



OUR SPRINGWATER, OUR FUTURE
OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW



DISCUSSION PAPER



[DRAFT]

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Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

The Township is undertaking an Official Plan Review, to update the Plan's existing policy framework related to managing growth, improving transportation systems, capitalizing on economic development opportunities, and protecting and enhancing natural heritage features and water resources to the planning horizon of 2031. The Official Plan Review will address the opportunities and challenges of planning and building in the Municipality and will result in a new Official Plan that implements Provincial and County of Simcoe policies that have been introduced or revised in recent years. Provincial legislation, policies and plans include recent amendments to the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) along with the new County of Simcoe Official Plan.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to: outline the key issues to be addressed in the new Official Plan; summarize the input received from the Official Plan Visioning Workshops to develop the vision and guiding principles for the new Official Plan; and identify the key recommended policy directions for the new Official Plan, and additional background studies that should be undertaken in Phase 2 to inform the new Official Plan.

The Discussion Paper has been prepared concurrently with a Growth Management Strategy (GMS) which characterizes the extent and nature of land demand that the Township is projected to experience to the year 2031, reviews the adequacy of Springwater's designated land supply to accommodate the projected growth, and provides recommendations to establish growth management policies in the Township's new Official Plan. The key recommendations of the GMS are summarized in this Discussion Paper.

2.0 Developing a Vision and Guiding Principles

The new Official Plan will be guided by a new vision statement and goals to manage growth and development in the Township, which have been developed in consultation with the community and stakeholders. To identify a vision statement for the Township, three Vision Workshops were undertaken to engage with the community in developing draft vision statements and goals which are presented in Section 2.0 of this Report. These vision statements and goals will be refined through further consultation throughout the process. The goals identified through this process will form the foundation for developing Official Plan policies. The key policy themes that were identified are elaborated in Section 2.0, and generally include:

- Develop Healthy and Complete Communities
- Protect Agriculture

- Protect the Environment and Natural Resources
- Preserve Cultural Heritage
- Enhance Community Services, Facilities and Amenities
- Promote Economic Development; and
- Provide Sustainable Infrastructure.

3.0 Planning Policy Framework

Section 3.0 of the Discussion Paper provides an overview of the existing planning policy framework to which the Township's Official Plan must implement. This framework is established primarily through the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS), and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (The Growth Plan), as well as the County of Simcoe Official Plan. All lower-tier Official Plans must be in conformity with the upper-tier County of Simcoe Official Plan.

Of particular importance is the enactment of the new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 which provides more detailed planning guidance for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including the County of Simcoe and the Township of Springwater. The Township's Official Plan must conform to the Growth Plan to the extent permitted, while recognizing that numerous policies of the Growth Plan must first be implemented through a municipal comprehensive review of the County Official Plan (i.e., growth forecasts and allocations to 2041 planning horizon, intensification and designated greenfield area density targets, among other matters).

Section 3.0 also provides an overview of other recent Provincial legislation and documents which will inform policy development for the new Official Plan, such as the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario Agricultural Areas, 2016, Minimum Distance Separation Document, 2017, the *Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act*, 2011, and the implementation of the Source Protection Plans.

4.0 Township Studies

As summarized in Section 4.0, the Township has also recently undertaken a number of studies which will inform the new Official Plan. These include the Long Range Financial Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, the Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan, the Township Strategic Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, Municipal Cultural Plan, and servicing studies, including the Township's 20 Year Capital Plan for Water Supply Facilities and Wastewater Systems, and an update to the Village of Elmvale Sewage Capacity Allocation Strategy.

As previously discussed, the 2018 GMS was also undertaken concurrently with this Discussion Paper as a basis for the Official Plan Review, to identify matters related to growth management, population and employment land needs based on forecasted growth for the Township, as identified through the

County Official Plan and Growth Plan. The recommendations of the 2018 GMS are summarized in this section and in Section 5.0, which identify a recommended settlement hierarchy for the Township and assessment of the Growth Plan targets with respect to minimum residential intensification targets and designated greenfield area density targets.

5.0 Recommended Official Plan Policy Directions

The primary focus of the Discussion Paper is to identify the key issues which need to be addressed in the new Official Plan and provide recommendations on key policy directions. It is recognized that the intended planning horizon of the existing Official Plan has been exhausted, and a new Official Plan is required to implement the current Provincial and County planning frameworks which have significantly evolved since that time. As such, a new Official Plan is required to establish a new vision, goals and objectives for appropriately managing growth and land use planning to the planning horizon of 2031, and provide updated policies in conformity with the Provincial and County planning frameworks.

Section 5.0 of this Report outlines the key issues and proposed policy recommendations to align with the current planning framework and address the aspirations of the Township's residents. The key issues and recommendations are summarized as follows:

5.1 Healthy and Complete Communities (Growth Management)

Population and Employment Forecasts

The 2018 GMS forecasts were conducted based on independent population, housing and employment forecasts prepared by MetroEconomics. Adjustments to the forecasts were made to account for:

- Updated information from the 2016 Census;
- OMB decisions regarding the "Midhurst Special Rule" which accommodates additional development on 300 hectares of land in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area, which equates to 4,595 units, in addition development within mixed use designated areas;
- An additional population of 2,961 persons within the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, as approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), as part of the County's 20,000 population program; and
- Furthermore, it is anticipated that this additional population may be accommodated beyond the 2031 planning horizon.

The 2018 GMS forecasted that the Townships' total population will grow to 37,800 persons by 2031, which is 13,800 people above the 2031 forecast currently identified in the County Official Plan and Growth Plan (Schedule 7). This level of total population growth represents the addition of 18,100

people between 2016 and 2031. Under this projection, the Growth Plan 2031 population forecast of 24,000 would be reached by 2023.

Considering the increased population forecast associated with the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, the Study Team estimates that 11,800 jobs will exist on a Township-wide basis by 2031. This represents growth of 5,600 jobs between 2016 and 2031, and is 6,170 jobs higher than the 5,600 jobs projected by the Growth Plan (Schedule 7). However, two portions of this projected employment growth – being Work from Home Jobs and No Fixed Place of Work Jobs – do not consume land that is designated for non-residential purposes. As such, only 3,930 new jobs will consume non-residential designated settlement area lands between 2016 and 2031, in which 1,230 would be on Employment Serving lands (industrial) and 2,700 would be on Population Serving lands (commercial).

The following table summarizes the population and employment forecasts as expressed in the Growth Plan and the 2018 GMS.

Population and Employment Forecasts (2016 – 2031)

Projection	Description	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Population	Growth Plan					24,000
	2018 GMS (Including Undercount ¹)	18,700	19,600	21,000	29,300	37,800
Employment	Growth Plan					5,600
	2018 GMS	6,000	6,200	8,100	9,900	11,800

Notwithstanding the forecasts, the Township's Official Plan should expressly identify the planned population and employment growth forecasts, in accordance with the County Official Plan and 2017 Growth Plan, which is forecasted to grow to approximately 24,000 persons and 5,600 jobs by 2031. The planning horizon for the Official Plan should be to the year 2031 in accordance with the County of Simcoe Official Plan. It is recognized that the County of Simcoe Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) will extend the planning horizon to 2041 and allocate additional growth to the Township. The

¹ Census undercount refers to persons who were not present to be counted on Census day. As such, a census undercount figure needs to be applied in order to derive a total population figure which includes people who were not present to be counted. The information necessary to estimate undercount for 2016 had not yet been released by Statistics Canada when this report was prepared. As a result, the Study Team applied the same 2011 County-wide Census undercount factor of 2.88% that was applied by the County Land Budget.

County is in the process of undertaking a MCR to implement the 2017 Growth Plan, the timeframe for completion is uncertain at this time.

Land Needs

The 2018 GMS has identified that there is sufficient residential and non-residential designated land supply to meet projected forecasts to 2031.

In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the identification of excess lands will need to be determined through the County's next municipal comprehensive review, using the land needs assessment methodology to be developed by the Province, and implemented by the County. As such, the identification of excess lands has not been considered through this Official Plan Review.

Community Settlement Area Hierarchy

The Official Plan must establish a clear settlement hierarchy for directing and managing growth. The GMS has identified a recommended settlement hierarchy for the eight settlement areas based on the settlement areas character and development potential, and Provincial and County planning frameworks. The recommended settlement hierarchy builds upon the major and minor settlement framework set out in the existing Official Plan, adding a level of detail in between to further clarify the Township's priorities for focusing and directing growth. The recommended settlement hierarchy includes the identification of Major, Intermediate, and Minor settlement areas, which are further described in Section 5.1.1, and include:

- Major Settlement Areas: Midhurst, Elmvale, and Hillsdale;
- Intermediate Settlement Areas: Snow Valley and Centre Vespra; and
- Minor Settlement Areas: Anten Mills, Minesing and Phelpston.

It is noted that Orr Lake is not considered a settlement area in the County Official Plan and is not a focus of growth. Furthermore, the County MCR will be required to establish an official settlement hierarchy, and these recommendation should provide input to this future work.

Other key recommendations include:

- The settlement area boundaries must be clearly defined in the Official Plan, in accordance with the County of Simcoe Official Plan settlement area boundaries.
- The current policy framework related to Adult Lifestyle Communities (ALCs) should be revised to only direct ALC's to settlement areas, consistent with provincial policy and where growth and development is to be focused. Furthermore, in rural and agricultural areas where current Official Plan policies would permit development that is inconsistent with the recommendations of directing growth to settlement areas, the Official Plan Review process should consider

modernizing these policies to bring them into conformity with Provincial policy, and engage in dialogue with these landowners.

