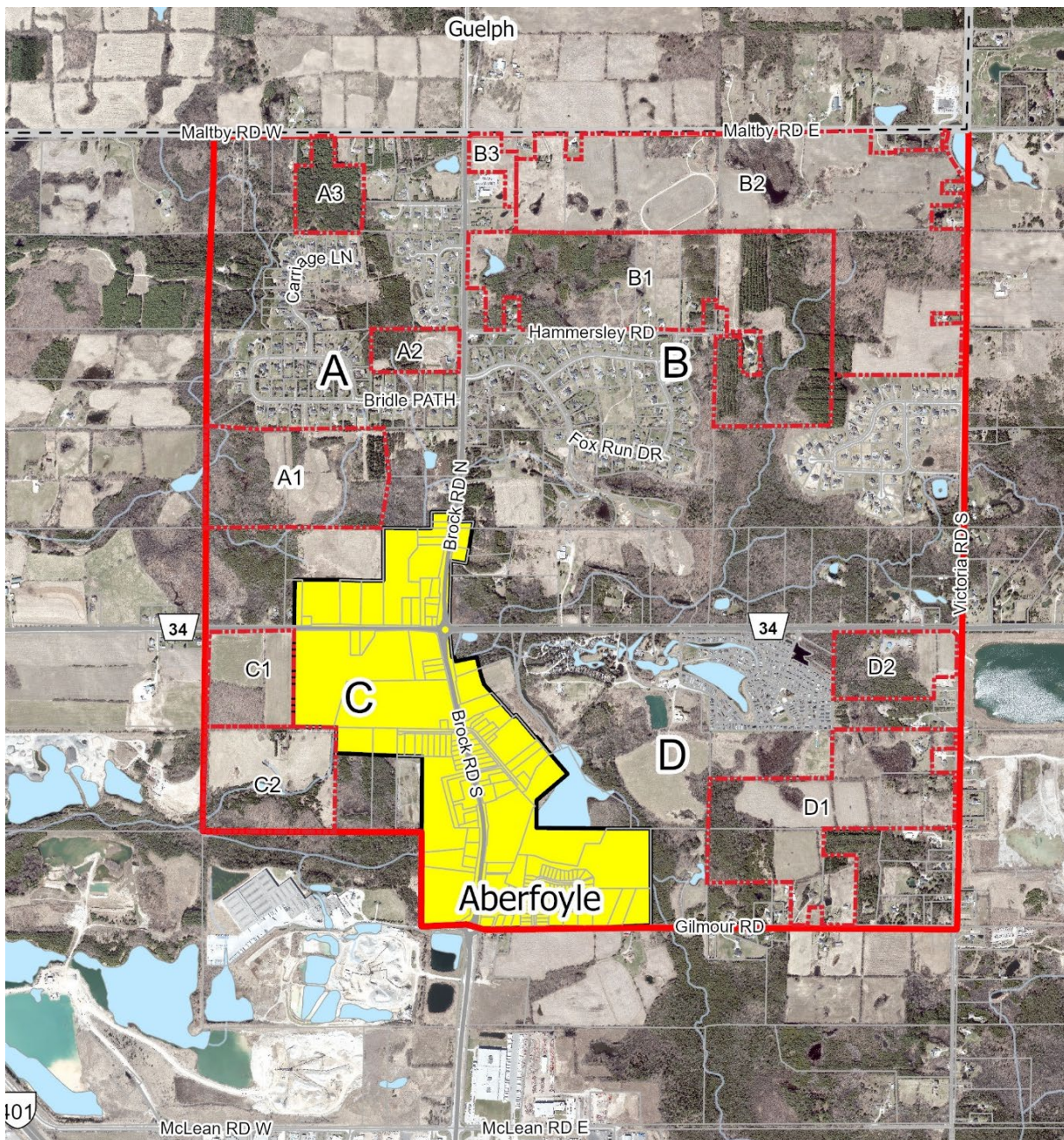




Aberfoyle Expansion Review

Planning Impact Assessment

PLANWELL^{OM}



County of Wellington
Planning and Development Department

September 2025



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Aberfoyle Expansion Review

Planning Impact Assessment

1.0 Introduction

The County of Wellington is currently conducting a phased Official Plan Review which has been implemented through a series of Official Plan Amendments. As part of the Phase 3B Rural Growth Review, the County has determined that there is a shortage of suitably designated residential and employment lands to accommodate forecasted growth in the Township of Puslinch to 2051. This project focuses on the residential growth shortfall for Aberfoyle, one of the rural settlement areas in Puslinch.

1.1 Project Overview

An expansion to the designated Secondary Urban Centre of Aberfoyle is proposed to address the need for approximately 101 ha (250 ac) of additional residential land. The County will apply the urban expansion criteria of the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement and the County of Wellington Official Plan to assess the urban boundary and evaluate the suitability of lands for expansion. Results of the evaluation will be implemented through an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to expand Aberfoyle.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this Planning Impact Assessment is to identify a preferred location for expansion that meets applicable Provincial and County policies.

1.3 Background

The County's ongoing Official Plan Review has been divided into phases:

- Phase 1 Growth Structure and Allocations
- Phase 2 Land Needs Assessment
- Phase 3A Urban Settlement Area and Policy Review
- Phase 3B Rural Residential and Employment Growth Review
- Phase 4 Provincial Planning Statement Consistency Review – Part 1
- Phase 5 Provincial Planning Statement Consistency Review – Part 2

The residential component of the Phase 3B Rural Growth Review was launched in September 2024 as part of a rural residential growth analysis (report PD2024-29). The Town of Erin and Township of Puslinch councils were asked to provide input about how to address their long-term rural residential growth needs. County planning staff reported on the input received and considered options for addressing the rural area housing shortfall through report PD2025-20.

As detailed in the report, considering Provincial, County and local priorities for rural growth Puslinch would have a balance between its supply and growth forecast by:

1. Changing the severance date to May 1, 2025 as it applies to the Secondary Agricultural Areas of Puslinch only;
2. Assigning growth to support potential expansion of Aberfoyle and Arkell; and
3. Reallocating a 120 unit rural residential growth shortfall from Erin to Puslinch.

The reallocation of 120 units is in keeping with Town of Erin Council's preference to limit rural growth opportunities to those which currently exist through vacant units in Hamlets and other rural residential areas, existing vacant rural lots and potential supply from new rural severances under current policies.

As part of addressing the identified household need for Puslinch to 2051 an expansion to the Secondary urban centre of Aberfoyle is being proposed. This expansion is to provide approximately 200 rural residential housing units. There is also a parcel at the southeast corner of Maltby Road E and Brock Road N considered for commercial use.

Aberfoyle is the only Secondary Urban Centre in Puslinch that can be potentially expanded (Morriston is in the Greenbelt). Aberfoyle is a focus area for residential, commercial, recreational and public uses in the Township.

1.4 Pre-Consultation Process

County staff attended Puslinch Council on June 18, 2025 and July 23, 2025 to finalize the limit of the primary study area for Aberfoyle.

County staff also had preliminary discussions with Harden Environmental Services Ltd. and the Wellington Source Water Protection Risk Management Official regarding Puslinch-focused changes in OPA 131. Proposed water quantity policies extending into Puslinch will be released this fall for public engagement. Staff will continue to review ground water policies as they may relate to OPA 131.

In July 2025 County staff consulted with the following Provincial ministries regarding Rural Phase 3B and Phase 4 of our work programme:

- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA)
- Ministry of Energy and Mines (Mines)
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
- Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)
- Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)
- Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (MCM)

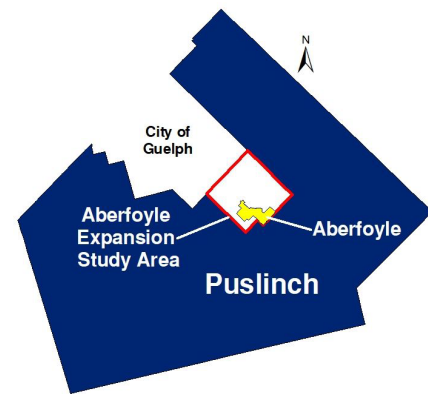
As the associated official plan amendment will be processed under Section 26 of the Planning Act, it will be circulated to the Province as part of the land use planning approvals process for review and approval. In addition to Provincial circulation, the direct consultation for the OPA will include at a minimum:

- Circulation to Member Municipalities, Indigenous communities, agencies, members of the public and stakeholders
- Statutory Open House
- Statutory Public Meeting

Notice of the statutory open house and public meeting will be provided in accordance with the Planning Act and advertised in the Wellington Advertiser. To obtain further public feedback, notification of engagement opportunities will also be provided through the project email list and website updates.

2.0 Study Area and Surrounding Land Uses

The context of the Study Area within the Township of Puslinch is shown in the key map at right. The proposed expansion would facilitate opportunities for mainly residential development across the study area allowing the Township to comprehensively plan for and meet forecasted growth to 2051.



2.1 Study Area

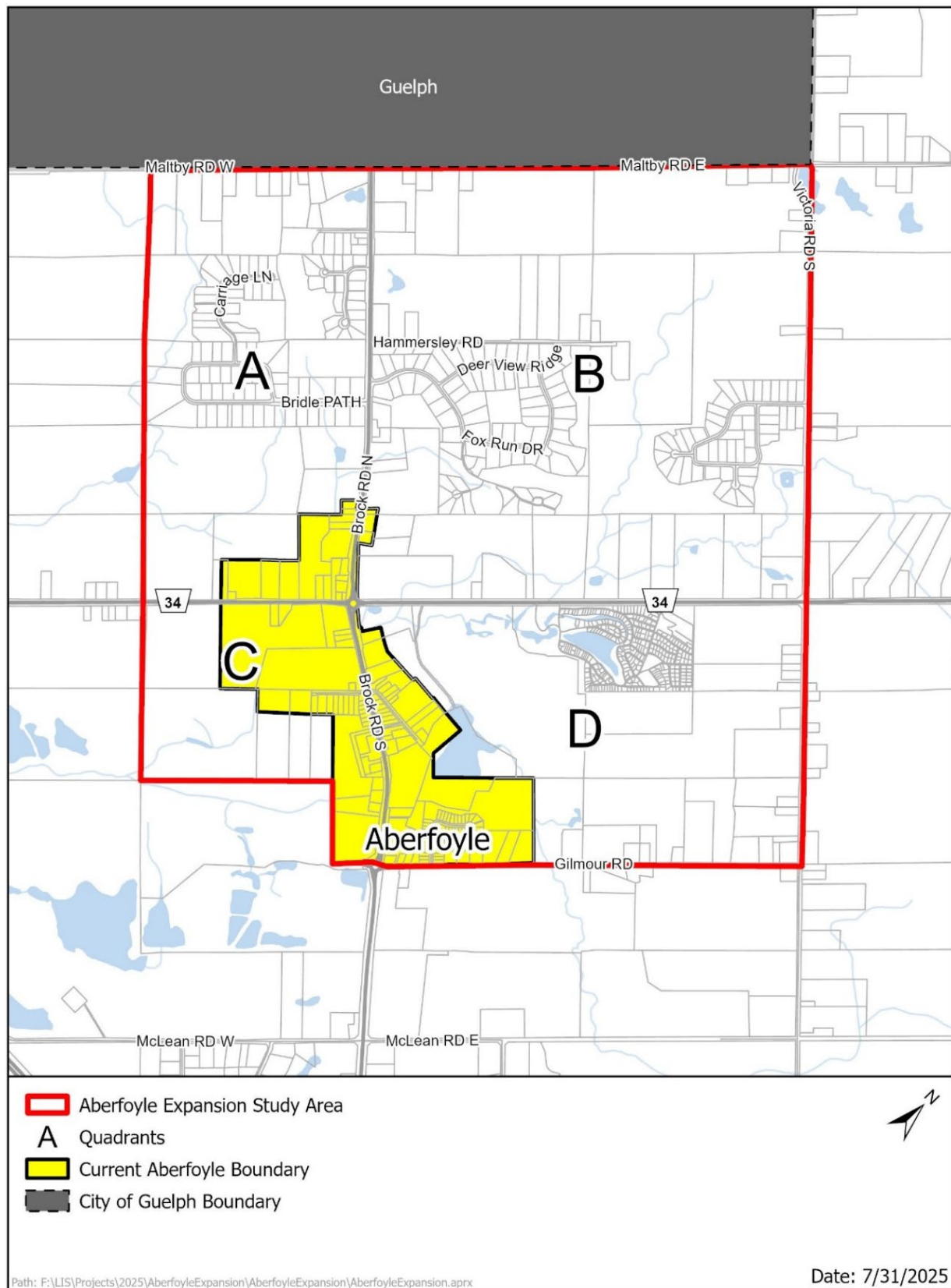
As shown in Figure 1, the Study Area has a northern limit of Maltby Road (City of Guelph Boundary), an eastern limit of Victoria Road S, a southern limit of Gilmour Road, and a western limit of the midway point of Concession 7 and Part Lots 16 through 22. Wellington Road 46 (Brock Road S) and Wellington Road 34 are major County roads which bisect the area.

