



Committee Report



To: Chair and Members of the Planning Committee
From: Sarah Wilhelm, Manager of Policy Planning
Date: Thursday, February 08, 2024
Subject: **County Official Plan Review – Urban Boundary Expansion Review**

PLANWELL

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of:

- the Provincial and County policy framework for considering urban boundary expansions;
- the final inventory of urban expansion requests received through the County's municipal comprehensive review; and
- the framework developed to screen and evaluate where urban expansion should occur.

2.0 Background

The County retained Watson and Associates Land Economists Ltd. to complete the municipal comprehensive review (MCR) Phase 1 Growth Forecasts and Allocations and Phase 2 Land Needs Assessment technical reports. Both reports have been approved by County Council. More information about the growth management component of the MCR is included in Appendix A.

Urban boundaries are designated in the County Official Plan and there are rules governing how to change them. An urban boundary expansion (or settlement area boundary expansion) must be based on need, feasibility and the most appropriate location for growth.

Throughout the MCR, County planning staff have been tracking requests made for property to be considered for a potential settlement area expansion. In April 2023, staff report PD2023-09 provided an inventory of urban expansion requests received through the County's municipal comprehensive review. Since that time additional submissions have been received and the submission window is now closed. This report provides the final updated inventory of requests for consideration.

The County, in coordination with each member municipality, will continue with the evaluation of submitted requests for urban boundary expansions in the communities with a need for more:

- community area growth (Centre Wellington, Mapleton and Minto); and
- employment area growth (Centre Wellington, Erin and Mapleton).

Community area growth is mainly residential, but also commercial, office and institutional; and employment area growth is only industrial. See Appendix B for summary results of County land needs assessment.

3.0 Policy Framework

Existing Provincial policy provides the framework for where and how municipalities can grow, while also establishing the geographic areas and features that should be preserved and protected over the long term. Lands within the Greenbelt Plan area are subject to additional, more restrictive growth policies. The current Provincial policies applicable to Wellington County are as follows:

2019 Growth Plan (as amended)
2020 Provincial Policy Statement
2017 Greenbelt Plan

Policy 2.2.8.2 of the Growth Plan sets out the key policies for consideration of urban boundary expansions as part of the MCR process. Section 4.8.2 of the County Official Plan also contains specific policy criteria related to such expansions. Refer to Appendix C for a summary of key policies.

The Province released a Draft Provincial Planning Statement in April 2023 which proposes to combine and replace the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan (except within the Greenbelt Area) into a streamlined and simplified land use planning policy framework. At the time of writing this report, it is difficult to predict the timing and content of the final document. In the interest of bringing the growth management component of the MCR to a conclusion, the County is proceeding with its review under the current policies.

4.0 Inventory of Urban Expansion Requests

A total of 48 urban settlement area boundary expansion requests have been received totaling an area of about 1,445 ha (3,570 ac). The overall need for boundary expansions across Wellington is 482 ha (1,200 ac) after accounting for recommended employment area conversions. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the requests compared with the land needs results by municipality.

Based on Figure 1, staff highlight the following:

Guelph/Eramosa and Wellington North

- Requests for expansion in Guelph/Eramosa and Wellington North will not be considered further because the Phase 2 Land Needs Assessment did not identify a need for additional land.

Puslinch and Rural Areas

- Puslinch isn't included in Figure 1 because all the Township's growth is considered rural, not urban.
- Staff will continue tracking requests for expansion of rural settlement areas (Secondary Urban Centres and Hamlets) and other inquiries throughout rural Wellington.
- These and other matters, including severances, will be addressed as part of the future rural Phase 3B work plan.

Figure 1 Summary of Urban Expansion Requests and Land Need Results

Municipality	REQUESTS FOR EXPANSION		NEED FOR EXPANSION		
	Total Requests #	Total Area ¹ (ha)	Community Area ² (ha)	Employment Area ³ (ha)	Total Area (ha)
Centre Wellington	30	973	238 ⁴	160 ⁴	398 ⁴
Erin	4	180	0	23	23
Guelph/Eramosa	4	87	0	0	0
Mapleton	4	136	34	9	43
Minto	4	60	18	0	18
Wellington North	2	9	0	0	0
TOTAL	48	1,445 ha (3,570 ac)	290 ha (717 ac)	192 ha (474 ac)	482 ha (1,190 ha)

NOTES to Figure 1

- ¹ All areas are approximate and exclude lands designated Core Greenlands and Greenlands
- ² Community area land is mainly residential, but also commercial, office and institutional uses
- ³ Employment area refers to land designated as industrial
- ⁴ Land Needs Assessment results for Centre Wellington are currently under review and may be subject to change

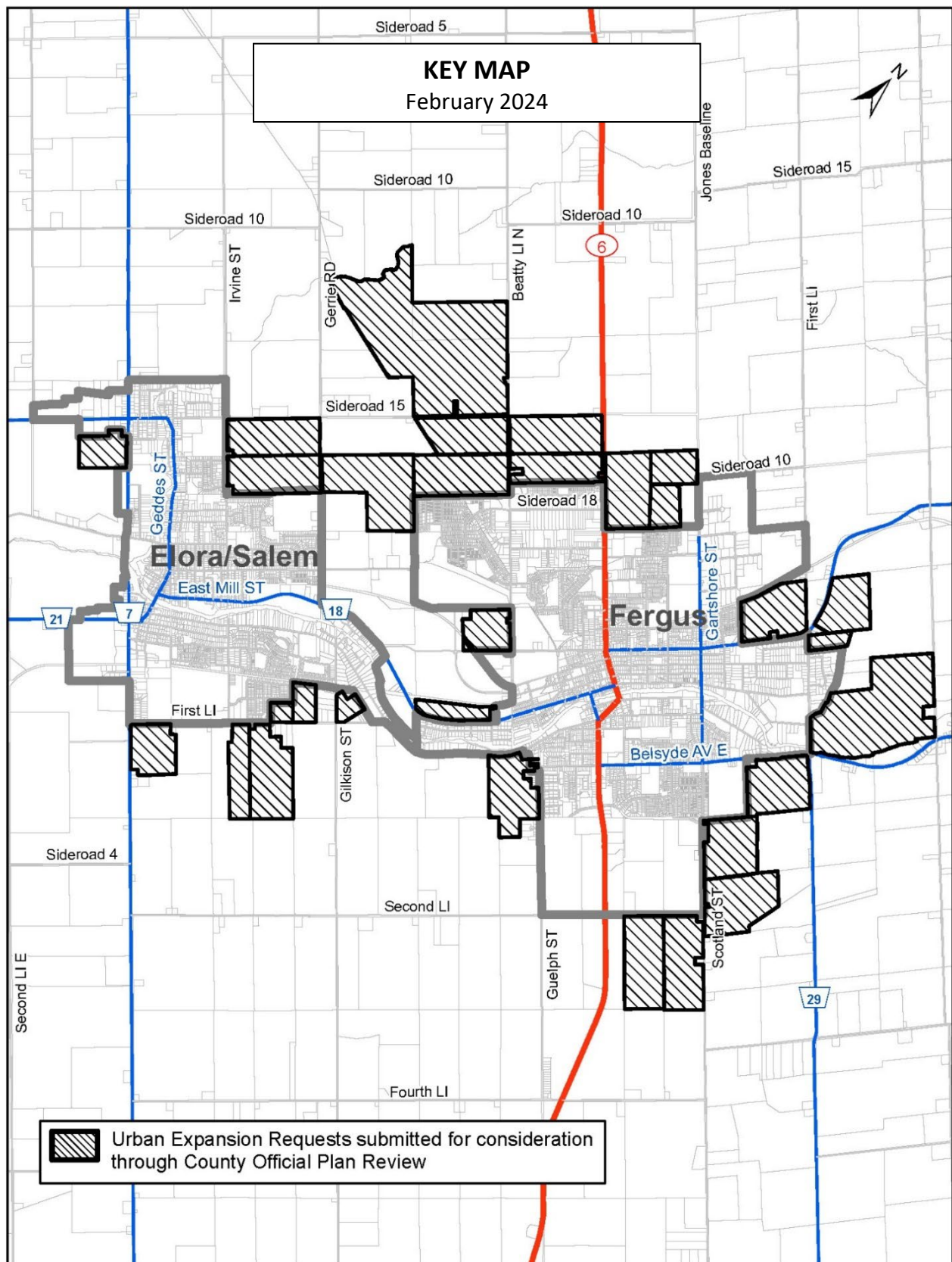
Planning staff have compiled detailed lists and associated mapping to identify properties with requests received during the submission window (see Appendix D). Staff caution that:



- If a property is included in the inventory, it does not necessarily mean it will be used for a future urban boundary expansion.
- If a property is not included in the inventory, it may still be identified for consideration for a future urban boundary expansion as part of the review process.

In addition to the detailed mapping contained in Appendix D, we have included a key map for Centre Wellington so that the significant number of requests can be viewed on one map (Figure 2).