- New Estate Residential development should not be permitted in the Rural Areas, as only limited residential development should be permitted.

Minimum Residential Intensification Target

The Official Plan must identify the approved minimum alternative intensification target, under the 2006 Growth Plan for the settlement areas of Midhurst and Elmvale, which is 15% of all new residential development, occurring annually to be within the built boundary. The delineated built boundary should be clearly identified on the Official Plan schedules. In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, until the next County municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect, the annual minimum intensification target contained in the upper-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply.

The GMS 2018 identified that there is sufficient residential dwelling supply (1,831 dwelling units of capacity) within the Township's built boundary, inclusive of capacity in the undelineated built-up area, to accommodate the alternative minimum intensification target of 15%. However, excluding supply in the undelineated built-up areas (as per the 2017 Growth Plan), would reduce the delineated built boundary supply to 72 units, which represents an approximate intensification rate of only 1.3%. As such, the minimum intensification target established in the 2017 Growth Plan of 60% will not be achievable. At the time of the County's next municipal comprehensive review, the Township should work with the County to determine an appropriate target based on the revised minimum intensification target calculations within the Growth Plan, and seek an alternative minimum intensification target. The Growth Plan requires that the alternative target maintain or improve on the minimum intensification target in the official plan that is approved and in effect.

Designated Greenfield Areas

The Official Plan must identify the approved minimum alternative density target of 32 residents and jobs per hectare, under the Growth Plan for the settlement areas of Midhurst and Elmvale. Furthermore, it is recognized that the Midhurst Secondary Plan policies provide alternative density targets applicable to the new neighbourhoods, which exceed the minimum alternative density target. The calculation of the minimum density target is to be measured over the entire designated greenfield area of each upper-tier municipality, excluding certain areas as specified in the Growth Plan. In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, for upper-tier municipalities in the outer ring, the minimum density target for designated greenfield areas contained in the applicable official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply until the next County municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect 2017 Growth Plan.

The 2018 GMS identified that the Township can achieve a total designated greenfield area density of 33.95 persons and jobs per hectare before considering additional development potential on mixed use designations or in the Future Development Potential designated lands in the Midhurst Secondary Plan area. This exceeds the approved alternative minimum designated greenfield area density target of 32 persons and jobs per hectare.

Notwithstanding, the 2017 Growth Plan has increased the designated greenfield area density target to 80 people and jobs per hectare, which is out of context and character for a Township such as Springwater. The Township should work with the County during their next MCR to determine an appropriate alternative target for Springwater. This analysis will have to take into consideration the 2017 Growth Plan requirements for calculating minimum designated greenfield area density targets, which includes the exclusion of additional constrained lands as well as employment areas. The Growth Plan requires that the alternative target maintain or improve on the minimum designated greenfield area density target in the official plan that is approved and in effect.

The Official Plan policies should provide a strategy and consider more intensive built forms and a variety of housing types to assist in achieving this density target for lands within designated greenfield areas.

Settlement Area Expansions

The settlement area boundaries must conform to and implement the settlement area boundaries as established in the County Official Plan. Settlement area expansions are not anticipated over the planning horizon, as the 2018 GMS has identified sufficient residential and non-residential land supply to meet projected needs to 2031 and achieve its alternative minimum intensification rate and designated greenfield area density targets. A County municipal comprehensive review is required to amend the settlement area boundaries, which may only be contemplated at the time of the County's next municipal comprehensive review.

Consideration should be given to maintaining the "Green Belt" buffer area policies of the Official Plan (S. 24.4) to provide separation from adjacent municipal urban areas and restrict new non-farm development within the "Green Belt" buffer area in the Township.

Housing

Key recommendations with respect to the provision of affordable housing and a range and mix of housing types include:

- Policies and implementation measures should be identified to address how the Township will work to achieve the County target of 10% of all new housing units created each year to be affordable. The Township of Springwater is targeted to accommodate 96 affordable housing units by 2024 to achieve the County's minimum target for affordable housing.

- Encouraging the preservation and maintenance of the existing housing stock, supplemented by various forms of residential intensification such as infilling and the creation of accessory dwelling units.
- Encouraging medium density residential units, including row or block townhouses, and small scale apartments provided that development can be physically integrated with the neighbourhood in terms of density, design, and function.
- Ensure that a full range of housing types and densities are provided to meet the anticipated demand and demographic change (young families, seniors etc.), including those with special needs.
- Include new policies to permit second units in various dwelling types (single detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings, and accessory structures), subject to satisfying certain criteria (i.e., servicing, parking availability, among other matters as deemed appropriate).
- Continue to permit Garden Suites on a temporary basis and subject to specific provisions.
- Discourage the conversion of affordable rental housing stock to freehold if such conversion results in a reduction in the amount of rental housing available to an unacceptable level.
- Revise and update policies with respect to special needs housing and group homes to remove limitations associated with minimum distance separation requirements, remove policies which identify specific groups/users, and generally support such housing forms in accordance with recent decisions from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mix of Uses

Official Plan policies should accommodate a mix of land uses, which provides for grade related uses (i.e., commercial/retail uses) and residential uses above the ground floor, to invigorate streets and add vitality to downtown core areas. The residential and commercial land use designations should be revised to identify opportunities for mixed use corridors and areas (particularly traditional core areas), including consideration for a new Commercial/Mixed Use designation (similar to the Midhurst Secondary Plan), which accommodates a range of office, retail and commercial uses at grade, with residential uses above.

The intersection of Bayfield Street and Snow Valley Road has been identified as a major community focus for Midhurst, as is the promotion of sensitive intensification within the Bayfield Street Corridor, with a mixture of uses, including more intensive forms of housing (i.e., mid-rise, mixed use development). In order to facilitate the planned land use and built form changes for this important corridor, the Township should consider undertaking a land use urban design and traffic study for the Bayfield Corridor.

Community Design

Policies with respect to community design should be maintained and enhanced to encourage new development to adopt a high quality of design that is reflective of the character of the Township and supportive of the existing area. Key recommendations for updating the Official Plan policies relate to:

- Mitigate impacts from commercial uses on surrounding residential communities;
- Encourage the development of “complete streets” which support pedestrian and cycling activity, and accessible public spaces;
- Encouraging new development to sustain and enhance the character and the identity of existing stable residential neighbourhoods, through appropriate infill and redevelopment policies;
- Support the development of walkable and pedestrian oriented communities;
- Consider policies to ensure accessibility for all persons and promote universal design principles;
- Consider policies to establish and enhance the Township’s identity, including the identification of “gateways” to Springwater to reinforce the community image and distinct community identities while unifying the Township as a whole;
- Consider more detailed built form and urban design policies, particularly in core areas to enhance the sense of place, define the street edge, require active uses at grade, compatible land use transitions with adjacent uses, among other matters; and
- Consider the submission of community design guidelines and/or architectural controls for new developments to ensure a high level of community design is achieved.

5.2 Protect Agriculture

The 2017 Growth Plan requires that the Province identify and map an Agricultural System for the GGH, which may be refined or augmented by the County. As a result, further direction from the Province and the County will be required to develop the agricultural system and mapping for the Township of Springwater. It was anticipated that the prime agricultural areas identified in the County Official Plan will provide the basis for the identification of prime agricultural areas in the Township’s new Official Plan, however, on February 9, 2018, the Provincial Agricultural System mapping was issued, and takes effect immediately, and any further refinements may be undertaken by the County through their MCR. Further discussions with the Province and County will be required to confirm the appropriate designation of prime agricultural areas, as these designations vary between the new County Official Plan and the Township’s Official Plan.

Agricultural Areas

Key recommendations with respect to the agricultural area include:

- Prime agricultural areas must be protected for agricultural use. The permitted uses within the Agricultural designation should be refined to be consistent with the PPS and County policies, which permit agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, processing of agricultural products, and on-farm diversified uses, as defined by the PPS.
- The Official Plan should discourage lot creation in the Agricultural designation, and only permit lot creation in accordance with the PPS and the County Official Plan (3.6.7) (i.e., for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, a residence surplus to a farming operation, and infrastructure, subject to specific policy requirements).
- The Official Plan should establish a minimum lot size of not less than 40 hectares, or the original survey lot size for lot creation for agricultural uses in the Agricultural designation, in accordance with the County Official Plan. The existing Official Plan policies may permit a new agricultural use with an approximate minimum lot size of 35 hectares.
- Where a residence is surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, a consent may be permitted provided that the new lot will be limited in size to accommodate the residential use and appropriate sewage and water services, and should be an approximate size of 1 hectare.
- The Official Plan should include policies for non-agricultural uses that may be permitted in prime agricultural areas in accordance with the PPS and County Official Plan (S. 3.6.12). These uses may relate to the extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources. Limited non-residential uses are only to be permitted through a site-specific local Official Plan amendment and subject to satisfying various criteria.
- Policies should support opportunities for local food, urban and near-urban agriculture, and promote the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food and agri-product businesses through protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts.
- OMAFRA's Minimum Distance Separation Guidelines and Formulae must be addressed to determine appropriate setbacks from livestock barns, manure storage or anaerobic digester and other land uses. The Township Official Plan should provide policy direction on the appropriate application of the Formulae to existing lots, consent applications for surplus farm dwellings, within settlement areas, and following destruction of all or part of a dwelling by catastrophe.