While the Study Area (including Aberfoyle) is approximately 985 ha (2,434 ac) in size, once the constraints have been factored in by the County, the potential residential area is 128 ha (316 ac) and the potential commercial area is 2.9 ha (7.2 ac). This area exceeds the 101 ha land need and areas which have the least amount of impact and meet other land use policies and requirements will factor into the selected settlement area boundary expansion location.

The Study Area is the most populated area in the Township of Puslinch and contains the current Secondary Urban Centre of Aberfoyle. Aberfoyle is the main rural settlement area in the Township and home to the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Township Municipal Office | • Recreational Facilities |
| • Township Fire Station | • County Library |
| • Aberfoyle Public School | • County Works Yard |
| • Community Centre | • Residential uses |
| • Park | • Commercial uses |
| • Trail System | |

Figure 1 Aberfoyle Expansion Study Area



The balance of the Study Area includes:

- Several developed Country Residential subdivisions
- Mill Creek and Mini Lakes residential communities
- Numerous rural residential properties of various sizes and configurations
- Secondary (non-prime) agricultural lands
- Automobile dealership
- Natural heritage features, natural hazards, and other environmentally sensitive areas
- Mineral aggregate resources

For purposes of the analysis and evaluation of expansion areas, the Study Area has been divided into 4 quadrants (A, B, C and D) and then into ten focus areas as locations for potential growth. County planning staff identified the focus areas by determining which locations are likely to have potential for future residential development of three or more lots. In the case of Area B3, this location is likely to have potential for future commercial development. See Figure 2 and 3 below.

2.2 Surrounding Land Uses

For ease of discussion, project north will be referenced throughout this document rather than true north. Surrounding land uses include the following:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| North | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses to the north in the City of Guelph are currently rural in nature however, high density residential, medium density residential, low density greenfield residential and natural areas are planned by the City through the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan (see Appendix A - Figure A1, A2 and A3)• Industrial and natural areas in the City of Guelph, west of Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan (see Appendix A - Figure A1)• Golf course, agricultural, rural residential and natural areas |
| South | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggregate operations• Rural industrial and highway commercial uses• Agricultural, rural residential and natural areas |
| East | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggregate operation• Agricultural, rural residential and natural areas |
| West | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggregate operations• Agricultural, rural residential and natural areas• Rural industrial lands• Puslinch Employment Lands Study Area A, G and H (see Appendix A - Figure A4 and A5) |

Figure 2 Focus Areas

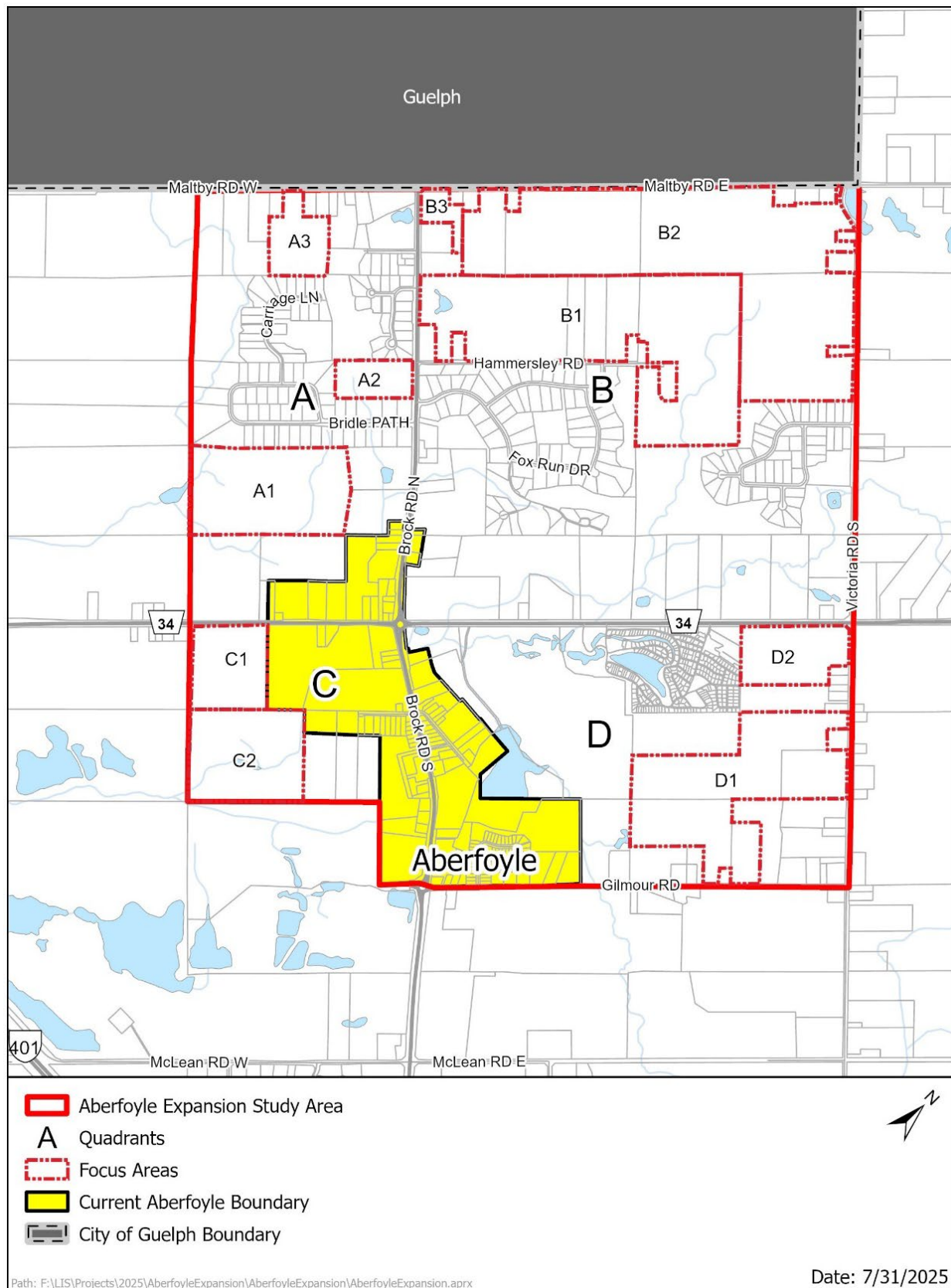
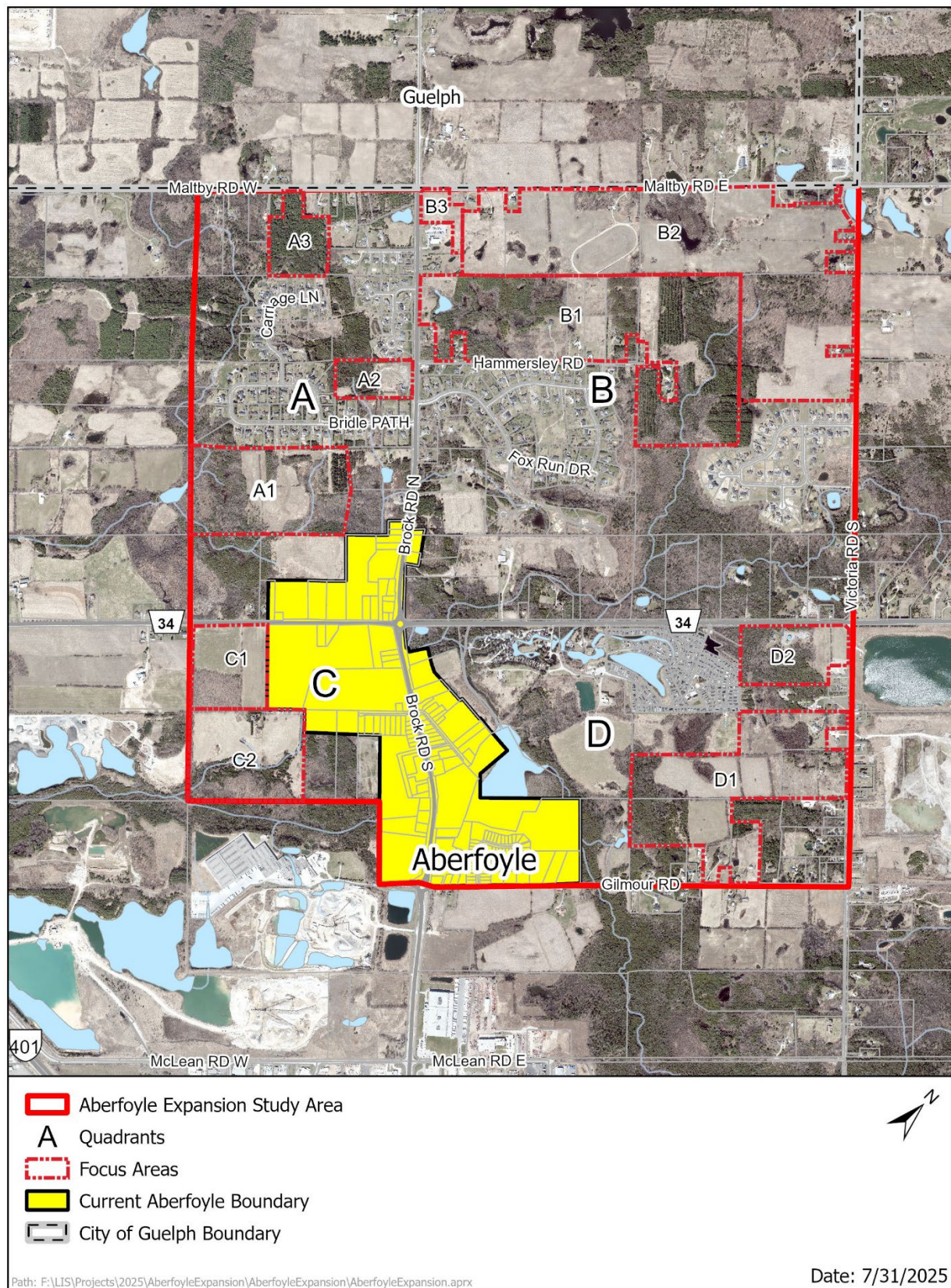


