



Committee Report

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Committee
From: Sarah Wilhelm, Manager of Policy Planning
Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026
Subject: County Official Plan Review – Progress Report #14



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1.0 Purpose

This progress report for the County Official Plan Review covers the period from October 2025 to the end of December 2025.

2.0 Report Highlights

Table with 2 columns: Item ID and Description. Rows include OPA 126, OPA 131, and Bill 60, 2025.

The following County Planning Committee Reports have been brought forward to Council since the last progress report:

- PD2025-25 County Official Plan Review – Progress Report #13
PD2025-28 Bill 60 – Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025

3.0 Work Plan

3.1 Urban Boundary Expansions - Official Plan Amendment 126 (OPA 126)

OPA 126 was originally adopted by County Council on April 24, 2025. The amendment identifies urban boundary expansions in Centre Wellington, addresses County-wide policy updates related to growth, and housekeeping changes.

The Province approved OPA 126 on November 18, 2025 with three modifications. The modifications were made to address matters related to land use compatibility between major facilities and sensitive land uses, and protecting mineral aggregate resources. This approval brings Phase 3A of the Official Plan Review to a conclusion.

3.2 Rural Area Policies and Growth – Official Plan Amendment 131 (OPA 131)

As part of Phase 3B of the Official Plan Review, Draft OPA 131 has been circulated for Provincial, Municipal, Indigenous, agency and public comment. Staff have been reviewing the comments and will

report to Committee following formal public input required under Section 26 of the Planning Act through an open house and public meeting.

In September 2025, County Council authorized staff to hold an open house and authorized the Planning Committee to hold a public meeting at the appropriate time. We have scheduled these statutory meetings as follows:

Virtual Open House	Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 6:30 pm
In Person Public Meeting	Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 11:00 am

Notice of the open house and public meeting will be given in accordance with the Planning Act. Staff will go beyond these requirements by providing notice to over 400 subscribers to the digital mailing list for the Official Plan Review project. As part of those notices further details will be shared about how to register for the Open House (registration for the Public Meeting is not required). These details will also be posted on the project webpage at www.wellington.ca/planwell.

4.0 Bill 60 - Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025

Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 received royal assent on November 27, 2025. Planning staff previously reported on the omnibus bill and other provincial initiatives in November 2025 through Planning Committee report PD2025-28. Planning staff have identified two key areas below that could have an effect on the County's Official Plan Review.

4.1 Expanded Ministerial Authority in Decision Making

Bill 60 has introduced an exception to the general rule that decisions on planning matters must be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024). Bill 60 allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make decisions that are not consistent with the PPS, outside of the Greenbelt Plan. This expanded power could be applied to the approval of municipal official plans and amendments where the Minister is the approval authority. The County is the approval authority for most amendments to the County Official Plan but those associated with the 5-year review are typically approved by the Minister. It remains to be seen how the Minister will make use of the new exception, especially in relation to local decision-making.

4.2 Expanded As-of-right Minor Variance Framework

As the Committee may recall, as part of Bill 17 (Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025) the Province made changes to Planning Act Regulation 545/06 to reduce the number of minor variance applications for setbacks. The amended regulation, which came into force on November 21, 2025, allows variations to be permitted "as-of-right" if a proposal is within 10% of the required setback applicable to specified lands. Specified lands include parcels of urban residential lands outside of the Greenbelt Area, and exclude areas such as hazardous lands, and lands near shorelines and railways.

Bill 60 broadens the legislative framework to permit as-of-right minor variances to include other zoning standards beyond setbacks (e.g., height). No prescribed percentages or standards have been established yet through this new regulation-making authority of the Province.

4.3 Simplifying and Standardizing Official Plans

The Province also launched additional consultations to support the objectives of Bill 60, including one aimed at simplifying and standardizing official plans (ERO 025-1099). The Government wants to help municipalities plan for growth and housing more efficiently by making official plans shorter, easier to understand, and more consistent across Ontario. Some of the proposed changes include standardization of the following:

- Table of contents and structure,
- Schedules, overlays and data,
- Page or word limits, and
- Number and type of land use designations.

Other changes under consideration would limit the use of development standards (e.g., building heights, lot sizes, density) and prohibit secondary plans or site-specific policies.

Planning staff provided comments on this consultation before it closed on November 22, 2025. No legislative or regulatory changes implementing a new streamlined framework for official plans have been released at this time. Planning staff will continue to monitor this Provincial initiative and its implications for the Official Plan Review project and potential implications for the County Official Plan and other planning documents.

5.0 Strategic Action Plan

This report relates to the following objectives and priorities in the County's Strategic Action Plan:

Making the best decisions for the betterment of the Community.

Recommendation:

That the County Official Plan Review – Progress Report #14 be received for information and forwarded by the County Clerk to Member Municipalities.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Wilhelm, RPP, MCIP
Manager of Policy Planning

In consultation with/approved by:

Aldo Salis, Director of Planning and Development
Scott Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer