural areas subject to criteria.
- Continues to discourage non-agricultural uses within the Prime Agricultural Area but where avoidance is not possible, requires the submission of an agricultural impact assessment.
- Continues to permit extraction as an interim use within the Prime Agricultural Area however, it is only permitted where impacts are addressed through an agricultural impact assessment and requires the site to be rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition.

Please note that the above summary does not include all changes implemented through the PPS 2024 but rather is a summary of major changes which affect growth and development with the Town of Grand Valley.

### **2.3 Dufferin County Official Plan**

The DCOP was approved March 27, 2015, and provides the over-arching policy directions on matters of County and Provincial interests. As previously mentioned, Dufferin County recently completed its three-stage MCR consisting of three separate OPAs. The first two amendments (DCOPA #2 and #3) were approved with modification by the MMAH on October 9, 2024. The last amendment (DCOPA #4) was adopted by County Council on March 14, 2024 and is awaiting approval from MMAH. These DCOPA#2 increased the settlement area boundary of Grand Valley and increased the forecasted 2051 allocated population to 16,500, which is more than quadruple the current population of Grand Valley.

Updated policies to the Grand Valley OP are required to ensure orderly development and management of resources in the community. The Grand Valley OP must conform to the DCOP and as such, Grand Valley Council will have one (1) year to amend its OP to conform to the changes to the DCOP, once the latter is approved by the Province.

### **2.4 Lake Erie Source Water Protection Region**

Grand Valley is within the boundaries of the Lake Erie Source Protection Region, and within the Grand River Source Protection Area. In 2006, the Lake Erie Source Protection Region was created under the *Clean Water Act*, 2006, which includes the Grand River Source Protection Area and protects existing and future drinking water sources from significant drinking water threats within its vulnerable areas. All municipal decisions, including those made under the *Clean Water Act*, are required to conform to the significant drinking water threat policies found in the Grand River Source Protection Plan.

Grand Valley is also under the jurisdiction of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA). Under the jurisdiction of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, 1990 and *O-Reg 177/06*, the GRCA manages the area's watersheds and conservation areas. The GRCA has a delegated responsibility from the Province of Ontario to review and comment on municipal policy documents and development applications to make sure that they are consistent with the natural hazard policies of the PPS. The GRCA was consulted for the purposes of this background review and to obtain up to date data and mapping of natural heritage and hazards, as discussed in later sections of the report.

## 3.0 Changing Climate

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### 3.1 Background

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defines Climate Change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”<sup>2</sup>.

In 2019, the Government of Canada released *Canada’s Changing Climate Report*, part of a national assessment of how and why Canada’s climate is changing, the impacts of those changes and how the country is adapting to the change. This report concludes, in part, that:

- Both past and future warming in Canada is, on average, about double the magnitude of global warming.
- The effects of widespread warming are evident in many parts of Canada and are projected to intensify in the future. This includes more extreme heat, less extreme cold, longer growing seasons, reduced snow and ice cover, and early spring peak streamflow.
- Precipitation is projected to increase for most of Canada, on average, although summer rainfall may decrease in some areas. Precipitation has increased in many parts of Canada, and there has been a shift toward less snowfall and more rainfall. Annual and winter precipitation is projected to increase everywhere in Canada over the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. More intense rainfalls will increase flood risk.
- The seasonal availability of freshwater is changing. Warmer winters and earlier snowmelt will combine to produce higher winter streamflows. Warmer summers will increase evaporation of surface water and contribute to reduced summer water availability in the future despite more precipitation in some places.
- A warmer climate will intensify some weather extremes in the future. Extreme hot temperatures will become more frequent. This will increase the severity of heatwaves and contribute to the increased drought and wildfire risk.
- The rate and magnitude of climate change under high versus low emission scenarios project two very different futures for Canada. Much of the impacts of climate change will depend on the ability of individuals, corporations, municipalities, and all levels of government, to reduce carbon emissions.

According to the Government of Canada’s [Canadian Centre for Climate Services](#), Grand Valley’s annual mean temperature and total precipitation are projected to increase over the next 40 years:

- From 1951-1980 the average annual temperature in Grand Valley was 5.4°C.
- From 1981-2010 this increased to 6.2°C<sup>3</sup>.
- Under a high emission scenario, it is anticipated that the annual average temperature will increase to 8.3°C from 2021-2050, 10.4°C from 2051-2080, and 12.2°C for the remainder of the century.
- The average annual precipitation from 1971-2000 in Grand Valley was 922 mm. Under the high emissions scenario, this is projected to be 7% higher from 2021-2050, 10% higher from 2051-2080 period, and 15% higher for the remainder of the century.

The PPS requires that planning authorities prepare for the impacts of climate change and support efforts to conserve energy, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The PPS

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 1992.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/ccsites/zimbabwe/conven/text/art01.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Environment and Climate Change Canada (2024). Climate Data: Grand Valley. Retrieved on February 14, 2024 from <https://climatedata.ca/explore/location/>

further directs municipalities to develop policies which address climate change adaptation, protect natural resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2018, Dufferin County and its member municipalities, including Grand Valley, became part of the [Partners for Climate Protection](#) program, a national network of over 400 municipalities with the shared goal to take action against climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2021, Dufferin County declared a Climate Emergency, reinforcing this commitment County-wide.

Dufferin County adopted its Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2021, a strategy for the County and its local municipalities to take action on climate change, which establishes a climate goal of net-zero by 2050. The CAP has six focus areas: on the move; in our buildings; for our land; planning our community; in our bins; and empowering our community. The CAP outlines 34 actions the County can take to build net-zero and resilient communities and identifies five (5) priority actions:

- Develop a municipally led financing program for home energy retrofits to encourage and make the use of deep energy retrofitting and energy efficiency measures more accessible for residents.
- Accelerate the transition to low-GHG transportation by developing an electric vehicle charging network across Dufferin County and neighbouring municipalities.
- Empower the community to take climate action by institutionalizing climate action in municipal planning and supporting community awareness, education, and knowledge sharing initiatives.
- Support climate-resiliency initiatives in agricultural and natural systems to enhance food security, support local farmers, and protect natural systems.
- Create green development standards to ensure new development is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

In April 2023, Dufferin County adopted the Together for Change: Dufferin's Climate Adaption Strategy (CAS) to advance strategies and actions to advance climate resilience for the County and its local municipalities. These actions build from the CAP and encourage the creation of a Green Development Standard Framework; improved climate resilience for property owners through upgrade and retrofits; improved emergency preparedness plans; regenerative agricultural practices; and incorporating a climate lens into capital planning and budgetary processes.

The Town's 2019-2024 Conservation and Demand Management Plan builds upon Dufferin County's CAS and demonstrates steps the Town has specifically taken to reduce its energy consumption. Further it demonstrates steps taken to transition to low-GHG transportation by installing three electric vehicle charging stations in one of the municipal parking lots, making it one of the first locations in the surrounding region to become part of this program. The Town should continue this work by introducing policies and regulations to promote the implementation of a greater number electric vehicle charging stations.

The Town should continue its work to mitigate and adapt to climate change and implement the directions from the County's CAS and CAP documents through effective land use planning which encourages a mix of land uses, compact community design, alternative forms of transportation, efficient use of services and infrastructure, mitigation of the heat island effect and alternative stormwater management techniques.

### **3.2 The Official Plan**

Climate change is an increasing threat to municipalities across the globe. The existing OP contains some policies regarding energy efficiency, renewable energy, and alternative form of

energy. However, there are no policies regarding climate change mitigation or adaption. In order to respond to, adapt, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, a holistic and proactive policy approach within the OP is required. Policies should also be incorporated that are consistent with the PPS, and reflective of the environmental priorities of the Dufferin County CAP and CAS. This includes speaking to climate change more clearly in the document, including climate change in the context and background of the document and clarifying the connection between climate change and other land use planning policies such as active transportation and stormwater management.

It is recommended that the updated OP include policies which:

- Continue to promote a compact built form within the Settlement Areas.
- Direct higher density and mixed-use built forms to the Downtown, outside of the floodplain, along Main Street and Amaranth Street.
- Encourage energy conservation and the use of renewable energy systems.
- Encourage alternative means of transportation and electric vehicles.
- Encourage tree planting of native or non-native non-invasive plant species which are resilient to climate change, and the use of permeable surfaces for parking lots and sidewalks.
- Consider the potential impacts of a changing climate on water resources.
- Require new infrastructure and public service facilities to be designed in a manner that considers the impacts of a changing climate.
- Promote designs which maximize energy efficiency and conservation and consider the mitigating impacts of vegetation and green infrastructure.
- Promoting green infrastructure to complement traditional infrastructure.
- Maximize vegetation within settlement, rural, and recreational areas.
- Require stormwater management to consider the impacts of a changing climate through the effective management of stormwater including the use of green infrastructure; and,
- Continue to direct development away from natural and human-made hazards in order to protect public health and safety from the risks posed by a changing climate as discussed further in Section 13.

### **3.3 The Zoning By-law**

It is recommended that the Zoning By-law be updated to include:

- general provisions and definitions for buildings and structures which relate to the conservation of energy and use of renewable energy systems.
- higher density and mixed-uses in appropriate Zones.
- setbacks from areas subject to natural hazards such as flooding or wildland fire risk.
- regulations for electric vehicle parking.
- regulations for increased landscaping requirements; and
- other regulations to implement updates to policies of the OP.

## 4.0 Growth and Settlement

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### 4.1 Background

Understanding the future development needs of the community is vital to ensuring there is adequate land supply, servicing, and infrastructure available, and a framework in place to ensure development meets the needs of the community. As Grand Valley is part of a two-tier municipal government, its upper tier (Dufferin County) completed an MCR to shape the future growth of Dufferin County for the next 30 years.

Dufferin County's three stage MCR to the DCOP addressed matters such as:

- Land Needs Assessment (LNA; to determine whether urban boundary expansions are required).
- Population and employment growth forecasts and allocations.
- Built-up area intensification and greenfield area density targets.
- Employment areas.
- Settlement area boundary expansions.
- Natural heritage systems; and
- Agricultural areas

Please note that prior to the issuance of the PPS 2024, the Provincial Growth Plan and PPS required municipalities to complete a municipal comprehensive review which included an LNA to determine if a settlement area boundary expansion was necessary. Per the PPS 2024 and DCOP, growth shall be directed to settlement areas with full municipal services and to a lesser extent to the rural settlement areas which are able to accommodate growth on partial or private individual servicing. The purpose of the County's LNA was to determine how much growth could be accommodated through intensification in the delineated built-up area and in the existing Designated Greenfield Area. Please note that the LNA was completed under the Provincial Growth Plan and therefore this section refers to terminology that is no longer part of the PPS 2024 but is included with the DCOP.

Grand Valley's delineated built-up area is approximately 104 hectares in size. Utilizing an intensification target of 40% for Grand Valley, in line with the Provincial Growth Plan requirement of 40% for the County, the LNA determined that there would be a dwelling shortage of 795 dwelling units within the delineated built-up area based on the existing built forms. Therefore, to meet the County-wide intensification target, local municipalities (including Grand Valley) will be required to allow for greater intensification within the existing built-up area.

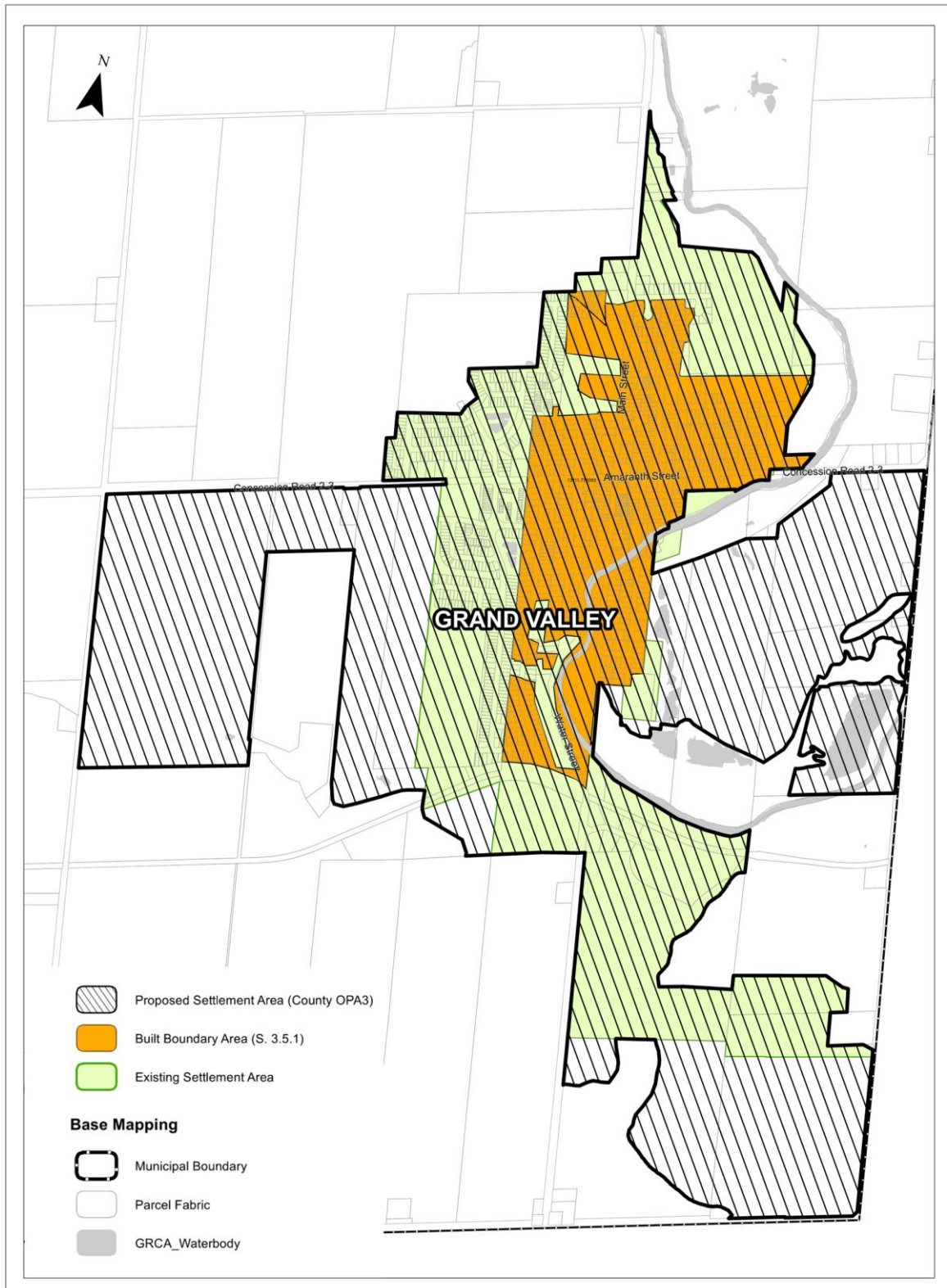
DCOPA #2 was the first of multiple stages of the Dufferin County MCR and updated the DCOP to implement the findings of the Land Needs Assessment. The forecasted 2051 population for Grand Valley through DCOPA#2 is 16,500 more than four times greater than the Town's 2021 population. From a job's perspective, approximately 4,600 jobs are forecasted to be located in Grand Valley by 2051, more than 5 times greater than the employment estimate of 900 jobs in 2021. Through DCOPA #2, Grand Valley's intensification target within the Built-up Area was increased from 12 percent to 40 percent; however as stated above, Grand Valley will not be able to achieve this target through business-as-usual development and will require changes to the intensifications policies with its Official Plan. Further, the minimum density target for Grand Valley's Designated Greenfield Area was decreased through DCOPA#2 from 44 to 32 residents and jobs per hectare. DCOPA#2 further requires that in order to achieve an appropriate mix of land uses, contributing to complete communities and employment needs, Grand Valley is required to identify 77.1 hectares for commercial, institutional, or mixed-use lands uses (referred to as "Community Employment").



DCOPA #3 implements provincial policy updates related to prime agricultural lands and the natural heritage system and schedule updates resulting from DCOPA#2, including updated schedules showing the expanded settlement boundaries (Figure 2; boundary expansion is listed within this figure as “proposed”).

Updates to Grand Valley’s Official Plan are required to address the growth and settlement changes through DCOPA#2 and DCOPA#3 relating to population and employment forecasts, settlement area boundaries, intensification and density targets, and land use mix.

**Figure 2: Grand Valley Settlement Area (Existing and Adopted, Pending Approval)**



## 4.2 Demographics

Grand Valley's 2021 population was 3,851, representing a significant population growth of 30.3 percent between 2016 and 2021.<sup>4</sup> This trend is expected to continue.

The MCR work confirmed that Grand Valley is expected to experience significant growth to the year 2051 with a forecasted 2051 population of 16,500 people and 4,600 jobs.