Figure 3 Context



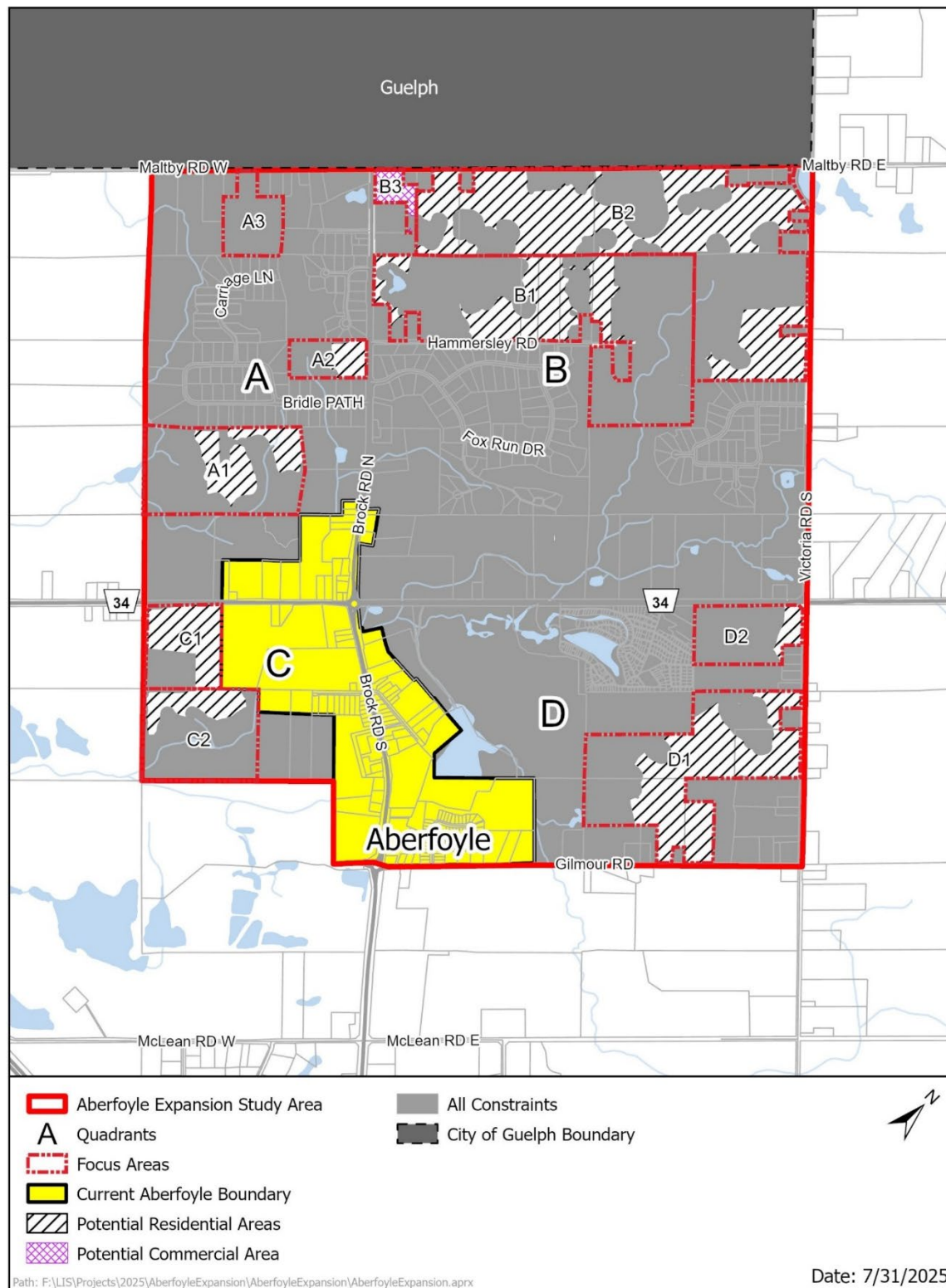
Source: County of Wellington

2.3 Study Area Constraints

There are a number of constraints within the Study Area which have been considered to determine locations which are likely to have potential for future residential development of three or more lots and future commercial use (Figure 4). These constraints include:

1. Lands that have already been developed as residential or commercial (Figure 5)
 - Estate residential subdivisions;
 - Mill Creek and Mini Lakes residential communities;
 - Non-farm rural residential lots with limited infilling potential; and
 - Commercial development.
2. Lands with environmental features (Figure 6)
 - Core Greenlands and Greenlands designations;
 - NE Zone, buffer and EP Overlay;
 - County Natural Heritage System (by GRCA); and
 - Lands which have been fragmented and land locked by these features.

Figure 4 Constraint Areas



The Study Area also contains lands within the Mineral Aggregate Resource Overlay of the County Official Plan.

Figure 5 Existing Development Constraint Areas

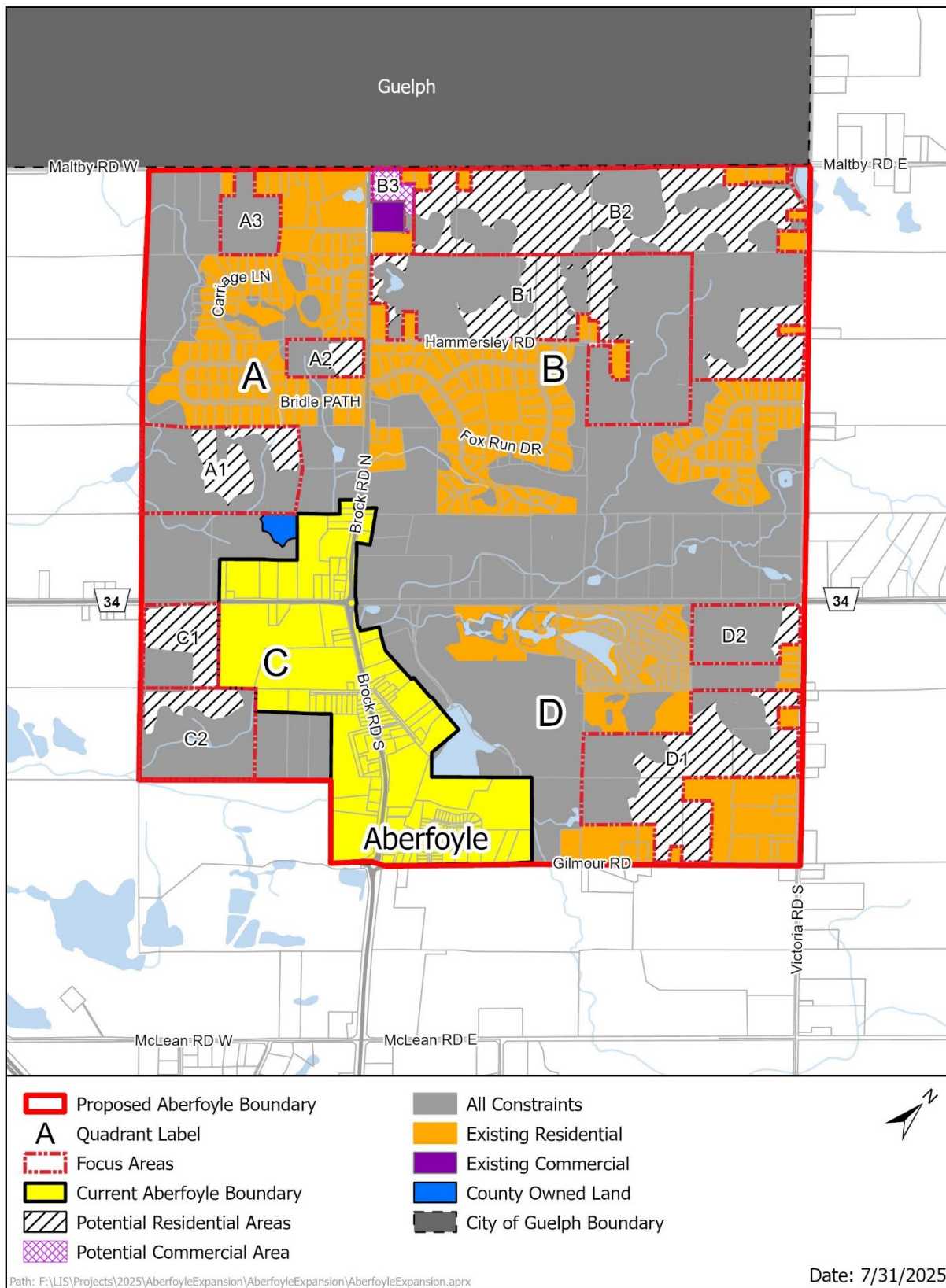
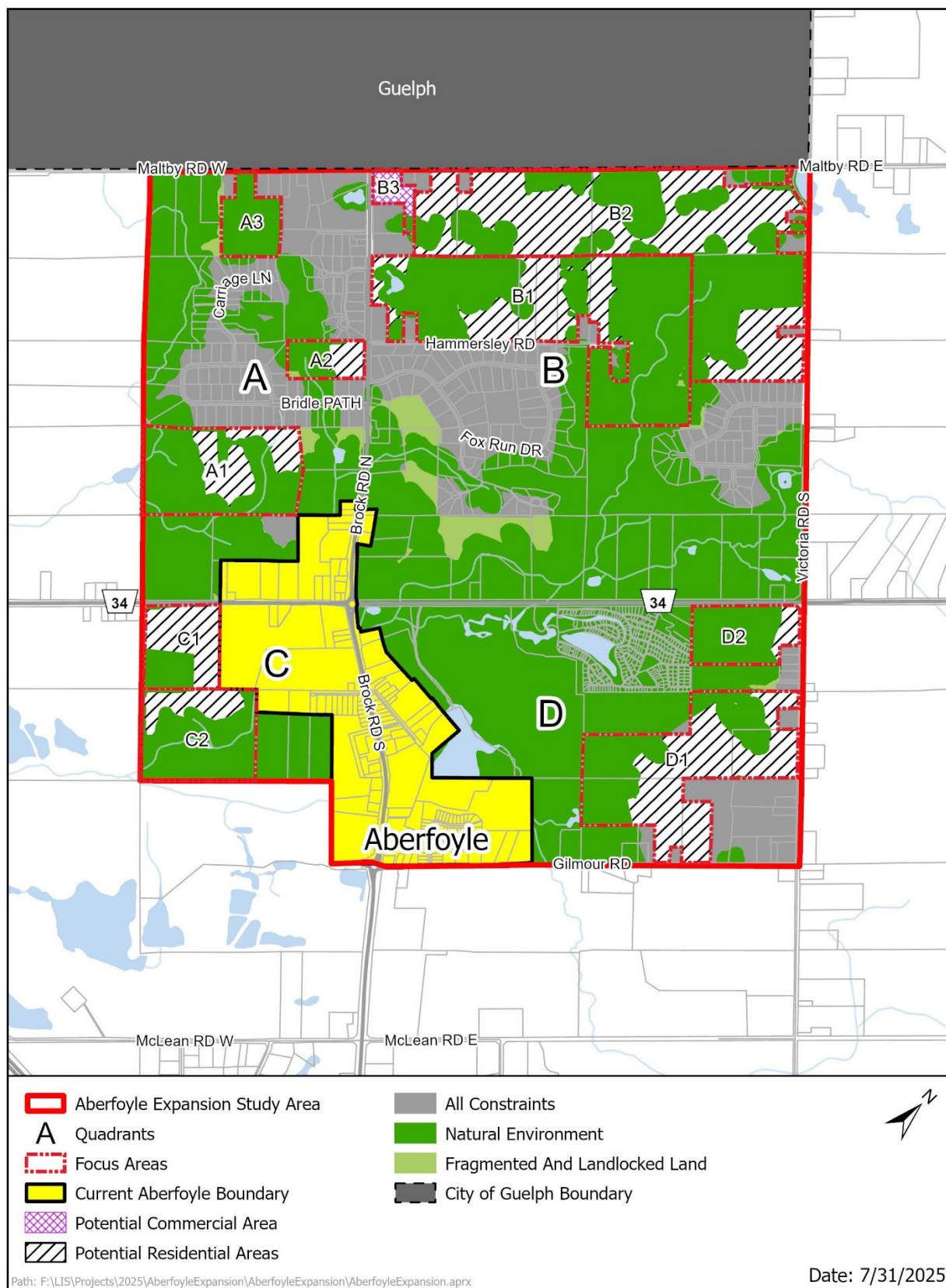


Figure 6 Environmental Constraint Areas



3.0 Land Use Policy Context

The Provincial and County land use planning policy documents applicable to the proposed Aberfoyle Expansion include the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 and the County of Wellington Official Plan. As the Aberfoyle Expansion Study Area is outside of the regulated Greenbelt Plan Area, the policies of the Greenbelt Plan have not been reviewed in this assessment.