Figure 2 **Key Map of Urban Expansion Requests in Centre Wellington**



5.0 Evaluation Framework

The County has developed an evaluation framework to be used to consider whether a given area is feasible for urban expansion based on Provincial and County land use policies and policy direction. The framework has also been informed by a best-practices review of other municipalities. Figure 3 provides a summary of the focus areas and objectives organized under the three broad and interconnected theme areas of the County of Wellington Official Plan Review: Sustain Well, Live Well and Grow Well.

Figure 3 Evaluation Framework - Summary of Focus Areas and Objectives



Focus Areas	Objectives
Agricultural Resources	• Protect prime agricultural area • Minimize fragmentation of prime agricultural lands • Compliance with minimum distance separation formulae • Minimize impact on the agri-food network including agricultural operations
Natural Heritage and Water	• Enhance/support water resource system • Avoid Provincial Natural Heritage System • Avoid and protect natural features and areas for the long term • Climate change mitigation and adaptation
Source Water	• Source Water Protection - quality and quantity of municipal sources of drinking water
Aggregate Resources	• Protect mineral aggregate resources
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	• Support/protect cultural heritage resources • Support/protect archaeological resources
Greenbelt Protection (Erin)	• Support growth in Greenbelt Towns and Villages • Limited expansion of Greenbelt settlement areas • Support complete communities/local agricultural economy • Optimize use of existing or planned infrastructure • Protect Natural Heritage System

Figure 3 Evaluation Framework - Summary of Focus Areas and Objectives (continued)



Focus Areas	Objectives
Complete and Healthy Communities	• Diverse range and mix of housing options • Mixed use and compact • Improve transportation linkages and increase travel choices • Convenient access to necessities for daily living • Provide integrated open space and parks • Prioritizing tree canopy protection/enhancement • Support public health, active living and personal safety



Focus Areas	Objectives
Water, Wastewater, Roads and Financing	• Optimize use of existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities • Cost effective/financially viable infrastructure
Growth Management	• Wise use and management of lands • Sustainable and active transportation system • Protect or enhance employment areas, highway corridors and railway corridors • Consider local development conditions

The full framework, including the evaluation criteria, is included in Appendix E.

6.0 Next Steps

Subject to Council’s endorsement, the Urban Boundary Expansion Review Framework will be used to assess urban boundaries and assist in evaluating the appropriateness and suitability of lands for boundary expansion. This assessment will be completed by a team made up of County and Member Municipality staff and/or consultants together with input from Conservation Authorities, Source Water Protection staff and other specialized areas of expertise as needed. The overall recommendation as to whether a given candidate expansion area is feasible for expansion will be based on the comprehensive application of all the criteria.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to scope the criteria due to the small scale of land needed in a municipality, provided the overall policy intent is maintained. The framework document is not meant to limit the County or Member Municipalities from identifying local criteria and information that may also need to be considered.

7.0 Strategic Action Plan

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

- Always look to the future and consider sustainability impacts with respect to social, environmental, economic and fiscal realities.

8.0 Recommendations

That the County Official Plan Review – Urban Boundary Expansion Review report be received for information.

That the Appendix E Urban Boundary Expansion Review Framework be endorsed by Council.

That the County Clerk forward the report to Member Municipalities for information.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Wilhelm, RPP, MCIP
Manager of Policy Planning

Appendix A	Status Update - Growth Management Component of Wellington County MCR
Appendix B	Urban Community Area and Employment Area Land Needs
Appendix C	Key Policy Criteria for Settlement Area Boundary Expansions
Appendix D	Inventory and Mapping of Urban Expansion Requests
Appendix E	Urban Boundary Expansion Review Framework

Appendix A

Status Update - Growth Management Component of Wellington County MCR

Phase 1 Growth Allocations

Technical Work: **Phase 1 MCR Report: Urban Structure and Growth Allocations**

- Finalized January 31, 2022 and approved by Council in March 2022

Implementation: **County Growth Structure – Official Plan Amendment (OPA 119)**

- Submitted to Province for a decision June 9, 2022
- Approved by Province April 11, 2023 with modifications, including mandated urban boundary expansions
- Approval by Province with modifications largely reversed (including those for urban boundary expansions) through Bill 150 (royal assent December 6, 2023)

County Growth Forecast – Official Plan Amendment (OPA 120)

- Submitted to Province for a decision March 1, 2023
- Provincial decision pending. Posted for 30-day comment period ending February 15, 2024 (refer to Environmental Registry of Ontario posting ERO 019-6784)

Phase 2 Land Needs Assessment

Technical Work: **Phase 2 MCR Report: Urban Land Needs Assessment**

- Finalized August 29, 2022 and approved by Council in September 2022
- Results for Centre Wellington are currently under review and may be subject to change

Phase 3A URBAN Growth Review

- Technical Work:**
- Agricultural System Mapping and Policy Review (report PD2023-05)
 - Future Development Lands (report PD2023-24)
 - Urban Settlement Area Boundary Review (report PD2024-02)

- Implementation:**
- Agricultural System Mapping and Policy Review currently on hold due to uncertain Provincial policy direction.
 - County Future Development Lands Official Plan Amendment (OPA 123) currently on hold due to Provincial wind back of OPA 119 modifications
 - A future Official Plan Amendment will be needed to implement the results of the Urban Boundary Review

Phase 3B RURAL Growth Review

- Technical Work:**
- Agricultural System Mapping and Policy Review (report PD2023-05)
 - Study for Regionally Significant Economic Development Area initiated by Township
 - County-wide rural residential growth component

- Implementation:**
- Agricultural Review and rural residential review currently on hold due to uncertain Provincial policy direction.
 - A future Official Plan Amendment will be needed to implement results of the Puslinch employment land study

Appendix B

Urban Community Area and Employment Area Land Needs

NOTES Future Development Lands are located within Settlement Area Boundaries
S.A.B.E. refers to a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion
Community area land need in Centre Wellington is currently under review and may be reduced

Figure ES-3
County of Wellington
Urban Community Area Land Needs
Adjusted for Recommended Employment Area Conversions

Area Municipality	Redesignation of Future Development Lands to Community Area	Community Area S.A.B.E., ha	Community Area Excess, ha
Centre Wellington	-	238	-
Mapleton	15	34	-
Minto	61	18	-
Wellington North	81	-	89
Puslinch	-	-	-
Guelph-Eramosa	-	-	-
Erin	38	-	-
County of Wellington	195	290	89

Notes: Adjustment made to the Township of Wellington North (2 ha) and the Township of Centre Wellington (9 ha) to account for recommended Employment Area to Community Area conversions.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Figure ES-4
County of Wellington
Urban Employment Area Land Needs
Adjusted for Recommended Employment Area Conversions

Area Municipality	Urban Employment Area S.A.B.E., ha	Urban Employment Area Excess, ha
Centre Wellington	160	-
Mapleton	9	-
Minto	-	-
Wellington North	-	40
Puslinch	-	-
Guelph-Eramosa	-	-
Erin	23	-
County of Wellington	192	40

Notes: Adjusted for recommended Employment Area to Community Area conversions in the Township of Wellington North (2 ha) and the Township of Centre Wellington (14 ha).

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Appendix C

Key Policy Criteria for Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

As specified in Section 2.2.8.2 of the Growth Plan (2019, as amended), where the need for a settlement area boundary expansion has been justified under the policies of the Growth Plan, the feasibility and most appropriate location for the proposed expansion must be identified in a manner consistent with the policies of the Growth Plan, and including the following criteria:

Infrastructure:

- there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities
- the infrastructure and public service facilities are viable over their full life cycle
- the proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent, and storm water master plans or equivalent, as appropriate

Natural Heritage/Water Resources Impact:

- the proposed expansion, including the associated water, wastewater and storm water servicing, would be planned and demonstrated to avoid; or if avoidance is not possible, minimize or mitigate, any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including the quality and quantity of water
- key hydrologic areas and the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan should be avoided where possible

Agricultural Area/Network Impact:

- 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
- the settlement area to be expanded complies with the minimum distance separation
- any adverse impacts on the agri-food network, including agricultural operations, from expanding settlement areas would be avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment

Alignment with other Provincial Plans/Policies:

- the Wise Use and Management of Resources and Protecting Public Health and Safety policies of the Provincial Policy Statement are applied
- the proposed expansion meets applicable requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and applicable Source Protection Plans

Greenbelt Area:

- settlement area to be expanded is identified as a Town/Village in the Greenbelt
- proposed expansion would be no more than 5% increase in geographic size of settlement area up to a maximum of 10 ha (additional restrictions to residential development apply, however Erin does not require additional residential land based on the land needs assessment results)

- proposed expansion would support the achievement of complete communities or the local agricultural economy
- proposed use cannot be reasonably accommodated within existing settlement area boundary
- proposed expansion would be serviced by existing municipal water and wastewater systems without impacting future intensification opportunities in the existing settlement area
- expansion into the Natural Heritage System in the Greenbelt Plan is prohibited

County Official Plan:

Similar criteria for expansion of the County's urban centres are contained in the County Official Plan. The Official Plan also contains additional criteria related to the existing development pattern in the community, logical boundaries and other planning criteria considered appropriate in the circumstances.

