



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Chair and Members of the Planning Committee  
**From:** Sarah Wilhelm, Manager of Policy Planning  
**Date:** Thursday, May 13, 2021  
**Subject:** County Official Plan Review – Alternative Intensification Target



PLANWELL

### 1.0 Purpose

To initiate a request with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for an alternative residential intensification target for Wellington County as part of the municipal comprehensive review (MCR).

### 2.0 Background

As part of the MCR component of the Official Plan Review, the County is required to set targets for various areas/uses in accordance with Provincial policy. This report addresses the residential intensification target which applies to parts of Wellington's urban centres where development has taken place (built-up areas). The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) places a priority on intensification to make efficient use of land and infrastructure, and to support transit viability.

The current County Official Plan has an intensification target that requires at least 20% of all new residential units to be within built-up areas of Wellington's urban centres annually over the 2022 to 2051 period. According to the Growth Plan (2020 consolidation), Wellington County is to maintain or improve upon this target, but may request a lower target. Such a request must be made by County Council to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and demonstrate:

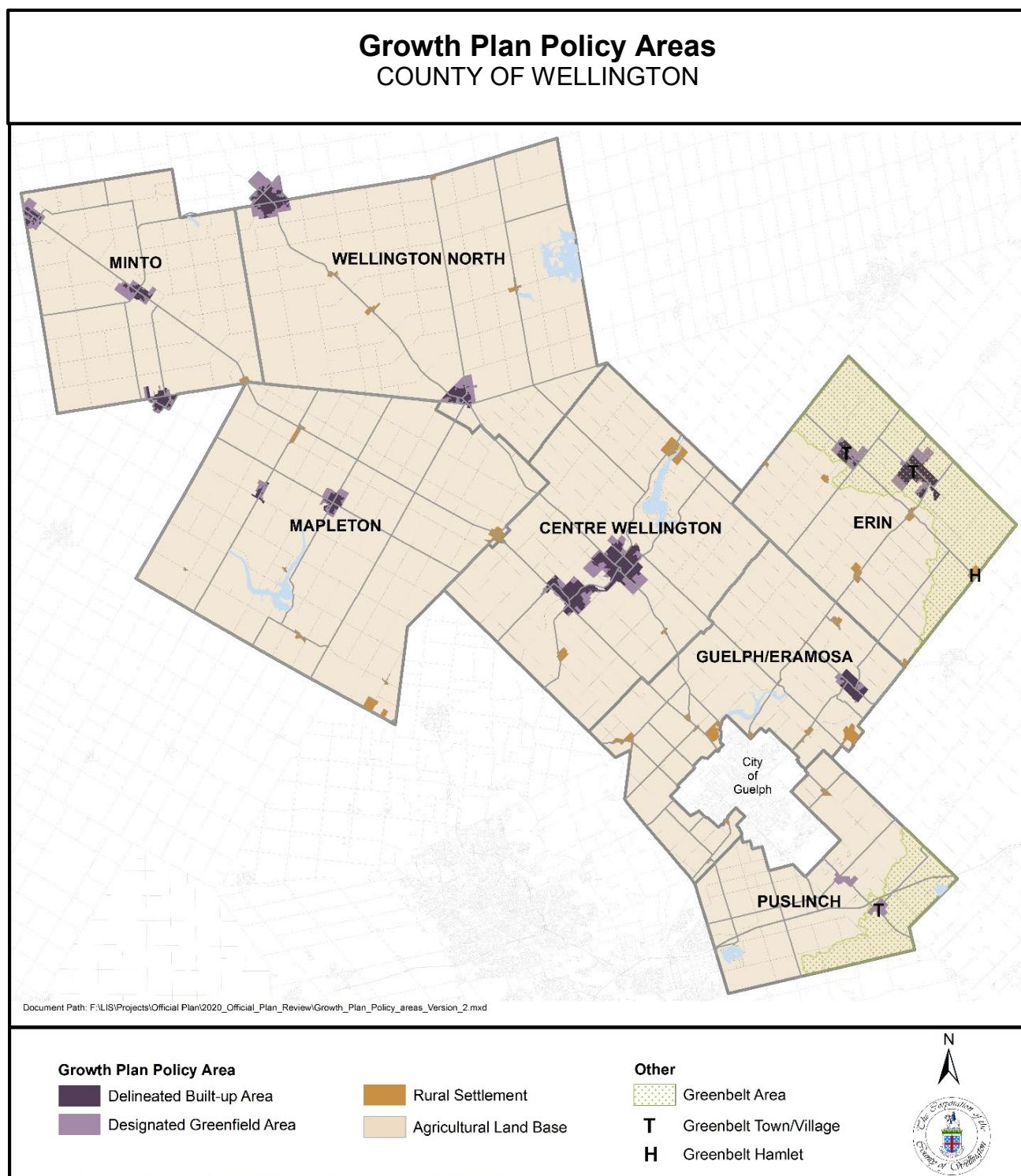
- that the target cannot be achieved; and
- that the alternative target will be appropriate given the size, location and capacity of the delineated built-up area.