Rural Areas

Key recommendations with respect to the rural area include:

- Rural area character should be protected for a viable rural economy and environmentally sensitive recreation and only permit limited residential development.
- The Official Plan must implement the County Official Plan policies that direct that limited residential development may be created by consent provided that the lots should be restricted in size in order to conserve other lands in larger blocks for agricultural uses or environmental purposes, consent lots should be developed to an approximate maximum size of one hectare, except where larger sizes may be suitable because of environmental constraints or design considerations; and the number of lots on the grid road system shall be restricted in order to maintain the rural character and road function and to avoid strip development.
- Rural industrial and commercial development should only be permitted in the Rural designation where it cannot be appropriately located within a settlement area, and subject to certain criteria established in the County Official Plan (S. 3.7.5), which should be reflected in the Township's policies.

5.3 Protect the Environment and Natural Resources

The 2017 Growth Plan, in particular, directs municipalities to consider natural heritage features and areas in a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach, in order to maintain, restore and enhance their diversity and connectivity, and their long term ecological function. The 2017 Growth Plan identifies that the Province will map natural heritage systems and municipal official plans will incorporate the systems, and apply appropriate designations and policies to maintain, restore or improve the diversity and connectivity of the system, and the long term hydrological functions of the features and areas. The Growth Plan also provides that in implementing the Natural Heritage System, upper-tier municipalities may, through a municipal comprehensive review, refine provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan (S. 4.2.2(5)).

In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province's NHS is to be implemented as an overlay in municipal official plans, which is contrary to how the County's NHS is currently implemented through the Greenlands designation. Until such time as the Province's NHS is issued, the NHS of the County Official Plan is to remain in effect. Further direction from the Province and the County will be required to develop the Natural Heritage System for the Township of Springwater and the preferred approach for implementing a NHS, which will be dependent upon the timing of issuance of the Province's NHS and associated guidelines. It is anticipated that the natural heritage system currently identified in the County Official Plan will provide the basis for the identification of the natural heritage system in the

Township's new Official Plan, until such time as the Provincial Natural Heritage System is identified and any further refinements are undertaken by the County through their municipal comprehensive review.

Section 5.3 outlines further recommendations regarding the protection of the environment and natural resources, aggregate resources, water resources and hazard land policies.

5.4 Preserve Cultural Heritage Resources

Policies regarding cultural heritage resources and built heritage resources should be strengthened to ensure protection of the Township's unique character and identity. This should include policies related to: encouraging the repurposing/adaptive reuse of significant cultural heritage resources; conserving significant cultural heritage landscapes, additional policies to support the designation of a heritage conservation district, the protection and conservation of archaeological resources.

The Official Plan should include policies to assist in implementing the Township's Municipal Cultural Plan, which addressed matters to leverage the Township's history and awareness to support local business and agri-tourism, for example. Furthermore, the interests of Aboriginal communities should be considered in conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

5.5 Enhance Community Services, Facilities and Amenities

The PPS and County Official Plan provides policies which support the provision of community facilities and public service facilities to be co-located in community hubs, to promote cost effectiveness and facilitate service integration and access to active transportation and transit.

Some of the key recommendation outlined herein include:

- Promote the development of a comprehensive parks, open space and trails network to encourage healthy communities.
- Implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update, including: the recommended Park/Open Space Classification System and provision levels; park Planning Guidelines; the Park and Open Space Development Strategy to address parkland deficiencies in future development areas and existing communities; and parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu of parkland policy to secure the maximum benefit permitted in the Planning Act.
- Policies supporting the Township's tourist and recreational amenities should be enhanced to capitalize on these unique environmental attributes of the Township, and encouraging year-round recreational opportunities to enhance economic development opportunities.
- The Official Plan should promote the development of seniors housing, retirement homes, and alternative housing forms that are accessible to seniors to support ageing in place and accommodate this demographic of the community.

5.6 Promote Economic Development

The Official Plan is an important document to promote economic development through the designation and protection of employment lands, supporting tourism/recreational development, and providing flexibility in accommodating home based businesses. The following summarizes the key policy directions for the new Official Plan to promote economic development:

- Ensure that there are adequate employment designations and lands designated for employment uses in appropriate locations to concentrate areas of economic activity. The 2018 GMS identified that the Township has sufficient non-residential designated land supply to meet projected forecasts to 2031.
- Consider designating prime employment areas to implement the 2017 Growth Plan. The 2018 GMS identified that employment lands in Hillsdale should be considered for the designation of prime employment areas, given the lot sizes of these lands and their proximity to the highway.
- An employment strategy will need to be undertaken through the County's next municipal comprehensive review in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2017, in order to establish minimum employment densities and opportunities for intensification of employment areas.
- The 2018 GMS recommended that the Township explore options for increasing non-residential development densities particularly in conjunction with long term infrastructure planning. A possible option for consideration is to investigate the suitability to accommodate and encourage higher order Employment Serving uses in Elmvale while encouraging more land extensive dry employment uses in Hillsdale (subject to the preferred servicing regime). Opportunities for more intensive Employment Serving development may include the development of underutilized parking areas, remnant lots suitable for infill and intensification, and underutilized land with low density development.
- The 2018 GMS identified the opportunity to increase densities of Population Serving employment uses. The GMS recommended that the Township undertake a Population Serving Employment Market Study to investigate commercial and institutional market demand in Springwater and the potential to capture a larger share of local shopping and service needs of existing and future residents.
- Providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment uses to meet long term needs, and clearly define appropriate uses permitted in employment areas, while providing sufficient land use flexibility.
- Ensuring the long-term economic viability of the Township by identifying strategic lands outside of the existing employment area that should be protected for future employment use, in accordance with the PPS (i.e., additional land for employment uses near Highway 400 and Penetanguishene Road, in the Hillsdale settlement area).

- Strengthen employment land conversion policies to retain employment lands. The 2017 Growth Plan now requires that employment area conversions may only be contemplated through a County municipal comprehensive review, this policy direction should be provided in the Township’s new Official Plan.
- Update policies to promote local tourism with an emphasis on Township attributes, including policies to promote the Township as a destination, opportunities related to commercial tourism, recreation, and agri-tourism should be promoted.
- Promote home based businesses as a key component of the economic base of the Township and strengthen existing policies in the Official Plan (S. 25.3) to promote and encourage home based businesses within single detached dwellings, and provide flexibility in the types and intensity of permitted uses provided potential nuances can be appropriately mitigated.

5.7 Provide Sustainable Infrastructure

The GMS has identified where growth should be focused and the extent to which it should be expected; which is reflected in the recommended settlement area hierarchy. The Township will have to ensure appropriate infrastructure, including transportation and community services are in place to support growth within these areas, based on this framework. As these elements are all growth-related capital infrastructure requirements, their costs are supported through development charges, being one-time fees levied by the Township on new development.

The Township is currently updating their Development Charges By-law to ensure new growth is appropriately funded. This study should be informed by the 2018 GMS in regards to settlement hierarchy and required infrastructure investments, specifically pertaining to water and wastewater servicing, based on the Township’s 20 Year Capital Plan for Water Supply Facilities and Waste Water Systems (the “Capital Plan”), released in April 2017.

The 2018 GMS, provides an overview of the existing municipal water and wastewater services, and available capacities, based on the Township’s 20 Year Capital Plan for Water Supply Facilities and Waste Water System, released in April 2017. The 2018 GMS provides a summary of the municipal water and wastewater servicing capacities of these communities, based on the Capital Plan. Given the conditions that exist and the expansion plans for the next 20 years in regards to servicing, it has been concluded that Midhurst and Elmvale are the only communities able to accommodate the majority of projected growth on the basis of full municipal servicing at this time. Growth should be focused to settlements with full municipal services, and to a lesser extent to settlement areas which do not provide full municipal services.

Section 5.7 of this Report outlines the recommendations regarding servicing infrastructure, transportation and active transportation, public transit and how to address climate change. Some of the key recommendations include:

- Addressing the need to appropriately service areas and development while in keeping with the policy direction of the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan. Growth should be focused to settlements with full municipal services, and to a lesser extent to settlement areas which do not provide full municipal services.
- Planning for infrastructure should be coordinated with land use planning decisions to meet current and projected needs, while ensuring the infrastructure is viable over its life cycle.
- Policies should promote the use of green infrastructure, and encourage stormwater management practices which promote infiltration and green infrastructure.
- Provide policies to ensure that the existing transportation infrastructure can serve the needs of existing and future development, and that adequate infrastructure is in place prior to proceeding with new development.
- Review the existing road hierarchy in the Official Plan to confirm whether it is still appropriate with respect to right-of-way widths and access requirements.
- Consider undertaking a Transportation Master Plan to identify transportation requirements to meet projected needs, which includes an active transportation strategy. An active transportation network may be included as a Schedule to the Official Plan.
- Consider undertaking the construction of new roads and development projects through the lens of complete streets to facilitate alternative travel modes where appropriate, and enhanced pedestrian/public space.
- Strengthen transportation policies aimed at expanding and promoting transit use and active transportation for the entire Township, including the development and implementation of trails strategies, and active transportation facilities such as bicycle lanes as a component of major road reconstruction projects.
- The Township should promote public transit connections to major community destinations and primary settlement areas.
- Policies for transit supportive development should be considered in the planning for new communities (i.e., local road patterns conducive to pedestrian access).
- The new Official Plan will be required to implement policy that promotes the identification of actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change adaptation goals, in alignment with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and Action Plan.