Appendix D

Inventory and Mapping of Urban Expansion Requests

CENTRE WELLINGTON

ERIN

MAPLETON

MINTO

Inventory of Urban Expansion Requests

CENTRE WELLINGTON

ID#	Settlement Area	Location	Approximate Net Area (ha)
SABR-006	Elora/Salem	178 First Line	2.0
SABR-007	Elora/Salem	220 First Line	7.9
SABR-009	Elora/Salem	264 First Line	6.4
SABR-023	Elora/Salem	7581 Sideroad 15	32.0
SABR-025	Elora/Salem	6574 Gerrie Road	37.1
SABR-040	Elora/Salem	6389 Wellington Road 7	23.7
SABR-051	Elora/Salem	456 Wellington Road 7	17.4
SABR-061	Elora/Salem	159 First Line	38.2
SABR-062	Elora/Salem	127 First Line	21.6
SABR-005	Fergus	795 Anderson Street N	5.9
SABR-019	Fergus	6586 Beatty Line N	35.4
SABR-020	Fergus	6490 First Line	30.5
SABR-022	Fergus	968 David Street N, 6581 Hwy 6	36.3
SABR-026	Fergus	6470 Beatty Line N	19.6
SABR-033	Fergus	965 Gartshore Street	12.9
SABR-034	Fergus	965 Gartshore Street	16.3
SABR-035	Fergus	930 Scotland Street	34.1
SABR-036	Fergus	851 Wellington Road 18	12.6
SABR-037	Fergus	6583 Gerrie Road	46.6
SABR-038	Fergus	6268-6278 Jones Baseline	35.8
SABR-039	Fergus	7863 Second Line	35.2
SABR-043	Fergus	6585 Highway 6 N	26.3
SABR-053	Fergus	8147 Wellington Road 19	28.2
SABR-056	Fergus	8055 Wellington Road 18	34.8
SABR-058	Fergus	6602 Highway 6	27.0
SABR-059	Fergus	6684, 6704 Beatty Line N, 7692 Sideroad 15	169.6
SABR-060	Fergus	996-6279 Jones Baseline	38.7
SABR-063	Fergus	7715 Sideroad 15	30.7
SABR-064	Fergus	785 Guelph Street	26.8
SABR-065	Fergus	Multiple addresses	83.9

Centre Wellington Total: 973 ha
(2,400 ac)

NOTES

The inventory of requests is strictly for information only.

All areas are approximate and exclude Core Greenlands and Greenlands designated lands. Other constraints to development may apply.

Properties included in the inventory will not necessarily be used for a future urban boundary expansion, nor is inclusion on the list a prerequisite for a property to be considered for new growth.

MCR Phase 2 Land Needs Assessment results for Centre Wellington are currently under review and may be subject to change.

Inventory of Urban Expansion Requests

ERIN

ID#	Settlement Area	Location	Approximate Net Area (ha)
SABR-008	Erin Village	9558 Sideroad 10	13.0
SABR-052	Erin Village	5458 Winston Churchill Blvd	99.4
SABR-054	Erin Village	9556 Sideroad 17	26.5
SABR-057	Erin Village	5644 Wellington Road 23	41.1
Erin Total:			180 ha 445 (ac)

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Inventory of Urban Expansion Requests

MAPLETON

ID#	Settlement Area	Location	Approximate Net Area (ha)
SABR-013	Drayton	7133 Wellington Road 11	16.1
SABR-032	Drayton	8067 Wellington Road 8	55.0
SABR-045	Drayton	7950 Wellington Road 8	38.2
SABR-018	Moorefield	12 William Street	26.7
Mapleton Total:			136 ha (335 ac)

NOTES

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Properties included in the inventory will not necessarily be used for a future urban boundary expansion, nor is inclusion on the list a prerequisite for a property to be considered for new growth. We note however, that the Township of Mapleton Growth Management Summary Final Report of January 2022 contains additional details of the Township's preferred approach to growth and land optimization.

Inventory of Urban Expansion Requests

MINTO

ID#	Settlement Area	Location	Approximate Net Area (ha)
SABR-055	Clifford	41 Park Street W	5.7
SABR-017	Harriston	122 Wellington Road 109	22.6
SABR-041	Harriston	6004 Elora Street N	16.8
SABR-042	Palmerston	8779 Wellington Road 5	15.2
Minto Total:			60 ha (150 ac)

NOTES

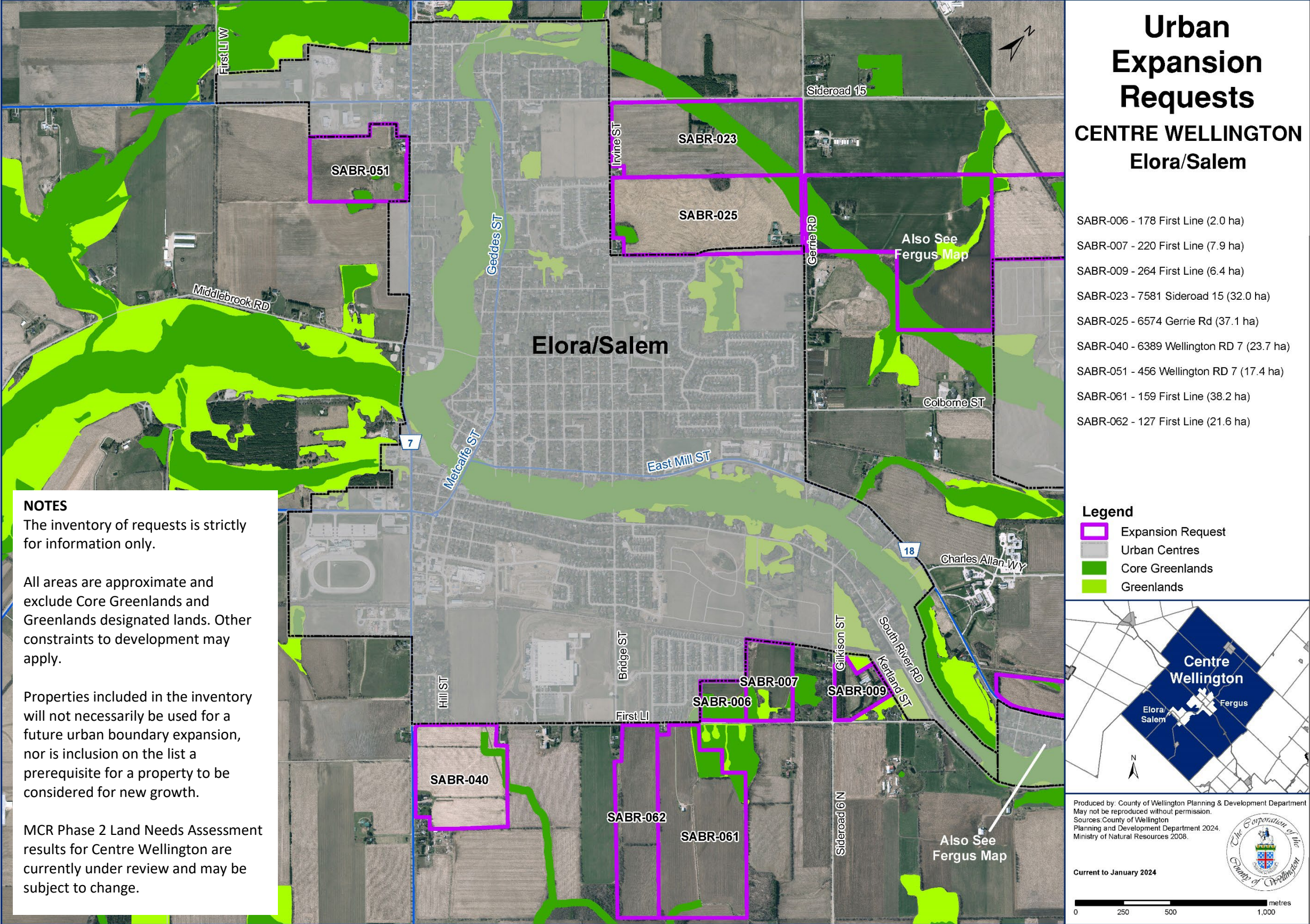
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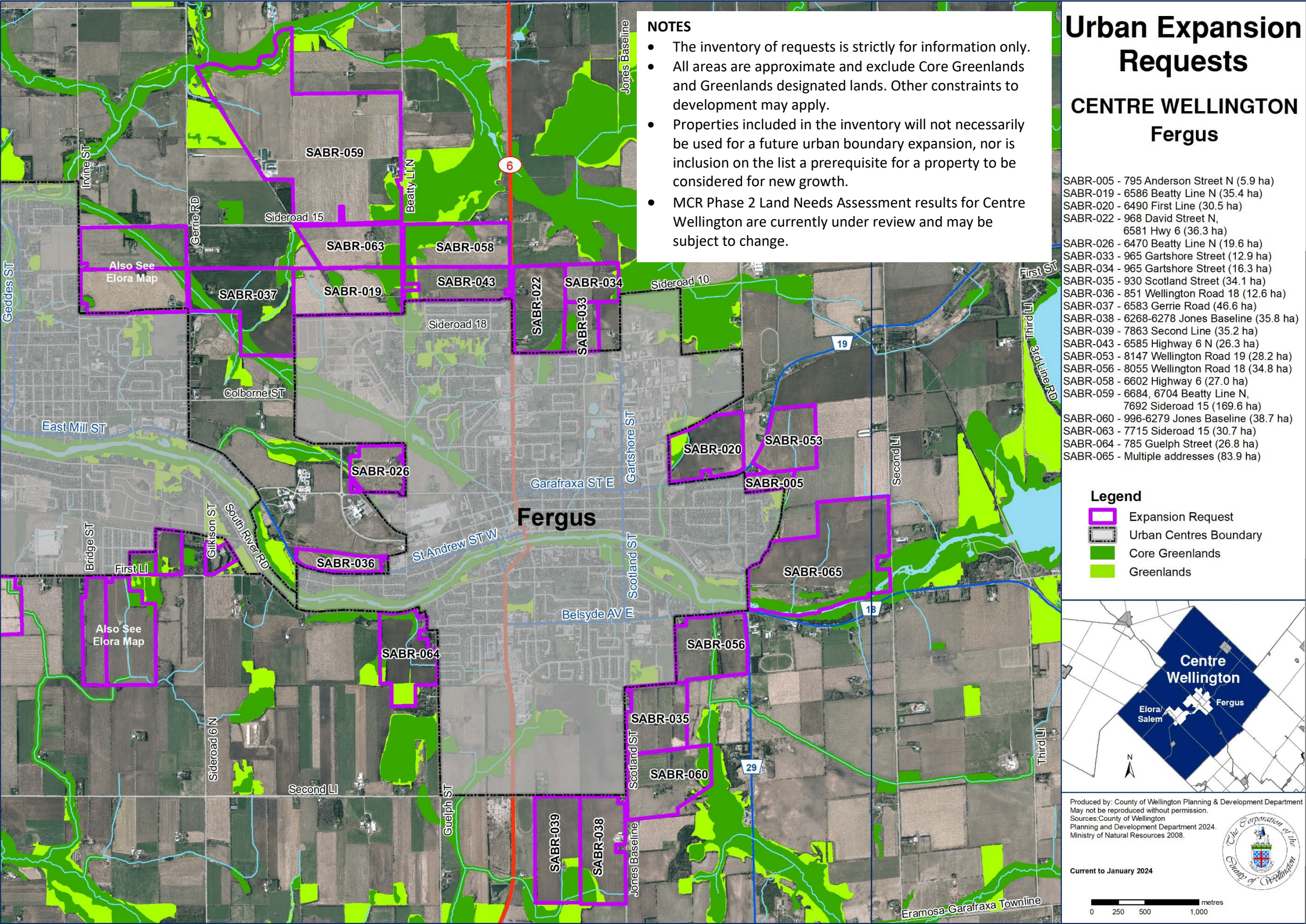
Properties included in the inventory will not necessarily be used for a future urban boundary expansion, nor is inclusion on the list a prerequisite for a property to be considered for new growth.