There are 12 urban centres in Wellington County with built-up areas:

<b>Centre Wellington</b>	Fergus, Elora/Salem	<b>Mapleton</b>	Drayton, Moorefield
<b>Erin</b>	Erin Village, Hillsburgh	<b>Minto</b>	Clifford, Harriston, Palmerston
<b>Guelph/Eramosa</b>	Rockwood	<b>Wellington North</b>	Arthur, Mount Forest

Puslinch has two designated urban centres in the Official Plan (Aberfoyle and Morriston) but they do not have a delineated built-up area and are therefore not included in this analysis. Figures 1 and 2 identify built-up areas for intensification and other Growth Plan policy areas in Wellington. Detailed mapping by municipality is appended to this report.

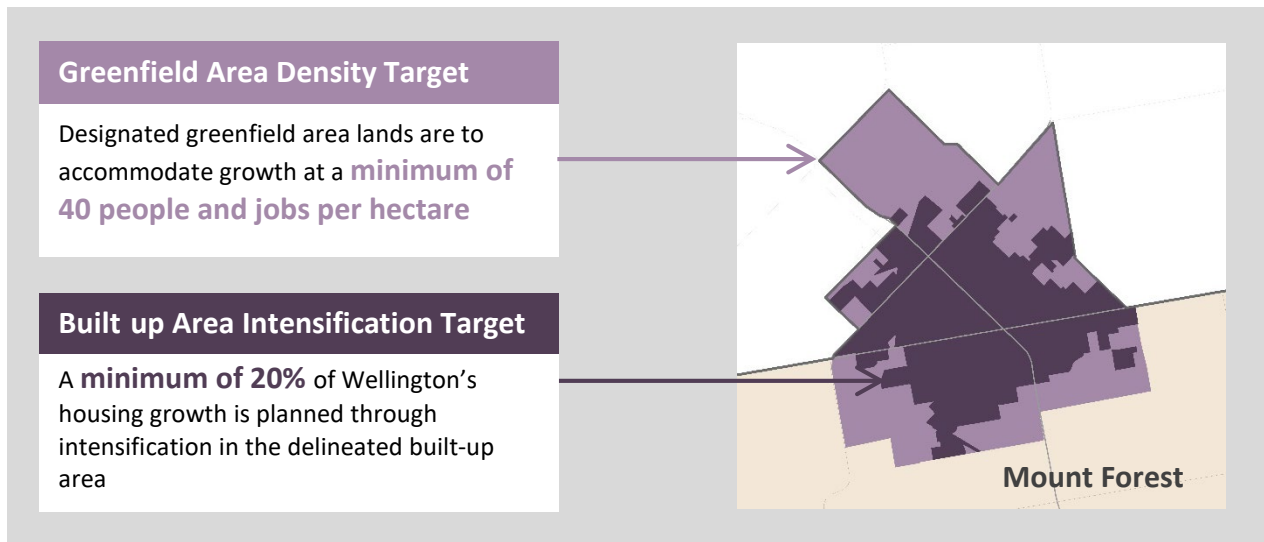
**Figure 1 Growth Plan Policy Areas in Wellington\***



**\*NOTE:** Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

Source: Growth Plan (2020 consolidation), Greenbelt Plan (2017), County Official Plan (January 8, 2021 consolidation)

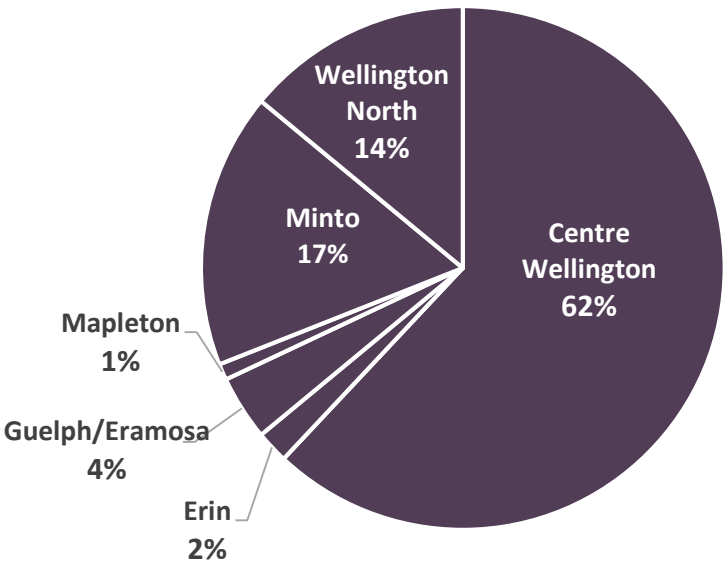
**Figure 2      Detail – Provincial Targets by Growth Plan Policy Areas, County of Wellington**



Source: Growth Plan (2020 consolidation), County Official Plan (January 28, 2021 consolidation)

The County's consultants, Watson & Associates Economists (Watson), have assessed the historical rate of intensification in Wellington from 2016 to 2019. The County has generally achieved the minimum 20% intensification target during this period, but as shown in Figure 3, at differing rates across each municipality. As previously noted, the Township of Puslinch is not included as they have no urban centres with built boundaries.