3.1 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS)

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024 provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and sets the policy framework for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario. The PPS aims to provide for appropriate development while balancing the protection of resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the natural and built environment. All planning decisions must be consistent with the PPS. Highlighting has been added for emphasis throughout this report.

The Township of Puslinch is a rural area comprised of rural settlement areas (Aberfoyle, Morriston and Arkell), rural lands (secondary agricultural areas), prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas. There are no prime agricultural areas within the Study Area.

Table 1 Rural Settlement Area Growth Policies (PPS)

PPS 2024 Policy	Policy Analysis
Settlement areas are defined in the PPS as “urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets). Ontario’s <i>settlement areas</i> vary significantly in terms of size, density, population, economic activity, diversity and intensity of land uses, service levels, and types of infrastructure available.”	The village of Aberfoyle meets the PPS definition of a rural settlement area. The policies further recognize that settlement areas across Ontario are diverse.
“In <i>rural areas</i> rural <i>settlement areas</i> shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.” (section 2.5.2)	Aberfoyle is the primary location for growth and development in Puslinch under the current provincial policy framework. Morriston is within the Greenbelt Plan and cannot be expanded and as a hamlet, Arkell has been allocated less residential expansion.
“When directing development in rural <i>settlement areas</i> in accordance with policy 2.3, planning authorities shall give consideration to locally appropriate rural characteristics, the scale of development and the provision of appropriate service levels.” (section 2.5.3)	These matters will be addressed through the future review of development applications. We anticipate future residential development to be low density and small scale.

<p>Section 2.3.1 – General Policies for Settlement Areas provides the following key directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring that settlement areas be the focus of growth and development • Encouraging efficient use of land and resources and optimizing existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities 	<p>Expansion of Aberfoyle supports these policy directions. It allows the Township to direct growth to an area where existing municipal services are offered. There are a number of public service facilities nearby.</p>
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The PPS requires planning authorities to consider the criteria of section 2.3.2.1 for settlement area boundary expansions.

Table 2 Expansion Criteria (PPS)

PPS 2024 Policy	Policy Analysis
“In identifying a new <i>settlement area</i> or allowing a <i>settlement area</i> boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:	“Shall consider” is a lower policy threshold than the criteria of the former Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
a) The need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;	As in Appendix B, there is an established need for approximately 101 ha (250 ac) of primarily rural residential land in Aberfoyle. The Study Area contains a potential residential area of approximately 128 ha (316). and a potential commercial area of 2.9 ha (7.2 ac). A reduction in the final proposed boundary will be needed to align with the land need.
b) If there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned <i>infrastructure</i> and <i>public service facilities</i> ;	<p>Close to commercial and other uses, including a school and recreational facilities.</p> <p>Appropriate studies will be required as part of future development applications to ensure that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development including stormwater management, water services and sewage services which protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water.</p>
c) Whether the applicable lands comprise <i>specialty crop areas</i> ;	There are no specialty crop areas in Puslinch or Wellington County.
d) The evaluation of alternative locations which avoid <i>prime agricultural areas</i> and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority	There are no prime agricultural areas in the Study Area. An evaluation of alternative locations is not required.

agricultural lands in <i>prime agricultural areas</i> ;	
e) Whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;	The County retained consultants to complete an MDS I evaluation. The results are summarized in Section 4 of this Report.
f) Whether impacts on the <i>agricultural system</i> are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an <i>agricultural impact assessment</i> or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and	The County has completed an Agricultural Impact Assessment. The results are summarized in Section 4 of this Report.
g) The new or expanded <i>settlement area</i> provides for the phased progression of urban development.”	The identification of expansion lands for Aberfoyle is expected to meet a significant portion of the Township’s housing needs over the coming decades.

Land Use Compatibility

Section 3.5 of the PPS provides direction to planning authorities when considering sensitive lands uses near major facilities to ensure long-term viability of major facilities. The PPS states:

“Major facilities and sensitive land uses shall be planned and developed to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term operational and economic viability of major facilities in accordance with provincial guidelines, standards and procedures.” (section 3.5.1)

*“Where avoidance is not possible in accordance with policy 3.5.1, planning authorities shall protect the long-term viability of existing or planned industrial, manufacturing or other *major facilities* that are vulnerable to encroachment by ensuring that the planning and development of proposed adjacent sensitive land uses is only permitted if potential *adverse affects* to the proposed sensitive land use are minimized and mitigated, and potential impacts to industrial, manufacturing or other major facilities are minimized and mitigated in accordance with provincial guidelines, standards and procedures.” (section 3.5.2)*

Major facilities are defined as:

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

Sensitive land uses are defined as:

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

There are manufacturing uses, industries and resource extraction activities to the south of Area C and resource extraction facilities east of Area B.

In addition to section 3.5:

“...on lands within 300 metres of *employment areas, development* shall avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate potential impacts on the long-term economic viability of employment uses within existing or planned *employment areas*, in accordance with provincial guidelines.”

There is an employment area proposed adjacent to Area C1. The implementing OPA limits future uses to Class I or Class II industrial facilities (as defined by MECP D-6 Guidelines). Future development applications for employment uses and sensitive land uses are required to be consistent with the D-6 Guidelines.

There are a number of natural heritage features and natural hazards within the Study Area. Appropriate studies will be required as part of future development applications within the proposed expansion areas to ensure that natural heritage features are protected and hazards are appropriately addressed.

A separate mineral aggregate assessment has been completed to address PPS policies.

3.2 County of Wellington Official Plan

The Wellington County Official Plan (WCOP) implements provincial policy and provides more detailed land use planning direction for the physical development of the County, local municipalities, and the long-term protection of resources.

The County of Wellington Official Plan policies were developed in sufficient detail to provide appropriate official plan coverage for the entire County, while still responding to local conditions. The County Official Plan also serves as the local official plan for five of the seven municipalities in Wellington, including the Township of Puslinch.

3.2.1 Growth and Expansion Policies

The following policies are addressed in the tables below: Growth Strategy, Urban Area Protection, Secondary Urban Centre Expansion and Urban Centre Expansion Criteria. ~~Red~~ ~~strikeout~~ text denotes OPA 126 removals and red underlined text denotes OPA 126 additions.

Table 3 Wellington County Growth Hierarchy (WCOP)

Wellington County Official Plan Policy	Policy Analysis
The priorities for directing growth will be as follows:	
1. The majority of growth will be directed to primary urban centres that offer <i>municipal water services</i> and <i>municipal sewage services</i> .	90% of the County's growth is directed to primary urban centres.
2. Growth will be limited in primary urban centres, secondary urban centres and hamlets that offer partial, private communal or individual on-site services.	10% of the County's growth is directed to rural areas.
3. To a lesser extent, growth will also be directed to secondary agricultural areas.	A lesser extent of growth is directed to secondary agricultural areas, which are only found in portions of Erin, Minto and Puslinch.

Section 3.1, WCOP

Table 4 Urban Area Protection (WCOP)

Wellington County Official Plan Policy	Policy Analysis
In order to allow the efficient expansion of urban areas, and to maintain a clear distinction between urban and rural areas, the County of Wellington:	Expanding Aberfoyle to the north provides for logical and efficient expansion.
a) prohibits new <i>development</i> adjacent to existing primary and secondary urban centres, hamlets or cities unless part of an urban expansion (adjacent will normally mean within 1 kilometre of an urban area boundary).	Aberfoyle is a designated secondary urban centre and is part of an urban expansion, which is in keeping with the intent of section 4.7.1(a). Therefore new development is not prohibited within the 1 kilometre area.
b) Requires that livestock operations adjacent to existing urban boundaries shall only be permitted in accordance with the <i>Minimum Distance Separation Formulae...</i>	The County retained consultants to complete an MDS I evaluation. The results are summarized in Section 4 of this Report.

Section 4.7.1, WCOP

Table 5 Secondary Urban Centre Expansion (WCOP)

Wellington County Official Plan Policy	Policy Analysis
None of the secondary urban centres in Wellington are on municipal services and it is the policy of this Plan to limit growth in areas without municipal services. The expansion must be based on a municipal comprehensive review and on the criteria set out in Section 4.8.2.	The intent of the policy is to limit but not prohibit growth. The County has proposed limited growth in Aberfoyle of approximately 200 units. This represents 0.9% of the overall household growth from 2021 to 2051 in Wellington County.

Table 6 Urban Centre Expansion Criteria (WCOP)

Wellington County Official Plan Policy	Policy Analysis
Expansion may only occur where it has been demonstrated that: a) sufficient opportunities to accommodate the accommodate the population and employment forecasts for the County of Wellington, through <i>intensification</i> and in <i>designated greenfield areas</i> , using the <i>intensification</i> target and greenfield density targets, are not available. i) within the County of Wellington; and ii) within the applicable lower-tier municipality to accommodate the growth allocated to the municipality;	N/A. Intensification and greenfield density targets do not apply to Puslinch.
b) the expansion makes available sufficient lands for a time horizon not exceeding the year 2051, based on the analysis provided for in a);	Approximately 101 ha (250 ac) of primarily residential land is needed in Aberfoyle (see Appendix B for further details). The Study Area contains a potential residential area of approximately 128 ha (316). and a potential commercial area of 2.9 ha (7.2 ac). A reduction in the final proposed boundary will be needed to align with the land need.

c) the timing of the expansion and the phasing of development within the <i>designated greenfield area</i> will not adversely affect the achievement of the <i>intensification</i> target and density targets set out in Section 3.3.1 as approved by the Province , <u>the phasing policies of Section 3.6</u> and the other policies of this Plan;	N/A. There are no designated greenfield areas in Puslinch.
d) where applicable, the proposed expansion will meet the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan;	N/A. The Study Area is not within the Greenbelt Plan.
e) the <i>infrastructure</i> and <i>public service facilities</i> needed for expansion will be environmentally sustainable and financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets;	Local road upgrades may be necessary to support future development (for example, on Hammersley Rd., Gilmour Rd. and/or Victoria Rd. N/S. The Township should ensure that these costs are borne by the developer.
f) prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible. To support the Agricultural System, alternative locations across the County will be evaluated, prioritized and determined based on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impact on the Agricultural System and in accordance with the following: i) reasonable alternatives that avoid <i>prime agricultural areas</i> are evaluated; and ii) where <i>prime agricultural areas</i> cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are used;	N/A. There are no prime agricultural areas in the Study Area. An evaluation of alternative locations is not required.
g) any adverse impacts on the <i>agri-food network</i> , including agricultural operations, from expanding <i>settlement areas</i> would be avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an <i>agricultural impact assessment</i> ;	The County has completed an Agricultural Impact Assessment. The results are summarized in Section 4 of this Report.

h) in determining the most appropriate direction and location for expansion, the policies of Sections 2 (Wise and Management of Resources and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the Provincial Policy Statement are applied, as well as the following are addressed:	There are natural heritage and natural hazards within the Study Area. These features have been mapped and are considered constraints to future development. Compatibility with existing mineral aggregate operations adjacent to the Study Area is covered in the Aggregate Impact Assessment.
i) the existing development pattern in the community;	The expansion areas represent a logical and orderly progression of development. Most of the expansion areas are adjacent to the existing Aberfoyle boundary or estate residential subdivisions. Area D1 is separated from Aberfoyle by natural features but there is a concentration of rural residential properties along Victoria Road S and Gilmour Rd.
ii) the potential impacts on people;	There are manufacturing uses, industries and resource extraction activities to the south of Area C and resource extraction facilities east of Area B. There is a planned employment area adjacent to Area C1.
iii) the need to avoid <i>mineral aggregate</i> areas or where it is unavoidable to use lands of lower quality aggregate resources;	There are mineral aggregate areas within the Study Area and these matters are addressed in the Aggregate Impact Assessment.
iv) the impacts on <i>natural heritage systems</i> and features;	<p>The Growth Plan Natural Heritage System was not carried forward to the 2024 PPS. The County Natural Heritage System (NHS) was developed by GRCA and will form the basis for implementing a Natural Heritage System in Wellington. All of the Focus Areas contain elements of the County NHS which are mapped as part of the constraints to development.</p> <p>See Section 3.2.2 below for further discussion.</p>