6.0 Phase 2 New Official Plan Path Forward and Work Program Recommendations

Section 6.0 outlines the recommended direction for the Township to take in updating its current Official Plan, particularly within the context of the new 2017 Growth Plan. Furthermore, it identifies additional supporting studies that the Township is recommended to undertake at this time in support of the Official Plan Review, and studies the Township may consider pending the outcome of the County's next municipal comprehensive review to implement the 2017 Growth Plan.

The 2017 Growth Plan also outlines the policies and standards that will remain in effect until the next County municipal comprehensive review. These policies allow for a transition period in which lower-tier municipalities can still operate in conformity with the 2017 Growth Plan while awaiting for further policy direction from their upper-tier planning authority.

It is not in the Township's best interest to wait until such time as the County's municipal comprehensive review is undertaken and amendments to the County Official Plan are approved, to conform to and implement the 2017 Growth Plan. The intended planning horizon of the Township's current Official Plan has expired and an updated planning framework is required at this time to ensure that the Official Plan implements current Provincial and County planning policy to appropriately manage growth and development in the Township.

As outlined in Section 6.0, the following matters of the 2017 Growth Plan must be addressed through the County's next municipal comprehensive review, or require further direction from the Province in implementing the 2017 Growth Plan. These matters will then be considered by the Township of Springwater at the time of their next Official Plan Review, which include:

- allocation of growth to the 2041 planning horizon and the identification/refinement of the Township's settlement area hierarchy;
- the identification of new residential intensification targets for the delineated built-up areas of Midhurst and Elmvale;
- the identification of new designated greenfield area density targets for Midhurst and Elmvale;
- the identification of employment area minimum density targets;
- employment area conversions which may only be considered through the County's municipal comprehensive review;
- the expansion of settlement area boundaries which may only be considered through the County's municipal comprehensive review;
- the identification of excess lands, which will be considered through the County's municipal comprehensive review; and
- the implementation of the Province's Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System, once issued by the Province, and/or refined by the County through their municipal comprehensive

review. Until such time as the County's MCR is approved, the Township's Official Plan will need to conform to, and implement the Province's Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System.

In light of the above, it is recommended that the Township proceed with updating its Official Plan to bring it into conformity with the County Official Plan and the 2017 Growth Plan, to the extent permitted, until such time as the County's next municipal comprehensive review is approved.

As part of the County's municipal comprehensive review, a number of studies will need to be undertaken to address these matters, and based on further implementation and guidance documents to be prepared by the Province.

However, in support of the preparation of the Township's new Official Plan (Phase 2), Section 6.3 identifies the following supporting studies which are recommended to be undertaken as part of the current Official Plan Review:

- **Intensification Strategy** – Recognizing the challenges to intensification, and based on limited opportunities for intensification within the existing communities, it is recommended that an Intensification Study be conducted to identify intensification opportunities that support the Township's residential intensification targets. Overall, the Intensification Study should provide input to the County's next MCR. However, the Study should specifically determine an appropriate alternative minimum intensification target for the Township which should be brought forward to the County through their MCR process.
- **Population Serving Employment Market Study** - To support intensification priorities on non-residential lands, it is recommended that the Township consider undertaking a Population Serving Employment Market Study, including a commercial and institutional establishment inventory. The Study should investigate commercial and institutional market demand in Springwater and the potential to capture a larger share of local shopping and service needs of existing and future residents. Specifically, it is recommended that a detailed analysis be undertaken to identify underutilized Population Serving employment developments from an economic development standpoint, especially within Midhurst and Elmvale. This study should be undertaken in conjunction with the recommended Intensification Study.
- **Midhurst Corridor Study** - The intersection of Bayfield Street and Snow Valley Road has been identified as a major community focus for Midhurst, as is the promotion of sensitive intensification within the Bayfield Street Corridor, with a mixture of uses, including higher density forms of housing. In order to facilitate the planned land use and built form changes for this important corridor, the Township may consider undertaking a land use, urban design and traffic study for the Bayfield Corridor, to address such matters as: accommodating a mix of commercial and residential uses, appropriate intensification and higher density development forms, consolidating and limiting the number of access locations, urban design and streetscape improvements.

Additional potential future studies are recommended in Section 6.3, that the Township may consider, pending the outcome of the County's next municipal comprehensive review to implement the 2017 Growth Plan, or in providing further input to the County's municipal comprehensive review, once population and employment forecasts and allocations have been established to the 2041 planning horizon by the County.

7.0 Next Steps

The Discussion Paper and the 2018 GMS will be reviewed with Township staff, and stakeholders, including the County of Simcoe, and will be subsequently presented to the public for review and input. The Discussion Paper is intended to assist in guiding the development of new policies for the Official Plan, and will be presented to Council for endorsement. Phase 2 will integrate work undertaken in Phase 1, including the policy recommendations identified in this Report, and will culminate in the preparation of the new Official Plan, which will be brought forward to Township Council for adoption.

1. Introduction

The Township of Springwater (the “Township”) is undertaking an Official Plan Review (OPR), which offers an opportunity to evaluate the Official Plan’s existing policy framework related to managing growth, improving transportation systems, capitalizing on economic development opportunities, and protecting and enhancing natural heritage features and water resources over the next 20 years. The OPR will address the opportunities and challenges of planning and building in the Municipality and will result in a new Official Plan that implements Provincial and County of Simcoe policies that have been introduced or revised in recent years.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to:

- outline the key issues to be addressed in the new Official Plan based on a review of the current planning policy framework which includes a review of applicable Provincial, County and Township legislation and policy initiatives;
- summarize the input received from the Official Plan Visioning Workshops to develop the vision and guiding principles for the new Official Plan;
- identify the key recommended policy directions for the new Official Plan; and
- identify the recommended additional background reports/studies that should be undertaken in Phase 2 of the OPR to compliment and inform policy development for the new Official Plan.

The Discussion Paper has been prepared concurrently with a Growth Management Strategy (GMS) which characterizes the extent and nature of land demand that the Township is projected to experience to the year 2031, reviews the adequacy of Springwater’s designated land supply to accommodate the projected growth, and provides recommendations to establish growth management policies in the Township’s new Official Plan. The key recommendations of the GMS are summarized in this Discussion Paper.

The Township of Springwater’s current Official Plan took effect on February 19th, 1998 with a purpose to manage development and physical change in Springwater to the year 2016. The Township’s new Official Plan will establish a new vision, goals and objectives for managing growth and land use planning decisions to the planning horizon of 2031, in conformity with the Provincial and County planning framework, and the aspirations of the Township’s residents and Council.

The Township’s Official Plan has undergone a number of amendments over the years including Secondary Plans for the Midhurst, Hillsdale, Centre Vespra, and Snow Valley Settlement Areas. Due to delays attributed to ongoing policy revisions at the Provincial level and the County Official Plan conformity/update, the Official Plan has not undergone a major revision/update in nearly 20 years.

The OPR project stems from the need for local planning documents to evolve in-parallel with the issues and matters of upper-tier and Provincial interests, in order to provide a consistent policy framework that guides growth and development. As a result, the Township of Springwater Official Plan is being reviewed to ensure consistency with provincial policy, and conform to the updated Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017), which came into effect on July 1, 2017 and specifically the Simcoe Sub-Area, as well as the new County of Simcoe Official Plan.

Throughout the OPR process, there will be several opportunities to help guide the development of a new vision, goals, and objectives, as well as identifying a path forward to manage growth to the year 2031. The new Official Plan will address the unique planning issues facing the Township, which will be identified with Council, staff, stakeholders, and residents of Springwater.

1.1. What is an Official Plan?

An Official Plan is a policy document adopted by Council under the provisions of the *Planning Act*. As such, it reflects matters of provincial interest and applies to all lands within the Township. The Township's Official Plan must be consistent with Provincial Policy and conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the new County of Simcoe Official Plan. Furthermore, the Township's Official Plan will enable a number of planning tools for use in implementing the policies of the Plan including, but not limited to, Secondary Plans, Community Improvement Plans, Zoning By-Laws and Site Plan Control.

The Official Plan expresses the vision, goals and objectives for the community, as well as land use planning policies to help guide and direct growth and development over the next 20 years. It addresses the location and form of new housing, industry, offices and shops and anticipated needs for infrastructure and community amenities. The Plan considers everything needed for managing growth in the municipality (e.g. streets, transit, schools, parks etc.). It also establishes policies for the protection of agricultural land, conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage resources. The use and development of individual parcels of land are also influenced by the Official Plan, which establishes more specific regulatory measures related to land division, zoning and site plan control.

1.2. How does the Official Plan Relate to the Zoning By-law?

A Zoning By-law contains provisions that regulate the use, size, height, density and location of buildings on each property within the Township. The basic purpose of a Zoning By-law is to describe the types of uses permitted and to regulate what can be built on a property, its character and built form, and how it will be configured on the lot.

The Zoning By-law is a regulatory tool that implements the policies of the Official Plan on an individual lot by lot basis. Once the Official Plan has been updated and brought into conformity with Provincial and County policy, the Township's Zoning By-law must be updated within 3 years of approval to implement any new or amended Official Plan policies.

1.3. Official Plan Review Process

The OPR is being undertaken through a two phase process spanning a multi-year timeframe and culminating in a new Official Plan for the Township of Springwater. The two phased OPR process is illustrated in Exhibit 1.1, which highlights the key tasks, anticipated timing, and opportunities for community engagement.