**Figure 3      Share of Housing Development within the Built-up Area  
County of Wellington 2016 - 2019**



Source: Watson & Associates, 2021

The communities in Wellington are diverse and are not equally able to accommodate intensification at the same rate. Watson has prepared a draft housing forecast to 2051 within the built-up areas to analyze the intensification target across Member Municipalities.

Watson's findings show that the intensification rate is expected to be below 20% over the forecast period for Erin, Mapleton and Minto for the following reasons:

**Erin:** due to the extent of greenfield area development outside the built-up area and minimal opportunities for intensification

**Mapleton:** due to smaller size and location of urban centres, and somewhat limited opportunities for intensification

**Minto:** due to location of urban centres and somewhat limited opportunities for intensification

As the intensification rate is an average, other municipalities would need to exceed 20% to make up the difference. In addition, the boundary of the built-up area was set as of 2006 and there are diminishing opportunities for development across all urban centres. In absolute terms, however, the total intensification in units per year (as opposed to percentage of units) would in fact be an increase relative to the current target. This is due to the higher rate of population growth in Wellington forecast by the Province to 2051 in Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan which is considered a minimum.

Centre Wellington would be impacted most by retaining the current 20% target as it has the highest rate of forecast population and housing growth. Historically, Centre Wellington was allocated the most growth and has delivered the highest rate of intensification. Staff also recognize that Fergus and Elora/Salem have the highest concentrations of designated built heritage resources in Wellington County and the Township has recently devoted considerable resources to study its cultural heritage landscapes. While it is possible to conserve cultural heritage resources and achieve the intensification target through well-designed development, Centre Wellington would need to significantly increase its rate of intensification for the County to continue to achieve the 20% annual housing minimum within the built-up area.

On the basis of the background analysis and the context in Wellington County, the project team recommends an alternative intensification target of 15% across Wellington. The County's project team believes the reduction is supportable and appropriate for the County's context.

## **Conclusion**

County Council may make a request for an alternative target to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing as part of the MCR. Planning staff has been meeting with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and other Ministry representatives during the MCR process. Our background work has identified a need to request an alternative intensification target of 15%. This request is necessary at this time as it is a key input into the land needs assessment.

## Recommendations

That the report “County Official Plan Review – Alternative Density Target” be received for information and forwarded to member municipalities in Wellington County.

That a request be made to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to approve an alternative intensification target of 15% for Wellington County.

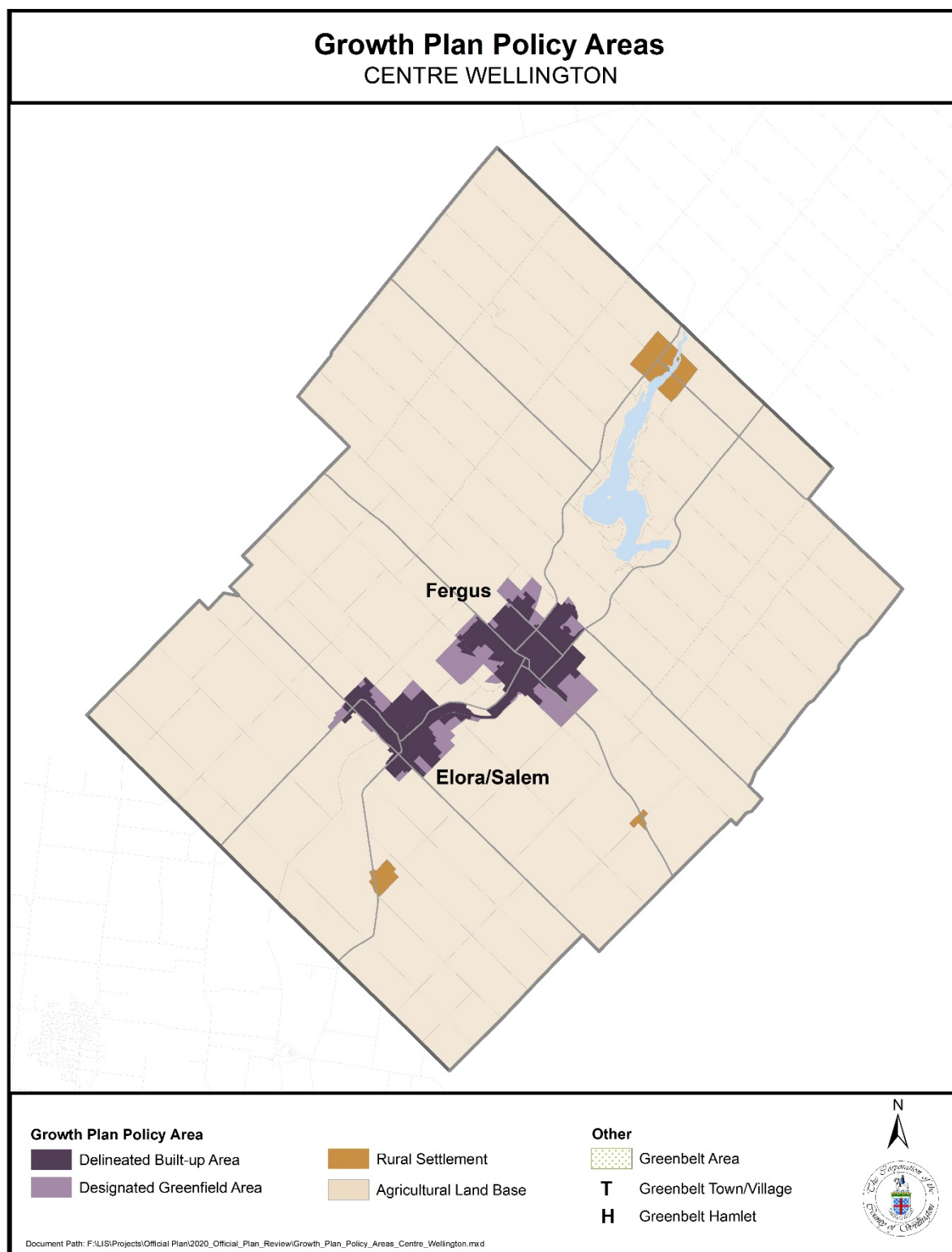
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Wilhelm', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sarah Wilhelm, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Policy Planning