<p>v) the impacts on groundwater and surface water;</p>	<p>Appropriate studies will be required as part of future development applications to ensure that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development including stormwater management, water services and sewage services which protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water. Lands within the Paris and Galt Moraine policy area will also be required to demonstrate that ground and surface water functions will be maintained, and where possible, restored and enhanced through appropriate studies.</p>
<p>vi) the impacts on the safety and efficiency of existing or planned <i>infrastructure</i>;</p>	<p>Transportation infrastructure is in place. Most sites are adjacent to major County roadways (Wellington Road 34 and Brock Rd. S) and a Guelph collector road (Maltby Rd. E/W). Local Puslinch roadways (Hammersley Rd., Gilmour Rd. and Victoria Rd. N/S may require upgrades.</p>
<p>vii) the impacts on archaeology, <i>cultural heritage landscapes</i>, and <i>built heritage resources</i>;</p>	<p>Archaeology: Most focus areas are within 300 m of a water source and portions of quadrant A, B and D are within the Paris Galt Moraine. Therefore, an archaeological investigation would be required prior to any site alteration associated with future development.</p> <p>Cultural Heritage Landscapes: There are no cultural heritage landscapes identified within the Study Area.</p> <p>Built Heritage Resources: The Municipal Heritage Register identifies designated and listed properties within the current Aberfoyle boundary. These built heritage resources will not be directly impacted by the boundary expansion.</p> <p>There are no designated properties within the balance of the Study Area. There are five listed properties: 63 Brock Rd. N, 68 Brock Rd. N, 77 Brock Rd. N, 381 Maltby Rd. E and 4512 Victoria St. S.</p>

viii) local boundaries based on existing property lines or recognized physical features where possible; and	The Study Area boundary is mainly based on existing roads and property lines. The boundary should be revised to follow the pond at the intersection of Maltby Road E and Victoria Rd S.
ix) other planning criteria considered appropriate in the circumstances.	See Table 6 below.
i) the County and local municipalities will plan to maintain or move significantly towards a minimum of one full-time job per three residents within or in the immediate vicinity of the urban centre or hamlet.	The proposed expansion contemplates additional highway commercial lands.
j) the <i>settlement area</i> to be expanded is in compliance with the <i>minimum distance separation formulae</i> .	The County has retained consultants to complete an MDS I evaluation. The results are summarized in Section 4 of this Report.

3.2.2 Other Planning Considerations

Other planning considerations are addressed below.

Transportation Linkages

Most sites are adjacent to major County roadways (Wellington Road 34 and Brock Rd. S) and a Guelph collector road (Maltby Rd. E/W). Local roadways (Hammersley Rd., Gilmour Rd. and Victoria Rd. N/S may require upgrades.

Active Transportation

The potential expansion of Aberfoyle provides an opportunity for the Township to plan for trail and open space linkages between developments and connecting to the current Aberfoyle settlement area.

Greenlands System Updates

Planning staff conducted a review of the Official Plan Greenlands System to compare with the 2018 GRCA Natural Heritage System (NHS) mapping to determine if any Core Greenlands and Greenlands mapping updates would be needed through OPA 131. The analysis concluded that there were two areas requiring updates: wetlands and woodlands (Table 7).

Wetlands: The County's 2018 NHS utilized the MNR and all Conservation Authority wetland data to create a County wetlands layer.

Woodlands: The County's 2018 NHS study used the MNR (Ministry of Natural Resources) woodland layer as a base and refined it using specific thresholds to identify a County Woodlands layer. Hedgerows were removed from the MNR data.

Aberfoyle Expansion Review

This review was also necessary to consider woodlands over 1 hectare in size and over 30 m wide for redesignation as Greenlands. Such woodlands are considered significant once part of an urban area.

Table 7 Natural Heritage Components – Wetlands and Woodlands

Wetlands	Hydrological importance	✓ Evaluated non-Provincially Significant Wetlands and all Provincially Significant Wetlands
		✓ Unevaluated wetlands mapped by the MNRF or Conservation Authorities
Woodlands	Size	✓ Woodlands in Urban Centers: ≥ 1 ha and ≥ 30 m wide
		✓ Woodlands in Rural Areas: ≥ 4 ha and ≥ 30 m wide
	Matrix influence	✓ Woodlands of any size that is contained by or is within 30m of a natural heritage component meeting a criteria threshold
	Rarity	✓ Woodlands containing a vegetation community and/or species with a provincial ranking of S1, S2 or S3 (as ranked by the NHIC) or a global ranking of G1, G2 or G3 (as ranked by the NatureServe Network) (text criterion)
		✓ Woodlands containing 10 or more trees/ha greater than 100 years old (text criterion)
		✓ Woodlands containing 10 or more trees/ha that are ≥ 50 cm in diameter (text criterion)

The area of difference identified in the wetland data is small (0.4 ha) and the data sources used in the 2018 NHS correspond to data sources the County uses to identify wetlands in the Core Greenlands System currently. This area should be redesignated Core Greenlands in OPA 131 (Figure 7).

The area of new woodlands proposed to be designated through OPA 131 is 74.2 ha. This is largely driven by more recent woodlands mapping that identified new rural woodlands meeting the 4 ha size criterion and the Woodlands Matrix Influence areas identified through the 2018 NHS. Most of these new woodlands appear to be plantations and would meet the reduced size criterion of 1 ha. These areas should be redesignated Greenlands in OPA 131 (Figure 8).

Figure 7 Official Plan Core Greenlands vs 2018 Natural Heritage System (NHS)

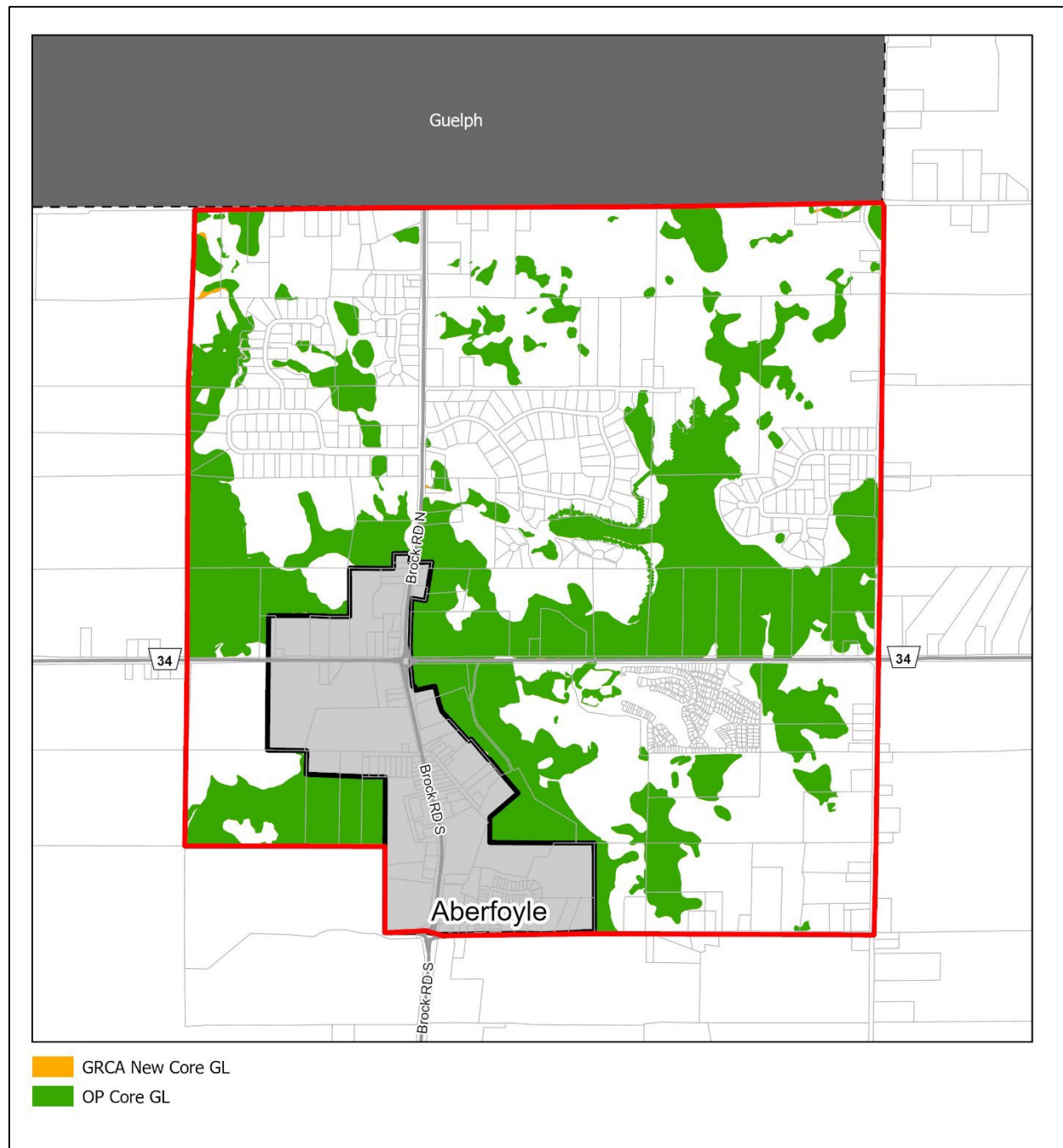
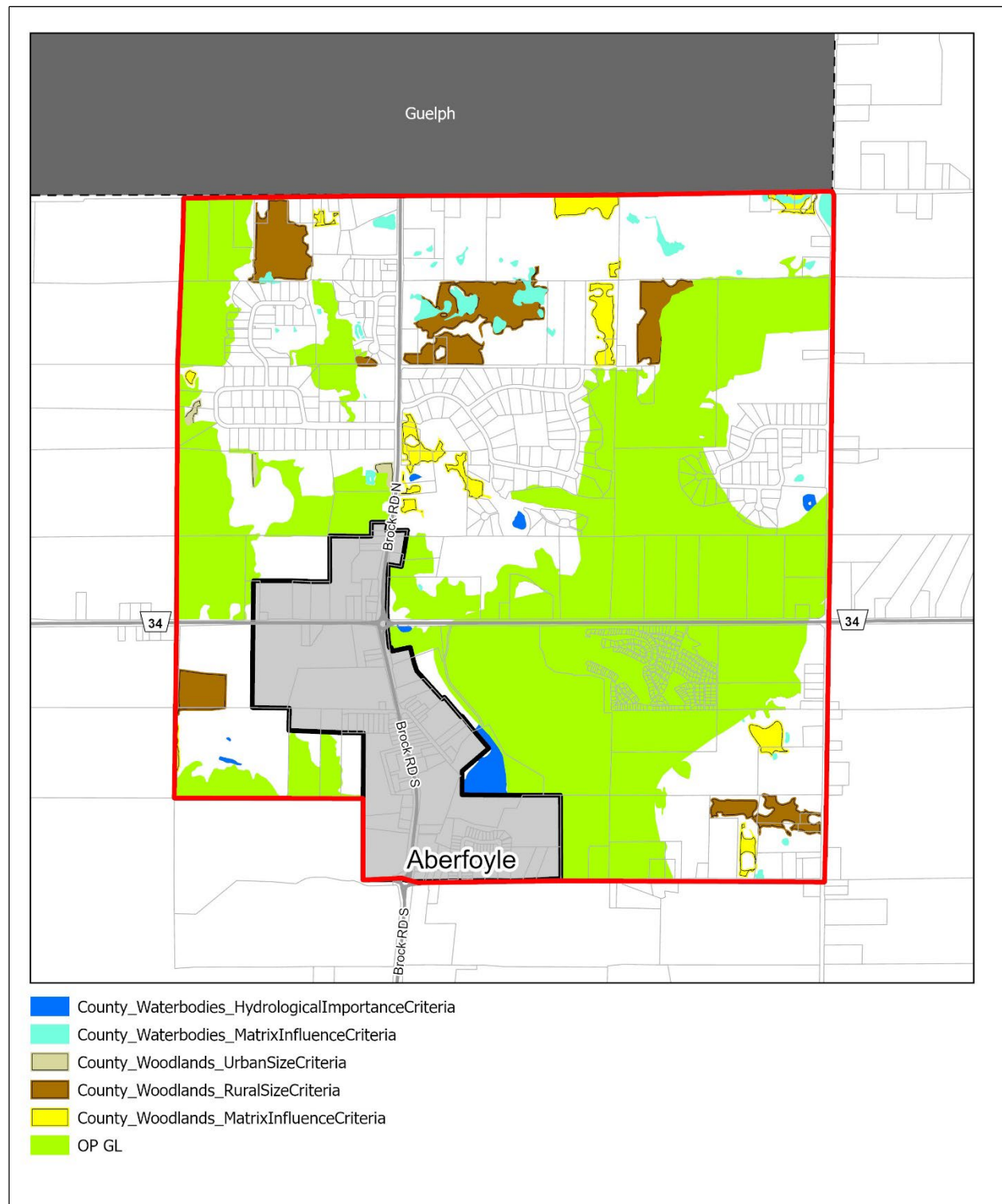