As of 2021, the median age of the Grand Valley residents was 36.8 which has decreased from a median age of 40.9 in 2016.<sup>5</sup> This is representative of a trend in the GGH Area to “drive until you qualify”, with younger families and younger adults moving away from the larger metropolitan centres of Toronto and Peel in search for more affordable housing prices. As explained in Smart Institute's Report titled “Baby Needs a New Home”, Dufferin County is one of the fastest growing Regions in terms of interprovincial migration due to its proximity to Toronto and Peel.<sup>6</sup>

Per the 2021 census, the average household size in Grand Valley was 2.8, which is a slight increase from the average household size of 2.7 in 2016. Single detached dwellings are the predominant dwelling type in Grand Valley at 88.2% followed by apartments in a building that has fewer than five storeys (which does not include a townhouse but includes a dwelling unit attached to other dwelling units or a non-residential space) at 7.8% and townhouse dwellings at 2.5%. There are other dwelling types that exist in Grand Valley (i.e. semi-detached, duplex) but at much smaller percentages.

## 4.3 The Official Plan

The current OP contains policies that aim to manage growth and development. These policies no longer conform to the updated policy direction from both the 2020 PPS, Growth Plan, and the updates to the DCOP, pending their approval. Per the County of Dufferin's MCR, Grand Valley is projected to quadruple in population and expand its economic sector by 3,700 by 2051. Given this significant amount of growth, updated OP policies are required to ensure orderly development and the creation of complete communities.

Per the Growth Plan and DCOP, Grand Valley's OP is required to be updated to:

- Reflect the new population and jobs projection.
- Increase the intensification target within the Built-up Area from 12 percent to 40 percent.
- Add 234 hectares of land to its urban boundary on Schedule A-1 to accommodate part of this projected growth.
- Include a site-specific policy area for certain new settlement areas to require that the master servicing plan be complete prior to development occurring on these lands and require applicants to demonstrate how the lands will be planned comprehensively with a mix of uses.
- Establish a new minimum density target within Grand Valley's Designated Greenfield Area.
- Identify approximately 77.1 gross hectares of land for commercial, institutional, and mixed use lands uses.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada (2023). 2021 Census for Grand Valley Census Subdivision. Retrieved January 8, 2024 from [Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Grand Valley, Town \(T\) \[Census subdivision\], Ontario \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada (2023). 2021 Census for Grand Valley Census Subdivision. Retrieved January 8, 2024 from [Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Grand Valley, Town \(T\) \[Census subdivision\], Ontario \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> Smart Institute (October 2021). Baby Needs a New Home: Projecting Ontario's Growing Number of Families and Their Housing Needs. Retrieved on February 14, 2024 from [Baby-Needs-a-New-Home-Oct-1.pdf \(smartprosperity.ca\)](#)

- Establish land use patterns based on densities and a mix of lands uses.
- Update intensification policies to encourage higher density built forms through infill in specific locations such as Main Street and Amaranth Street and small scale intensification through the establishment of additional residential units.
- Ensure a 15-year supply of land is maintained to accommodate residential growth through intensification and re-development.
- Include policies regarding settlement area boundary expansions and settlement area adjustments to reflect PPS 2024 changes
- Include additional policies regarding employment area conversions.
- Include new definitions for complete communities, compact built form, delineated built boundary, designated greenfield area, municipal sewage and water services and transit supportive development.

It is important to note that the County's LNA determined that Grand Valley will not be able to accommodate the minimum intensification target of 40% through business-as-usual development and will be required to update its OP to allow for greater intensification within the existing built-up area through higher density built forms (such as townhouses and apartments) and small scale intensification (such as additional residential units). While there is a minimum density target of 32 residents and jobs per hectare within the Designated Greenfield Area, this target is a minimum and there may be instances where higher densities are required to achieve a better mix and range of housing types and options and align with servicing connections/capacity. Therefore, it is our recommendation that the minimum density target be increased to 44 residents and jobs per hectare, in line with the target established in the existing Grand Valley OP.

While the population in Grand Valley is projected to significantly increase, it is important to also note that this growth is only possible if adequate servicing is available. Servicing and phasing policies are discussed further in Section 11 of this report.

While the section speaks primarily to the urban settlement area, where the majority of growth is to be directed per Provincial and County policies, it is recognized that rural settlement areas may continue to experience growth through infilling and development of vacant lots and the policies of the Grand Valley OP will be updated to implement updated policies of the PPS 2024 and DCOP.

#### **4.4 Zoning By-law**

It is our recommendation that the Zoning By-law be updated to:

- Include new settlement area lands on Schedule A1-Comprehensive Zoning By-law Mapping and Schedule A2 -Urban Zoning Mapping.
- Zone new settlement area lands 'Development' (D) to allow the future uses and applicable provisions to be determined through more detailed development processes.
- Update or add new Multiple Residential (RM) Zones which include more compact urban standards and a wider range of permitted uses, such as the inclusion of townhouses and additional residential units. This will aid in the achievement of the increased minimum density targets of the OP.
- Similarly, update standards relating to the Village Residential (RV) Zone to permit a more compact urban form, while respecting the character of the existing community.
- Review standards relating to parking for residential uses within the Downtown Commercial (CD) Zone and for apartment dwellings; and,
- Include of a new mixed-use commercial and residential Zone, to facilitate residential and commercial opportunities and compact urban form, such as along specific areas of Amaranth and Main Street, outside of the CD Zone.

## 5.0 Housing

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### 5.1 Background

Housing is a basic human right. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, international law requires that Canada work towards having access to adequate and affordable housing. There is ample evidence that demonstrates that attainable and affordable housing is central to achieving positive economic and social outcomes. It is no secret that Canada's housing market has become more competitive in recent years, placing upward pressure on housing costs, both ownership and rental.

The PPS further requires that municipalities provide a range of housing options and densities to ensure sufficient market rate and affordable housing. This ensures that households of different sizes, ages and incomes may access to housing within their means. Municipalities are required to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years, with further servicing capacity to accommodate a potential 3-year supply of residential units, as allocated by an upper tier municipality. The Growth Plan directs municipalities to adopt intensification and density targets in support of diverse housing options, to establish housing affordability targets, and to align planning policies with legislative requirements for plans to address homelessness.

As noted earlier, the average household size in 2021 was 2.8, slightly higher than the provincial average of 2.6. This is an increase in household size since 2016, when the average household had 2.7 people. This indicates that the Grand Valley population is growing among larger households, such as those of families with children, multigenerational households, or shared households made up of multiple single individuals. As the population continues to grow, there is a further need for more dwelling types to accommodate these diverse households.

In Grand Valley, increasing housing prices, a lack of housing diversity and a growing population are the main causes for concern regarding access to adequate and affordable housing. The number of occupied dwellings in Grand Valley increased from 1,106 in 2016 to 1,397 in 2021. Of that total number of occupied dwellings, 88% are single detached dwellings, 8% are apartment units in buildings less than five storeys in height, 3% are townhouses and the remainder are classified as semi-detached, duplex, or other single attached housing types. This data represents a fairly homogenous housing stock. Furthermore, of the total housing stock, 85.7% of dwellings are owner-occupied and 14.3% are rental properties. In terms of the local real estate market, Statistics Canada data found that the average value of a home has increased significantly from \$400,488 in 2016 to \$752,000 in 2021. More recent data for Grand Valley is not available, however data from the Canadian Real Estate Association for Orangeville is comparable, indicating an average home price of \$764,821 in January of 2024<sup>7</sup>.

Census data reports that the average rent in Grand Valley has also increased from \$969 in 2016 to \$1,440 in 2021. Recent data on rental pricing for Grand Valley is limited. However, more recent data from similar Dufferin municipalities indicates this has likely increased dramatically since the 2021 census. For example, of 13 rental listings available in March of 2024 in neighbouring Amaranth, the average listing price for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1,809 per month<sup>8</sup>.

Over the previous census period, it appears that incomes have increased somewhat in line with shelter costs. As of 2021, the median total household income in Grand Valley was \$101,000, a substantial increase since the 2016 census, when the median household income was \$80,691. Median incomes for Grand Valley in 2021 are slightly higher than the provincial median of \$91,000, but slightly less than the median household income of \$108,000 in Dufferin County.

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian Real Estate Association. National Price Map. <https://www.crea.ca/housing-market-stats/canadian-housing-market-stats/national-price-map/>

<sup>8</sup> Rentals.ca search for all one-bedroom apartment listings in Amaranth, Ontario. March 14, 2023.

Further, in Grand Valley, the number of households classified as low-income has reduced from 12% in 2016 to 8.5% in 2021. Despite this, 2021 Statistics Canada census data indicates that approximately 23.4% of people spend more than 30% of their annual income on shelter costs compared to 22.6% within Dufferin County overall. The continued availability of affordable, attainable, and supportive housing will be a key consideration as Grand Valley continues to grow.

On June 1, 2024, the Development Charges Act, 1997, S.O.1997.c.27, will be amended to include updated definitions for affordable and attainable residential units. These definitions rely on the proposed MMAH Affordable Residential Units bulletin to establish guidance on income-based rents and affordable purchase prices. The Affordable Residential Units bulletin is effective June 1, 2024 and will be replaced by a new bulletin annually. Applicable units must be subject to agreements to provide them as affordable residential units for 25 years. The updated definitions are summarized below:

- **Affordable Residential Unit, Rented**  
A rented residential unit where the rent is no greater than the affordable income-based rent established in the MMAH Affordable Residential Units bulletin. This is to be established by the MMAH by determining the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of gross annual incomes for renter households in a municipality and establishing a rent that is equal to 30 percent of that income. To qualify as an affordable residential unit, rented, the landlord must be at arms distance from the tenants (i.e. they cannot be a family member or connected via common law partnership).
- **Affordable Residential Unit, Ownership**  
A residential unit offered for purchase at the income-based affordable purchase price established in the MMAH Affordable Residential Units bulletin and at a price that is no greater than 90 percent of the average purchase price for the residential unit identified in the MMAH Affordable Residential Units bulletin. The income-based affordable purchase price is to be established by the MMAH by determining the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of gross annual income for households in the applicable municipality and establishing a purchase price that would result in an annual accommodation cost equal to 30 percent of the income identified above. Similar to the previous definition, the seller must be at arm's length with the purchaser (i.e. they cannot be a family member or connected via common law partnership).
- **Attainable Residential Unit**  
A residential unit that is:
  - not considered an affordable residential unit
  - not intended to be available for rent
  - developed as part of a prescribed program (no prescribed program has been established at the time of the writing of this report).
  - Meets other criteria that may be prescribed .

On June 1, 2024, the Planning Act will subsequently be amended to reference the definition of affordable and attainable residential unit in the Development Charges Act in relation to parkland dedication and community benefits charges.

In 2019, the Province of Ontario released *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan* and *Bill 108, More Homes More Choice Act* that were intended to increase the supply of housing and streamline the development approval process. In 2020, the Province of Ontario released an updated PPS, which aligned housing policies with the strategic intent of provincial legislative changes. The 2020 PPS requires municipalities to provide for an appropriate mix and range of housing options, establish a minimum affordable housing targets, promote densities for



new housing that make efficient use of land and services and establish standards for residential intensification and new development that minimize the cost of housing and facilitate a compact built form.

The Province also implemented legislative and policy changes to encourage intensification as a means of increasing housing stock. Recent changes to the *Planning Act* as a result of *Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act (2022)*, changed the jurisdiction of municipalities to permit or restrict residential dwellings. The *Planning Act* now requires municipalities to permit three residential dwellings per residential lot as-of-right on urban residential lands, in any combination within a detached, semi-detached or townhouse or ancillary building to the primary dwelling.

DCOPA #4 states that additional residential units are generally permitted where single detached, semi-detached or townhouse dwellings are permitted. This means that permissions for additional residential units exist not only within the settlement area but in areas outside of it as well, subject to Building Code, Fire Code, and sewage and servicing requirements. The impacts of these changes on infrastructure and servicing, particularly in the case of private services, will need to be adequately addressed in the OP and Zoning By-law. In other jurisdictions, the increase in additional dwellings has brought with it opportunities for new housing trends, such as tiny homes or multi-generational living.

Land use planning can impact the cost of housing and support more affordable options by ensuring an adequate land supply, facilitating all forms and densities of housing, ensuring efficient use of land, and using effective business practices.

## **5.2 The Official Plan**

Given the exponential growth planned for Grand Valley, it is important that the OP has strong policies in relation to housing. Through flexible policies, and policies supportive of federal, provincial, and municipal programs, the OP can support building a range of housing types and densities.

The existing OP relies heavily on references to Provincial Plans in relation to definitions and broader housing mix policies. There is little reference to attainable and affordable housing in the current OP, an issue that is becoming increasingly more prominent throughout the province. Given the predominance of single detached dwellings in the Town (88%), it is important that policies be developed to encourage a broad range and mix of housing types including affordable, attainable, and supportive housing.

While infill and intensification are referenced in the OP, the OP does not contain evaluation criteria for intensification or infill proposals and does not specify what is considered intensification in this context. The DCOP contains evaluation criteria for intensification and infill proposals which are to be used by local municipalities, including Grand Valley.

In summary it is recommended that the OP be updated to:

- Include definitions and regulations for affordable, attainable, and supportive housing in line with *Planning Act* and *Development Charges Act* definitions.
- Establish housing mix targets for new greenfield areas.
- Establish affordable and attainable housing targets.
- Establish policy directions related to infill and intensification.
- Include definitions and regulations for additional residential units and remove references to garden suites.
- Modernize policies related to supportive housing including group homes and long-term care facilities among others.

- Correct inconsistencies with DCOP; and,
- Reflect recent changes to the *Planning Act* and PPS 2024.

### **5.3 Zoning By-law**

It is recommended that the Zoning By-law be updated to implement updated policies of the OP and requirements of the PPS 2024 and the *Planning Act* related to housing including:

- merge the urban settlement zones (Residential Village and Residential Multiple) to broaden permissions to allow for a range of housing types.
- add new regulations related to additional residential units, shared housing, and supportive housing.
- remove regulations relating to garden suites.
- updated residential zoning standards to facilitate a more compact urban form through reductions to the front yard setback and lot frontage requirements.
- new definitions to cover different housing types including back-to-back townhouses, stacked townhouses and laneway townhouses; and,
- updated regulations relating to parking.

## 6.0 Natural Environment

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### 6.1 Background

The Town of Grand Valley boasts an extensive natural heritage system comprised of forests, river, wetlands, creeks, tributaries, and valleys and includes part of the Grand River, Luther Marsh, Boyne Creek and Black Creek (Figure 3 – Grand Valley Natural Heritage Features). These natural heritage features provide animal habitat, erosion and flood control and clean air and clean water.<sup>9</sup> The Grand River is a Canadian Heritage River and is an asset to the community for its ecological and recreational benefits. The Luther Marsh, containing Luther Lake, straddles boarder between the Town and the adjacent Township of Wellington North. The Luther Marsh is considered both a Provincially Significant Wetland and Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). A series of tributaries from Grand River, Boyne Creek, Black Creek and Luther Lake and wetlands flow throughout the Town and support its agricultural system.

The PPS requires that natural features and areas be protected for the long term. Per section 2.1.2 of the PPS, the diversity and connectivity of the natural features and the function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems should be maintained, restored, or improved. The PPS prohibits development within the significant wetlands, woodlands, significant valley lands, significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest within Dufferin County. It further prohibits development within fish habitat and habitat of endangered or threatened species except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.

As part of the County's MCR, the Natural Heritage System mapping and policies were updated to reflect changes to the PPS 2024.

Natural environments and the climate are also inextricably linked. Climate change is altering the water cycle resulting in flooding, droughts, and wildfires which is causing significant biodiversity loss. The Government of Canada has set a target to protect 25% of our lands and oceans by 2025 and 30% by 2030. The target of 30% of land/water to be conserved has been scientifically established as a minimum objective needed to support global biodiversity. The effects of climate change on the natural environment can pose increase risks to public safety, as discussed further in Section 13.