Appendix A1 to A7      Growth Plan Policy Areas by Municipality

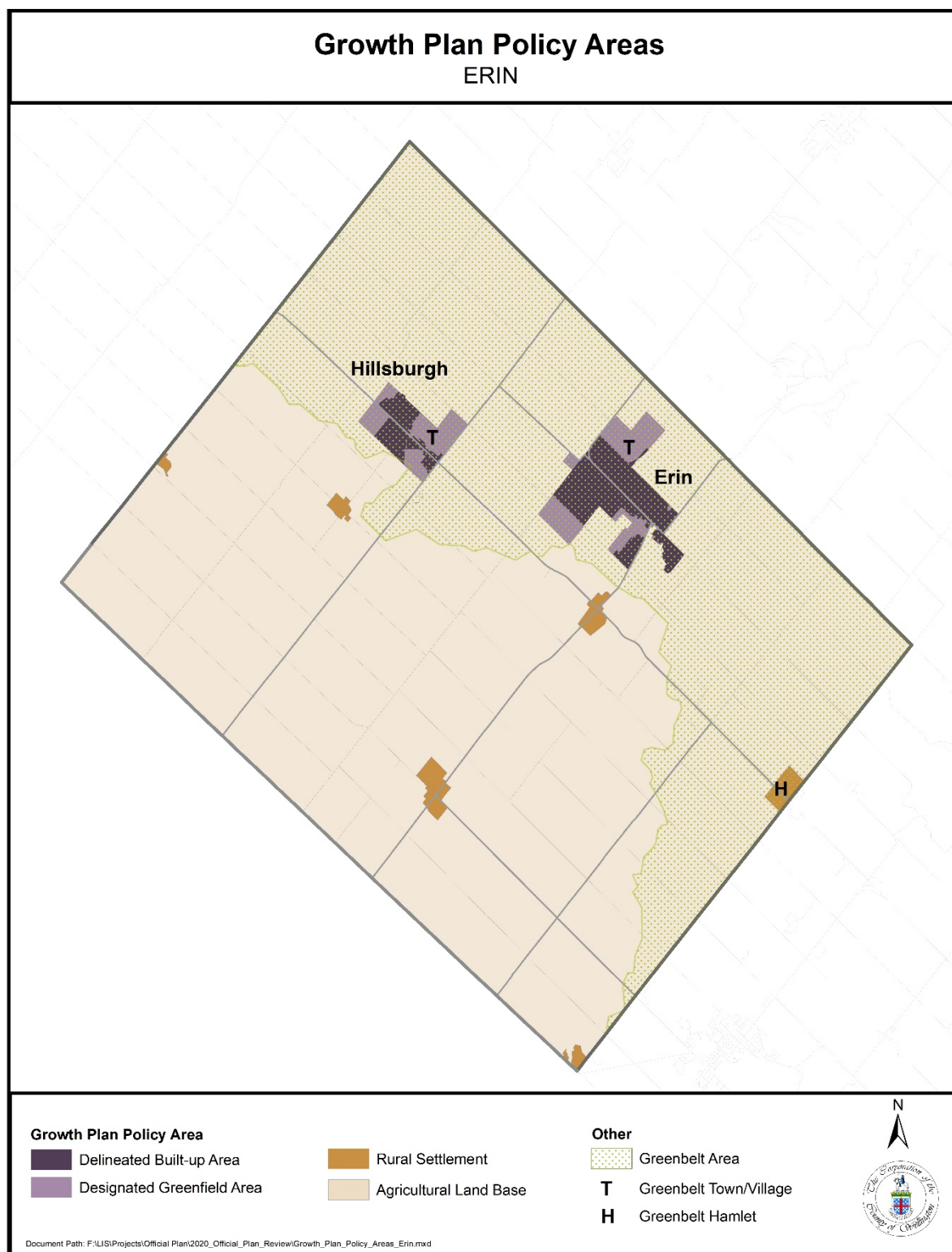
## Appendix A1



NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

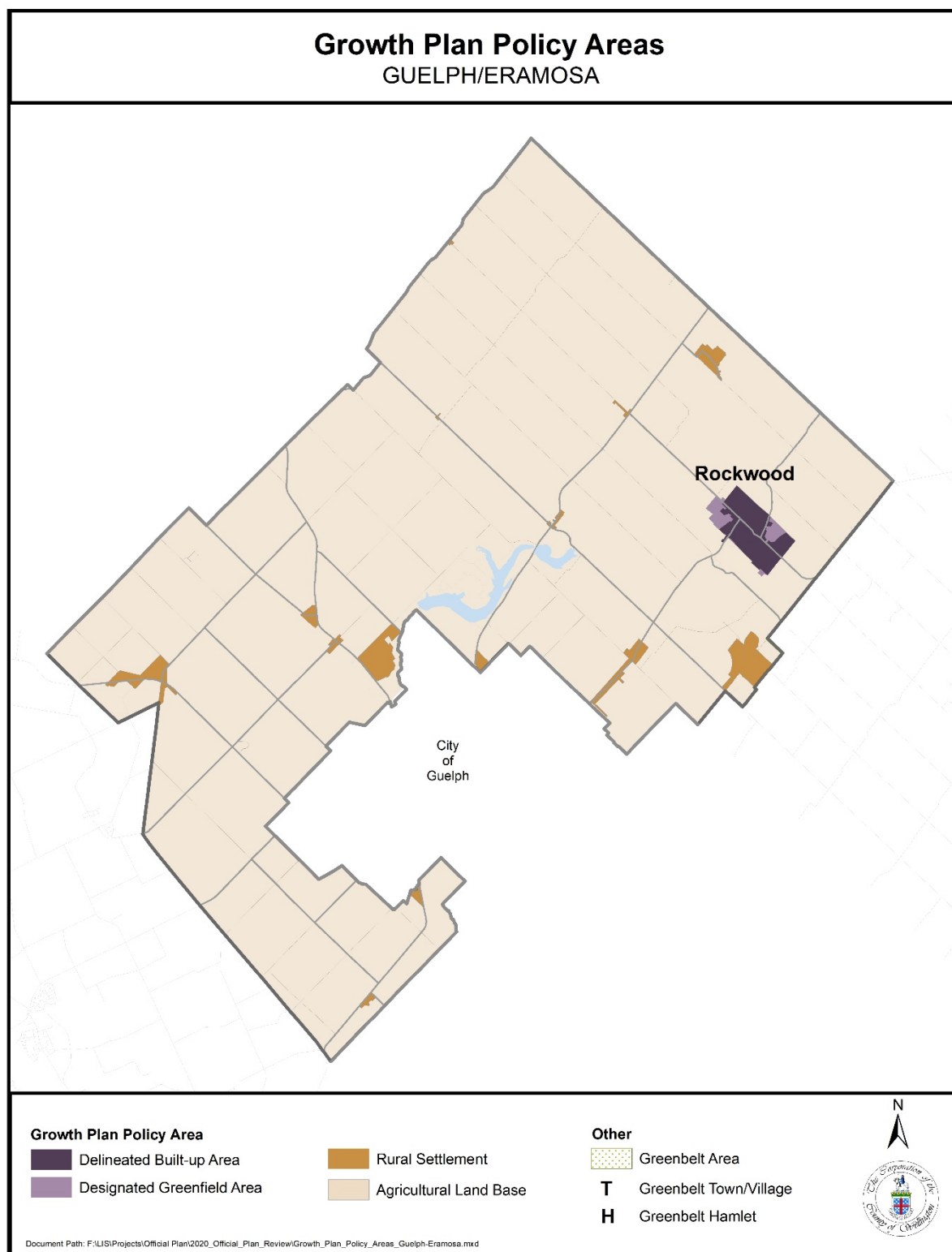


## Appendix A2



NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