The first phase currently being undertaken is the 'Preparatory Phase'. The purpose of Phase 1 is to establish the community vision, goals and objectives, which will guide land use planning in the Township, and identify any conformity issues, background study gaps and proposed policy directions to be considered in the preparation of the new Official Plan. Phase 1 includes the preparation of a Communications Strategy, a planning policy framework review which includes a review of applicable Provincial, County and Township legislation and policy initiatives, a series of community Visioning Workshops, and the preparation of this Discussion Paper in conjunction with a new Growth Management Strategy (GMS). The Draft Discussion Paper and Growth Management Strategy will be presented at a Public Open House for review and comment. Phase 1 will culminate in a Special Meeting of Council held under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* and presentation of the Discussion Paper and Growth Management Strategy to Council.

Phase 2 will involve undertaking any required background studies or reports as identified through the Phase 1 work, and the preparation of the new Official Plan. This Phase will involve various consultations with the public, stakeholders and Council to review the new draft Official Plan, prior to bringing it forward to Council for adoption.

The anticipated timelines for the preparation of the Township's new Official Plan will require further consideration, and may likely be extended, in light of the 2017 Growth Plan and the ongoing County MCR.

Exhibit 1.1 – Official Plan Review Process



2. Developing a Vision and Guiding Principles

The new Township of Springwater Official Plan will guide growth and manage change to the year 2031, guided by a Vision Statement and supplemented by Goals. A Vision Statement is an aspirational statement that identifies what is important to the community, now and in the future. Goals, however, are more detailed statements that identify how the Vision may be implemented.

The Township undertook a campaign to engage the community to develop a Vision for Springwater. Outreach and awareness took the form of a postcard, which was mailed to every residence in the Township, as well as the use of online methods, including the creation of an OPR webpage, Twitter postings using the hashtag #SpringwaterOPR, the Township's Facebook page, and the creation of an OPR project video in addition to traditional printed media (newspaper). The message that was conveyed through these various methods was that the Vision for Springwater cannot be defined without detailed input from the community. That input could be provided using digital media as well as through attendance at one of three Vision Workshops, which were held on:

- November 22, 2016 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Elmvale Community Centre, 33 Queen Street West, Elmvale;
- November 28, 2016 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Township Administration Centre, 2231 Nursery Road, Minesing; and
- November 30, 2016 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Minesing Community Hall, 2347 Ronald Road, Minesing.



The following Draft Vision Statements and Goals have been prepared by the Project Team, in an effort to consolidate the community input and guide the preparation of new Official Plan policies. These

2.2. Draft Goals

Healthy and Complete Communities

- Promote integrated and connected communities while celebrating and enhancing the Township's unique identity.
- Balance growth with the protection of agricultural lands.
- Ensure well managed and fiscally responsible growth integrated with planning for community facilities, services and infrastructure.
- Focus growth and development within existing settlement areas, and encourage more compact and alternative forms of housing.
- Provide a mixture of housing choices, particularly housing and services geared towards an aging population and younger families.
- Encourage appropriate residential infill and intensification opportunities by directing growth to settlement areas to make the most efficient use of land and infrastructure.
- Support secondary dwelling units as a means to providing more affordable and diverse housing choices.
- Ensure the development of walkable communities and promote active transportation through cycling facilities and multi-use trails.
- Consider accessibility in the design of new communities and housing.
- Promote well-designed built form that encourages a sense of place and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

Protect Agriculture

- Protect prime agricultural lands for agriculture and ensure the continued viability of farming operations by directing development to settlement areas and preventing incompatible development.
- Limit the expansion of non-agricultural uses on prime agricultural lands.
- Support and promote local food production, diversified agricultural uses, and environmentally friendly farming practices.
- Support specialty and organic farming operations and value-added farm businesses.
- Ensure an appropriate support network and infrastructure for agricultural uses.

Protect the Environment and Natural Resources

- Protect natural heritage features and water resources through a connected natural heritage system.
- Promote opportunities for the restoration and the enhancement of the natural environment.

- Promote the Township's natural resources for tourism and passive recreation.
- Protect water resources and headwaters from incompatible development.
- Establish high standards for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
- Encourage remediation, reuse, and redevelopment of contaminated and underutilized lands.
- Protect aggregate resources for future use, and ensure the remediation of former aggregate sites for appropriate reuse.

Preserve Cultural Heritage Resources

- Preserve significant cultural heritage buildings and resources.
- Preserve and enhance the vibrancy and historic character of our downtowns and main streets.
- Preserve the rural and agricultural character of our community and unique landscapes.

Enhance Community Services, Facilities and Amenities

- Provide services and facilities for seniors to allow for aging-in-place and age friendly communities.
- Provide a range of community facility and recreational opportunities that support a diverse and growing population.
- Ensure community facilities and services, including schools and community gathering places, are appropriate to meet the needs of the community.
- Provide for an enhanced and well-connected network of trails and open spaces for active and passive recreation.
- Promote year round recreational opportunities including indoor and outdoor recreational uses.
- Prioritize community services and facilities to meet the needs of the community in a sustainable manner.
- Facilitate social interaction through well-planned and accessible community gathering places and events.

Promote Economic Development

- Provide for a range of commercial and retail choices conveniently accessible to all residents.
- Encourage and promote the health and vitality of community downtowns and main streets.
- Promote tourism and economic development with a focus on outdoor recreation while encouraging the development of overnight accommodations.
- Promote tourism and recreation opportunities through ecotourism and agri-tourism uses.
- Encourage economic development and job growth for retaining a skilled labour force.
- Support small businesses and the viability of community oriented service and commercial uses.

- Ensure municipal services, utilities and supporting infrastructure are available to accommodate employment growth.

Provide Sustainable Infrastructure

- Accommodate growth in a manner that makes efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure.
- Integrate land use planning decisions with the provision of supporting infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Promote active transportation and healthy lifestyles through safe, continuous and well-connected trails.
- Plan for an interconnected transportation system that supports future transit and alternative modes of transportation.
- Encourage the use of low impact development measures which minimize impacts to the environment, and move towards net-zero communities.

3. Planning Policy Framework

Planning at the Official Plan level is undertaken within a framework established by the Province of Ontario, specifically the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS), and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (The Growth Plan). In cases where there is an upper-tier government, such as the County of Simcoe, Provincial policy is implemented at the County-level through the County of Simcoe Official Plan. The County of Simcoe Official Plan (the “County Official Plan”) is then implemented at a local and more specific level by the Township of Springwater Official Plan. All lower-tier Official Plans must be in conformity with the upper-tier County Official Plan.

Local land use policy is required to be consistent with the policies of the Province as administered through the Provincial Policy Statement, (PPS) and other provincial initiatives, such as Bill 73 (*The Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*, 2015), which has recently resulted in significant amendments to the *Planning Act*. Furthermore, the Province has also completed a coordinated review of the Provincial Plans that have resulted in revisions to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Therefore, it is the intent of the OPR to ensure that the Official Plan implements the most up to date Provincial and County policy and legislation, and sets out the appropriate framework for land use planning in the Township of Springwater.

The purpose of this Section is to provide an overview of the applicable Provincial, County and Township legislation, policies, plans and studies, and identify the key policy issues which will inform the preparation of the Township’s new Official Plan.

3.1. The Planning Act

The *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.13 provides the fundamental land use planning framework in Ontario. It governs the overall content and direction of Official Plans through sections 16(1) and 16(2), which state:

“An official plan shall contain,

- a) goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment of the municipality or part of it, or an area that is without municipal organization; and*
- b) a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public in respect of,*
 - a. proposed amendments to the official plan or proposed revision of the plan,*
 - b. proposed zoning by-laws,*

- c. *proposed plans of subdivision, and*
- d. *proposed consents under section 53.*”

And,

“an official plan may contain,

- a) *a description of the measures and procedures proposed to attain the objectives of the plan; and*
- b) *a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public in respect of planning matters not mentioned in clause (1)(b)”*

The *Planning Act* also identifies 19 matters of Provincial interest that municipal councils “*shall have regard to*” when carrying out their responsibilities under the Act (Section 2), including the preparation and adoption of an official plan. These matters are:

1. the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;
2. the protection of agricultural resources of the Province;
3. the conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base;
4. the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
5. the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;
6. the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;
7. the minimization of waste;
8. the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
9. the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;
10. the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
11. the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;
12. the adequate provision of employment opportunities;
13. the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;

14. the co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies;
15. the resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private conflicts;
16. the protection of public health and safety;
17. the appropriate location of growth and development;
18. the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be pedestrian-oriented; and
19. the promotion of built form that,
 - a. is well designed
 - b. encourages a sense of place, and
 - c. provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

The matters of Provincial interest are presented in no particular order, and, depending on the context, are not intended to indicate that Provincial interests have varying levels of importance. The Official Plan is the primary tool in implementing these Provincial interests in a manner that is appropriate and meaningful to the Township of Springwater.

3.1.1. Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015 (Bill 73)

The *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*, 2015, largely took effect on June 1, 2016, and made significant amendments to the *Planning Act*, along with changes to the *Development Charges Act*. In broad terms, the reforms introduced by Bill 73 are intended to give citizens a greater, more meaningful say in determining how their communities will grow, and to give municipalities more tools to fund community services and growth.

The following list summarizes the key amendments to the *Planning Act*, which are applicable to the Township:

Citizen Engagement

- The Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) (formerly the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB)) must have regard to all information received from the municipality when adjudicating non-decision appeals. The LPAT and approval authorities must have regard to both written and oral submissions received at the municipal level.

- Official Plans are now required to contain a description of the measures and procedures for consulting and informing the public with regard to proposed amendments to official plans, proposed Zoning By-Laws and amendments, plans of subdivision and proposed consents.
- Decision makers must now explain what effect, if any, a written or oral submission from the public relating to a planning matter had on the decision that they made.