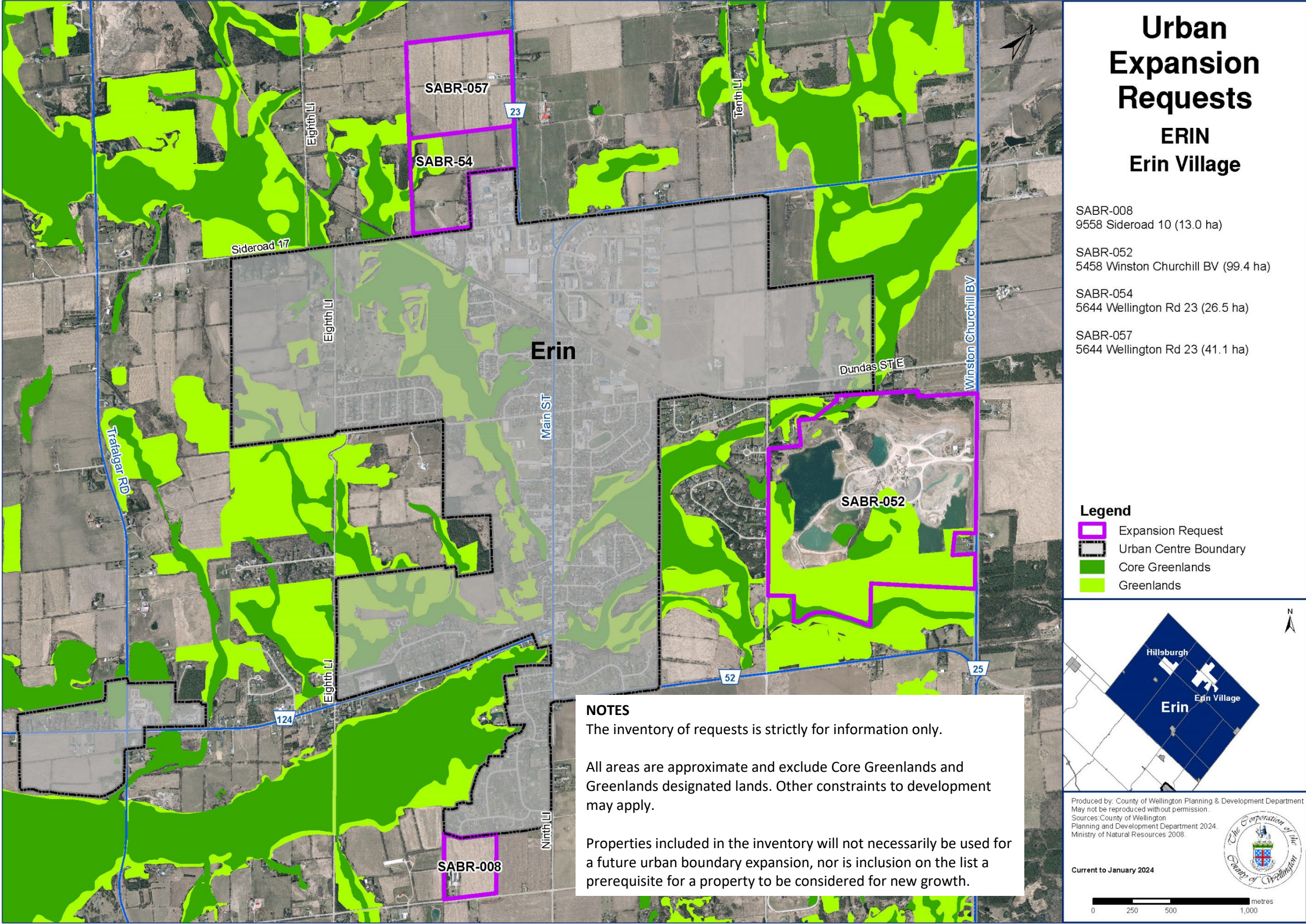
SABR-055 also proposes an approximately 0.2 ha settlement area removal.

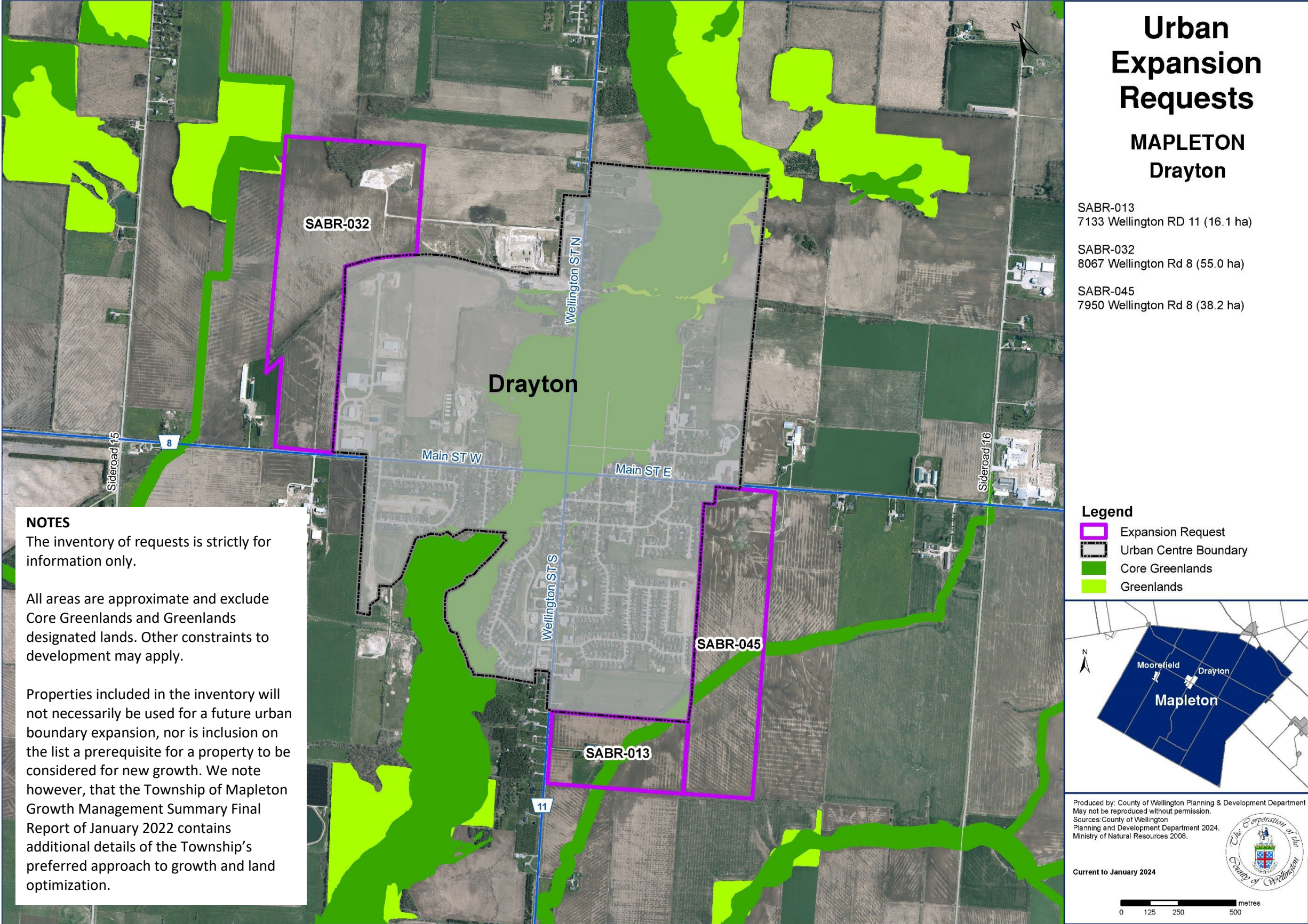
SABR-041 also proposes to offset expansion by removals elsewhere.