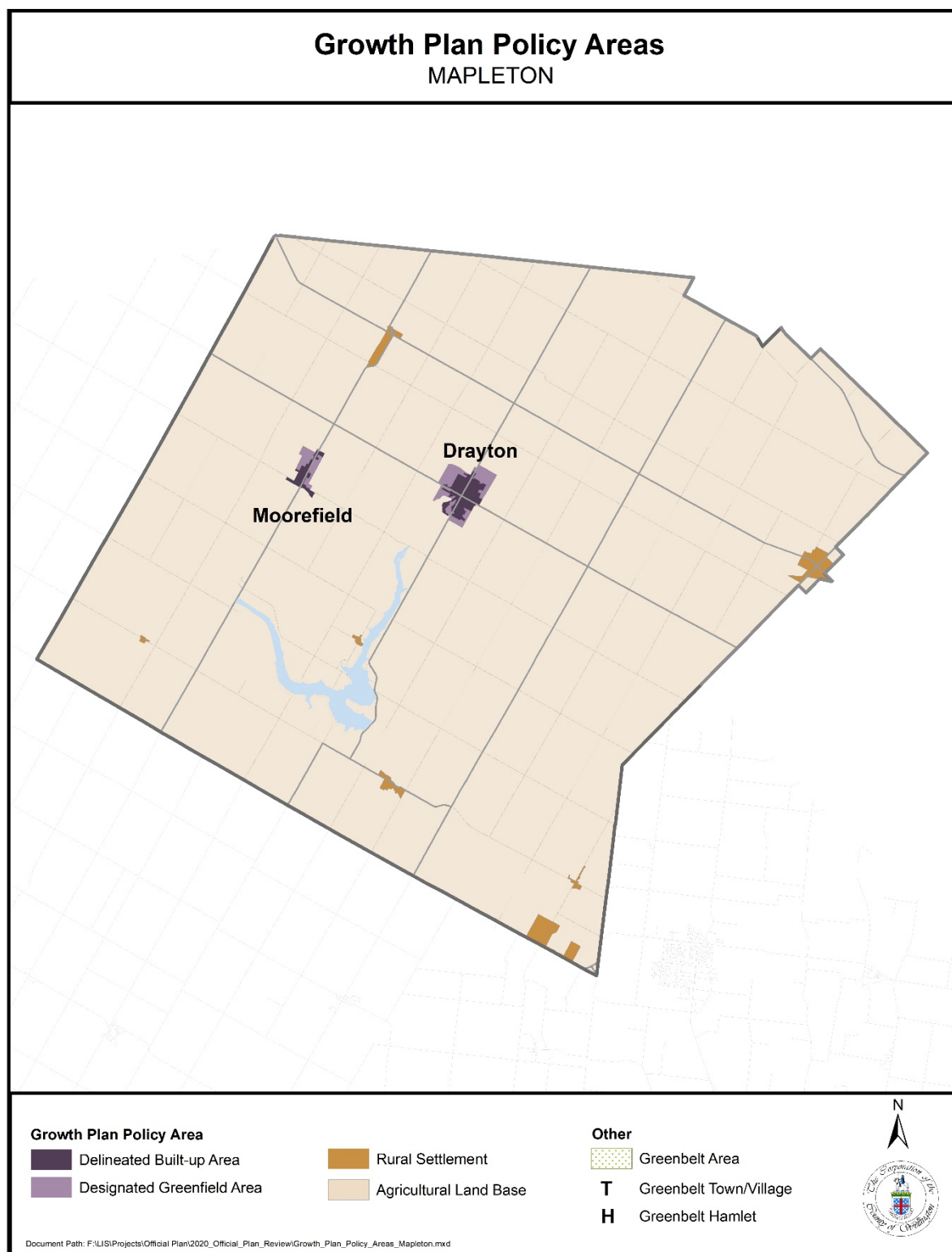
## Appendix A3



NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