Greater Certainty and Stability

- The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) review cycle changed from 5 to 10 years for bringing Official Plans into conformity with the PPS.
- Prevent certain approvals, appeals of lower-tier Official Plans, and Section 26 conformity update Official Plan Amendments unless it conforms with upper-tier in effect/adopted Official Plans.
- New official plans must be reviewed and revised, as necessary, within 10 years of a new Official Plan coming into effect (where an existing Official Plan is repealed and replaced). The 5 year Official Plan review cycle remains in place when reviewing and updating an existing Official Plan.
- No privately-initiated applications to amend a new Official Plan or Zoning By-law are permitted within 2 years of a new Official Plan or Zoning By-law coming into force and effect, unless the amendment is supported by the municipality through a resolution of Council. A resolution may relate to site-specific applications, a class of applications, or applications generally.
- In addition to existing matters of provincial interest, planning decisions must have regard to the promotion of built form that is i) well designed, ii) encourages a sense of place and; and iii) provides for public spaces that are of high quality, accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe. Official Plans are required to contain policies related to the built environment.
- Municipalities are no longer required to revise their employment land policies and designations at the time of an official plan update. This provides municipalities with greater control over the preservation of their employment lands, as these policies are no longer required to be opened as part of an Official Plan update, and accordingly, would no longer be subject to appeals. However, municipalities are encouraged to keep their employment policies and land designations up-to-date and amendments may be considered through OPRs.

Local Decision Making and Accountability

- The approval authority and adopting municipality or applicant can agree to an extension of up to 90 days in addition to the 180-day decision timeline for approving Official Plan / Official Plan

Amendments. This extension must be initiated by either party prior to the expiry of the 180 day decision timeline, however, both parties must agree to the extension.

- The name of the “Development Permit System” (DPS) tool has changed to “Community Planning Permit System” (CPPS). Along with a change in name, the CPPS now allows municipalities to pass by-laws to establish concurrent permitting requirements for zoning, site plan and minor variance processes into one application and approval process. No privately-initiated amendments to CPPS are permitted for five years, unless supported by the municipality.
- New authority authorizing the Minister of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA) or upper-tier municipality to require the use of Community Planning Permit System for specific purposes (requires implementing regulation).
- Transition requirements have been clarified to state that applications for Official Plan Amendments are subject to previous policies / legislation only if the complete application was made prior to transition date.

Dispute Resolution

- No appeals of Official Plans are permitted that implement provincially approved matters, including forecasted population and employment growth in lower-tier official plan in accordance with an allocation in the upper-tier municipality’s official plan that has been approved by the Minister; and settlement area boundaries in lower-tier official plan which reflect the boundary set out in the upper-tier municipality’s official plan that has been approved by the Minister.
- Changes that remove the ability to appeal second unit policies at the time of an official plan update.
- Global appeals of an official plan are not permitted. In other words, an entire official plan document cannot be appealed, and appeals must target specific policies.
- Decision makers can now employ dispute resolution techniques in the event of an appeal. Municipalities are entitled to an additional 60 days to engage in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to resolve appeals prior to forwarding the matter to the LPAT.
- Appellants need to explain the reasons for an appeal in respect of consistency/conformity with provincial / local policies - failure to do so means that the appellant may not be able to argue the issue before the LPAT.

- New authority to establish additional criteria for the review of minor variance applications through provincial regulation, and new authority for municipalities to establish additional criteria through municipal by-laws.
- Municipal treasurers are required to provide Council with an annual financial statement related to density bonusing and parkland money (Section 37) that is available to the public.
- Enabling payment in lieu of parkland dedication policies now requires the municipality to prepare a 'Parks Plan' in conjunction with school boards, as appropriate. The intent is to ensure the municipalities are only accepting cash-in-lieu if there is no need for additional parkland. In addition, the calculation of the cash-in-lieu or parkland is now based on a ratio of 1 hectare for every 500 dwelling units, rather than 1 hectare for every 300 dwelling units. There is no change to the standard parkland dedication rate based on percentage of land in development, and the alternative rate of 1 ha for every 300 units is retained when land for parks is being provided.

The Official Plan for the Township of Springwater will contemplate and reflect the new Provincial direction in a locally appropriate manner in so far as:

- Official Plan reviews;
- Matters of Provincial interest;
- Consultation and public input on planning applications;
- Official Plan appeals and the timing thereof; and
- Tools for the implementation of a CPPS, if desired by the Township.

3.1.2. Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139)

On December 12, 2017, Bill 139 (*Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act*) received Royal Assent. A number of amendments related to Ontario's planning system are now in effect as of April 1, 2018, related to the replacement of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) with the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), changes to *Planning Act* approval processes, and revisions to the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Bill 139 has created an extensive range of reforms including placing a greater scope of authority with local Councils and planning authorities. The legislative changes that would impact an Official Plan Amendment include:

- The creation of a new Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT). Appeals would now go to the LPAT and be subject to those rules and processes—including the revised scope for appeals and hearings described below.
- Appeals are limited to decisions not being consistent with a Provincial Policy Statement or not in conformity with Provincial plans or an official plan. Previously, the OMB must “have regard to” the decisions of a municipal Council in adjudicating a matter before it. The OMB has had liberal jurisdiction to overturn a municipal decision and issue an independent decision without deference to the initial municipal decision. However, Bill 139 significantly scales back this authority in respect of decisions related to Official Plans, Zoning By-laws and Plans of Subdivision. In this regard, the new LPAT system is more oriented to assess the conformity of municipal decisions with applicable Provincial and municipal policy. Municipal decisions may only be overturned if it is determined that the decision under appeal is not consistent with or does not conform to the required Provincial and municipal (upper and lower-tier) policy frameworks. In such cases, the matter is returned to municipal Council for additional consideration.

The main policy consideration as it relates to Springwater are the timing considerations related to how potential appeals will be handled—in particular, in how matters of conformity and consistency to applicable Provincial policy, County and Township Official Plan policies have been satisfied.

3.2. Provincial Policy Statement, 2014

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS) came into effect on April 30th, 2014 and replaces the previous PPS 2005. The PPS is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and provides direction on key Provincial interests related to land use planning and development in Ontario. The Township’s Official Plan and subsequent land use planning decisions “*shall be consistent with*” the PPS. The “*shall be consistent with*” rule requires that Council ensure that PPS policies are applied within the land use planning decision-making process.

The 2014 PPS provides policy direction related to three key themes:

- **Building Strong Healthy Communities** (Section 1.0), to promote efficient land use and development patterns; promote strong, liveable, healthy, and resilient communities; and ensure appropriate opportunities for employment and residential development.
- **The Wise Use and Management of Resources** (Section 2.0), to protect natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral and cultural heritage and archaeological resources for their economic, environmental and social benefits.

- **Protecting Public Health and Safety** (Section 3.0), to reduce the potential for public cost or risk to Ontario's residents from natural or human-made hazards.

The changes to the PPS 2014 have involved modest modifications to existing policies as well as the introduction of new policies. In effect, the PPS 2014 builds upon the PPS 2005 policy framework. Key themes addressed by the changes to the PPS 2014 include:

- The incorporation of the interests of Aboriginal communities through improved coordination and protection of cultural and archaeological interests;
- Improved recognition of the needs and diversity of rural and northern communities, including recognition of the diversity of Ontario's communities;
- More explicit consideration and planning for the impacts of climate change;
- More explicit consideration and promotion of healthy communities and active modes of transportation;
- Recognition and protection of goods movement corridors; and
- Requirements for prime agricultural areas and provision for further diversification of on-farm diversified uses such as agri-tourism, and flexibility for larger-scale agricultural uses to support farming communities.

The PPS further elaborates these themes and the aforementioned principles in associated detailed policies.

3.3. Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006

The Growth Plan builds on the PPS and establishes a more detailed provincial policy framework for implementing Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) by better managing growth and establishing a long-term framework for where and how the region will grow.

The 2006 Growth Plan was previously amended by Amendment 1 (January 19, 2012) and Amendment 2 (June 17, 2013). Amendment 1 was in response to the intense growth and development pressures in the Simcoe Sub-Area, which is comprised of the County of Simcoe, lower-tier municipalities and the cities of Barrie and Orillia. Amendment 1 introduced a new section (Section 6.0) to the 2006 Growth Plan, which included a distribution of population and employment forecasts to the local municipalities in the Simcoe Sub-area to the year 2031 (Schedule 7). The Township of Springwater is forecasted to accommodate 24,000 people and 5,400 jobs to the year 2031, whereas the Simcoe Sub-Area, including

the cities of Barrie and Orillia, are forecasted to accommodate 667,000 people and 254,000 jobs to 2031.

The new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), 2017 pursuant to the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, took effect on July 1, 2017. Updates to the Growth Plan were part of the Province's 10 year review of the Growth Plan which was part of the Ministry's Coordinated Land Use Review.

The following provides a summary of the 2006 Growth Plan, and subsequent amendments, which provide the basis for the growth management framework of the County Official Plan. The major policy directions of the 2017 Growth Plan with respect to growth management, will need to be implemented through the County's next municipal comprehensive review (MCR), prior to being implemented in the Township's Official Plan. The policy implications of the 2017 Growth Plan, are discussed in Section 3.4 of this report.