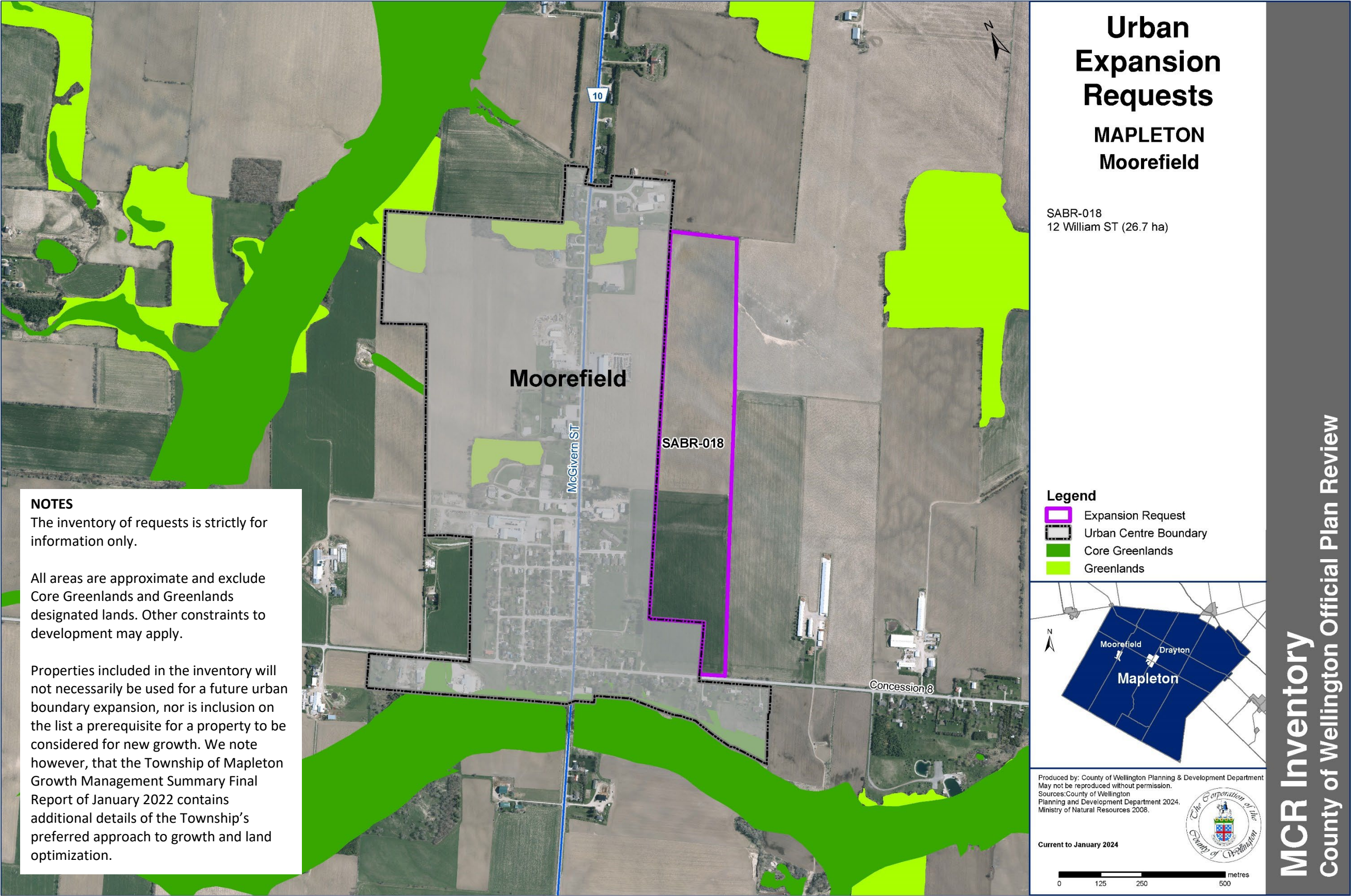


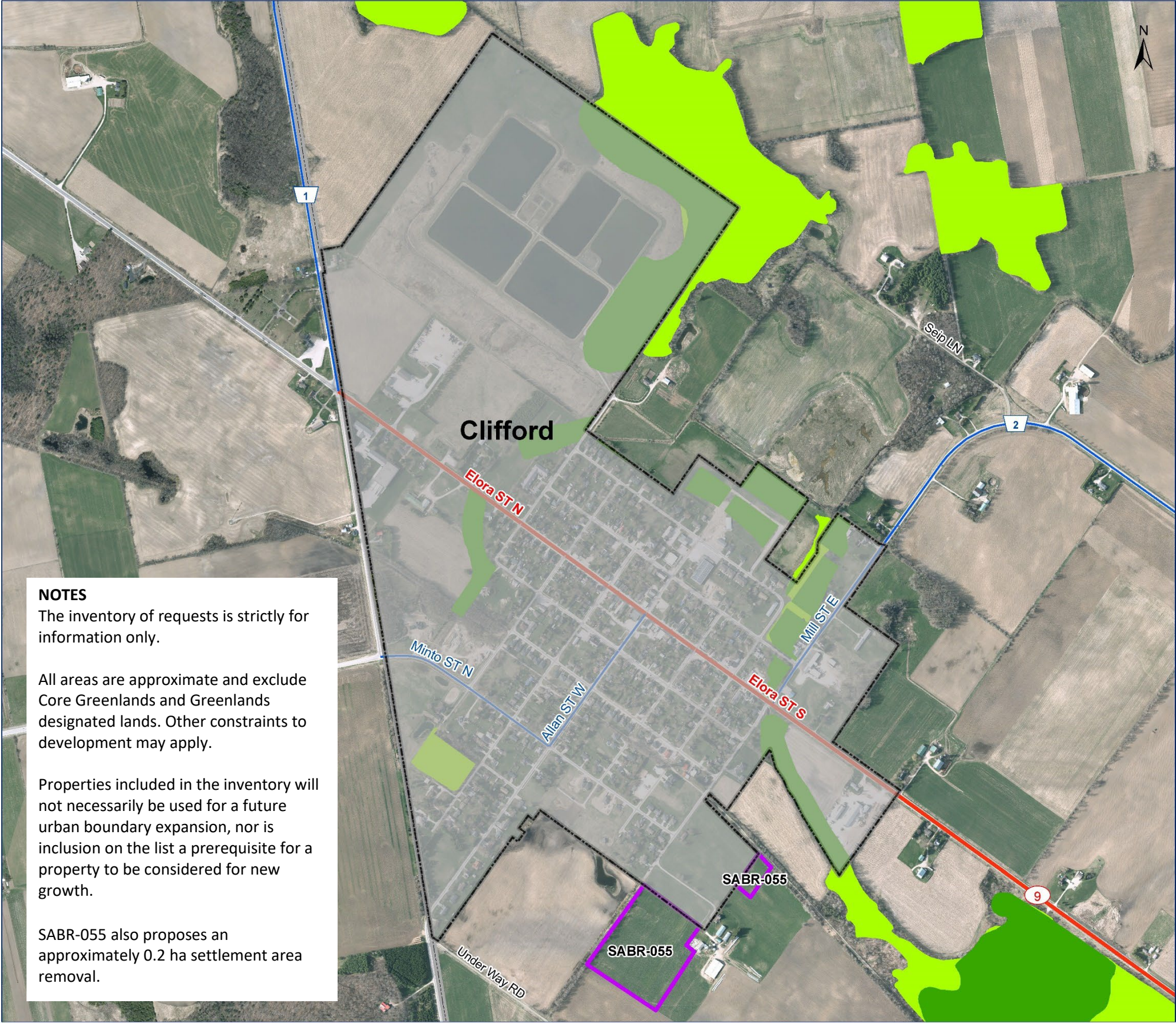
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NOTES

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Properties included in the inventory will not necessarily be used for a future urban boundary expansion, nor is inclusion on the list a prerequisite for a property to be considered for new growth.