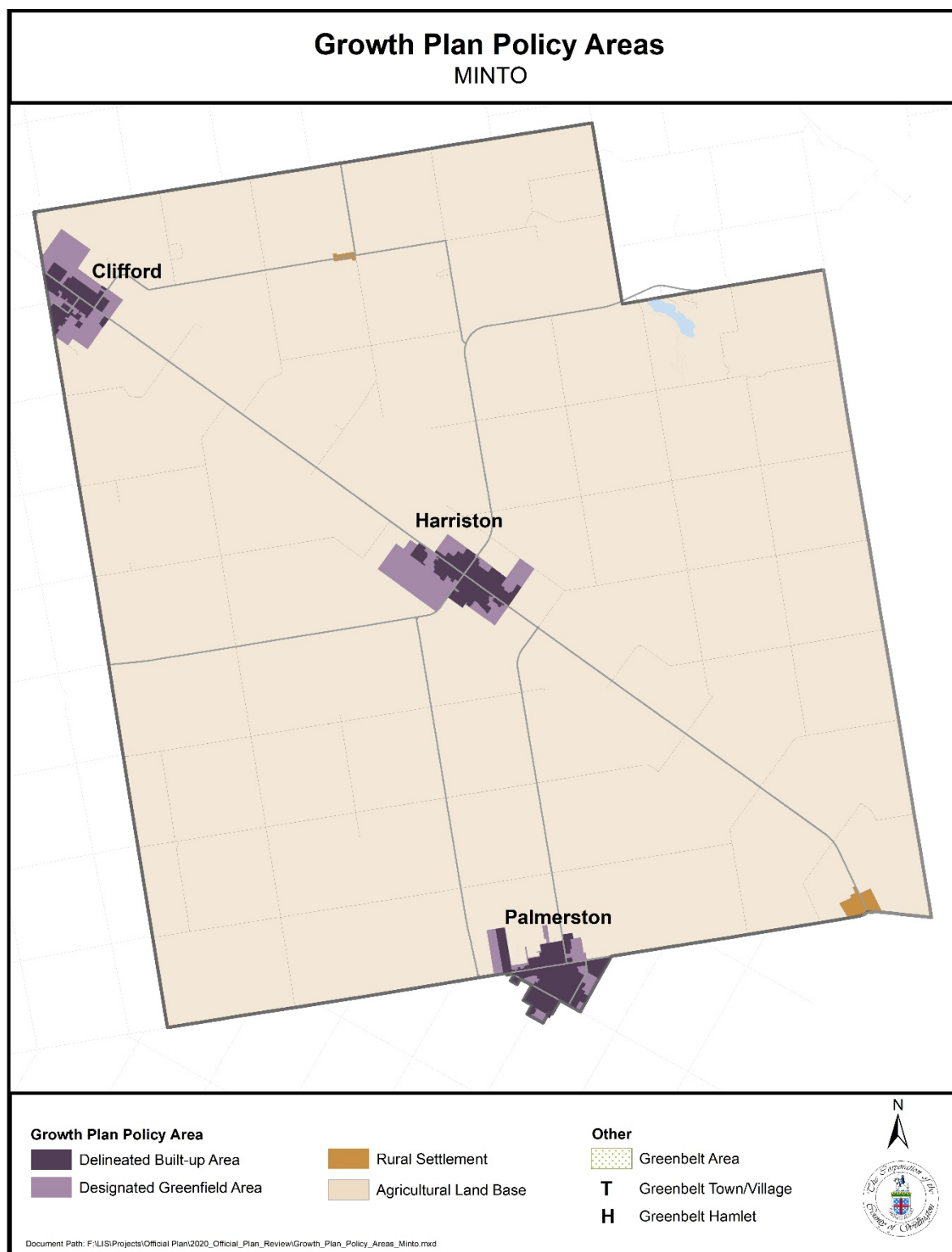


## Appendix A4



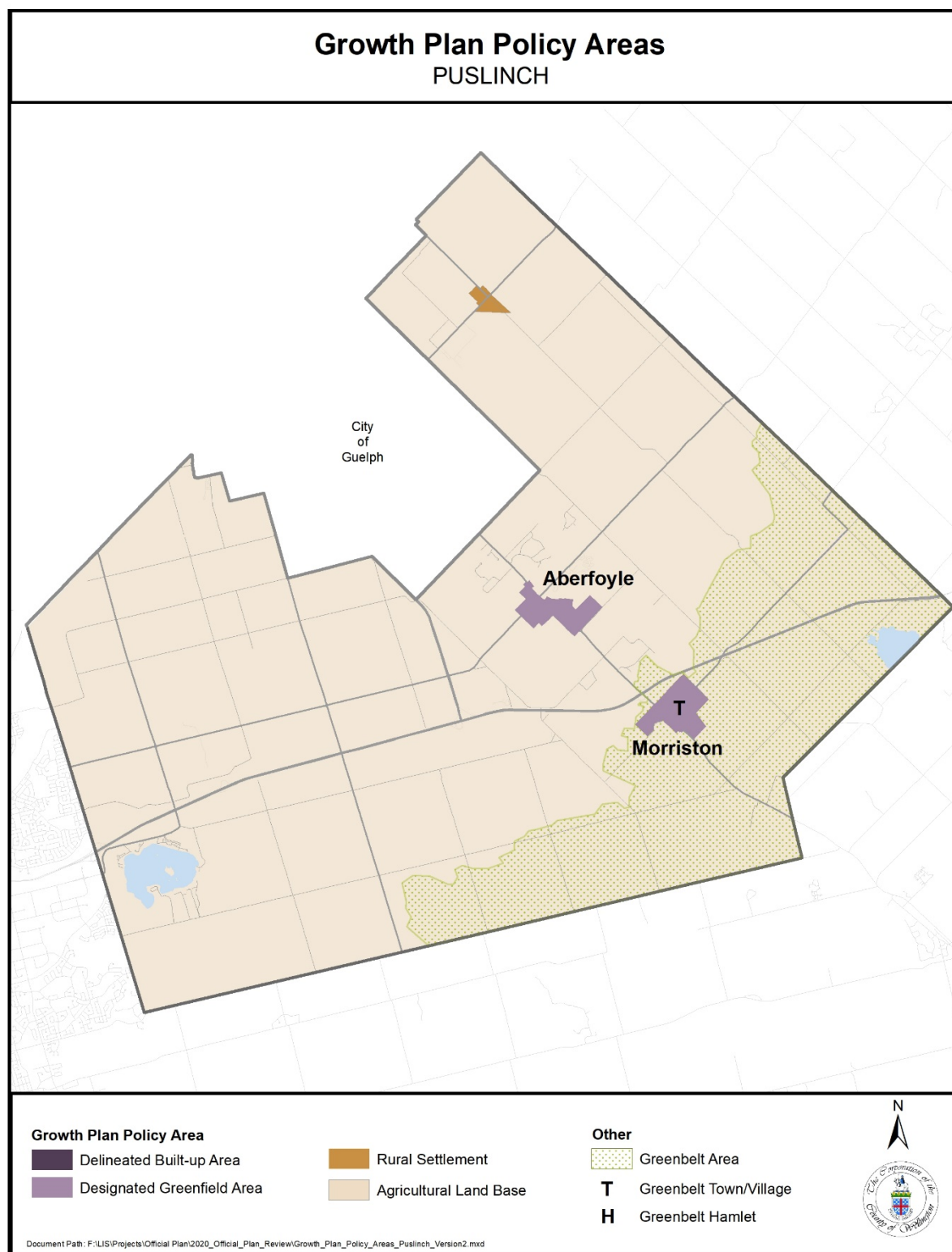
NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