The following guiding policies in the Growth Plan direct how land is developed, how resources are managed and protected and how public dollars are invested:

- Design complete communities to meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime, and support healthy and active living.
- Prioritize intensification and higher densities to make efficient use of land and infrastructure and support transit viability.
- Provide flexibility to capitalize on new economic opportunities and employment as they emerge, while providing certainty for traditional industries, including resource-based sectors.
- Provide for a mix and range of housing types to serve all sizes, incomes and ages of households.
- Improve the integration of land use planning with planning and investment in infrastructure and public service facilities, including integrated service delivery through community hubs, by all levels of government.
- Provide for different approaches to manage growth that recognize the diversity of communities in the GGH.
- Protect and enhance natural heritage, hydrologic and landform features and functions.
- Support and enhance the long-term viability of the agricultural sector by protecting prime agricultural areas and the agricultural support network.
- Conserve and promote cultural heritage resources to support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Métis communities.

- Integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth such as planning for more resilient infrastructure and moving towards net-zero communities by incorporating techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The targets for the Township of Springwater, as identified in the Growth Plan, would have been a minimum residential intensification target of 40% of development to be within the delineated built-up area and a density target of 50 jobs and people per hectare for designated greenfield areas. However, achieving these targets would have posed a challenge to the municipality. As a result, the Township sought and on July 9, 2012 received an approved alternative minimum residential intensification target of 15% of development to be within the delineated built-up area and a density target of 32 jobs and people per hectare for designated greenfield areas. Although the Province has increased the targets through the 2017 Growth Plan, the approved alternative targets will continue to apply until such time as the County's next MCR is approved, to establish revised minimum intensification and density targets in accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan.

3.3.1. Midhurst “Special Rule”: Ontario Regulation 311/06 (Transitional Matters)

In 2012, O.Reg. 311/06 which governs the application of the Growth Plan was amended by the Province. In effect, 300 hectares of land was approved for urban development within the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, which equates to a population of approximately 10,000 to 12,000 persons. The Province enacted a “Special Rule” to permit development applications for up to 300 hectares of land within the Midhurst Secondary Plan to proceed through the rezoning and draft plan of subdivision approval stages, provided that a list of stipulated criteria were met. The Regulation essentially exempted the future development of the first 300 hectares from the Growth Plan population forecasts and allocations to the Township of Springwater.

As a result, the Ministry partially withdrew its appeal of the Midhurst Secondary Plan, as it pertains to the first 300 hectares of developable land. With the partial withdrawal of the Ministry's appeal, the designation of lands for urban uses was deemed to be approved under the Midhurst Secondary Plan. Following that, the Regulation under the Growth Plan was further amended to specifically recognize the 300 hectares of developable lands within the “Midhurst Settlement Area”. Following an OMB settlement hearing in mid-2014, on October 29, 2014 the OMB issued its formal Decision and Order approving the draft plans of subdivision and zoning by-laws for development within the first 300 hectares in Midhurst. In total, the six (6) approved subdivisions allow for development of a total of 4,595 new residential units, in successive phases.

Furthermore, as noted in Section 3.3.2, the OMB approved an additional 2,961 persons on lands subject to the October 2016 OMB hearing, as part of the County's 20,000 population allocation

program. The balance of the lands remains under appeal, and may not be ready to proceed to development until after 2031, with the exception of the Midves lands, as discussed in Section 3.3.2.

With the approval of the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province enacted O.Reg. 204/17 on June 28, 2017, which amended O.Reg. 311/06 (Transitional Matters), to provide for transition between the old and new Growth Plans. The amendment removed specific reference to the Midhurst “Special Rule”. The transition rules cover applications that have been commenced before June 16, 2006, and include:

- Official Plans;
- Zoning Bylaws;
- Approval of Site Plan Control Areas;
- Minor Variances; and,
- Subdivisions and Consents.

Generally, the new transition rules provide that applications commenced after June 16, 2006, are to be determined in accordance with the 2017 version of the Growth Plan except in the case of some urban expansions. In most instances, there are no transition provisions. Some matters that commenced before January 16, 2006, continue to be grandfathered until July 1, 2018, at which point they are expected to conform to the 2017 Growth Plan. The new transition rules also provide specific transition provisions for the Simcoe Sub – Area that have the effect of continuing Simcoe matters under the same rules as the rest of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

Section 5.2.8.4 of the Growth Plan provides that,

“If a plan of subdivision or part thereof has been registered for eight years or more and does not meet the growth management objectives of this Plan, municipalities are encouraged to use their authority under subsection 50(4) of the Planning Act to deem it not to be a registered plan of subdivision and, where appropriate, amend site-specific designations and zoning accordingly.”

Notwithstanding, even where no transition rules are provided in O.Reg. 311/06, Growth Plan 2017 contains transition policies for the application of the population and growth forecasts, and intensification and density requirements, which are to be implemented at the time of the upper-tiers next municipal comprehensive review.

3.3.2. 20,000 Population Program

In 2012, the Province of Ontario approved Amendment 1 to the 2006 Growth Plan to allocate population and employment growth to each of the 16 local municipalities within the County of Simcoe,

and the cities of Barrie and Orillia, up to 2031. Amendment 1 to the 2006 Growth Plan also includes policies which allow municipalities in the County of Simcoe to exceed their population allocations up to a County-wide total of 20,000 additional persons.

As per Policy 6.3.2.2 of the 2006 Growth Plan, which relates to managing growth in Simcoe Sub-area settlement areas, the County may approve adopted local Official Plans or adopted Official Plan Amendments to redesignate lands not for urban uses to lands for urban uses in excess of what is needed for a time horizon of up to 20 years, or to accommodate the forecasts of Schedule 7 (24,000 persons/5,600 jobs to Springwater up to 2031), whichever is sooner. The sum of all population growth accommodated on lands for urban uses approved pursuant to Section 6.3.2.2 is not to exceed a total population of 20,000 for the County of Simcoe, and only applied to the County until January 19, 2017.

Lands for urban uses are defined as lands that are not designated for agricultural or rural uses within a settlement area identified in the approved official plan for the municipality. Lands not for urban uses are defined as lands that are designated for agricultural or rural uses within a settlement area identified in the approved official plan for the municipality.

The Township is of the position that Springwater is a desirable place to live because of its 'small town' atmosphere, close-knit agricultural community and recreational opportunities. The Township is striving to maintain those qualities in the face of ongoing development pressures to increase population growth in Springwater beyond the growth forecasts which the Province has assigned. In January 2016, Springwater Council passed a resolution to not support any private requests for additional allocation. On May 13, 2016, the Township released a response to the allocation requests under the County of Simcoe 20,000 population program. On May 24, 2016, County Council denied 5 of 6 requests for an additional 6,120 people for Midhurst. One request for an additional 15 people on private services was approved.

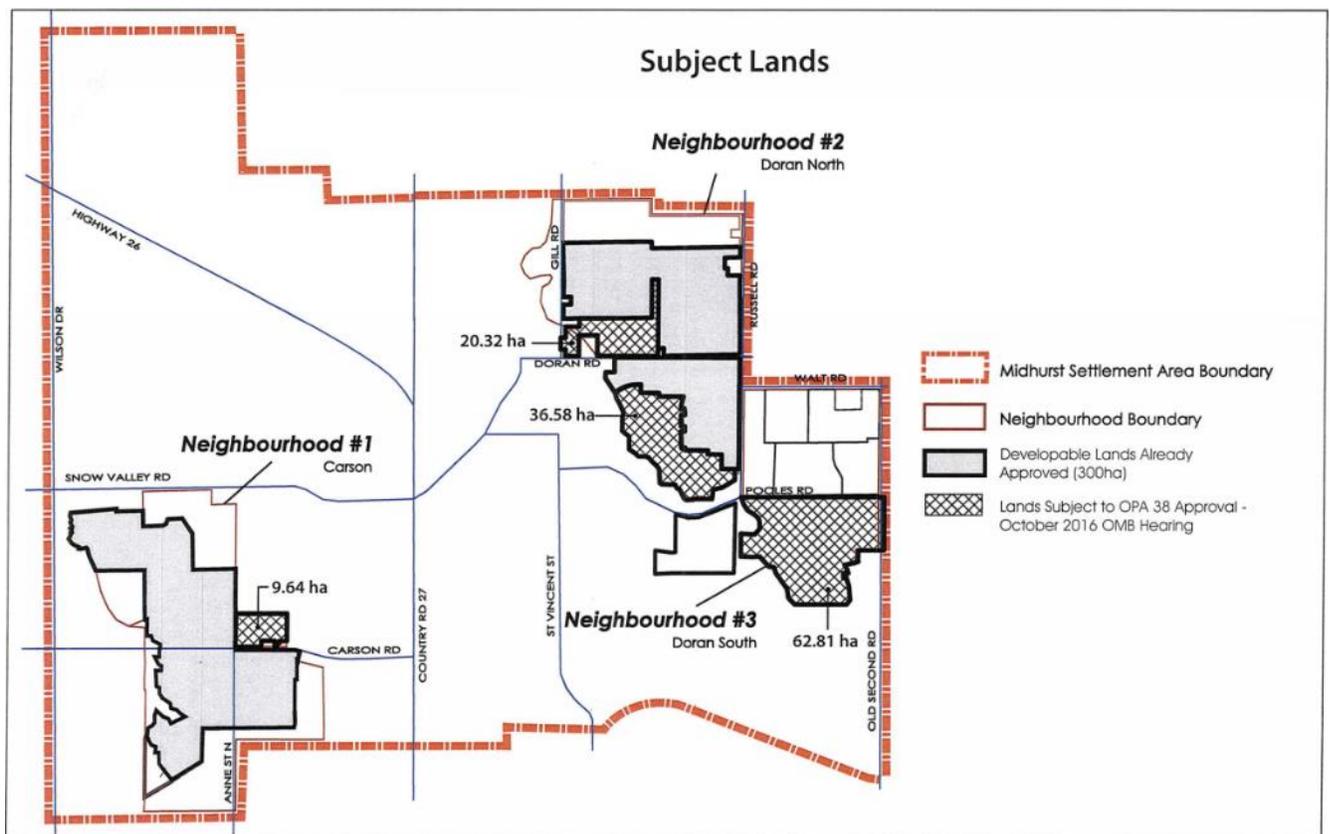
The County of Simcoe announced on September 29, 2016 that the County has reached an agreement with representatives from the Midhurst developers group to allow an increase of 2,961 additional residents as part of the resolution of the 20,000 population allocation program.