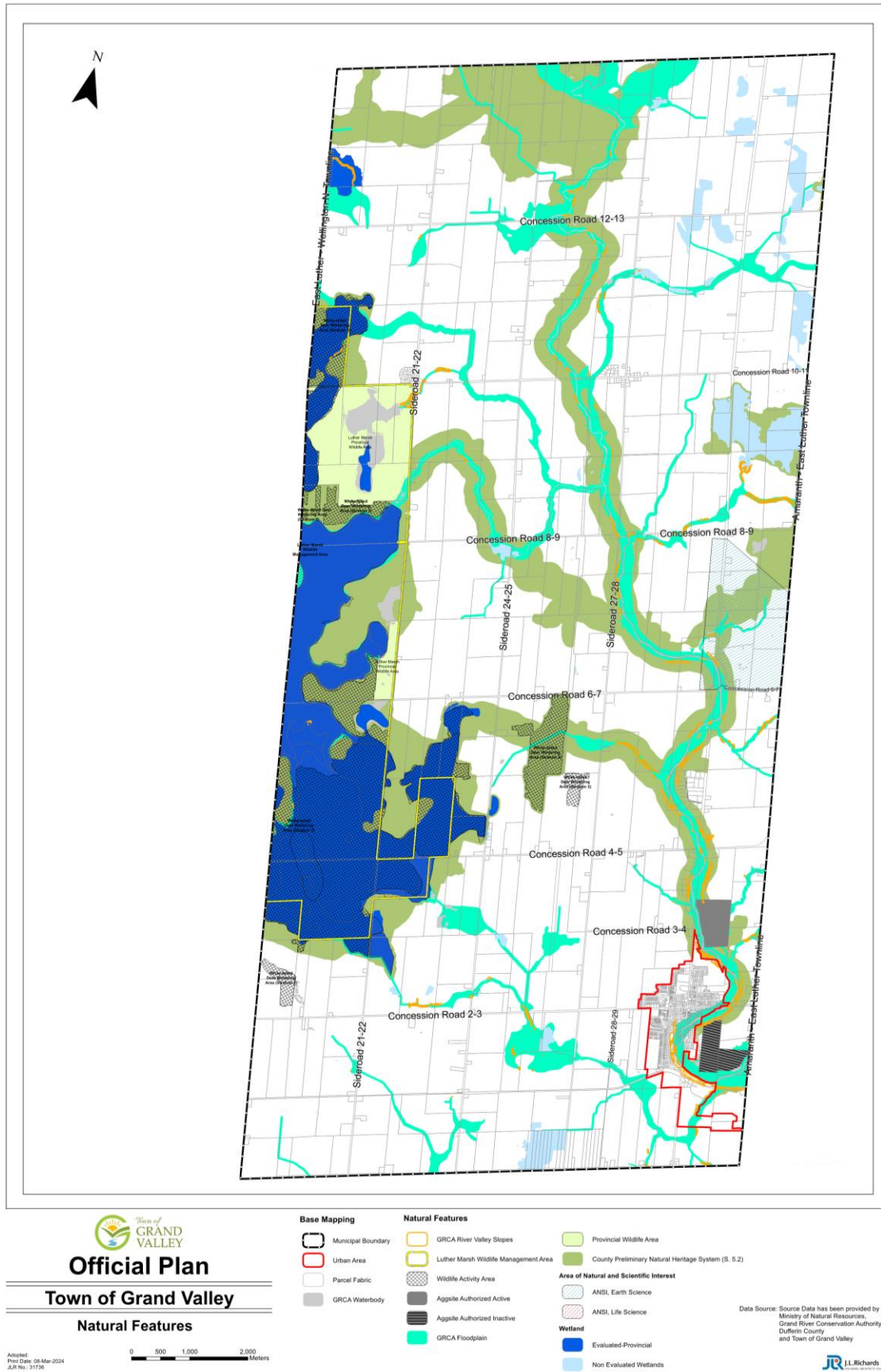
The Dufferin County 2021 CAP recognizes the link between climate change and natural environments and includes the objective to support the protection, rehabilitation, and enhancement of natural systems to foster climate resiliency. Updated planning documents should make reference to the Town's support and implementation of actions for climate change adaption.

As discussed in Section 2.5, Grand Valley is within the boundaries of the Lake Erie Source Protection Region, within the Grand River Source Protection Area. The County OP (Section 5.4.1.f) requires that local municipalities implement source water protection policies and regulations through the development approval process.

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<sup>9</sup> Grand River Conservation Authority (2023). Natural Heritage Systems. Retrieved April 25, 2024 from [Natural Heritage Systems - Grand River Conservation Authority](#)

Figure 3. Grand Valley Natural Heritage Features



## 6.2 The Official Plan

The current OP recognizes the importance of Grand Valley's natural heritage and establishes numerous policies for maintaining, protecting, and enhancing the natural environment. Natural heritage features are identified on Schedule 'B1' of the current OP. This schedule will need to be further updated to ensure conformity with the updated DCOP.

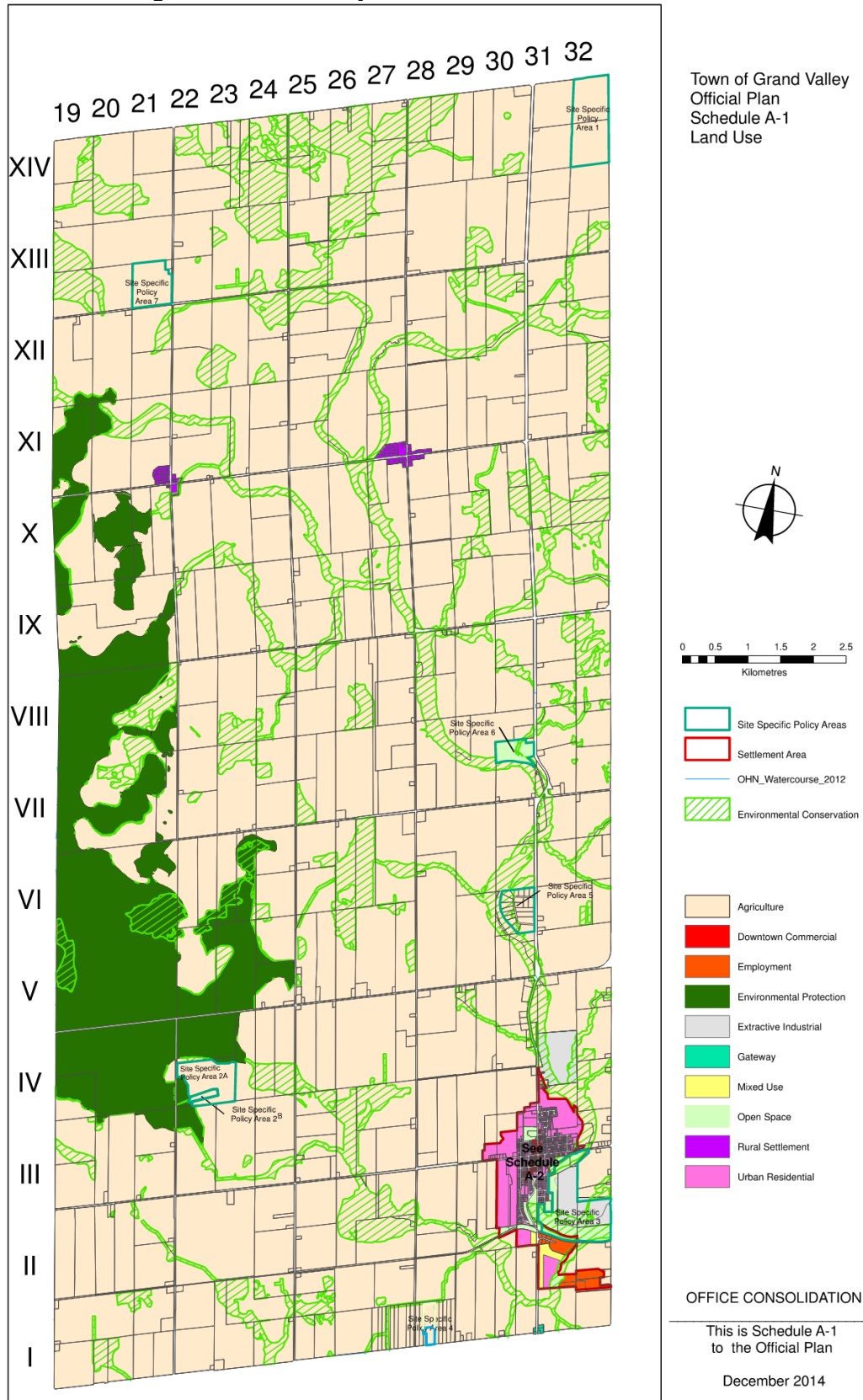
Within the OP, the Environmental Protection land use Designation (Figure 4 – Town of Grand Valley Official Plan Schedule A1 Land Use) is used to protect significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species and provincially significant wetlands and applies to the Luther Marsh and other wetlands within the Town. Lands within the Designation are limited to legally existing uses, passive recreation and eco-tourism uses, forest, wildlife and fisheries management, archaeological activities and essential transportation and utility facilities.

The OP also includes an Environmental Conservation Overlay (Figure 4), which is not a land use designation. The Environmental Conservation Overlay is used more broadly and applies to locally and provincially significant natural heritage features not captured in the Environmental Protection land use Designation nor Natural Hazards as shown on Schedule B1. The intent of the overlay is to regulate the development of land within natural heritage features while still providing flexibility for permitted uses in the underlying land use designation to occur subject to a specific set of policy criteria.

There is often confusion regarding the enforceability of an overlay versus a designation. To assist with interpretation and reduce confusion regarding the Environmental Conservation Overlay versus the Environmental Protection designation, it is our recommendation that the Town designate lands captured under the Environmental Conservation Overlay as Environmental Protection and delete the Environmental Conservation Overlay. This will ensure that these natural features are protected and will ensure that development will not occur within and adjacent to natural hazards. It should be noted that legally existing uses, passive recreation, eco-tourism, conservation management and essential transportation infrastructure are permitted on lands designated Environmental Protection. To provide flexibility and allow for environmental impact studies to determine the ultimate boundaries of the natural features and areas and required setbacks, the Official Plan allows the boundaries of the Environmental Protection designation to be refined through an approved environmental impact assessment without an Official Plan Amendment.

The OP's extensive policies related to natural heritage features will require updates to ensure consistency with the PPS and Growth Plan. This includes updating Section 4.2.1 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) to ensure terminology is consistent with PPS 2024 and DCOP (i.e. significant woodlands policies, endangered and threatened species habitat etc.) and provide additional clarity.

**Figure 4: Grand Valley Official Plan Schedule A1 Land Use**





### **6.3 Zoning By-law**

Both the Environmental Protection Designation and Environmental Conservation overlay are captured under the Environmental Protection Zone in the Zoning By-law. This Zone is more restrictive than the OP's overlay and only permits conservation uses, parks, forest management and erosion/flood control uses. Given that the EP Designation and EC overlay have two different set of policies, it may be beneficial to separate them out into two different Zone subsets (i.e. EP and EC), with different permitted uses corresponding the applicable OP policies.

The Zoning By-law will be updated to reflect any changes to the OP as applicable.

## 7.0 Rural and Agricultural Areas

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### 7.1 Background

The predominant character of Grand Valley is rural, and the lands within the Town's rural areas have been classified as entirely prime agricultural lands within the DCOP. It is the intent of the Town to continue to promote the continuance of this agricultural heritage and rural character, through policies which protect prime agricultural land and maintain the viability of farming opportunities through the maintenance of large tracts of land.

Per the PPS 2024, "Rural Areas" is a broad definition which includes "Rural Lands" and "means 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." More specifically, "Rural Lands" are defined as "lands which are located outside settlement areas, and which are outside prime agricultural areas". Within Grand Valley, the term "Rural Areas" applies to all agricultural lands. Within the PPS 2024 intended development and land uses are primarily limited to agricultural uses or those that enhance the agricultural system. The OP and Zoning By-law will be updated to include applicable policy changes for consistency.

The PPS 2024 states that rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, this includes the communities of Monticello and Colbeck. Development shall be appropriate to the infrastructure that is planned or available and should support a diversified rural economy.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) establishes Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas (2016). In addition to agricultural uses, it outlines specific criteria for Agricultural-related and On-Farm Diversified uses (OFDUs), as defined in the 2020 PPS. Agricultural-related uses are required to:

- be commercial or industrial uses.
- directly relate to farm operations in the area.
- be compatible with, and not a hindrance to, surrounding agricultural operations.
- support agriculture.
- provide direct products or services to primarily farm operations; and,
- benefit from proximity to farm operations.

In comparison, OFDUs refers to uses limited in area, that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of a property. Criteria for OFDUs include:

- location on a farm.
- being secondary to the principal use of the property.
- being limited in area within the property.
- activities such as home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism and uses that produce value-added agricultural products; and
- compatibility with, and posing no hindrance to, surrounding agricultural operations.

Recent updates to the DCOP reflect these guidelines and requires local municipalities to establish policies for agriculture-related uses and allows them to permit OFDUs as of right, subject to the above criteria. The Town's planning documents require updating to recognize these new definitions and ensure that applicable policies for agricultural lands are consistent with the OMAFRA Guidelines and PPS for uses in prime agricultural areas.

The PPS 2024 permits 2 additional residential units wherever a residential dwelling is permitted within the prime agricultural area subject to specific criteria. The County's updated OP *generally* permits additional residential units wherever a single-detached, semi-detached, and/or Town of Grand Valley OP and ZBL Review – Background Report

townhouse dwelling is permitted. This includes such dwellings in rural and prime agricultural areas. The Town will be required to update planning documents to be consistent with the PPS 2024 and conform with the DCOP, and to provide further policy direction for the development of additional units in agricultural areas, subject to minimum distance separation (MDS) requirements. This may include particular policies to ensure compatibility with the Town and County's objectives for both a variety of housing options as well as the protection and preservation of agricultural land and production.

## **7.2 The Official Plan**

Within the current OP, all lands outside of the urban and rural settlement areas are designated Agriculture, with the exception of lands designated Environmental Protection. The Agriculture Designation is intended to preserve the agricultural land base and rural character of the area, encourage diverse agricultural activities and farming best-practices, and discourage other forms of development and potential conflicts to agricultural uses.

Section 5.1 of the current OP contains specific policies for the Agriculture Designation and includes permissions for agricultural, agricultural-related uses, secondary uses to a principal agricultural use, single detached dwellings and associated home occupations or industries, resource extraction, conservation and watershed management, and farm labour accommodation. These definitions and applicable policies will be updated for consistency with the 2020 PPS and Growth Plan regarding agricultural-related uses.

The rural areas of Town also include a Rural Settlement Designation. The focus of this Designation is for compatible intensification of rural development, and to permit residential, institutional, and commercial uses within the existing settlements of Colbeck and Monticello. Policies for this Designation will be updated for consistency with the Growth Plan for Rural Settlement Areas, and in line with residential, institutional, and commercial policies as discussed elsewhere throughout this report.

Recommended OP policy updates include:

- Updated definitions for:
  - Agri-tourism.
  - Agricultural-related uses.
  - OFDUs.
  - Related terms, as appropriate.
- Updated schedules to conform with updates to the DCOP schedules and settlement boundary changes as a result of DCOPA 3, once approved.
- Updated policies for rural, agricultural, and rural settlements for consistency with the PPS 2024.
- Updated Agriculture Designation policies corresponding to prime agricultural lands consistent with the PPS 2024, including:
  - Limiting lot creation, except for the limited circumstances provided for in PPS 2024 policy 2.3.4, including for agricultural uses, agricultural-related use, residences surplus to a farming operation and for infrastructure. The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas will be prohibited/limited.
  - Policies permitting agriculture, agriculture-related uses, farm help dwellings, and OFDUs.
  - Inclusion of ARUs on agricultural properties, subject to the provisions of the Zoning By-law.
  - MDS (2017) compliance.
  - Site plan control for temporary uses or OFDUs; and,

- Policies to encourage regenerative farm practices and other objectives in line with the Town and County's climate change goals.
- Inclusion of references to the County's CAS and CAP and statements of the Town's intent to support the implementation of actions for climate change adaptation.

### **7.3 Zoning By-law**

Schedule A1 of the Town's Zoning By-law identifies the majority of lands outside of the urban area as Agricultural Zone, Rural Residential Zone, Rural Employment Zone, Open Space Zone, and Environmental Protection Zone. Proposed updates to non-agricultural Zones are discussed in detail elsewhere within this report. The Agricultural Zone is the sole zoning category with provisions to permit agricultural uses.

Section 5.1.6 of the Town OP requires that agricultural lands be zoned in the Zoning By-law to reflect the policies of the Agricultural Designation of the OP. Current provisions within the Agricultural Zone permit a minimum lot area of 16 hectares, with an alternative requirement made per nutrient unit, in the case of applicable uses. This provision does not conform with the Town OP requirements that agricultural uses be sited on lots sufficiently sized for the intended use and servicing capacity demand. Section 5.1.5(c) of the Town OP states that this is generally 40 hectares. Non-agricultural uses, as permitted within the Agricultural Designation have differing requirements, not specified within the OP. Within the Zoning By-law, we recommend the Agricultural Zone be updated to incorporate provisions specific to multiple uses, for example, agricultural and non-agricultural, to account for flexibility across a range of permitted uses while ensuring minimum lot requirements are in conformity with the OP and consistent with provincial policy.

The Town OP further states that farm-related commercial and industrial uses will be zoned separately. As the definitions for agricultural-related policies of the OP are updated, corresponding updates will also be made to the appropriate Agriculture Zone and applicable Rural Zone provisions.