Figure 8 Official Plan Greenlands Designations vs 2018 Natural Heritage System (NHS)



4.0 Reports

There are three additional reports which have been completed as part of the evaluation of the Aberfoyle expansion: Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Study for Aberfoyle Settlement Area Boundary Expansion, Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and an Aggregate Impact Assessment. The results of the reports are summarized below.

4.1 MDS Study

The County of Wellington retained Colville Consulting Inc. on June 11, 2025 to complete a Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Study to provide the County with information about the ability to comply with the MDS I formula for future settlement area boundary expansion. Field work was completed on July 3, 2023 and the MDS Study was completed on July 29, 2025.

The MDS I setback requirements were calculated for all manure storage systems and livestock facilities that were, or appeared to be, capable of housing livestock within 1,500 m of the Study Area. The report concluded that:

- Focus Areas A1, A2, A3, B1, C2 and D1 comply with the MDS I formula
- Focus Area B2 and D2 have an MDS I encroachment
- Focus Area C1 has an MDS encroachment if C2 isn't included in the expansion

Through the AIA below, further analysis was completed relative to the impact of current urban boundaries of Guelph and Aberfoyle on MDS I encroachments for Area B2 and C1. As a result, the only remaining encroachment would be for Focus Area D2.

4.2 Agricultural Impact Assessment

The County of Wellington prepared an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) dated September 2025. The AIA fulfills the need to complete an Agricultural Impact Assessment to consider impacts on the agricultural system associated with the proposed expansion of Aberfoyle.

- The AIA is considering opportunities on rural lands. There are no prime agricultural area or specialty crop area designations within the Study Area.
- Aberfoyle is a settlement area which is meant to be a focus of growth and development for the Township.
- The proposed expansion will be able to comply with the MDS I formula, with the exception of Focus Area D2. An adjustment to move the boundary of Area D2 outside of the MDS I arc would comply with MDS I.
- Impacts on the agricultural system have been evaluated. Loss of land and farm infrastructure is not considered to be significant, however land should be left in agricultural production until it is to be developed. Adverse impacts on the agrifood network are not anticipated as a result of expanding Aberfoyle.

4.3 Aggregate Impact Assessment

The County of Wellington prepared an Aggregate Impact Assessment dated September 2025. The Study included a mineral aggregate resource constraint analysis and land use compatibility assessment. Based on the results of the two assessments carried out, at this time it is recommended that:

- The unconstrained resource area identified in Area D not be included in the boundary expansion of Aberfoyle; and
- Focus Area C2 not be included in the boundary expansion of Aberfoyle.

5.0 Results of Assessment

The analysis contained in this report has led to the identification of a preferred option to expand Aberfoyle with lands that planning staff feel are best suited to accommodate long-term growth.

5.1 Lands Excluded from Consideration

The following areas were excluded from consideration:

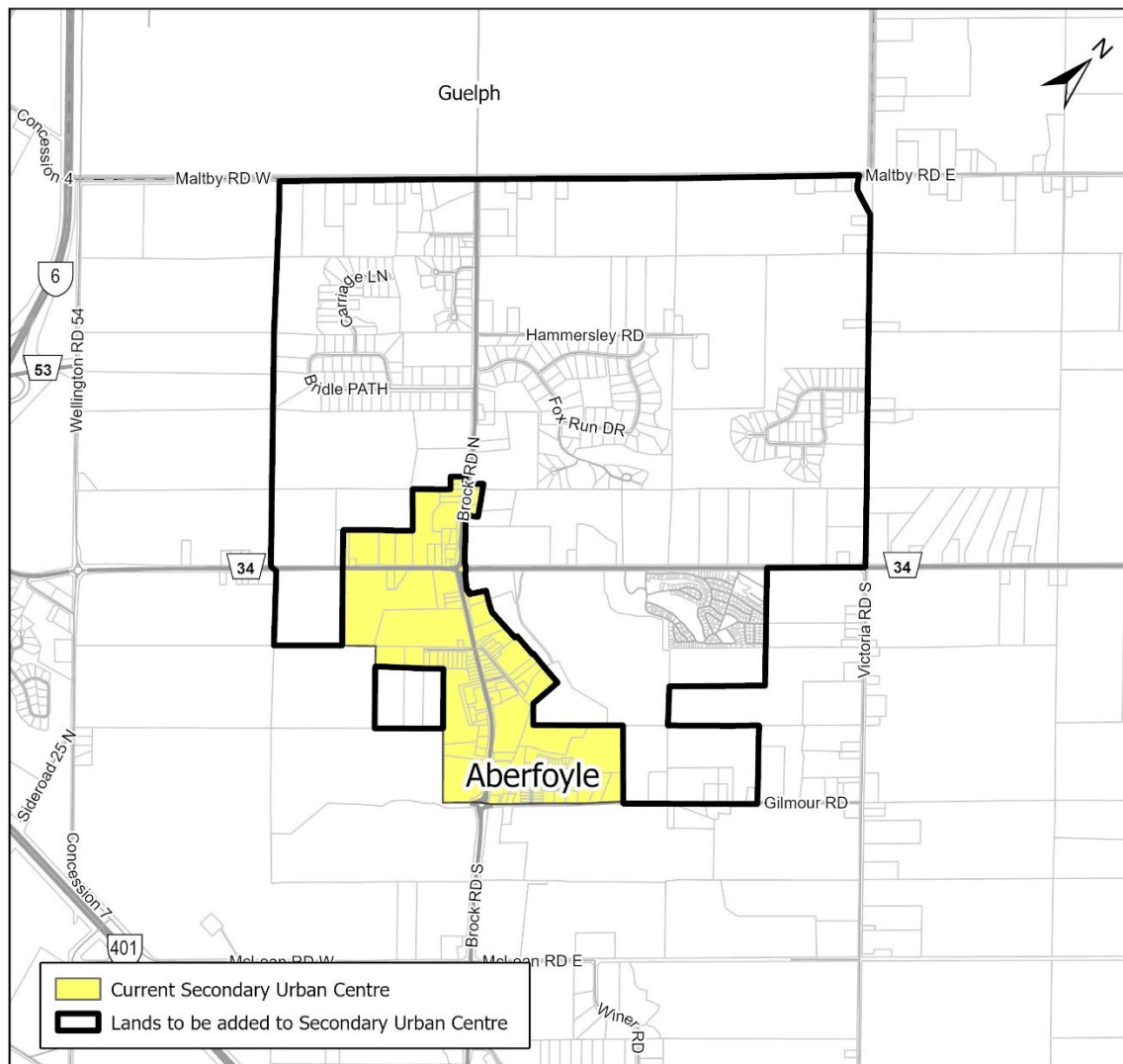
Focus Area	Rationale
A3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The property is approximately 95% treed. The wooded area is a managed forest which qualifies for protection once added to the Aberfoyle boundary as it is over 1 ha in size.• This feature was also identified within the County of Wellington Natural Heritage System (GRCA, 2018). This mapping does not form part of the Official Plan but is to be used to help inform future policy initiatives.
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The property has access to, but does not have frontage on, a public road.• Introduction of new sensitive land uses in this area creates the potential to preclude or hinder ongoing and future extraction activities at Pit No.1. It is recommended that Focus Area C2 not be included in an expansion to the Aberfoyle Urban boundary.
Portion of D1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area is constrained by natural environment features, mineral aggregate area resources, and parcel fragmentation which make residential use less viable.• Aggregate Impact Assessment recommends that the unconstrained resource area identified in Area D not be included in the proposed expansion area.• For logical boundaries, the Aberfoyle boundary should be extended to include Mill Creek and Mini Lakes residential communities.• Property at 70 Gilmour RD is proposed to be added as there may be potential for residential development at the rear of the property.
D2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The developable area of this property is relatively small and would not significantly contribute to the land need.

5.2 Preferred Expansion Option

As shown in Figure 9 and 10, the preferred option includes expansion of Aberfoyle for the following:

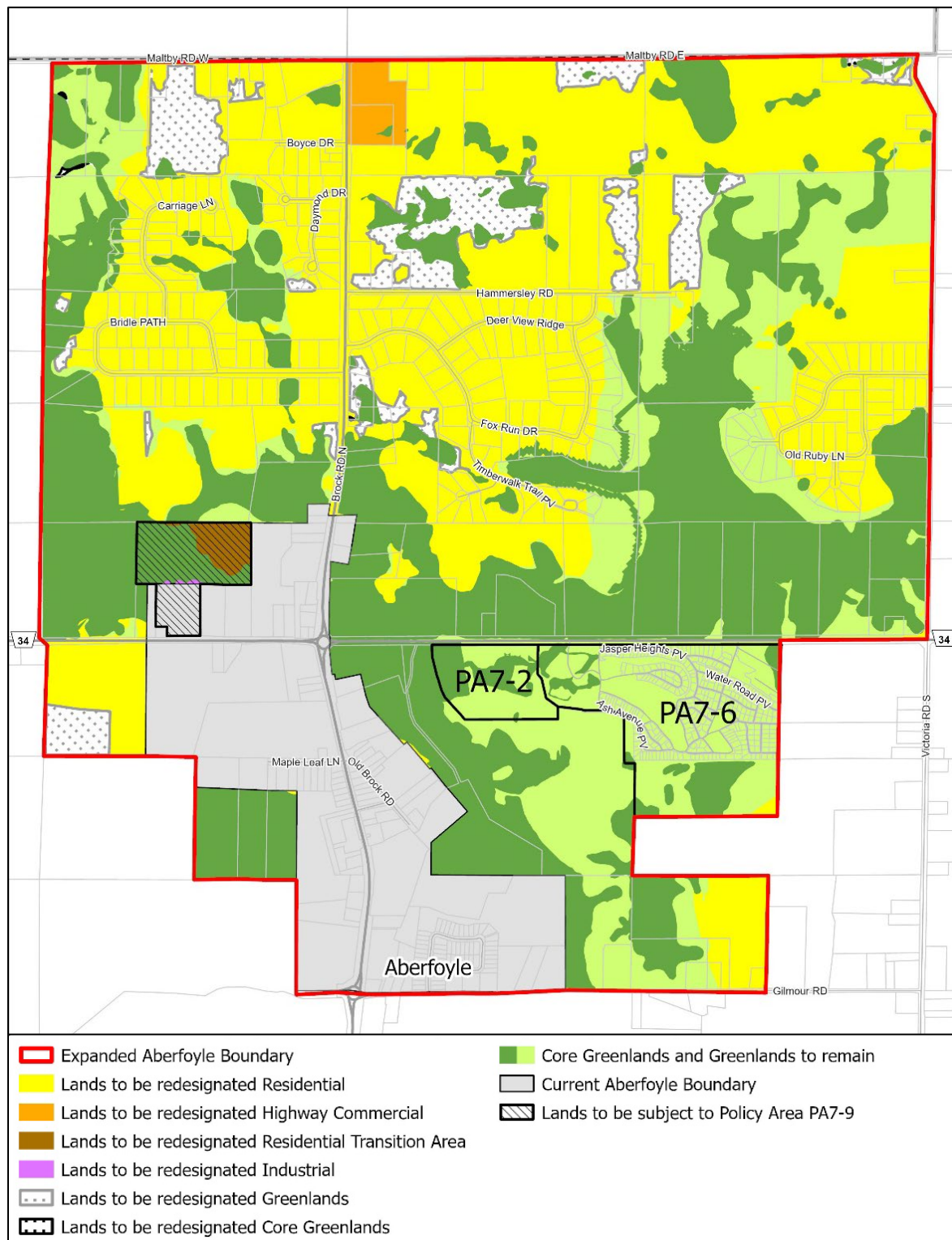
- Future residential development within Focus Areas A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and part of D1;
- Future highway commercial development within Focus Area B3;
- Future public uses on County lands associated with the Aberfoyle Garage;
- Core Greenlands and Greenlands updates; and
- Housekeeping changes.

Figure 9 Preferred Aberfoyle Expansion Option



This results in an expansion of approximately 100 ha (247 ac) of residential land and 2.9 ha (7.2 ac) of highway commercial land, compared with the 101 ha (250 ac) residential land need identified. It should be noted that inclusion within an expansion area does not presume that all of the conditions exist for development to occur. Appropriate studies will be required as part of future development applications.

Figure 10 Draft OPA 131 – Aberfoyle Expansion Land Use Changes



The County owns land on Wellington Road 34 where the Aberfoyle Public Works Garage is located. Property behind the Garage is vacant and future plans for this area are unknown. The front part of the property is designated Industrial within Aberfoyle, whereas the back part is proposed to be designated Residential Transition Area. The entire parcel is proposed to be added to a new Policy Area PA7-9 County Aberfoyle Garage to ensure future flexibility for public use of the property.

New Core Greenlands designations correspond with small wetland areas and new Greenlands designations identify significant woodlands.

Changes of a housekeeping nature are proposed to:

- Align the Residential designation with the boundary of the residential use of 7388 Wellington Road 34, whereas part of the property is currently designated Industrial; and
- Align the mapped boundary of existing policy area PA7-2 (Mill Creek Residential Area) and PA7-6 (Mini Lakes) with property boundaries.

6.0 Conclusion

This Planning Impact Assessment has been prepared to evaluate options for expanding the boundary of Aberfoyle. The analysis contained in this report has led to the identification of a preferred option to expand Aberfoyle onto lands that planning staff feel are best suited to accommodate long-term growth and align with Provincial and County policies. The preferred option forms the basis for draft OPA 131.