SABR-055 also proposes an approximately 0.2 ha settlement area removal.

Urban Expansion Requests

**MINTO
Clifford**

SABR-055
41 Park St W (5.7 ha)

Legend

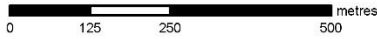
- Urban Centre Boundary
- Expansion Request
- Core Greenlands
- Greenlands

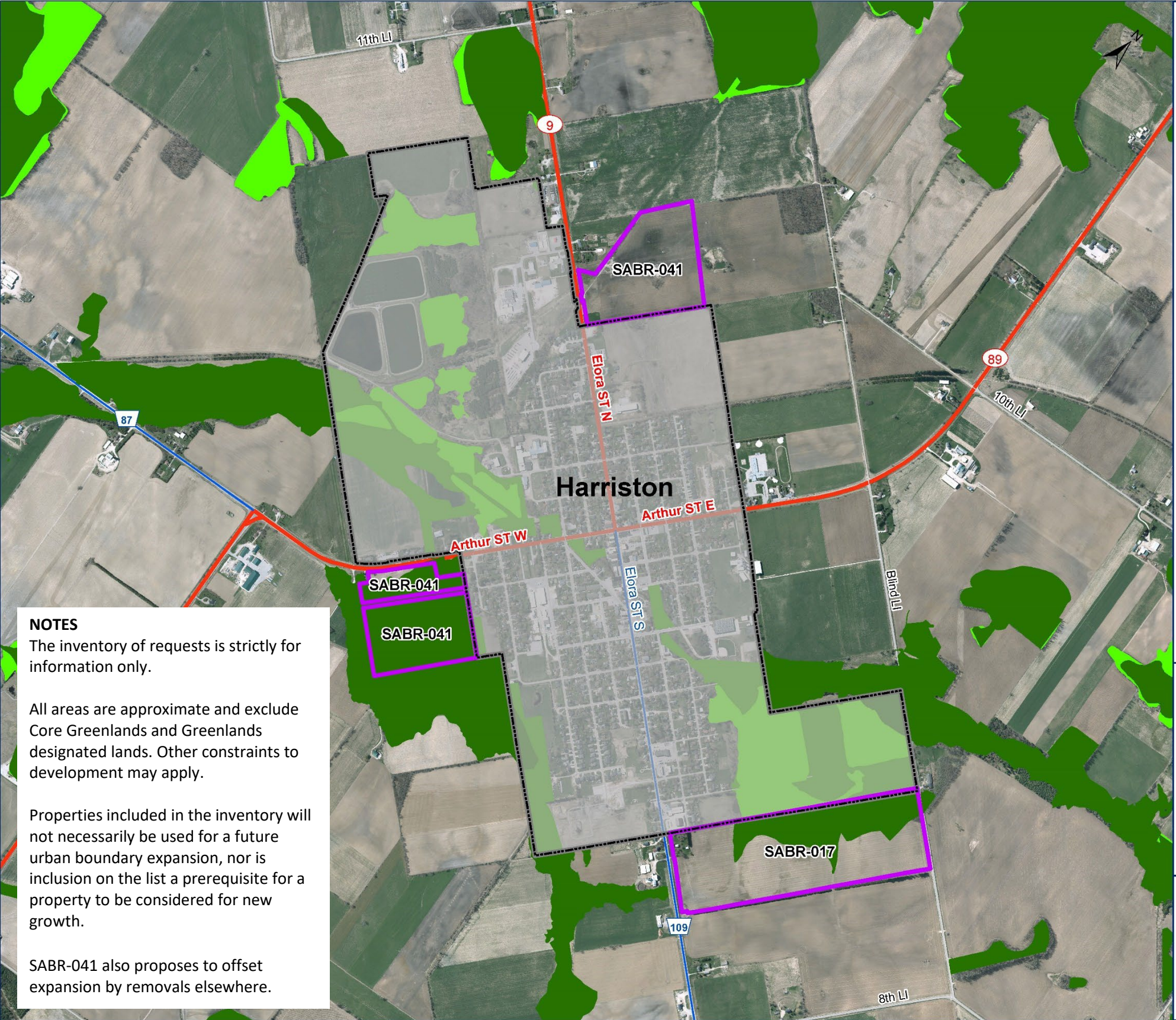


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Current to January 2024





NOTES

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SABR-041 also proposes to offset expansion by removals elsewhere.

Urban Expansion Requests

MINTO

Harriston

- SABR-017
6112 Wellington RD 109 (22.6 ha)
- SABR-041
6004 Elora ST N (16 ha)
- SABR-041
Frontage on Hwy 23 (Arthur St W) (0.8 ha)

Legend

- Expansion Request
- Urban Centre Boundary
- Core Greenlands
- Greenlands

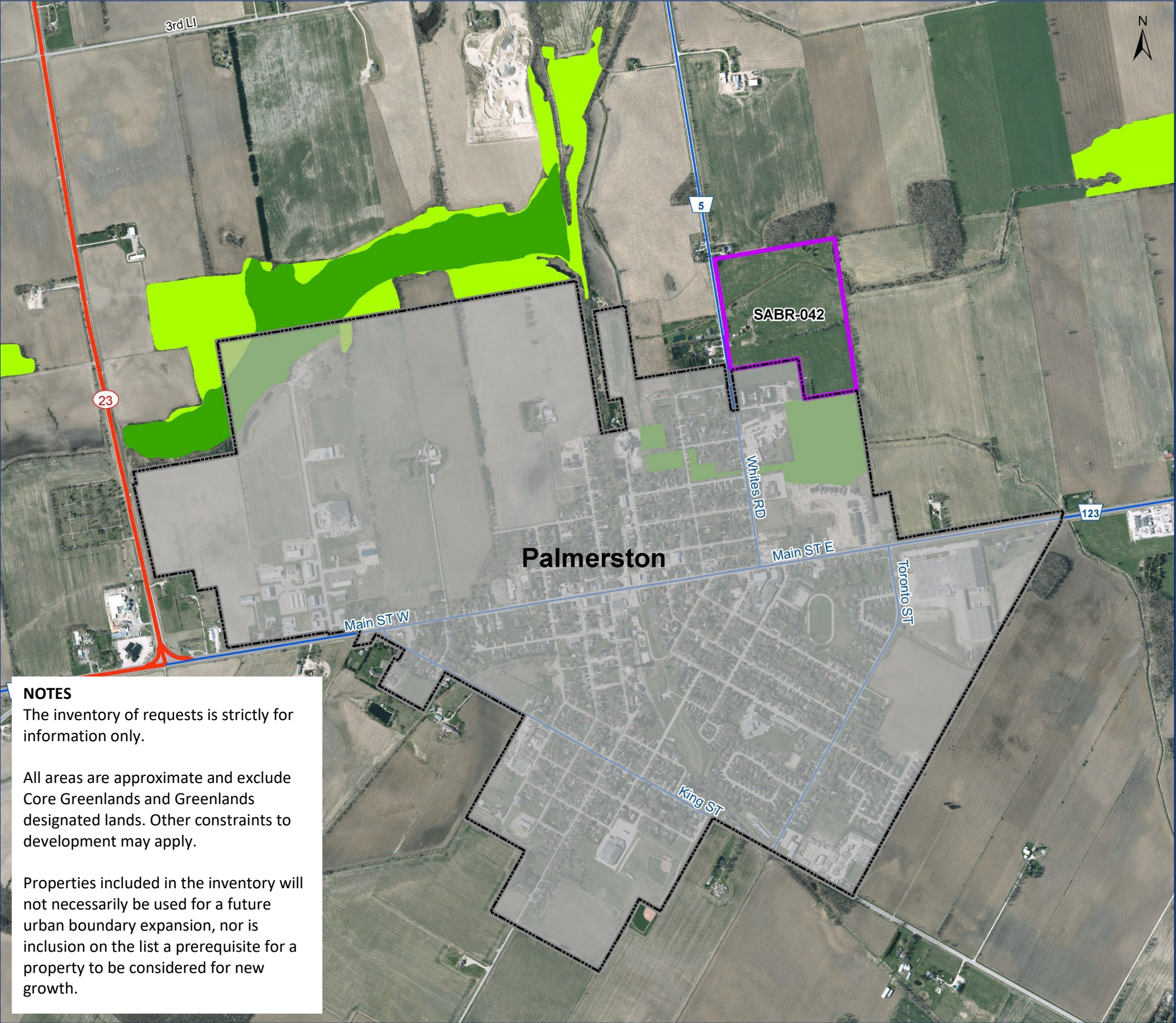


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Current to January 2024

0 125 250 500 metres





NOTES

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Properties included in the inventory will not necessarily be used for a future urban boundary expansion, nor is inclusion on the list a prerequisite for a property to be considered for new growth.