Recommended updates to the Agricultural Zone include:

- Uses which are clearly compatible and appropriate in prime agricultural areas under the PPS 2024 will be permitted as-of-right such as value-retaining uses (e.g., storage, grading, drying), home offices, or small produce stands.
- Inclusion of lot provisions allowing for sizes, types, and intensities of multiple permitted uses in the Agricultural Zone, in conformity with the OP.
- Updated definitions to incorporate new and updated agricultural related terms.
- Permitting partial lot zoning for on-farm diversified uses; and,
- Updates to MDS (2017) requirements.

The Zoning By-law will be updated to reflect any changes to the OP as applicable.

## 8.0 Economic Development

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### 8.1 Background

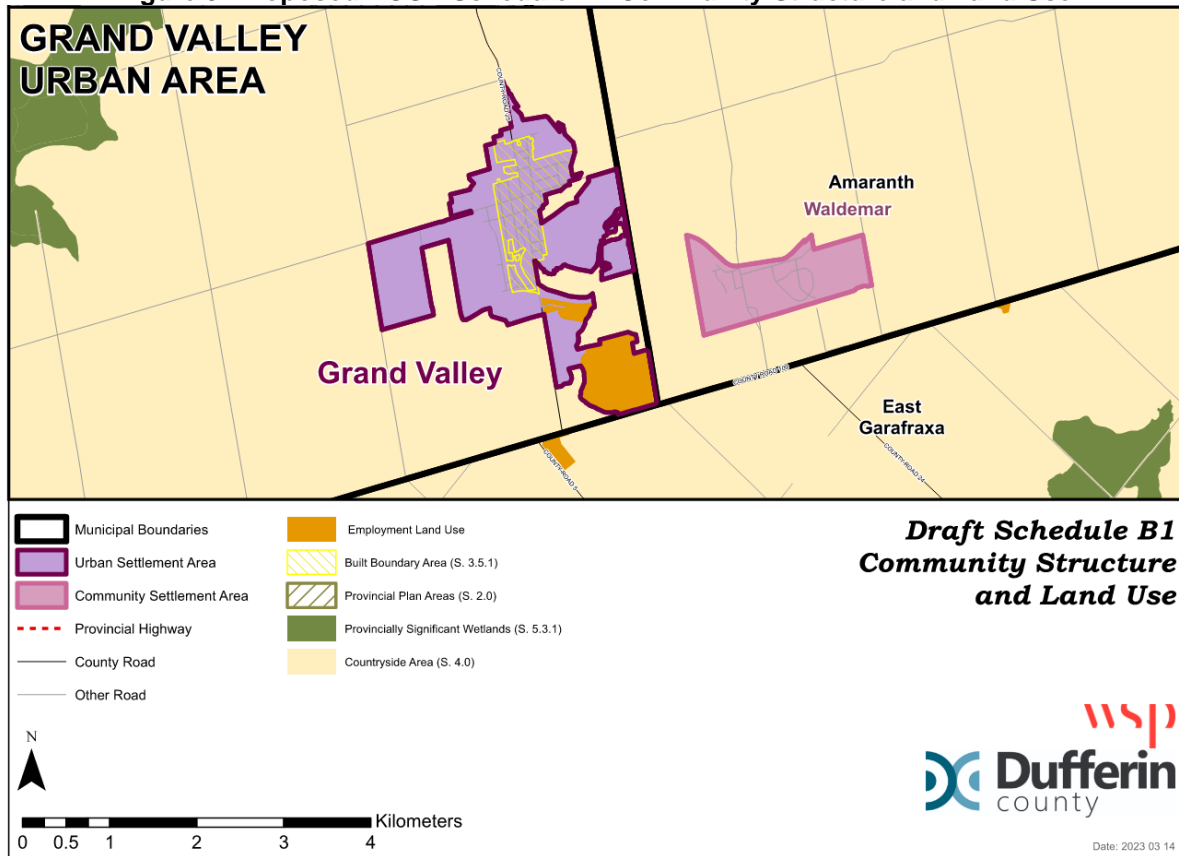
A strong economy is central to a healthy and sustainable municipality. Grand Valley's settlement has long centred on agriculture, with economic growth and development of the Town occurring with the expansion of the railway. Today, a broader range of factors impact the economy of the Town and wider County. As of the 2021 Census, Grand Valley residents were most likely to be employed within the construction, retail, manufacturing, health and social care, transportation, education, and agriculture and resource-based industries. The Town's location along Highway 89 and Dufferin Road 109, and its proximity to larger municipalities and the Greater Toronto and Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, contribute to opportunities for transportation of people and the geographic expansion of economic investment into Grand Valley.

Grand Valley is highly impacted by the wider economic conditions of the surrounding area. In recent years, the nature of work and economic opportunity are changing. As seen across the province, trends towards telework and a gig economy have changed where and how work takes place, and has created new patterns in residential growth, as not all workers need to reside near their place of employment.

This is one reason for which Dufferin County continues to see population growth. As shown in the LNA conducted as part of the County's MCR, Grand Valley is expected to see substantial employment growth to 4,600 jobs by 2051. To meet these employment demands, Grand Valley is expected to require 77.1 gross hectares of lands for commercial, institutional, or mixed uses, and an additional 2.6 gross hectares for industrial uses. The expansion to Grand Valley's settlement area in DCOPA #3 includes lands intended for employment designations at the southeast corner of the municipal boundary (Figure 5).

The PPS 2024 establish policies for economic development through the designation of employment areas. Per the PPS 2024 the definition of "employment areas" was updated and is defined as clusters of economic and business activities including manufacturing, research and development in connection to manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office and ancillary facilities. Commercial, institutional and stand alone retail and office uses are not permitted within employment areas per the PPS 2024. It includes policies that lands within 300 metres of employment area will be planned to avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate potential impacts on the long-term economic viability of employment uses within employment areas. The PPS 2024 permits lands to be removed from an employment area subject to specific criteria which is similar to the criteria established in the previous Provincial Growth Plan.

Figure 5: Proposed DCOP Schedule B1 Community Structure and Land Use



In its 2017 Economic Strategic Plan, Dufferin County committed to focusing on the following sectors for economic attraction and investment: agriculture, food, and beverage; tourism; creative industries; health, wellness, and recreation destinations; manufacturing; and professional, engineering, information technology and financial services. In the Town's most recent Economic Development Strategic Plan (2015), objectives included those areas of tourism attraction and brand development through prominent events and new community facilities, as well as strengthened capacity for existing and future commercial operations, such as through development of a Business Improvement Area. These goals are consistent with the PPS's requirement that planning authorities promote economic development through a "*mix and range of employment, institutional and mixed uses*", "*providing opportunities for a diversified economic base*", and "*facilitating conditions for economic investment*". The Town's land use planning documents are also required to outline policies meeting these objectives of the PPS.

## 8.2 The Official Plan

The OP promotes opportunities to facilitate business growth that is compatible with the character of the community. By identifying and retaining employment, commercial, and mixed-use lands and establishing supportive, and flexible policies, the policies in the OP can help make Grand Valley more investment ready.

The current OP objectives relevant to economic development include enabling growth to a size which can provide a range of goods and services to residents; to provide opportunities for residents to work in Grand Valley, in proximity to where they live and play; to maintain small town character for the continued function as a service centre to the surrounding agricultural area; and to encourage a range of commercial and industrial development without detracting from existing commercial areas in the downtown.



Multiple land use designations in the current OP encourage employment and economic activity as a primary use, including the Downtown Commercial, Gateway Economic Center, Mixed Use, Employment, Rural Employment, and Extractive Industrial. Additional policies support a wide range of employment and economic opportunities within other designations as well, such as through home-based businesses, home industries, agricultural-related uses for agricultural lands, and tourist facilities and tourism-related activities.

Recommended policy updates include:

- Establishing density targets and policies for employment areas, as determined by the updated DCOP, once approved.
- Updated OP objectives consistent with the PPS, the County's OP, and the County and Town's strategic plans.
- Updated definitions and terminology consistent with the PPS 2024
- Updated policies for the Employment Designation, to ensure consistency with the PPS 2024.
- Updates to policies for flexibility related to economic opportunity, such as remote teleworking, and home-based businesses.
- Updated schedules demonstrating the settlement boundary and employment areas, in conformity with the DCOP, once approved.

### **8.3 Zoning By-law**

Zoning regulations create a framework for economic development, establish industry norms, and allow new businesses to ensure they can meet community needs. Zoning regulations can advance manufacturing, retail, and service-commercial industries by putting them in proximity to consumers and the local variables that make businesses flourish.

Employment and economic development activities are primary uses within the Commercial, Employment, Industrial, Institutional and Agricultural Zones. These Zones will be reviewed to ensure they manage economic development and conform to the OP.

We recommend the addition of a mixed-use zone to permit shared residential and commercial activities in the urban area, such as live-work townhomes or conversion of residential uses to commercial retail with additional residential units. This can encourage the expansion of opportunities for broader types of both housing stock and storefronts or offices for small to medium-size businesses where such uses are compatible.

A similar mixed-use zone could be created at low densities for the hamlet areas to encourage small scale convenience and neighbourhood commercial mixed uses in the hamlets as these populations grow more gradually, as is currently permitted within the corresponding Rural Settlement Area Designation of the OP. Alternatively, this could be achieved by expanding the Hamlet Residential Zone to permit such low-density commercial uses.

Economic activity is not limited to specific Zones, and so the entire Zoning By-law will be reviewed and updated to implement OP policy requirements for employment and economic development. In addition, general provisions will be updated to be supportive of economic development, such as regulations related to home occupations and industries, accessory structures, parking, and storage.

## 9.0 Recreational, Parks, and Open Space

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### 9.1 Background

Access to nature and outdoor recreation are key components of a healthy, liveable, and safe community. Parks and open spaces provide a range of benefits. On an environmental level, parks and open space mitigate flood risks and impacts of climate change by offering permeable, high-absorbing lands that offset the impacts of potential flood events, and trees and vegetation that absorb carbon dioxide and provide cooling canopies. Additionally, parks and open spaces provide areas where native species can thrive within developed, built-up areas. On a human level, parks and open spaces have positive impacts on physical health by encouraging physical activity and community connections. They also have positive impacts on mental health and early childhood development. Representing significant community assets and aesthetic value, parks and open spaces support a community's economy by raising the values of adjacent and proximate properties. Recreational spaces provide opportunities to attract residents to the area and create a sense of place and space for residents. Parks and open spaces also offer opportunities for the community to host festivals, tournaments and other events that attract visitors to the community.

Grand Valley is fortunate to have riverfront and outdoor recreational space for both formal and informal recreational activities. The Grand River runs through the urban settlement area and includes ample open space areas for environmental protection and public access to parks and recreational areas. Outside of the settlement area, a portion of the Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area is located within the Town's boundary. This wetland and habitat protection area is jointly owned and managed by the province and GRCA and is available year-round for public visiting.

The Town is home to the Upper Grand Trailway, a year-round trail of 10.5 kilometers along a former rail line. The Town also boasts multiple playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, and a campground for park access and recreational activities. There is no recreational master plan in place for Grand Valley, however the Town wishes to ensure that these assets can continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The Dufferin County Outdoor Recreation Plan (2022) features one managed forest area (River Road Tract) which is open to the public for nature viewing and hiking and is approximately 3 hectares in size. The Town recognizes the value of these natural and recreational areas and will continue to plan in such a way as to minimize impacts on these areas.

The PPS 2024 directs municipalities to plan for complete communities through provisions of a range of recreation activities in built and natural settings, including public spaces, recreational facilities, parklands, trail networks, and waterfront access.

The type and range of recreational and park spaces available in many municipalities is increasing in order to meet the needs of their residents. The Town may opt to develop a parkland typology within the OP update, to implement a coordinated approach to planning parks and open spaces for long-term residential and visitor use. Such a typology may include a classification of park and trail hierarchies which can support the development of a larger recreation or parkland master plan or parkland acquisition strategies. Anticipating future need for a range of open space and recreational needs, the Town may opt to implement policies specific to new park typologies and public-access models within their planning documents.

Specific to parkland, since the OP came into effect, the legislative and regulatory framework governing parkland dedication was updated by the Province of Ontario through *Bill 108, More Homes More Choice Act*; *Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act*; *Bill 197 COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act*, *Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act*, and *O.Reg 509/20*. The outcome of these bills relates to:

- non-applicability of parkland dedication rates for non-profit residential development and additional residential units.
- reductions to the maximum alternative parkland dedication rate (1 hectare/600 units for land and 1 hectare/1000 units for cash-in lieu);
- establishment of a maximum amount of land to be conveyed or paid in lieu (10% for sites under 5 hectares and 15% for sites greater than 5 hectares in size);
- changes to the timing of parkland dedication.
- identification, agreement, or refusal of, and appeal related to parkland dedication.
- requirements for municipalities to reserve parkland funds within a particular account and spend or allocate at least 60% of allocated funds annually; and,
- requirement that a parks plan be prepared prior to the passing of any future parkland dedication by-laws.

Additional pending changes are the eligibility of privately owned public spaces (POPS) or encumbered parkland (strata parks) for parkland dedication, parkland dedication requirements for affordable and attainable housing, and the ability for private landowners to identify the lands they wish to provide as parklands. The Town's planning policies will be updated to be consistent with these legislative changes.

## 9.2 The Official Plan

The existing OP includes a land use designation for Open Space and Recreation, which permits public and private recreational facilities. The objectives of this Designation are to support the development of a continuous trail and park system which emphasizes local environmental features, such as the Grand River, to serve the recreational needs of the population, to protect sensitive environments, and within rural areas, to recognize recreational and resource-based development. Schedule A2 identifies lands designated for open space along the Grand River and in the area of the existing community centre along Main Street within the village settlement area.

Various scales of recreational uses are also permitted within the Urban Residential, Downtown Commercial, Gateway Economic Centre, Employment, and Environmental Protection Designations and the Environmental Conservation Overlay. Within rural or environmentally sensitive areas, recreation is intended to be passive for the conservation of environmental features. Within the settlement area, recreational uses are intended for higher activity levels and to draw residents and visitors to support surrounding residential or commercial areas. To support recreational amenities within the municipality, the OP states that the Town may request parkland dedication through development, with the exception of lands which are designated Environmental Protection, within the Environmental Conservation Overlay, or within the floodplain. Alternatively, the Town may request cash in lieu of parkland.

These and related policies will be reviewed to ensure conformity with updated provincial legislation and PPS policies.

It is our understanding that the Town has commenced the preparation of a recreation master plan in 2023. In the absence a complete recreation master plans at this time, the establishment of parkland service standards, parkland classifications and parkland design criteria could be considered in the OP, in coordination with the recreation master plan project team. The Town should also consider adding policies to support active transportation connectivity between these areas and other designations.

Recommended updates include:

- Updated policies for a parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu of parkland as a condition of development approval, to reflect recent legislative changes to the *Planning Act*.

- Reorganized parkland dedication policies within a single comprehensive section of the OP.
- Planning for the provision of adequate parks and recreational facilities in the Town, such as through:
  - Inclusion of parkland and recreation spaces within policies related to Complete Communities.
  - Recognition of the potential of urban agriculture, and alternative park and recreation models.
- Inclusion of Dufferin County managed recreational trails on Town OP schedules; and,
- Strengthening of policies to encourage public trails, park linkages, and active transportation.

### **9.3 Zoning By-law**

The Zoning By-law includes an Open Space Zone, which permits parks, recreation establishments, stormwater management facilities and passive recreation uses, as shown on Schedules A1 and A2. Parks are also permitted within the Multiple Residential (RM) and Environmental Protection (EP) Zones. Recreational establishments and/or passive recreational uses are permitted within the Institutional, Downtown Commercial (CD) and Employment (M1) Zones.

Sections 2.3 and 3.17 deem trails and walkways, public and community parks, and playgrounds as a public use, which are permitted within any Zone except for Environmental Protection, subject to applicable provisions of the By-law. It is our recommendation that trails be permitted within the Environmental Protection zone.

The Zoning By-law will also be updated for conform to policy changes to the recreation and open space policies of the OP.

## 10.0 Mobility

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### 10.1 Background

The PPS 2024 defines a transportation system as a system comprised of facilities, corridors, and rights-of-way for the movement of people and goods and may take the form of transit stops and stations, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus lanes, HOV lanes, rail facilities and parking facilities. The PPS 2024 directs municipalities to take a long-term approach to planning for and around transportation corridors to protect and ensure efficient movement of goods. The PPS 2024 directs municipalities to make efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure through that transportation demand management strategies, where feasible. It further requires municipalities, to plan for a multimodal transportation, that is connected within and among transportation systems and modes.