Respectfully submitted
County of Wellington Planning and Development Department



Sarah Wilhelm, RPP, MCIP
Manager of Policy Planning

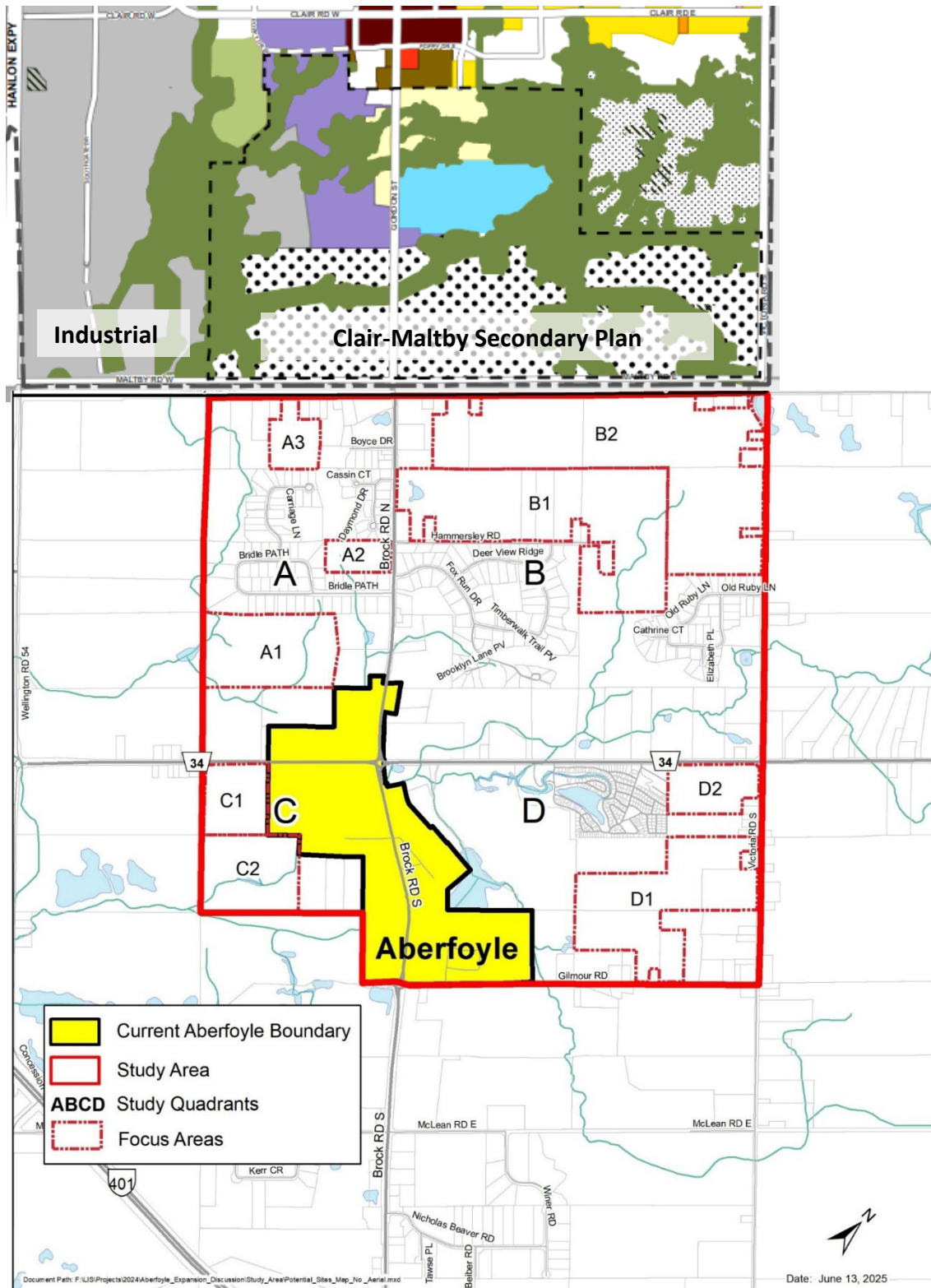
7.0 References

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Appendix A

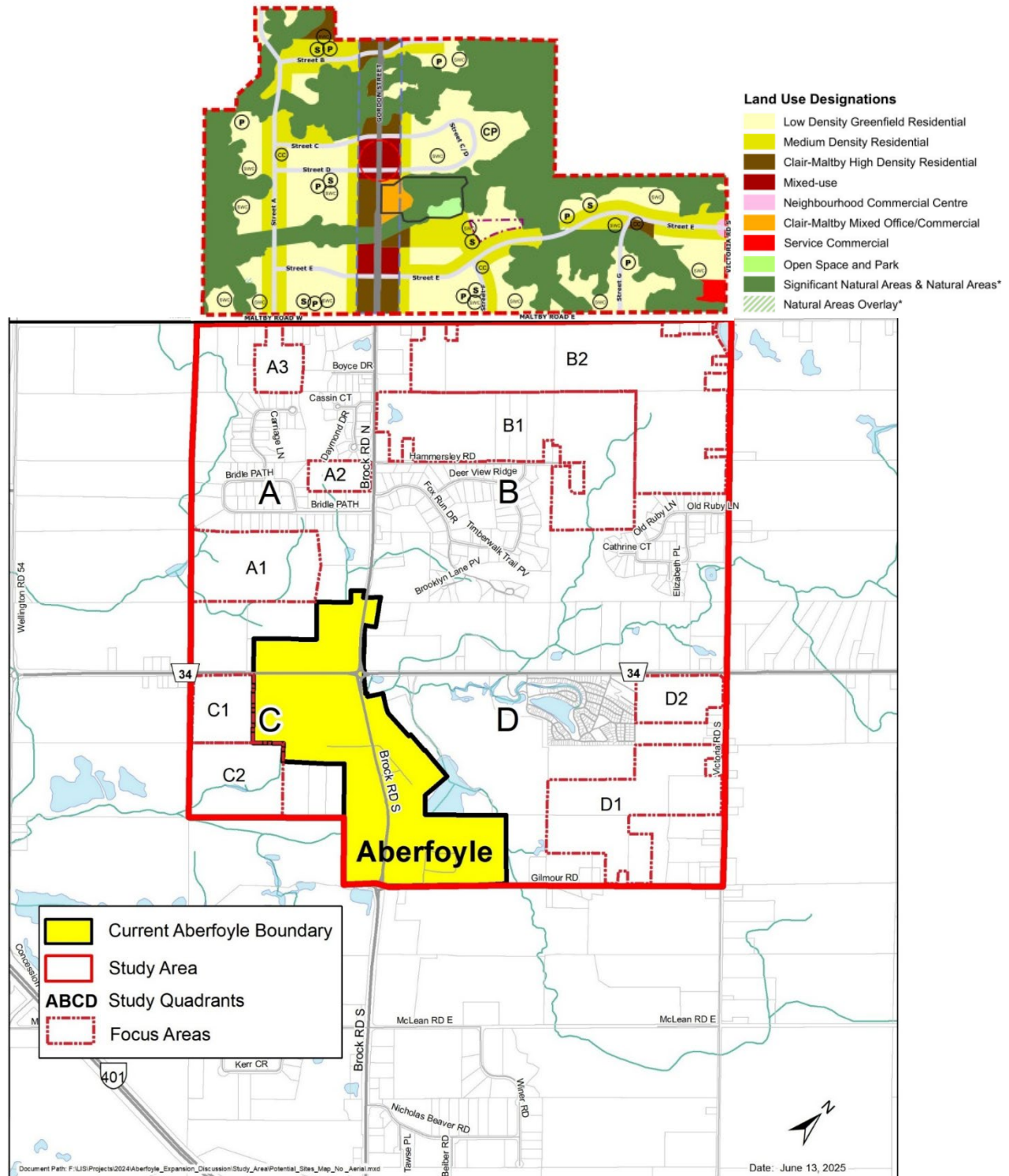
Context Maps

Figure A1 City of Guelph Land Use Context



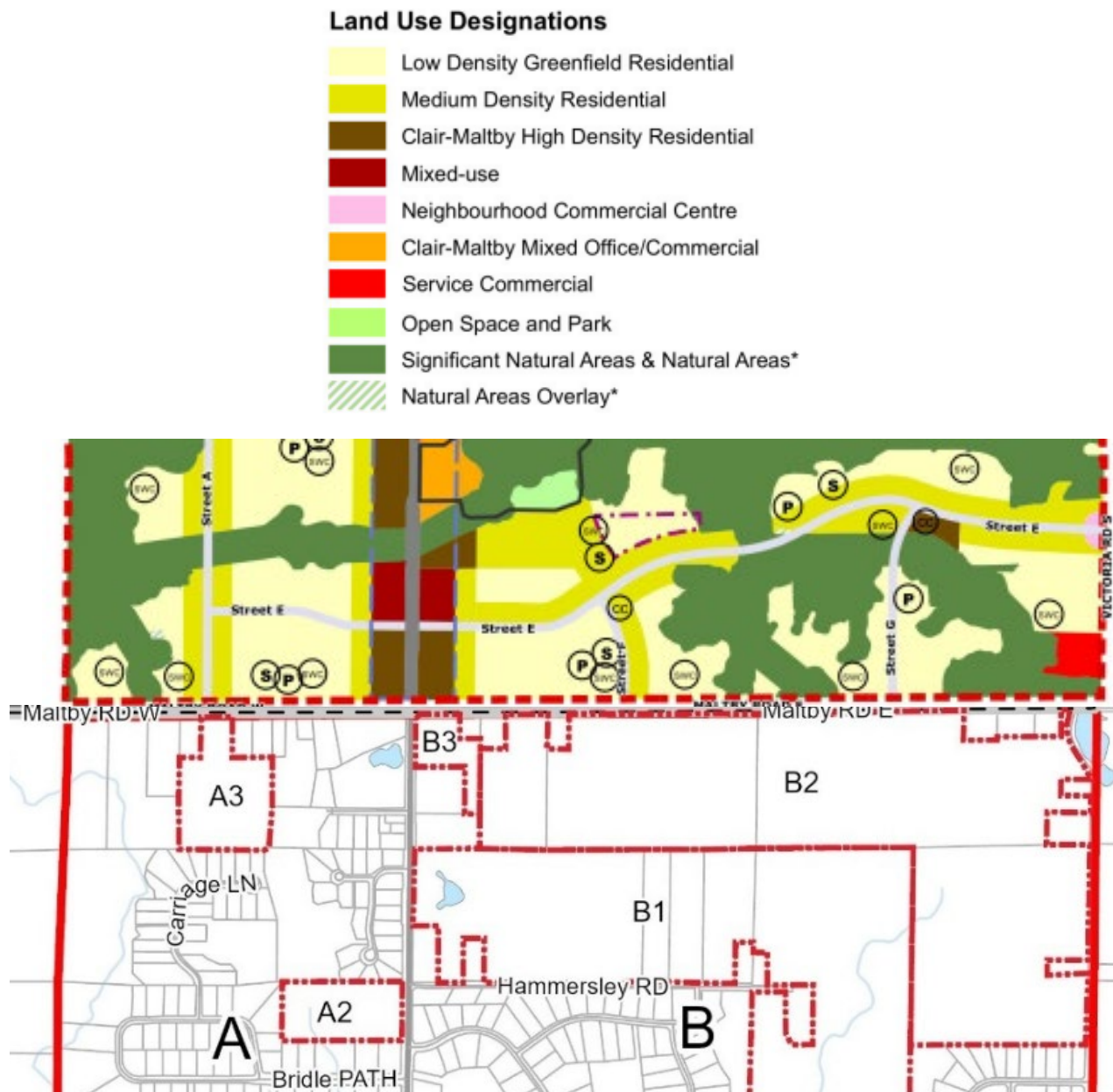
Source: Upper Map - City of Guelph Official Plan, Schedule 2: Land Use Plan Excerpt
Lower Map – County of Wellington

Figure A2 City of Guelph Land Use Context – Clair Maltby Secondary Plan



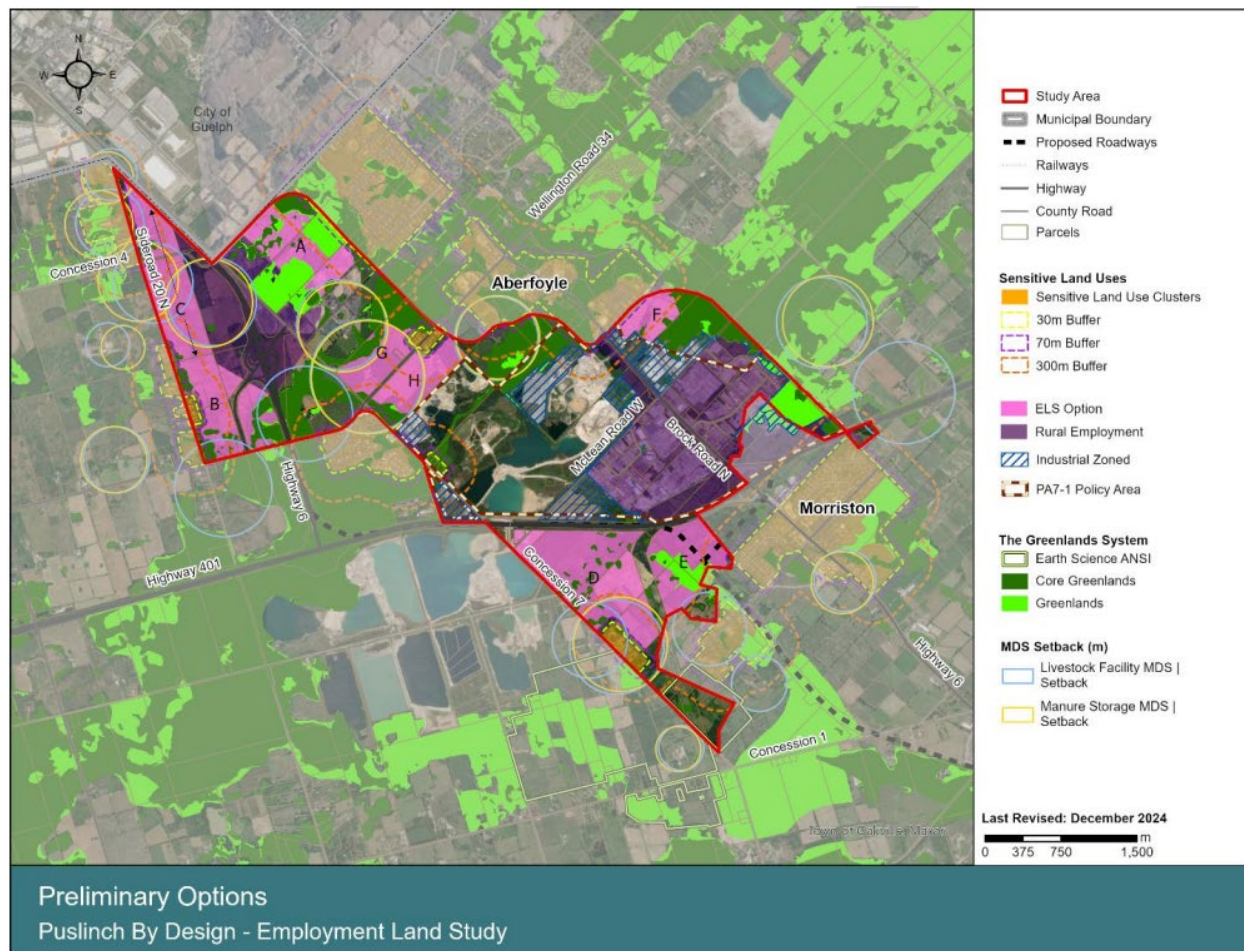
Source: Upper Map - City of Guelph Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan, Schedule B: Land Use Plan Excerpt
Lower Map – County of Wellington

Figure A3 Detail: City of Guelph Land Use Context – Clair Maltby Secondary Plan



Source: Upper Map - City of Guelph Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan, Schedule B: Land Use Plan Excerpt
 Lower Map – County of Wellington

Figure A4 Location of Preliminary Employment Land Options



Source: NPG Planning Solutions. Puslinch by Design: Employment Land Study. Phase 5 – Recommended Land Option and Land Use Report, June 2025.

Figure A5 **Detail: Location of Preliminary Employment Land Options**



Source: NPG Planning Solutions. Puslinch by Design: Employment Land Study. Phase 5 – Recommended Land Option and Land Use Report, June 2025.

Appendix B

Puslinch Rural Residential Land Needs Assessment

The County’s long-term growth forecast to 2051 assigns 90% of growth to municipally-serviced urban centres. The remaining 10% is for rural growth.

As part of Rural Phase 3B of the Official Plan Review, County of Wellington planning staff prepared an analysis of long-term rural residential growth needs in September 2024 (Report PD2024-29). The analysis concluded that forecasted rural growth can be accommodated through current supply in Centre Wellington, Guelph/Eramosa, Mapleton and Minto. Therefore, no rural settlement area expansions or additional Secondary Agricultural severance opportunities are necessary in those areas. A moderate shortfall of 50 units in Wellington North is being reviewed by Township and County staff.

A follow up report in June 2025 (Report PD2025-20) addressed a shortfall of 120 units in Erin and 250 units in Puslinch based on feedback from Town of Erin Council and Township of Puslinch Council. This is in keeping with the following approach:

- Reallocating an approximately 120 unit surplus from Erin to Puslinch;
- A 60/40 split between rural settlement area growth and severances (250 units/160 units);
- An 80/20 split between Aberfoyle (Secondary Urban Centre) and Arkell (Hamlet) 200 units/50 units for rural settlement area growth;
- Moving the severance date to May 1, 2025 resulting in a modest surplus of 50 lots.

This analysis specifically addresses the need for additional land to support an approximately 200 unit expansion to Aberfoyle in Puslinch. Morriston is unable to expand due to restrictive Greenbelt Plan policies and expansion of Arkell is more appropriately addressed through necessary technical studies as part of a privately-initiated application(s).

Table 1 provides a summary of the household growth forecasts, vacant supply of housing, and the resultant housing unit need based on the current Official Plan forecasts. Whereas Table 2 provides the same summary with adjustments to reflect the transfer of 120 units from Erin to Puslinch and allocation between rural settlement area boundary expansions and Secondary Agricultural Area severances in Puslinch.

The rural residential land need for Aberfoyle was determined by converting household growth of 200 units to area (hectares). Density is calculated on the basis of 1 unit per 1.25 acres to account for roads and stormwater management.

On this basis, approximately 101 ha (250 ac) of additional rural residential land is needed to meet the 2051 adjusted forecast for Puslinch.

Table 1 Erin and Puslinch Rural Residential Need

Based on current Official Plan Forecasts

		ERIN	PUSLINCH
DEMAND	2051 Rural Household Forecast	3,170	3,560
	2021 Census Households	2,520	2,860
	Rural Area Buildout Since Census to End of 2023	70	100
	Growth Required to Achieve Forecast	580	600
SUPPLY	Vacant Designated Rural Lands	112	73
	Existing Vacant Rural Lots	70	73
	Potential New Severances under Current Policies	278	204
	Total Vacant Supply	460	350
NEED	Long-Term Rural Housing Demand	580	600
	Existing Vacant Rural Residential Supply	460	350
	Rural Area Residential Need	-120	-250
	(negative value = shortfall)		

Source: County of Wellington 2024 Rural Residential Growth Analysis (PD2024-29)

Table 2 Adjusted Erin and Puslinch Rural Residential Need
Based on Adjustments to Official Plan Forecasts (shown in red font)

		ERIN	PUSLINCH
DEMAND	2051 Rural Household Forecast	3,050	3,680
	2021 Census Households	2,520	2,860
	Rural Area Buildout Since Census to End of 2023	70	100
	Growth Required to Achieve Forecast	460	720
SUPPLY	Vacant Designated Rural Lands	112	73
	Potential rural settlement area expansions	0	250
	Existing Vacant Rural Lots	70	73
	Potential New Severances under Current Policies	278	204
	Potential Additional Severances under New Date	0	160
	Total Vacant Supply	460	760
NEED	Long-Term Rural Housing Demand	460	720
	Existing Vacant Rural Residential Supply	460	760
	Rural Area Residential Need	0	+40
	(positive value = surplus)		

Source: County of Wellington 2024 Rural Residential Growth Analysis (PD2024-29), adjusted.