**Urban
Expansion
Requests**
**MINTO
Palmerston**

SABR-042
8779 Wellington Rd 5 (15.2 ha)

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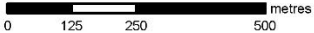
- Expansion Request
- Urban Centre Boundary
- Core Greenlands
- Greenlands



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Current to January 2024



Appendix E

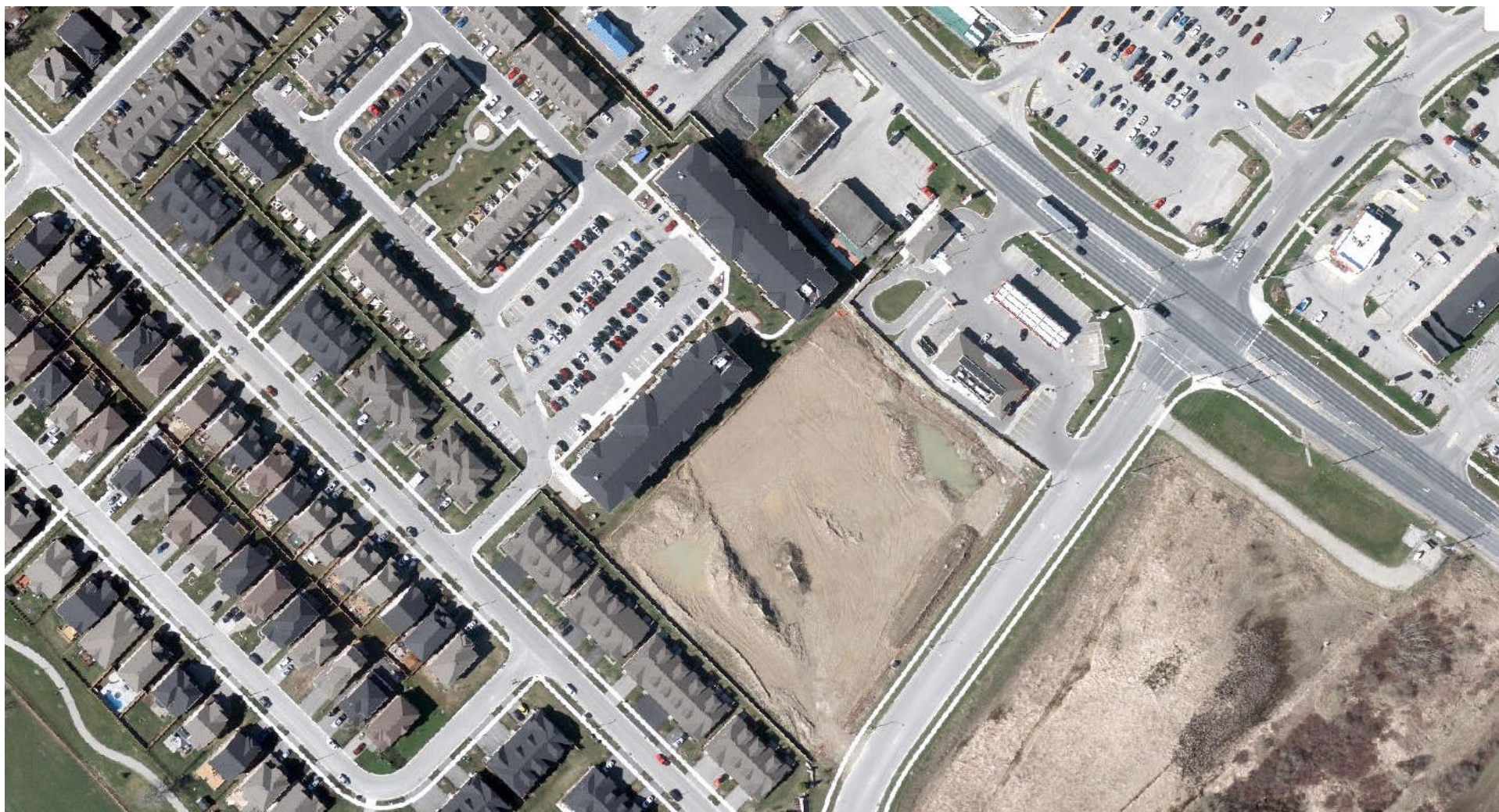
Urban Centre Expansion Review Framework



PLANWELL^{OM}

Wellington County Official Plan Review

Urban Boundary Expansion Review Framework



Urban Boundary Expansion Review Framework

County of Wellington

Context

By 2051, the Province expects the County to reach a population of at least 160,000 people and employment of at least 70,000 jobs. To manage this future growth, the County is required to follow a planning process to determine how and where population and employment growth will occur to promote healthy, compact and complete communities while incorporating planning, servicing and financing considerations.

Provincial guidance and requirements for planning for long term growth is found primarily in A Place to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). The Growth Plan builds on the policy foundation of the Provincial Policy Statement but provides additional and more specific land use planning policies for places like Wellington County in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. Working in concert with the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan also provides policy direction in Erin and Puslinch for settlement areas and their expansion.

How to Grow?

The Provincial Growth Plan requires completion of a land needs assessment which determines whether a settlement (urban) boundary expansion is necessary. The County retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson) to address the growth management requirements related to the allocation of growth and determination of which municipalities need additional land. Based on the County's land needs assessment, urban expansions are required in Centre Wellington, Erin, Mapleton and Minto.

Where to Grow?

The Province lays out a comprehensive set of planning policies to guide and shape decision-making related to growth. The criteria in this document have been developed based on the land use policies and policy directions identified in the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), Growth Plan (2019, as amended), Greenbelt Plan (2017) and County of Wellington Official Plan. This document has also been informed by a best-practices review of other municipalities.

Hamlet expansion and other rural growth options are subject to different policies and will be part of a separate process.

How this document will be used

This document will be used to consider whether a given area is feasible for urban expansion. There are two steps to the process. Step 1 is the initial screening to remove unqualified municipal comprehensive review requests based on whether the proposed expansion area is in a municipality with a need for expansion.

Step 2 criteria will be used to assess the urban boundary and assist in evaluating the appropriateness and suitability of lands for boundary expansion. This step will be completed by an assessment team made up of County and Member Municipality staff and/or consultants together with input from Conservation Authorities, Source Water Protection staff and other specialized areas of expertise as needed.

The County has compiled an inventory of private landowner/developer for lands to be added urban areas. The submission window for new requests is now closed.



- If a property is included in the inventory, it does not necessarily mean it will be used for a future urban boundary expansion.
- If a property is not included in the inventory, it may still be identified for new growth as part of the review process.

In some cases, supportive planning documents were voluntarily submitted as an accompaniment to a request to be added to an urban area. Supplemental submissions will only be reviewed for context.

Step 1 Screening Criteria

A request must meet the criteria below to proceed to Step 2.

In Wellington County's Land Needs Assessment, is the proposed expansion area located in a Member Municipality with an identified need for urban expansion:

- ☐ Centre Wellington (community area and employment area)
- ☐ Erin (employment area)
- ☐ Mapleton (community area and employment area)
- ☐ Minto (community area)

Community Area (mainly residential, but also includes commercial, institutional or office uses)

Employment Area (Industrial lands)

Step 2 Evaluation Framework

The County of Wellington Official Plan Review is being completed under the “Plan Well” banner which includes three broad and interconnected theme areas: Sustain Well, Live Well and Grow Well. The following focus areas have been identified under the themes:



**SUSTAIN
WELL**

Agricultural Resources
Natural Heritage
Source Water
Aggregate Resources
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
Greenbelt Protection



**LIVE
WELL**

Complete and Healthy
Communities



**GROW
WELL**

Water, Wastewater, Roads and
Financing
Growth Management

Each focus area has more detailed objectives which are associated evaluation criteria and measures. The evaluation criteria are based on the policy tests outlined in the Growth Plan and associated Provincial and County planning documents. The overall recommendation as to whether a given candidate expansion area is feasible for expansion will be based on the comprehensive application of all the criteria.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to scope the criteria due to the small scale of land needed in a given municipality, provided the overall policy intent is maintained. This document is not meant to limit the County or Member Municipalities from identifying local criteria and information that may also need to be considered.

Criteria marked with a magnifying glass:  highlight those which apply a climate lens.