For Grand Valley, with proximity to other regional communities, large population centres on the outskirts of the Greater Toronto Area and expected growth of the local and County population living and working in the Town, strong transportation links are increasingly important. Grand Valley's transportation road network includes Provincial Highway 89, County roads, local roads, private roads, and seasonal roads.

A 2022 Asset Management Plan and 2022 Road Management Plan indicate that municipally owned roads are in very good condition. The Town completed a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Study in 2017 to review the existing transportation network and anticipate capacity for the years 2021 and 2031. The recommendation of this plan was to create a collector road network between the Grand Valley Settlement Area and County Road 109, through upgrades to Amaranth East Luther Townline and County Road 25 between County Roads 10 and 109 (Figure 6).

More recently, a 2023 County Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was prepared as part of the County's Lands Needs Analysis and MCR. The study identified multiple alternatives to the existing County road network, with recommendations to expand County Road 109 to four lanes between County Road 25 and Highway 10 to construct a new two-lane road along Amaranth East Luther Townline between County Road 109 and Side Road 10, and to create a bypass around the main settlement area of Grand Valley (Figure 7). The TMP has not yet been adopted by County Council and proposed routes may be subject to change as the County continues the MCR and DCOP process.

In recent years the practice of land use planning has evolved to place an increasing emphasis on the need to integrate land use and transportation decisions and to provide individuals with additional non-automobile modes of "active" transportation including walking and cycling with the goal of improving health and climate outcomes. Creating communities that support a variety of transportation methods helps to create healthier, more active communities, and can reduce the impacts of automobile related to climate change. Enhanced sidewalk and trail networks provide venues for active transportation methods which allow for physical activity, increased social exchanges, and reduced road congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. These forms of transportation are also more accessible to a larger population.

As mentioned in Section 9, the Town boasts multiple trails and active transportation opportunities. An active transportation plan component was also included in the Town's 2017 TMP, with signed bike routes within the main settlement area and paved shoulders along County Road 25 outside of the settlement area and along Amaranth Street East. Funding has not yet been allocated to implement these plans. The 2023 County TMP has further recommendations (Figure 8) related to active transportation including upgrading roadways to include a buffered paved bike shoulder on County Road 25, an off-road route on the proposed extension to Amaranth East Luther Townline, and a signed route along County Road 15.



Figure 6. Grand Valley TMP 2017 Proposed Road Network

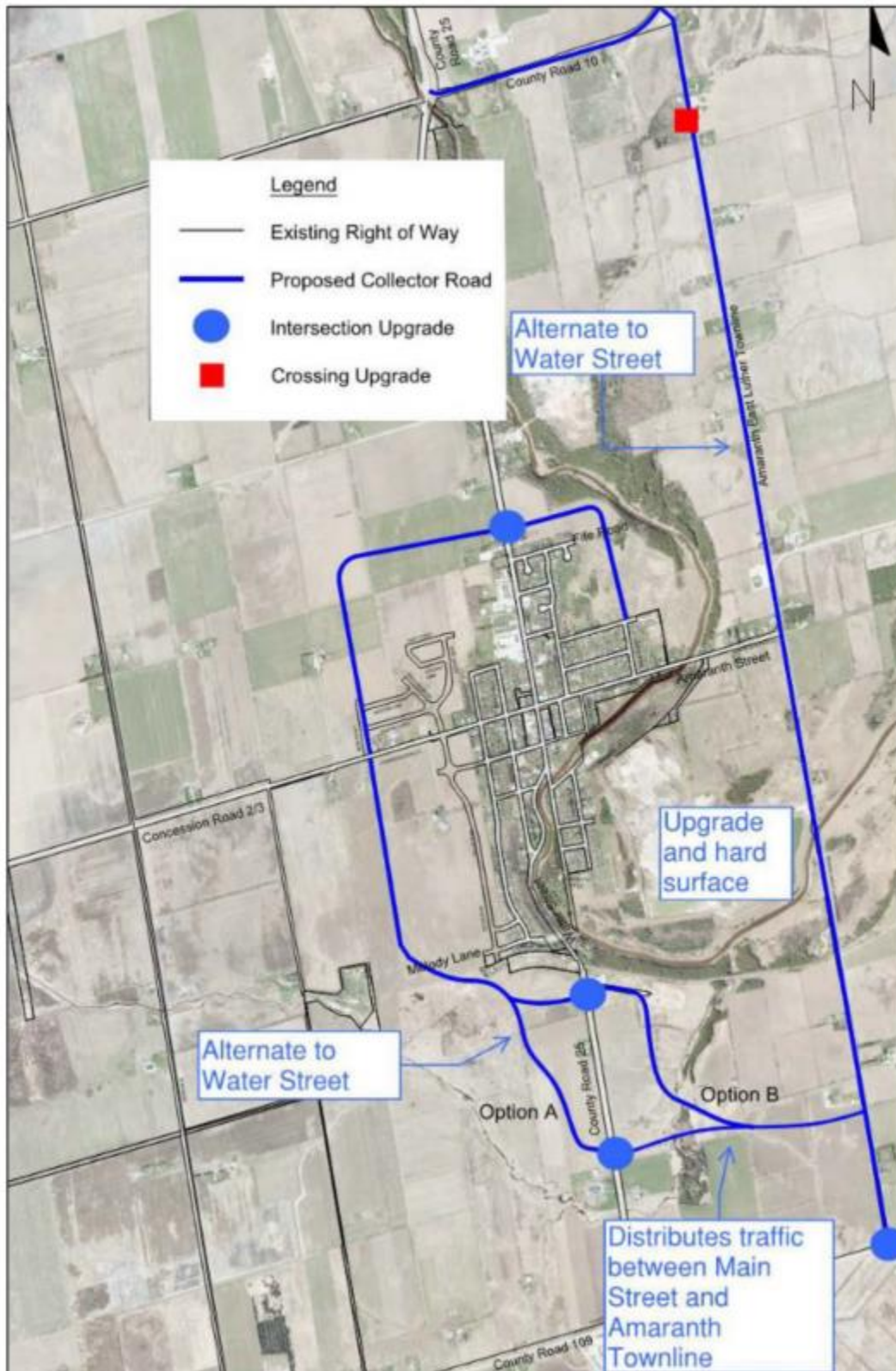
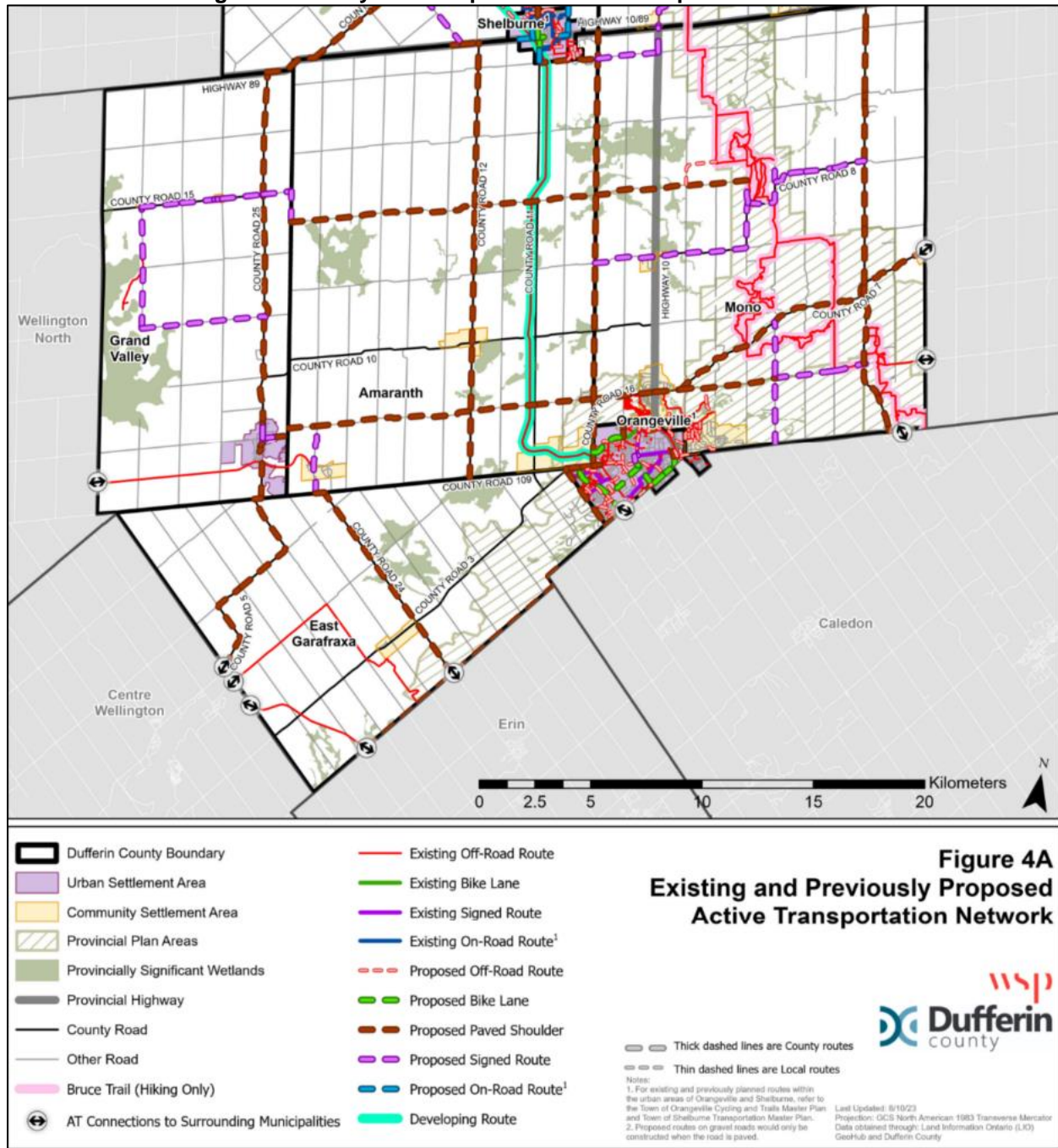




Figure 7. Dufferin County TMP 2023 Recommended Road Network



**Figure 8. County TMP Proposed Active Transportation Network**



The County's 2021 CAP also recognizes the value of active transportation and walkable community planning to achieving climate resilience goals and reducing carbon output. Recommended actions include walkable and accessible communities, reducing personal vehicle use and kilometers travelled, and the expansion of trails, walking, and cycling infrastructure, including ensuring that these are broadly accessible. The Town has also made investments towards reduced reliance on fossil fuels within transportation. In 2018, the Town installed four 24-hour electric vehicle charging stations in the municipal parking lot, through Tesla's Destination Charging program.

In addition to active transportation, the County recognizes the potential of public transit options to reduce personal vehicle use. The County TMP recommended on-demand transit plans for the County, excluding Orangeville; however the project has not yet received funding at time of writing.

DCOPA #4 proposes amendments to the County's transportation policies which will update references to the TMP, increase requirements for new development to carry out studies related to transportation and environmental noise impacts, and more strongly encourage active transportation facilities and network connections. Should additional transportation policies or schedules of the DCOP continue to be updated, such as to implement the County TMP, the Town's OP will also require updating for conformity.

## **10.2 The Official Plan**

The OP establishes and provides policies for a road classification to accommodate multiple modes of transportation safely and efficiently, including automobiles and freight. In line with the PPS's policies and the County TMP, the OP should be updated to integrate other modes of transportation present in the Town, such as walking and cycling. In addition, the OP will require updating for conformity to changes to DCOP #4, once approved.

Notably, the proposed road network changes as a result of the County TMP, once adopted, will require updating schedules and policies for the Town's road network to include the proposed bypass on Amaranth East Luther Townline, which will replace existing references to potential bypass options within the current OP.

Innovative public transportation options could be explored and supported by the OP. One such example is on-demand transit services, such as in Sault Ste. Marie, Innisfil, or on Manitoulin Island, whereby the community partners with a ridesharing program to allow residents to share trips using pre-existing vehicles to get to multiple destinations. Other innovative mobility options include e-scooters and e-bikes, which could be supported through OP policies for parking and signage.

OP policies should be revised to include a holistic approach to movement, mobility, and accessibility throughout the community. Recommended policy updates include:

- Conformity to DCOPA #4, once approved.
- Inclusion of policy recommendations, updated schedules, and upgraded road classifications in conformity to the County TMP, if adopted.
- Strengthened policies regarding road widening dedications for draft plan of subdivision applications.
- Stronger active transportation and trail connectivity policies.
- Permissions for private roads.
- Policies for electrical vehicle parking.
- References to the impacts of and to climate change and the priority of energy efficient land use patterns; and
- Policies to encourage alternative and renewable sources of energy within the transportation network.

In addition, we recommend including a schedule for transportation, showing the existing road network, approved updates to the road work such as through the proposed Grand Valley bypass, and active transportation routes.

## **10.3 Zoning By-law**

The transportation network as a whole is primarily regulated through the policies of an OP. However, roads are demonstrated on all schedules of the Zoning By-law and are regulated through the general provisions related road access and entrances, sight triangles, parking and

loading, trail, and recreational routes, including electric vehicle and bicycle parking, and vehicle storage where appropriate. Active transportation modes may similar be encouraged through provisions related to parks, trails, and sidewalks.

The Zoning By-law will be reviewed in its entirety and updated to implement relevant policies of the OP and requirements of the PPS 2024.

## **11.0 Servicing**

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### **11.1 Background**

The PPS 2024 and Section 7.3.1 of the DCOP states that water and sewage services in a municipality shall be provided in a manner that is sustainable, prepares for the impacts of a changing climate, protects human health and the natural environment and is financially viable. The PPS 2024 further outlines a hierarchy of service provision, ordering priority to municipal servicing where available, followed by private communal, on-site private individual servicing, and in limited cases, partial servicing.

Significant growth is projected for Grand Valley, but the extent of this growth is dependent on adequate servicing that is sustainable, complies with all regulatory requirements and is financially viable. Rural settlement areas and areas outside the urban settlement area, operate on private water and septic services and growth is limited in these areas, as a result. There are full municipal sewage and water services with the built-up area and part of the designated greenfield area. Full sewage and water services are planned to be expanded into the remainder of the designated greenfield area to accommodate new development.

However, the Town currently only has enough servicing capacity planned to service new greenfield lands until 2031. There are currently issues related to developing a new pump station due to a lack of electricity. While the pump station can be constructed, it cannot be commissioned without power. The Town is exploring several options (including a independent power supply) to rectify this issue.

Concurrent with this OP Review, a Master Servicing Plan is being contemplated to identify the necessary infrastructure required to accommodate the projected growth by 2051 and the appropriate phasing of the infrastructure.. The Master Servicing Plan will be an important consideration for the OP update and may require the creation of phasing policies to ensure the orderly development of growth.

Stormwater management for the Town takes the form of stormwater management ponds, storm mains, catch basins and culverts. As these are maintained by the Town, it is important to ensure that development and site alteration affecting these assets, such as driveways and property entrances, follow best practices for stormwater management and make efficient use of municipal maintenance and servicing. The PPS 2024 includes policies for stormwater management to prevent contamination, erosion, and changes in water balance, prepare for the impacts of climate change, mitigate risks to humans, property, and environment, maximize vegetation and pervious surfaces, and promote best practices. It also requires that municipalities will align planning with any comprehensive municipal plans for stormwater management that consider cumulative impacts of stormwater from development on a watershed scale.

### **11.2 The Official Plan**

As stated in Section 6.0 of the Grand Valley OP, it is the Town's intent to provide full municipal water and wastewater services within the Settlement Area, consistent with the DCOP and PPS 2024. The OP also includes policies for both communal and individual private water and wastewater services, but unlike Section 7.3.1 of the DCOP, it does not contain policies which speak to preferred hierarchy of servicing options where full municipal water and wastewater services are not available. Further, the existing Grand Valley OP does not include policies regarding partial services. Partial servicing occurs where a lot is serviced by a combination of municipal and private services. For example, a lot could contain a private septic system but be serviced by municipal piped water. However, the Town may choose to prohibit or exclude policies

regarding partial or communal services if it is its position that it does not want to incur the potential liability.

The OP also sets policies related to servicing for lot creation. Section 6.1 of the existing Grand Valley OP permits lot creation only where sufficient servicing capacity is available or planned, consistent with the DCOP to ensure that future development can be adequately serviced without negatively impacting lots on the existing system. Given the constraints of servicing capacity in the Town, this limits potential new development. While the Master Servicing Plan has not yet been completed, given the growth anticipated for the area, updated phasing policies in the OP will be required to ensure orderly growth and development that makes efficient use of planned services.

The existing OP also contains Stormwater Management policies and identifies when a Stormwater Management Plan is required but does not speak to other more passive stormwater management techniques such as low impact development approaches to minimize the impacts of runoff and stormwater pollution, for example the use of bio-swales, vegetation adjacent to paved surfaces, permeable pavement, green roofs, rain gardens, and exfiltration systems.