## Appendix A5



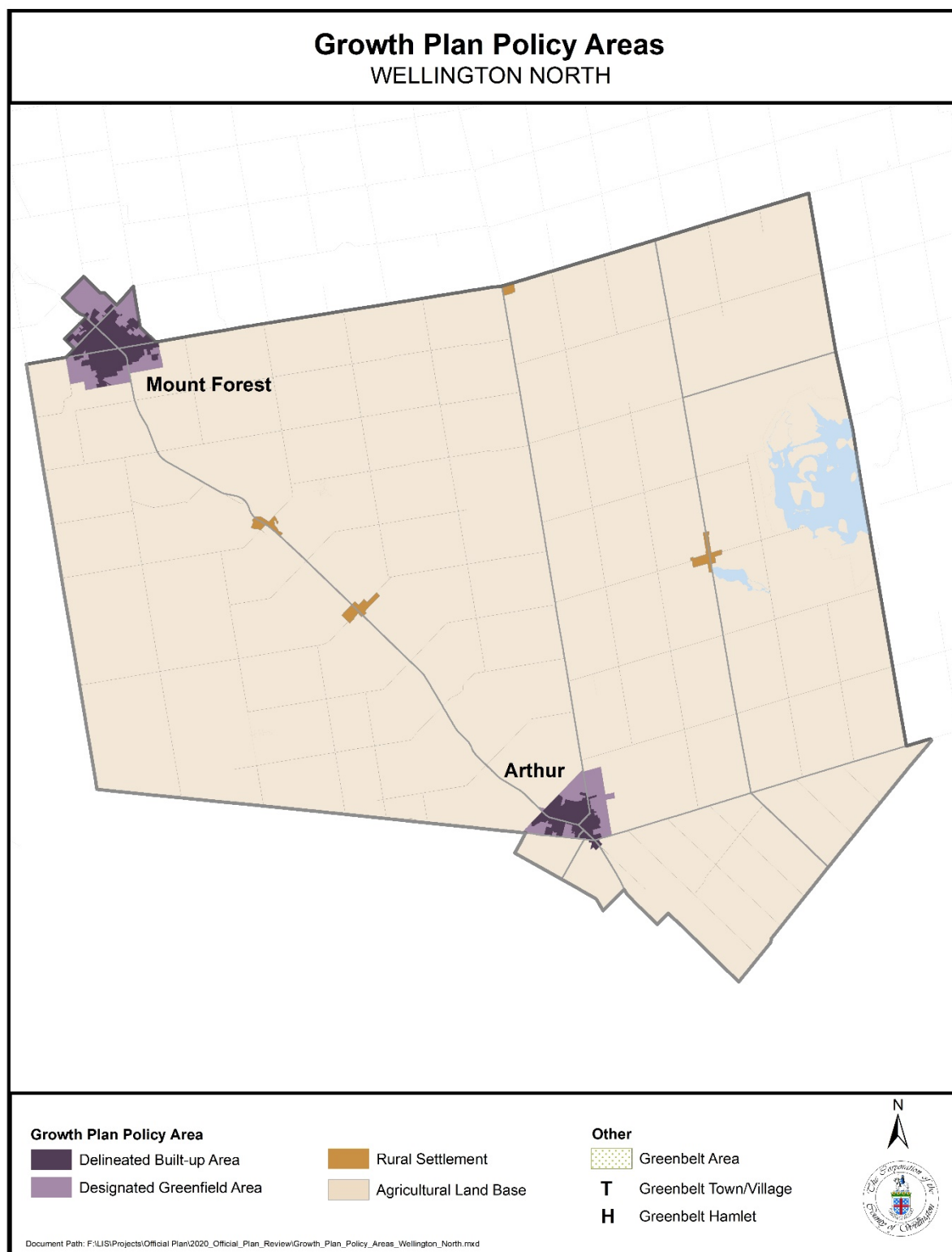
NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

## Appendix A6



NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.

## Appendix A7



NOTE: Rural Settlements are based on Hamlets identified in January 8, 2021 version of County Official Plan. Community structure, natural heritage system and agricultural system will be reviewed during MCR.