1. Agricultural Resources

Objectives	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Protect prime agricultural area	 Prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible. Where prime agricultural areas cannot be avoided, does the proposed expansion area contain lower priority agricultural lands?	Based on evaluation of reasonable alternatives that avoid, minimize and mitigate the impact on prime agricultural areas. Where prime agricultural areas cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are to be used.
Minimize fragmentation of prime agricultural lands	 Is fragmentation of prime agricultural lands avoided/ minimized; and, are contiguous agricultural lands retained?	Assessment of available mapping and data
Compliance with minimum distance separation formulae	Are there existing livestock operations in proximity to the candidate area? Does the proposed expansion area comply with the minimum distance separation formulae?	- Assessment of the distance between the candidate expansion area and existing agricultural operations - Based on the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formula with reference to OMAFRA's guideline
Minimize impact on the agri-food network including agricultural operations	 Does the candidate expansion area avoid/ minimize/ mitigate any adverse impacts on the agri-food network, including agricultural operations?  Would the proposed expansion negatively impact local food production, processing and distribution by increasing the length of trips (and greenhouse gas emissions) between farms, processing facilities, and grocery stores?	- Assessment of impact on agricultural operations and farm markets within and in proximity to the candidate expansion area - Qualitative assessment of location of existing agricultural assets



2. Natural Heritage and Water

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Enhance/ support water resource system	🔍 Would the proposed expansion area (including any extension of water and wastewater services) avoid/ minimize/ mitigate any potential impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including quality and quantity of water? 🔍 What is the potential for impacts on key hydrologic areas? Are key hydrologic areas protected?	• Assessment of available indicators of hydrologic function • Assessment of impacts to key hydrological areas
Avoid Provincial Natural Heritage System	🔍 Does the proposed expansion area avoid the Provincial Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan?	• Assessment of Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan mapping
Avoid and protect natural features and areas for the long term	🔍 Does the proposed expansion area avoid and protect the Official Plan Greenlands System and the County-identified Natural Heritage System and/or maintain, restore or improve the functions of the area?	• Assessment of the designated Core Greenlands and Greenlands features and the County Natural Heritage System
Climate change mitigation and adaptation	🔍 Does the proposed expansion area support nature-based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation (e.g. prevent flooding, provide shade to mitigate impacts of heat, and sequester carbon)?	• Available subwatershed studies • Input from Municipal staff on potential stormwater management constraints and opportunities and ability to implement best management practices



3. Source Water		
Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Source Water Protection - quality and quantity of municipal sources of drinking water	 Would the candidate expansion area create concerns or conflicts with the source protection plan?	• Source protection plan and policies • Input from Source Water Protection staff
4. Aggregate Resources		
Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Protect mineral aggregate resources	• Does the candidate expansion area contain any deposits of mineral aggregate resources or are there any within 300 m? • Would development within the proposed expansion area preclude or hinder the expansion or continued use of any existing mineral aggregate operations?	• Assessment of aggregate resource areas (Mineral Aggregate Resource Overlay, Schedule D of County Official Plan) • Assessment of active mineral aggregate operations



5. Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Support/protect cultural heritage resources	Would the proposed expansion area affect any significant built heritage resources or significant cultural heritage landscapes?	- Assessment of impacts to significant built heritage resources or significant cultural heritage landscapes - Input from Municipal staff with reference to available inventory and mapping of significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes and assessment of potential impact on such areas
Support/protect archaeological resources	What is the archaeological potential of the candidate expansion area?	Screening for archaeological resources through use of Provincial criteria for evaluating archaeological potential



6. Greenbelt Protection: Erin		
Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Support growth in Greenbelt Towns and Villages	🔍 Is the settlement area to be expanded identified in the Greenbelt Plan as a Town/Village?	Hillsburgh and Erin Village are identified as a Town/Village in the Greenbelt Plan
Limited expansion of Greenbelt settlement areas	🔍 Would the proposed expansion be modest in size? (e.g. no more than a 5% increase in the size of Erin Village or Hillsburgh, up to a maximum size of 10 hectares and residential development would not be permitted on more than 50 per cent of the lands that would be added)	- A maximum size of 10 hectares would apply to Hillsburgh and Erin Village - The land needs assessment identified a need for 23 ha of additional employment area land (industrial) and did not identify a need for additional community area land (mainly residential, but also includes commercial, institutional or office uses)
Support complete communities/ local agricultural economy	🔍 Would the proposed expansion support the achievement of complete communities or support the local agricultural economy?	See focus area 1 and 6
Optimize use of existing or planned infrastructure	🔍 Would the proposed expansion be serviced by existing municipal water and wastewater systems without impacting future intensification opportunities within the existing settlement area?	See focus area 8
Protect Natural Heritage System	🔍 Would the proposed expansion area be outside of the Natural Heritage System in the Greenbelt Plan?	Assessment of the location of Natural Heritage System

6. Complete and Healthy Communities

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Diverse range and mix of housing options	 Can the expansion area provide for an appropriate density and mix of housing?	Assessment of the ability to support the greatest opportunity for an appropriate density and mix of housing
Mixed use and compact	 Can the expansion area function as a standalone complete community or provide for the completion of an existing community including an appropriate mix of housing, jobs, stores, transportation options, and public service facilities for all ages and abilities?	Assessment of the ability to design the candidate expansion area as a complete community based on relative size and location
Improve transportation linkages and increase travel choices	 Would the proposed expansion area be served by and integrated with an existing or planned transportation network (e.g. roads, rail, bike lanes, multi-use trails and future transit) to increase travel choices?	- Review of existing and planned transportation network - Proximity to existing or planned pedestrian/trail or cycling network
Convenient access to necessities for daily living	 Would the proposed expansion area provide residents easy access to food, shelter, education, health care, arts and recreation?	Assessment of proximity of candidate expansion area to existing urban boundary and any development constraints which may impact/limit connectivity opportunities
Provide integrated open space and parks	 Would the proposed expansion area be integrated with existing, or planned open spaces, parks, trails, and other recreational facilities?	Assessment of proximity to existing parks, public facilities, amenities, etc.

6. Complete and Healthy Communities (continued)

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Prioritizing tree canopy protection/enhancement	🔍 Does the candidate expansion area support the maintenance and enhancement of the existing tree canopy?	- Assessment of existing tree canopy and potential for maintenance and enhancement should a boundary expansion occur - Based on input from Municipal staff with reference to available mapping
Support public health, active living, and personal safety	🔍 Would the proposed expansion area contribute to a pattern of development that supports healthy and active living and mitigates public health risks? 🔍 Would the proposed expansion area direct development away from hazardous lands?	- Proximity to existing or planned pedestrian/trail or cycling network - Assessment of identified hazardous lands, including but not limited to, areas subject to flood hazards and erosion hazards and hazardous sites that could be unsafe for development

7. Water, Wastewater, Roads and Financing

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Optimize use of existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities	- Is there sufficient capacity in existing or planned municipal infrastructure (including road, water and wastewater) and public service facilities to accommodate the expansion area? - Is there opportunity to effectively expand on existing and planned infrastructure established through approved master plans and related studies?	- High level assessment of new infrastructure requirements based on input from Municipal staff and/or consultants - Assessment of capacity in existing and planned water/wastewater systems (where available/applicable) based on input from Municipal staff and/or consultants
		- Based on input from Municipal staff and with reference to Water/Wastewater Master Plan - Best supports a sustainable, long term infrastructure planning strategy
Cost effective/ financially viable infrastructure	- Would the water/ wastewater/ transportation infrastructure needed be financially viable over the full life cycle of the assets? - Are the public service facilities needed financially viable over the full life cycle of the assets? - Does the proposed expansion area have an unreasonable or unanticipated financial impact on the municipality	- Relative assessment of new infrastructure costs based on input from Municipal staff and/or consultants - Assessment of infrastructure and public service facility requirements - Based on input from Municipal staff - High level assessment of potential financial impacts for proposed expansion areas - Based on input from Municipal staff and if necessary, a Financial Impact Assessment

8. Growth Management

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Wise use and management of lands	🔍 Does the candidate expansion area represent logical and orderly progression of urban development? 🔍 Is the proposed expansion area contiguous with an existing urban area boundary? 🔍 Would the timing of the proposed expansion adversely affect achievement of minimum density and intensification targets?	• Assessment of proximity of the candidate expansion area to existing settlement area and any development constraints which may impact/limit connectivity • Proximity to existing urban area boundary in the County Official Plan • Based on input from Municipal staff and/or consultants and with reference to available Water/Wastewater Master Plan • Best supports a sustainable, long term infrastructure planning strategy
Sustainable and active transportation system	🔍 Would the proposed expansion support other sustainable and active modes of travel, such as walking, cycling, and travel with the use of mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs? 🔍 Would it support minimized vehicle kilometres travelled and help reduce growth of greenhouse gas emissions?	• Proximity to existing or planned pedestrian/trail or cycling network. • Review of existing and planned street network (where available/applicable) • Assessment of potential street connectivity and block size

8. Growth Management (continued)

Objective	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Measures/Data Sources
Protect or enhance employment areas, highway corridors and rail corridors	- Is there potential for the candidate area to erode or enhance protection of existing employment areas, road and rail corridors? - Would the proposed expansion area protect or enhance employment areas in proximity to major goods movement facilities and corridors for employment uses that require those locations? - Would the proposed expansion area help to provide sufficient land, in appropriate locations, to accommodate the County's employment growth?	- Proximity to existing or planned employment areas, road and rail corridors - Assessment of how well the area/parcel can access a Provincial highway and whether it is in an area with the highest demand for employment area growth - Assessment of location relative to existing employment areas - Assessment of whether the candidate expansion area would have good road frontage and opportunity to subdivide
Consider local development conditions	- Are there any known cross-jurisdictional issues that may impact the viability of the land to be developed? (e.g. adjacent land use conflicts, transportation network, etc.) - Are there constraints on the site area that would negatively impact the feasibility of the development of the site? (e.g. contaminated lands, existing uses, topography, etc.)	- Assessment of adjacent lands and transportation networks - Based on input from County and Municipal staff - Based on input from Municipal staff