Regarding waste disposal, waste management policies are not reflected in the Grand Valley OP as the County is responsible for waste collection and disposal. The policies in the DCOP direct local municipalities to recognize and support the provincial initiative of reducing waste, show leadership by considering reductions in material consumption and waste production, promote household and commercial efforts for waste-diversion, and promote public awareness of waste issues.

Therefore, it is recommended that the OP be updated to:

- Reflect the preferred servicing hierarchy set out in the DCOP and PPS 2024, except prohibit communal servicing.
- Include policies which limit partial servicing, in conformity with the DCOP and PPS 2024.
- Add policies related to the phasing of growth upon the completion of the Master Servicing Plan to ensure the orderly growth and development that make efficient use of planned services; and
- Include stormwater management policies related to best practices and green infrastructure, such as low impact development techniques, for consistency with the PPS 2024.

### **11.3 Zoning By-law**

The Zoning By-law contains regulations regarding minimum lot sizes for private servicing and the prohibition of new waste disposal sites, setbacks to waste disposal and wastewater treatment facilities and defines stormwater management facilities.

It is recommended that the Zoning By-law be updated to:

- Create a new Zone for Stormwater Management Facilities to include specific regulations which remove setback requirements for the facilities and prohibit other uses typically permitted in the Open Space Zone; and,
- Include provisions for green infrastructure.

## 12.0 Minerals and Mineral Aggregate

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### 12.1 Background

The PPS 2024 states that minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources shall be protected for long term use and requires municipalities to establish policies related to development on or adjacent to deposits of these resources. The PPS 2024 defines adjacent lands as those “contiguous to lands on the surface of known petroleum resources, mineral deposits, or deposits of mineral aggregate resources where it is likely that development would constrain future access to the resources”. The boundaries of adjacent lands may also be determined by the province. The PPS 2024 further directs municipalities to establish policies for the conservation of mineral aggregate resources, protection of natural features from mineral aggregate operation, and the rehabilitation of mineral aggregate sites.

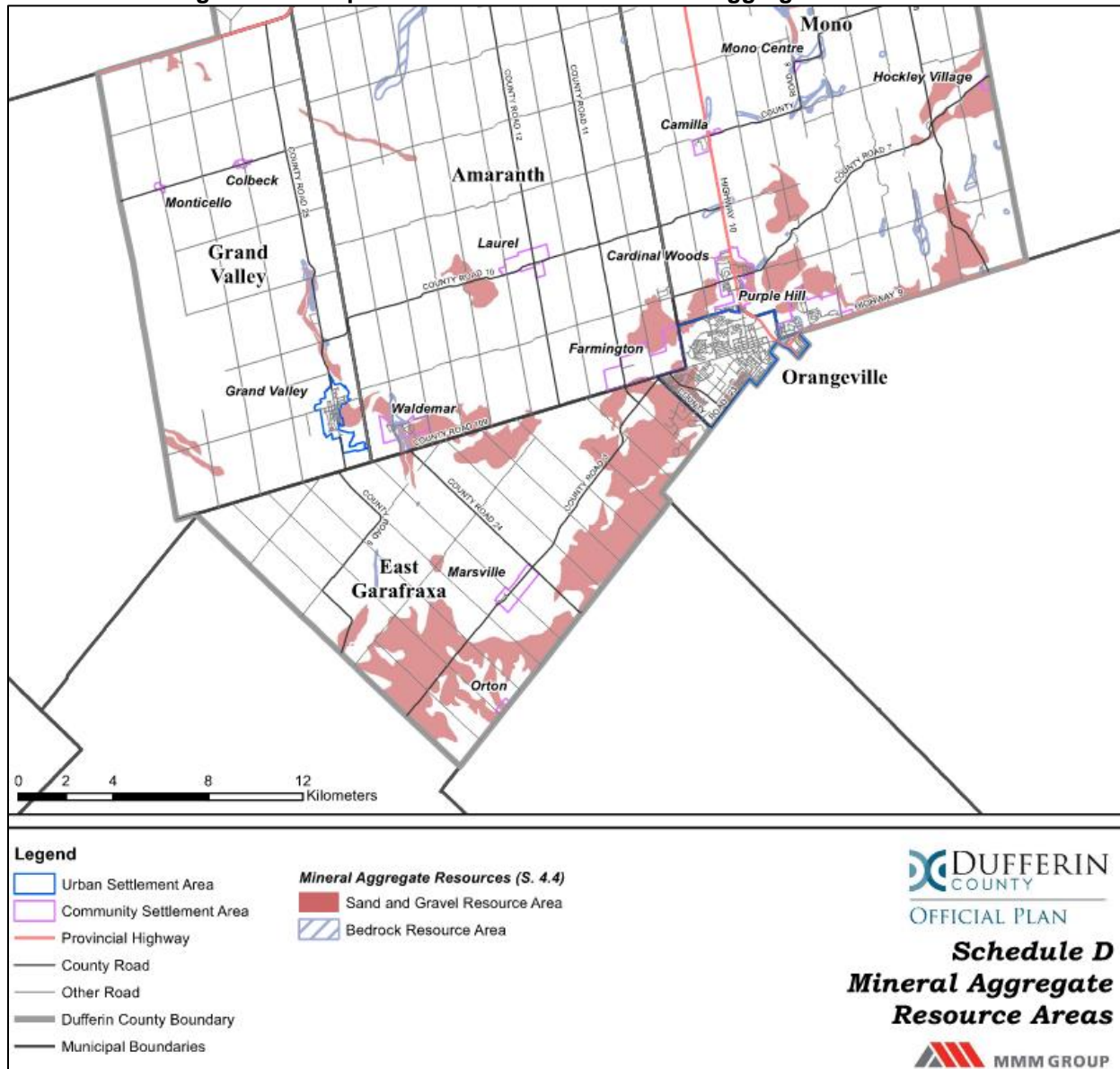
The Province provides the D-series Environmental Land Use guides, which provide recommended measures to ensure land use compatibility and environmental considerations. These include the D-6 series of guides for compatibility between industrial facilities, to which mineral resource extraction and mineral aggregate operations are subject. These provide guidance for municipalities on recommended separation distances and applicable studies to determine potential impacts on adjacent uses to ensure compatibility.

There are no known mineral resources identified within Dufferin County. Schedule D of the DCOP identifies known mineral aggregate resources within the County, including within the Town (Figure 9). Currently there is one licensed and operating mineral aggregate operation in Grand Valley and a closed gravel pit operation to the east of existing urban settlement area boundary south of Amaranth Street East, (Figure 10, from Land Information Ontario mapping), which has been included in the expanded settlement boundary within the County’s adopted OPAs, pending approval by the province. This is discussed further in Section 13.

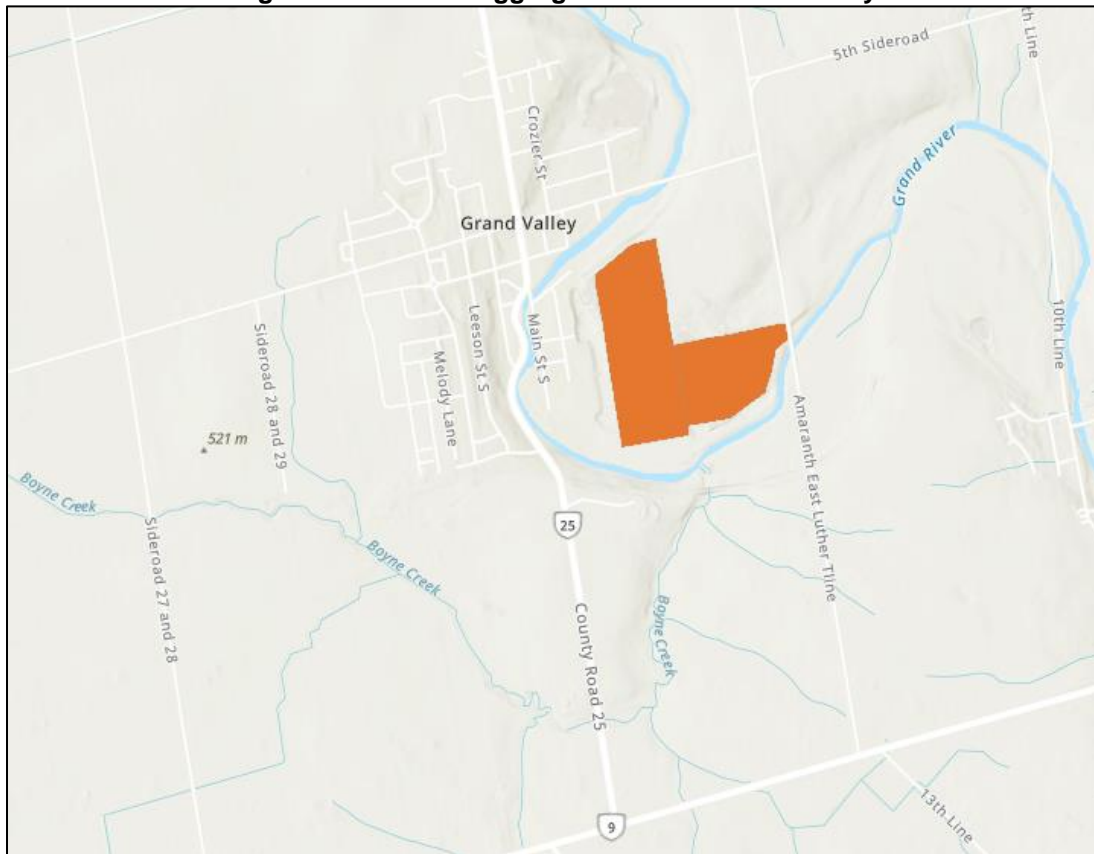
Section 4.4 of the DCOP contains policies to protect mineral aggregate resources, prohibit incompatible land uses, guide the development of new mineral aggregate operations, and guide the rehabilitation of these sites, consistent with Section 4.4 and 4.5 of the PPS 2024. No petroleum resources have been identified in Grand Valley.



Figure 9: Excerpt of DCOP Schedule D Mineral Aggregate Resources



**Figure 10. Inactive Aggregate Sites in Grand Valley**



## **12.2 The Official Plan**

Mineral Aggregate Resources are identified on Schedule 'B-3 – Mineral Aggregate Resources' of the OP and categorized as Primary and Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resources. For more detail on specific mineral aggregate resources, the OP references DCOP Schedule 'D'.

Section 4.2.5 of the OP speaks to Mineral Aggregate Resources and contains policies which protect for their long-term use and the separation of incompatible adjacent uses. These policies will be reviewed for consistency with the DCOP, provincial D Series guidelines, and the PPS. Further, this section requires updating to include policies which speak to extracting resources in an environmentally, economic, and socially sustainable manner.

Section 5.9 of the OP speaks to the Extractive Industrial land use Designation which applies to all existing mineral aggregate operations. Section 5.9 contains policies to guide the continued operation of mineral aggregate operations, the rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operation and requires an amendment to the plan to develop new mineral aggregate operations and requirements for new mineral operations. The Town OP lacks criteria to be considered when reviewing a proposal to develop or expand a mineral aggregate operation and should be updated to include these criteria or direct reference to applicable DCOP policies.

There are no policies within the OP which speaks to petroleum resources or mineral resources. However as identified in Section 4.4 of the DCOP, there are no known mineral or petroleum resources in the County.

Therefore, it is recommended that the OP be updated to:

- Update Schedule B3 – Mineral Aggregate Resources to identify the type of mineral aggregate resources, consistent with the DCOP and update the text to acknowledge the same.
- Update Section 4.2.5 to include policies which require that mineral aggregate resource extraction be conducted in an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable manner.
- Ensure policies relating to adjacent lands conforms with the DCOP, PPS 2024, and Provincial D-6 guidelines for industrial uses.
- Include additional policies regarding requirements for rehabilitation and adaptive re-use strategies for mineral resource operations.
- Update Section 5.9 to include criteria to be considered when reviewing a request for an OP amendment to expand or establish a new mineral aggregate resource operation.
- Include a new subsection under Section 4.2, Wise Use and Management of Resources to identify that there are no petroleum resources identified in Grand Valley and establish policies that would apply where future petroleum resources are identified.

### **12.3 Zoning By-law**

The Zoning By-law will be updated to reflect changes to definitions related to adjacent lands. At this time there is no need for further update to zoning regulations related to minerals and mineral aggregate resources.

## 13.0 Protecting Public Health and Safety

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### 13.1 Background

A key element of land use planning is ensuring that development does not occur in locations that are not appropriate due to the risk of public health and safety and property damage or loss. Under the PPS 2024, these broadly fall within two categories – natural hazards and human made hazards.

Natural hazards include hazardous lands, hazardous sites, and hazardous forest types for wildland fire. These hazard types are highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. The first of these, hazardous lands, are defined in the PPS 2024 as property or lands that could be unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes, such as high water levels during heavy precipitation. Along rivers, streams, and small inland lake systems, this means the land, including that covered by water, to the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard or erosion hazard limits. The PPS 2024 directs development away from hazardous lands and sites to reduce the effects of these risks. Municipalities may choose to identify a single zone for all an entire floodplain or apply a one or two zone concept to recognize both a floodway, of greater risk to safety, and the flood fringe, of lesser risk to safety when appropriate mitigation measures are in place.

Second, the PPS 2024 defines a hazardous site as property or lands that could be unsafe for development and site alteration due to naturally occurring hazards. These may include unstable soils or unstable bedrock. This also includes steep slopes, which may be associated with slope instability, erosion, or access constraints. Third, the PPS 2024 defines hazardous forest types for wildland fire as forest types assessed as being associated with the risk of high to extreme wildland fire using risk assessment tools established by the province and amended from time to time.

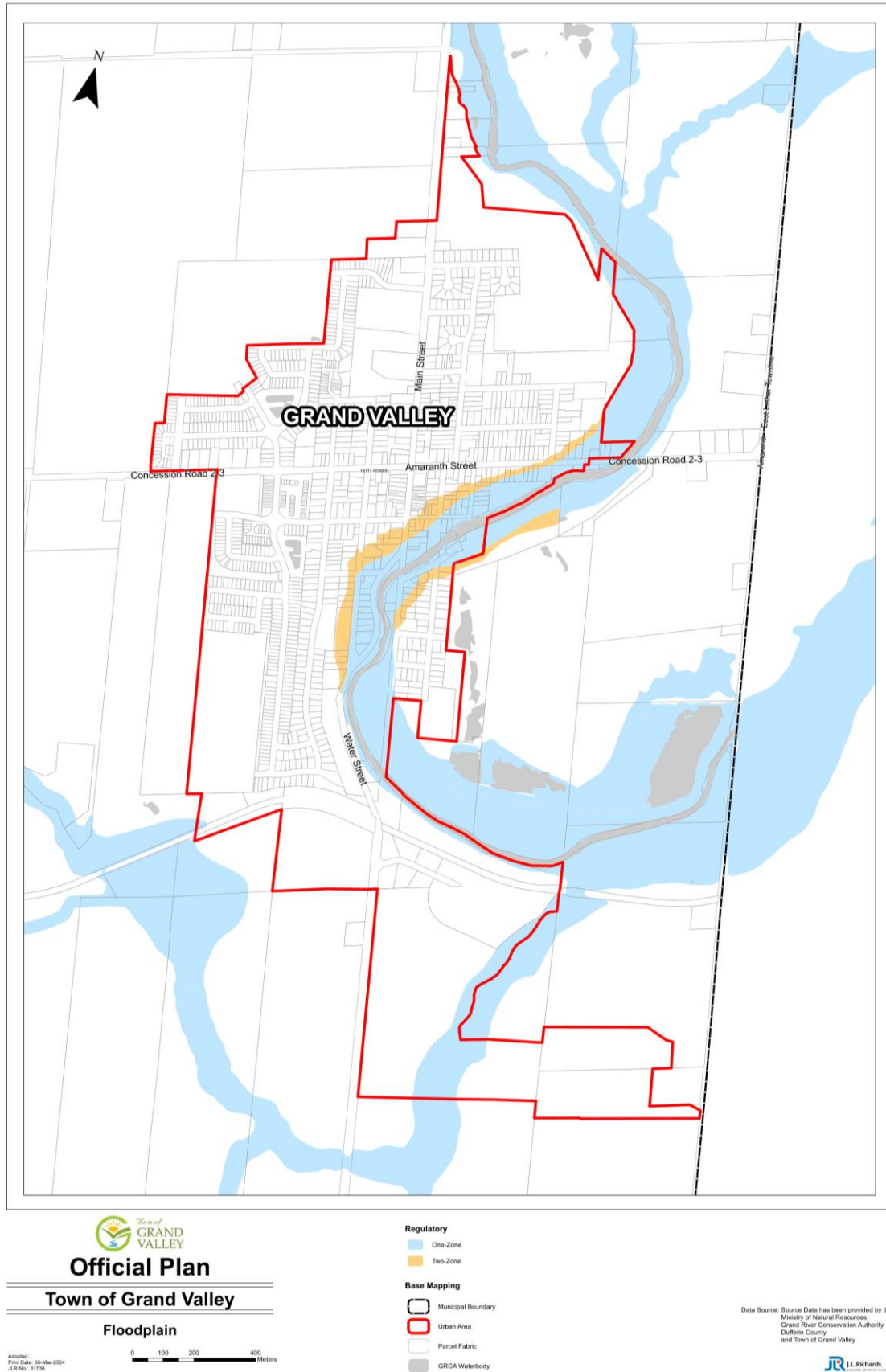
In recent years, Grand Valley has seen increased flooding along the Grand River. Grand Valley employs a two-zone concept for floodplain mapping within its urban settlement area (Figure 11), while the remainder of the Town employs a one-zone approach. In total, approximately 452 properties within Grand Valley (out of a total of 1825) are currently fully or partially located within the floodplain.

It is important that the Town review its floodplain and two-zone floodplain policies to ensure consistency with the PPS 2024 and provide additional clarity regarding permitted uses and setbacks to ensure community safety. The GRCA manages floodplain mapping for the Town and is currently undergoing a mapping update. The GRCA has also identified lots with steep slopes within the Township, and schedule updates will be prepared for the OP and Zoning By-law. Once updated floodplain mapping is available, the Town will have up to date mapping to identify the floodplain boundaries and related hazards.

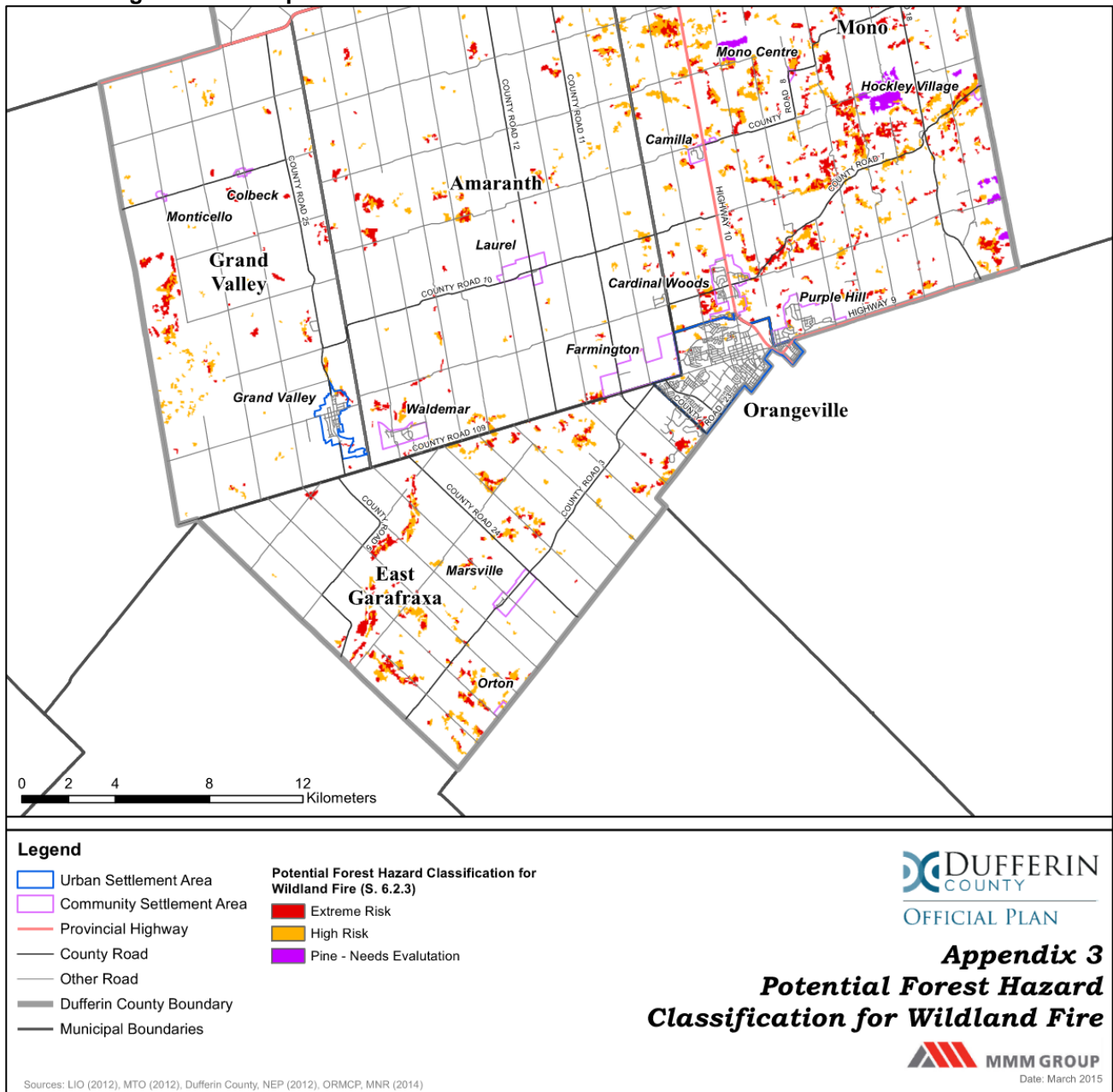
In addition to the above changes to natural hazards, Appendix 3 of the DCOP (Figure 11) identifies areas of potential forest hazard classifications for wildland fire as identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The Town's OP will be updated to include applicable mapping and policies consistent with the PPS 2024.

Alternatively, human made hazards, under the PPS 2024, are those places where human activity on the landscape has occurred and the activity has created a risk to further development. Human made hazards include mine hazards, oil, gas and salt hazards, contaminated lands or former mineral mining operations, mineral aggregate operations, or petroleum resource operations. The PPS 2024 directs development outside of areas of human-made hazards unless rehabilitation and remediations of hazards or contaminants can be taken to ensure there are no adverse effects as a result of proposed future uses.

**Figure 11: Grand Valley Settlement Area Floodplain Mapping**



**Figure 12: Excerpt of DCOP Potential Forest Hazard Classification for Wildland Fire**





Within Grand Valley, MNRF mapping identifies one active and one inactive aggregate site, the latter within the Town's settlement area (as shown previously in Figure 9). DCOP Schedule F also identifies two former waste disposal sites within the Town.

The abovementioned DCOPA #3 expanded the settlement area of Grand Valley to accommodate the Town's forecasted population growth. Schedule B1 of the OPA demonstrates the inclusion of the inactive aggregate site (known locally as the "Gravel Pit Lands") within the Town's new settlement area boundary, as shown earlier in Figure 2. This site was chosen for inclusion due to its proximity to the existing built-up area, the likelihood of a large developable area despite environmental constraints, and to prioritize the rehabilitation of brownfield lands rather than productive agricultural lands. Policies respecting the use, rehabilitation, and development within these hazard areas will be updated along with the settlement area boundary change.

### **13.2 The Official Plan**

The OP includes policies for hazardous lands, including floodplains, erosion and unstable slopes, inactive waste disposal sites, and organic soils, as shown on Schedule B2 (Natural and Human-Made Hazards) and B3 (Mineral Aggregate Resources). These Schedules will be updated with the latest available mapping from the GRCA and Provincial ministries.

Section 4.3 sets policies that speak to natural and human made hazards and potentially contaminated sites. Policies include those to limit the impacts of hazards on public safety, ensuring that development on such lands mitigates risk to public health and safety and protection of environmental features and function to the satisfaction of the Township, and requiring a Record of Site Condition to determine remediation needs prior to site redevelopment.

The former aggregate site ("Gravel Pit Lands") is identified within the Town OP as Site Specific Policy Area 3. The intent of this policy area within the current OP is to rehabilitate the former gravel pits and create a possible spillway to divert flooding in the area. Notwithstanding these policies, the OP will be updated to conform to the DCOP settlement area and policies, once approved, and to ensure future development within these areas is consistent with the PPS 2024 for the preservation of public safety.

While Schedule B2 identifies the broader floodplain, it does not illustrate the two-zone floodplain within the Grand Valley settlement area. Instead, this two-zone floodplain is illustrated as an inset diagram on Schedule A2 – Land Use (Village). It is recommended that a new schedule be added to better illustrate the two-zone floodplain for greater clarity and to ensure it is not missed by readers.

Recommended updates include:

- A review of all policies for consistency with PPS 2024.
- Policies and mapping of Wildland Fire hazards, consistent with the PPS 2024.
- Expanding policies of Section 4.3.2 related to mineral aggregate operations and resources, pits and quarries, waste disposal sites, and known contaminated soils, as well as policies related to rehabilitation of hazardous lands.
- Creating a new schedule which identifies properties within the two-zone floodplain.
- Updated to Natural Hazards policies (Section 4.3.1.1) to provide additional clarity and strengthen policy language surrounding prohibited uses and the two-zone flood plain.
- Updated policies with relevance to the impacts of climate change.

### **13.3 Zoning By-law**

The current Zoning By-law identifies risks to public health and safety related to natural and human-made hazards within the Environmental Protection (EP) Zone. Uses and structures permitted within the EP Zone are limited to those related to environmental conservation or flooding and erosion management.



Employing the two-zone concept as mentioned above, the Zoning By-law identifies areas within the Flood Fringe area through the suffix (f) applied to the applicable parent Zone. Section 2.8 outlines provisions applicable to properties within the flood fringe, including restrictions for the prevention of flooding hazards.

Uses related to human-made hazards, such as pits and quarries, peat extraction, recycling facilities, waste treatment and disposal, are restricted to the Extractive Industrial (MX) and Disposal Industrial (MD) Zones. To improve interpretation, we recommend updating the acronyms to reflect the Zone names (i.e. EI and DI). Human-made hazards are further addressed through the general provisions for waste disposal, landfills, recycling facilities, wayside pits and quarries and resource extraction.

The Zoning By-law update will include clarification of the distinction between these zones and their appropriate uses, updates to schedules reflecting changes to the floodplain mapping and settlement area expansion of DCOPA #3 once approved, as well as all required changes to implement updates to the OP.

## 14.0 Cultural Heritage

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### 14.1 Background

Grand Valley has much to offer residents and visitors in the way of cultural experiences. The Town boasts a historic downtown and the coursing natural features surrounding the Grand River. The OP and Zoning By-law updates can be employed to encourage new cultural activity and support the preservation of existing cultural heritage resources.

The PPS 2024 direct municipalities to conserve cultural heritage resources, including built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, and archaeological resources. Built heritage resources refer to structures, monuments, or installations, or remnants thereof which contribute to a property or community's cultural heritage value. Cultural heritage landscapes refer to defined geographical areas, including structures, spaces, views, or archaeological sites, which may have been modified by human activity, and are identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community. These resources and landscapes may be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* or included on local, provincial, federal, or international heritage registers. Grand Valley does not currently have such a heritage register, nor any heritage conservation area designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

In addition, the Province contains many areas of archeological potential, that is areas high in likelihood to contain archeological resources which are of significance to Indigenous communities. The PPS 2024 recognize the importance of the interests of Indigenous communities related to archeological resources and their implications for land use. Municipalities are directed to engage with Indigenous Communities when managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources and are encouraged to prepare Archaeological Management Plans. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) identifies criteria for evaluating archaeological potential, to determine requirements for additional archaeological assessment. The criteria include such factors as proximity to known archaeological resources, topographical features and land formations, or water sources. Given the presence of the Grand River throughout Grand Valley, the requirement for archaeological assessment for development is common within many areas of the Town. In addition to these measures, best practice across many municipalities is to circulate all development applications to local Indigenous communities to ensure interests can be addressed within *Planning Act* processes. See Section 15 for more about the Town's relationship with Indigenous Communities.

For many municipalities, elements of built heritage and urban design for the purposes of heritage conservation have historically been implemented through the site plan control process under the *Planning Act* or through heritage designation of properties or districts under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. In 2022, *Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act*, amended the *Heritage Act* to limit the applicability of property and district designation. Grand Valley does not maintain a Municipal Heritage Register under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and as such policies will require minimal update at this time. Bill 23 also amended the *Planning Act* to limit the scope of site plan control in regard to exterior design and appearance of structures, except in cases of health, safety, accessibility, sustainability, or the protection of adjacent lands, or in areas in proximity to railways or waterbodies or watercourses (as prescribed by O. Reg 254/23).

### 14.2 The Official Plan

Section 4.2.6 of the OP outlines policies for built and cultural heritage. This includes policies for known archeological resources and areas of archaeological potential, including requirements for archaeological assessments. It also includes policies requiring development adjacent to cultural heritage resources to include design consistent with the surrounding landscape and built form, as well as the application of site plan control to implement cultural heritage conservation. In the absence of a register listing built and cultural heritage resources within Grand Valley, as well as changes to the legislative scope of site plan

control under the *Planning Act*, these policies will require updating for consistency with the PPS and legislation.

Recommended policy updates include:

- Strengthening policies related to relationship building with Indigenous Communities, including for review of development for archeological potential;
- Policies which allow Council to consider the consider future policy mechanisms for stronger heritage protection; and,
- Updated policies to reflect changes to the PPS and applicable legislation, including site plan control and development adjacent to heritage resources.

### **14.3 Zoning By-law**

Cultural heritage resources within the Town include the Grand River and various natural heritage features, which are generally implemented within the Zoning By-law through the Environmental Protection Zone and discussed elsewhere in this report. The Zoning By-law will be updated to conform to applicable cultural heritage updates to the OP.

## 15.0 Other Considerations

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### 15.1 Cannabis

The *Cannabis Act* came into effect on October 17, 2018. It had the effect of legalizing the production, sale, and use of cannabis (sometimes referred to as marihuana or marijuana) for recreational purposes in Canada. Prior to the introduction of the *Cannabis Act* in 2018, cannabis was an illegal substance and only permitted to be grown and sold for medical purposes. There were rules in place for the personal growth and consumption of medical cannabis, as well as rules for the commercial growth, processing, and sale of cannabis for medical purposes.

In Spring of 2018, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) published the Municipal Guide to Cannabis Legalization: A Roadmap for Canadian Local Governments. This document provides an overview of several topics related to the legalization of cannabis, including a discussion of land use management (i.e., jurisdictional issues, location and scale of commercial cultivation and processing, location and density of retail facilities, and personal cultivation). Given that cannabis production is an intensive type of agriculture, the FCM recommends that these uses be permitted in agricultural or industrial zones.

Other considerations for licensed cannabis production facilities include those of land use compatibility, especially given potential impacts to adjacent uses due to light pollution or odour emissions. It is recommended that any provisions to regulate licensed cannabis production facilities provide a minimum separation distance between this use and other sensitive land uses, including residential and institutional uses, or any property that contains an existing residential dwelling, school, or church (e.g., 150 metres). Further consideration may be given to the scale of cannabis cultivation and/or processing that is permitted (i.e., where to permit commercial-scale cannabis cultivation and/or processing) and whether to introduce permissions for the retail sale of cannabis and in which zone(s).

There are no guiding policies in the DCOP or Town's OP which address licensed cannabis production facilities. The current zoning by-law contains definitions for a 'Cannabis Production Facility' and 'Cannabis Retail Store'.

#### 15.1.1 Official Plan

Given the broad nature of the policies within the OP, there are no regulations which prohibit the establishment of a Licensed Cannabis Production Facility or Cannabis Retail Store. However, to ensure the necessary enabling policies are provided in the OP regarding the establishment of Cannabis Production Facilities in the Agricultural and Employment Designations, it is recommended the OP be updated to:

- Define Cannabis Production Facilities and Cannabis Processing.
- Require a Zoning By-law Amendment for the consideration of new Cannabis Production Facilities.
- Permit Cannabis Production Facilities solely within the Agricultural and Employment Designations; and,
- Subject cannabis production facilities to Site Plan Control to ensure land use compatibility and to mitigate nuisances of noise, odor, light and security.

#### 15.1.2 Zoning By-law

While the Zoning By-law contains definitions for cannabis production facilities and cannabis retail stores, it is recommended that the Zoning By-law include regulations under the

General Provisions section of the Zoning By-law to establish setback requirements, parking, accessory uses and storage considerations.

## **15.2 Relationships with Indigenous Communities**

Equitable land use planning requires recognition of the rights and values of all people living on the land, historically, currently, and in the future. In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada prepared 94 calls to action for Canadians and all levels of government to recognize and amend the history of systemic mistreatment, subjugation, and the removal of Indigenous people from their lands and culture. At the local level, municipalities have a role to play in establishing land use policies and practices which work to reconcile relationships with Indigenous Communities and recognize the value of Indigenous knowledge and practice in regard to land stewardship and cultural heritage.

The PPS and Growth Plan require that Planning Authorities engage and coordinate with Indigenous Communities on land use planning matters. DCOPA #4 of the DCOP further includes policies which require that Indigenous Communities be consulted when considering an amendment to the DCOP. Further, it requires that planning authorities engage with indigenous communities when identifying, protecting, and maintaining cultural heritage and archaeological resources, in accordance with the PPS 2024.

### **15.2.1 Official Plan**

We recommend that the OP be updated to:

- include policies to require that indigenous communities are properly engaged and consulted with in relation to land use planning and decision making and identifying, environmental stewardship and cultural heritage and archaeological resources.
- include any additional priorities of Council relating to ongoing efforts of the Town towards reconciliation and relationship building with indigenous communities.

### **15.2.2 Zoning By-law**

The Zoning By-law will be updated where appropriate to conform to the updated OP.

## **15.3 Implementation and Structure**

Based on our review of the Town's OP and Zoning By-law, it is our recommendation that the Town amend its implementation policies and regulations to assist with interpretation, address legislative changes and the requirements for different *Planning Act* applications. To improve flow and consistency, it is our recommendation that the section structure be modified.

### **15.3.1 Official Plan**

It is our recommendation that the OP be updated to:

- Include a subsection for definitions rather than relying solely on the definitions from the provincial plans.
- Add a subsection regarding pre-consultation meetings and complete application requirements. This will complement the existing Appendix A which lists complete application requirements.
- Capture all site specific policy areas within a "Site Specific Policy Area" Section.
- Reorder sections to place "Growth Management" in front of "General Development Criteria" to establish density targets at the onset.

- Include a subsection within Section 11, which clarifies the usage of the auxiliary verbs “shall”, “should” and “may” to assist with interpretation of specific policies.
- Update the policies within Section 4.6.3 and 10.3.2 in relation to site plan control, to reflect legislative changes to the *Planning Act*.
- Update section 9.8 to reflect the specific information to be illustrated on a Plan of Subdivision per Section 51(17) of the *Planning Act* and specific information Council will consider when review an application for a Plan of Subdivision per Section 51(24) of the *Planning Act*.
- Update schedules to label primary, county, and provincial highways for ease of reference; and,
- Remove reference to uncompleted appendices.
- Ensure AODA compliance.

#### 15.3.2 Zoning By-law

It is our recommendation that the Zoning By-law be updated to:

- Make stylistic changes to the text to improve usability.
- Update standards that have been frequently amended to provide a more appropriate standard.
- Ensure AODA Compliance.

## 16.0 Public Consultation

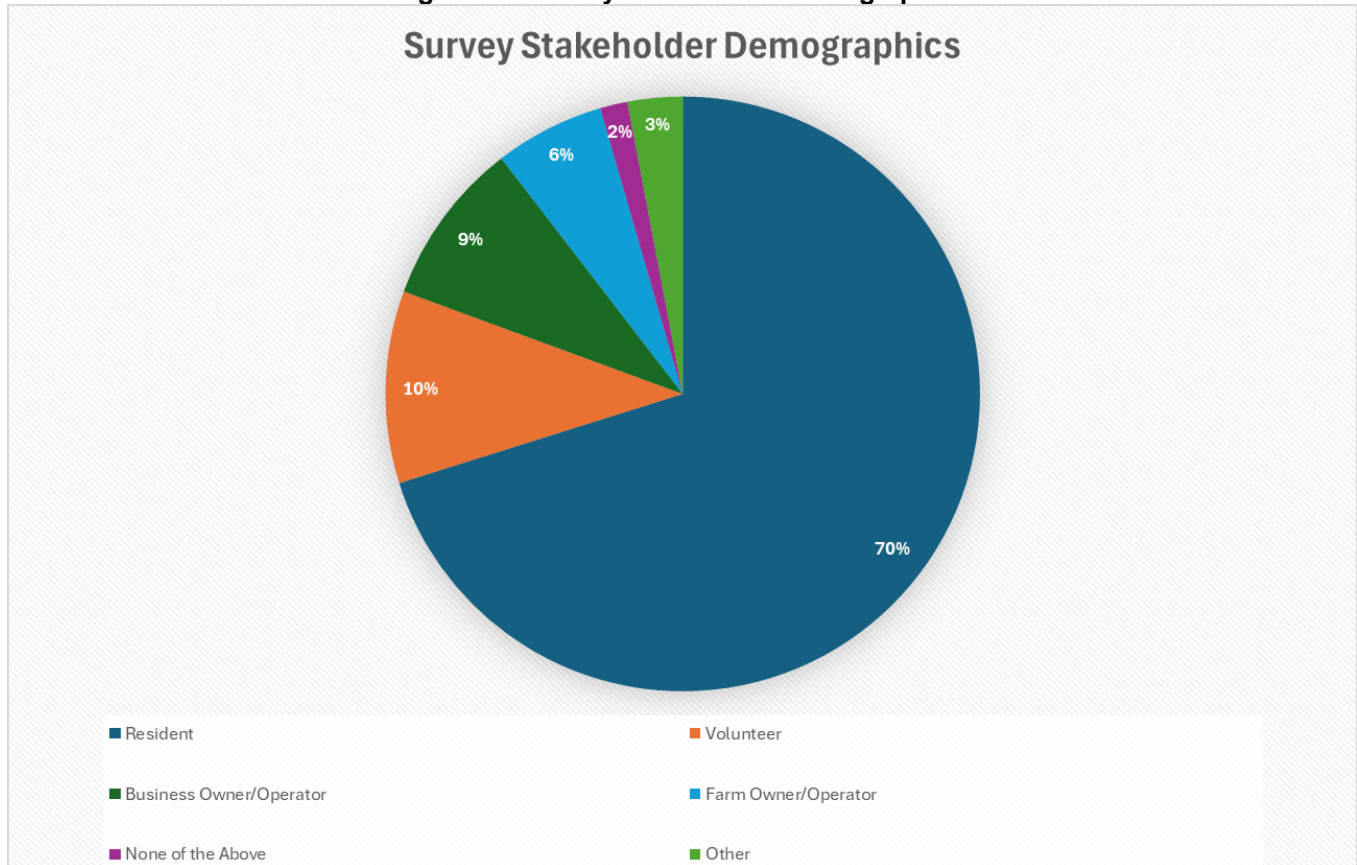
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The Town of Grand Valley Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review project has been shaped by public engagement in the form of focus group interviews, two surveys, one public open house and council presentations. This public engagement has been supplemented by oral and written comments received by members of the public. Oral and written comments will be addressed in a separate report once the updated OP and Zoning By-law are ready for adoption.

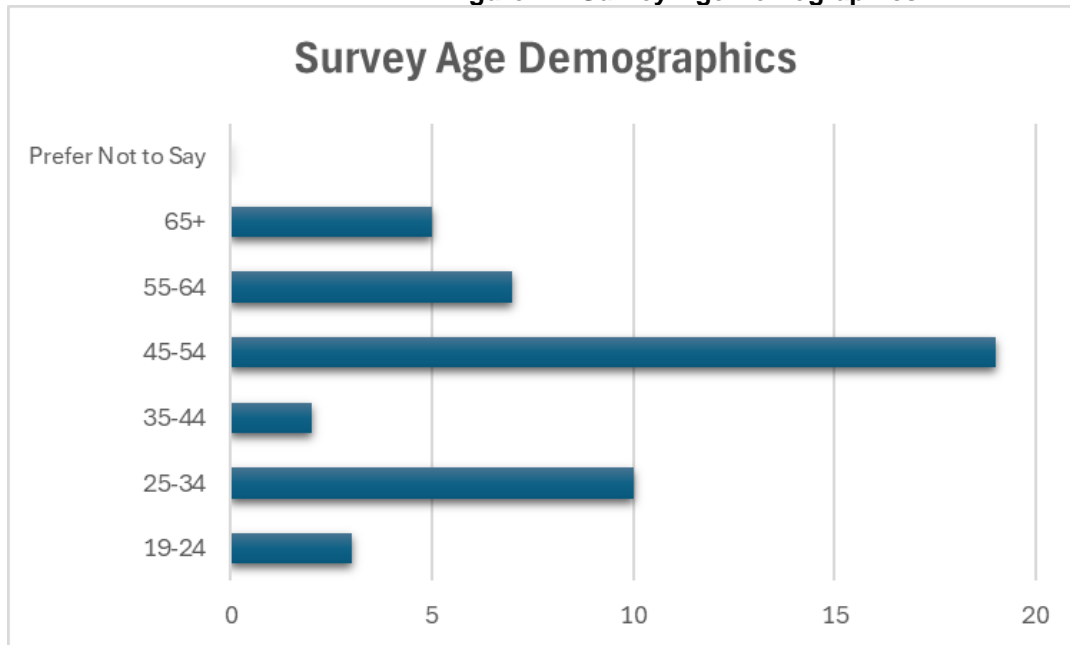
### 16.1 Survey #1

The first survey was published on the Town’s website in June 2024 and ran for approximately two months until August 31, 2024. This survey focused on gathering feedback on how respondents felt about Grand Valley, their vision for Grand Valley over the next 25 years and opinions on key themes presented in the draft background report such as housing, employment, rural areas, and the natural environment. A total of 51 responses were received. Most respondents were residents of the Town of Grand Valley, followed by volunteers and business owners/operators. (Figure 13 – Survey Stakeholder Demographics). The majority of respondents were within the 45-54 age group, followed by the 25-34 and 55-64 age groups (Figure 14 – Survey Age Demographics).

**Figure 13: Survey Stakeholder Demographics**



**Figure 14: Survey Age Demographics**





As it relates to housing, survey respondents identified the need for more seniors housing and nursing homes to allow residents to age in place and the need for affordable housing. Respondents had varied opinions on growth; some were in favour of more housing, while others opposed further residential development. Respondents identified the perception that development creates a division in town between the new and old residents. They also stated that the burden on taxpayers to fund the construction of new infrastructure for new housing should be reduced.

As it relates to employment and economic development, respondents identified the need to have shovel ready employment lands to reduce commuting and attract larger employers. This in turn would allow current and future residents to live, work and play in Grand Valley. Respondents identified the desire for larger retail, professional service establishments and doctors. There was also the desire to maintain the character of the storefronts within the downtown while improving their appearance and reducing vacancies.

In the rural area, respondents identified the need to protect farmland, support farmer and prevent development on farmland. There were mixed responses regarding farm severances; some respondents were in favour of them to encourage more family housing and others wanted to prohibit them to protect the long term viability of the agricultural area. Respondents wanted the municipality to allow for hobby farming and support OFDUs and on-farm events/activities. Respondents voiced the concern regarding the process of developers to buy farmland and leave it unused during the development planning process. Other responses included the desire to bring back rural town events, support community gardens, promote fair taxations, support rural transit or other transportation options and encourage co-op placements and events to better connect local farms with residents.

In relation to the natural area, respondents voiced the need to protect greenspace and natural heritage areas and features from development while also addressing the impacts on these features due to climate change, flooding and the erosion. Respondents stated that the trails and greenspaces are popular in the Town and that the trails require better upkeep. There was a desire for more parks and publicly accessible natural areas.

More broadly, respondents indicated the desire for more community spaces such as recreation centres, libraries, fitness centres and seniors centres. Respondents want to see more greenspace, want to limit the paving of backyards and want the Town to incentivize climate change adaption from homeowners. Respondents identified concerns with the traffic new development will bring and want the Town to consider taxi services and public transportation.

## **16.2 Focus Groups**

As part of the public engagement to inform the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law, two 1.5 hour focus group meetings were held on July 30, 2024 with stakeholders from the agricultural community and business and development industry. As part of the meetings, we sought specific feedback on key themes from the background report based on their expertise.

In general, both groups expressed the need for better infill and intensification policies and stated that the Town needs to “grow up, no out”. Both groups expressed the need for a greater variety of housing types in the Town, in particular housing for seniors and housing for young adults. The agricultural group expressed concerns with the larger lot sizes for surplus farm dwellings and the lack of maintenance for farm homes which are sold to developers. There is demand for mixed residential with storefront commercial but rental uptake is low on commercial units.

Regarding additional residential units, stakeholders identified the need for these units to be smaller than the main house, have a maximum height and provide sufficient parking. In the rural area, stakeholders expressed that the size of the additional residential unit could be more flexible but applicants would need to demonstrate how there would be sufficient private servicing capacity.

Both groups expressed the desire to see more mixed-use development within the Town. Stakeholders from the Business and Development group expressed the need for the zoning to be flexible. Currently, there is a lack of commercial space and infrastructure to support commercial uses within the Town.

From an economic perspective, stakeholders from the Business and Development group infrastructure as the primary barrier to attracting new businesses. There is an opportunity for light manufacturing businesses to locate in Grand Valley as employers are looking for smaller communities where workers can afford a home. The Town should focus on promoting key intersections of the Town for development and marketing certain business opportunities like food-related industries. From a rural perspective, housing affordability and a lack of farm help dwellings, hinders economic development. There are challenge with OFDUs, in terms of taxation, advertising and insurance, which hinder profits.

Regarding agricultural areas, the Agricultural group expressed that conflicts between agricultural and residential uses are a concern which hinder farm operations. Only two percent of the population in Canada are farmers so there is the concern that political will is decreasing for support of agriculture. There are a lot of opportunities for agricultural work in Grand Valley but not enough workers. OFDUs are not common in Grand Valley but they would like to see more.

Some additional considerations raised by the focus groups included focusing on Grand Valley's slogan as nature's playground in marketing and the desire to improve active transportation opportunities and promote alternative forms of transportation like taxis and transit was raised.

### **16.3 Open House**

A statutory Public Open House for the Vision Grand Valley project was held on October 29, 2024 from 6 to 8 pm. Members of the public were invited to review the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law, key themes, ask questions and make comments. Members of the public provided comments on the legibility of some Official Plan schedules, zoning provisions for parking and the policies for new settlement areas. These comments were incorporated into the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

### **16.4 Survey #2**

The second survey was published to the Town's website on November 11, 2024 and ran until December 16, 2024. The second survey focused on gathering feedback on the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law that was published on the Town's website. Only one (1) survey response was received, however this is likely due to the preference of members of the public to provide written or oral comments on a specific topic within the draft documents rather than complete a survey. The survey respondent identified that the schedules were difficult to read, which was a comment received at the public open house as well. The legibility of the schedules has been improved in the updated draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

## **17.0 Conclusion**

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The Town of Grand Valley is projected to experience significant growth to the year 2051 and requires policies and regulations to support growth and the creation of complete communities while recognizing and protecting the importance and viability of the agricultural area and natural features and areas. The background report has considered changes to the Planning Act, the new Provincial Planning Statement 2024, Dufferin County Official Plan Amendments 2 to 4 and other studies such as the Dufferin County Transportation Master Plan and Climate Change Action Plan. The background report has been informed by public engagement and includes recommendations to improve legibility and the interpretation of both the Official Plan and Zoning By-law. This review has been informed through public engagement and supplemented by a technical review of both documents to improve legibility and interpretation.

J.L. RICHARDS & ASSOCIATES LIMITED

Prepared by:



Marilyn Cameron, MSc  
RPP, MCIP, Planner



Alison Bucking, BES (Planning),  
RPP, MCIP, Planner

Reviewed by:



Dave Welwood, MES (Planning)  
RPP, MCIP, Senior Planner

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[www.jlrichards.ca](http://www.jlrichards.ca)

**Ottawa**

864 Lady Ellen Place  
Ottawa ON Canada  
K1Z 5M2  
Tel: 613 728-3571

[ottawa@jlrichards.ca](mailto:ottawa@jlrichards.ca)

**Kingston**

203-863 Princess Street  
Kingston ON Canada  
K7L 5N4  
Tel: 613 544-1424

[kingston@jlrichards.ca](mailto:kingston@jlrichards.ca)

**Sudbury**

314 Countryside Drive  
Sudbury ON Canada  
P3E 6G2  
Tel: 705 522-8174

[sudbury@jlrichards.ca](mailto:sudbury@jlrichards.ca)

**Timmins**

834 Mountjoy Street S  
Timmins ON Canada  
P4N 7C5  
Tel: 705 360-1899

[timmins@jlrichards.ca](mailto:timmins@jlrichards.ca)

**North Bay**

501-555 Oak Street E  
North Bay ON Canada  
P1B 8E3  
Tel: 705 495-7597

[northbay@jlrichards.ca](mailto:northbay@jlrichards.ca)

**Hawkesbury**

326 Bertha Street  
Hawkesbury ON Canada  
K6A 2A8  
Tel: 613 632-0287

[hawkesbury@jlrichards.ca](mailto:hawkesbury@jlrichards.ca)

**Guelph**

107-450 Speedvale Ave. West  
Guelph ON Canada  
N1H 7Y6  
Tel: 519 763-0713

[guelph@jlrichards.ca](mailto:guelph@jlrichards.ca)