In an Order issued January 4, 2017, the OMB approved an additional population allocation of 2,961 additional residents to Springwater, which comprise a portion of the 20,000 population allocation program. These additional lands allocated as part of the 20,000 population allocation program equate to roughly 130 hectares. The County's 20,000 population allocation program is now completed (expired after January 19, 2017), and no additional population can be allocated to Springwater Township under this program. As such, the additional population is not included in the 2017 Growth Plan forecasts.

As a result of the Midhurst Special Rule and the County’s 20,000 population allocation program, of the total 756 hectares of land within the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area, approximately 326 hectares of land remain designated Future Development Potential (non-urban designation).

Exhibit 3.1 identifies the lands which have now been approved for urban development (shown as hatched area and denoted as “Lands Subject to OPA 38 Approval – October 2016 OMB Hearing”). The lands previously approved for urban development through the Midhurst “Special Rule” (as discussed below), which amount to roughly 300 hectares, are shown as “Developable Lands Already Approved (300ha).”

Exhibit 3.1 – Midhurst Secondary Plan – Lands Approved for Development (Attachment 1, OMB Order Issued January 4, 2017)

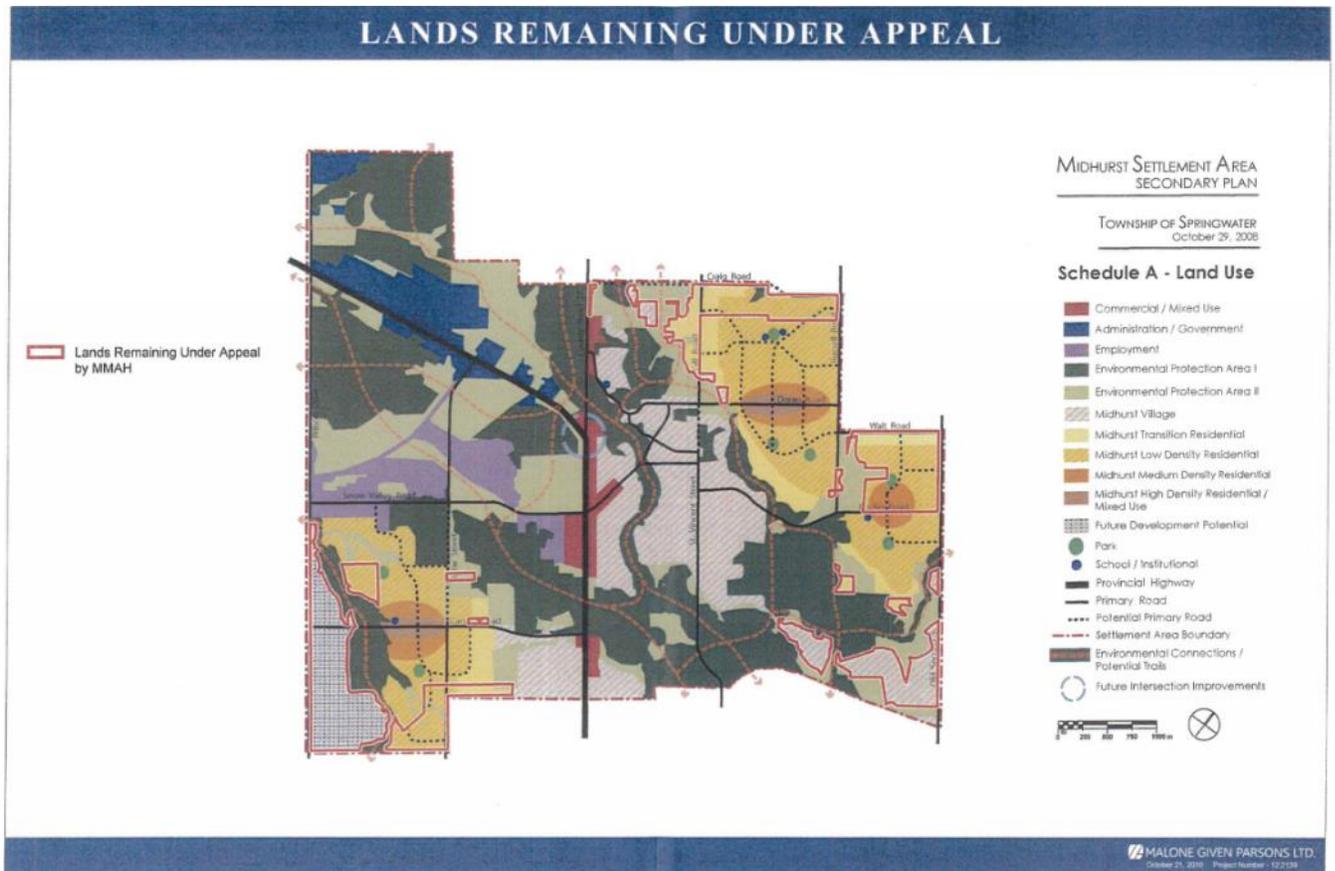


The lands still subject to OMB appeal are identified in Exhibit 3.2, and generally relate to the following issues:

- The policies and land use designation related to the “Future Development Potential” designation;

- The lands identified as “Lands Remaining Under Appeal by MMAH” as shown on Exhibit 3.2 (Attachment 2 to the OMB Order Issued January 4, 2017); and
- The lands subject to appeal by 285622 Ontario Ltd (Midves), which shall be determined subject to and in accordance with the Minutes of Settlement, dated October 6, 2016, including the population allocations for lands within OPA 38 that were approved by the County on October 6, 2016. The Minutes of Settlement may allocate 280 persons (of the 2,961 persons) to these lands conditional on obtaining urban residential land use designations (subject to the resolution of the Midves’ appeal of OPA 38). Should an urban residential land use designation not be approved, the 280 persons may be allocated to the other lands as per the Settlement.

Exhibit 3.2 – Midhurst Secondary Plan – Lands Still Subject to Appeal (Attachment 2, OMB Order Issued January 4, 2017)



3.4. Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017

The new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, under the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, took effect on July 1, 2017. Resulting from two years of consultation and policy development, the 2017 Growth Plan works to support the achievement of complete communities through support for economic development, protection of the natural environment, and preservation of land for forecasted population and employment growth over the Plan's horizon. The 2017 Growth Plan includes a number of changes to the 2006 Growth Plan including the reorganization and revision of existing policy directions, and the establishment of new policies.

All decisions on planning matters must conform with the new 2017 Growth Plan. However, changes with respect to growth management that impact the County will need to be incorporated into the County Official Plan through a County municipal comprehensive review (MCR), and then subsequent to that, the Township's Official Plan. A key change to the 2017 Growth Plan is the definition of "municipal comprehensive review", being:

"A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan."

The MCR is required to be undertaken by the County to comprehensively apply the policies of the 2017 Growth Plan. Section 5.2.3(2) of the 2017 Growth Plan states that:

"Upper-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, will, through a municipal comprehensive review, provide policy direction to implement this Plan, including:

- a) identifying minimum intensification targets for lower-tier municipalities based on the capacity of delineated built-up areas, including the applicable minimum density targets for strategic growth areas in this Plan, to achieve the minimum intensification target in this Plan;*
- b) identifying minimum density targets for strategic growth areas, including any urban growth centres or major transit station areas, in accordance with this Plan;*
- c) identifying minimum density targets for employment areas;*
- d) identifying minimum density targets for the designated greenfield areas of the lower-tier municipalities, to achieve the minimum density target for the upper- or single-tier municipality;*
- e) allocating forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan to the lower-tier municipalities in a manner that would support the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan; and*
- f) addressing matters that cross municipal boundaries."*

Until such time as this MCR is completed by the County, the Township is expected to bring its planning policy framework into conformity with the growth management framework established in the approved County Official Plan, through the 2006 Growth Plan and locally-specific, Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan.

The Township of Springwater is currently identified as part of the “Simcoe Sub-Area” and contains lands designated as “Built-Up Area” and “Designated Greenfield Area”. The 2017 Growth Plan does not include any substantive changes to the Simcoe Sub-Area policies (Section 6) and the growth forecasts have remained unchanged. However, changes to the balance of the Growth Plan still apply to the County of Simcoe and the Township of Springwater. Some changes to Section 6 clarify how the policies in this section are to be implemented and to ensure alignment with the changes to other sections of the Growth Plan. The County of Simcoe’s 20,000 population program has now expired and is therefore not included in the 2017 Growth Plan.

The 2017 Growth Plan did not result in any changes to the growth forecasts as they relate to the County of Simcoe or the Township of Springwater. However, various amendments will need to be addressed at the time of the County’s next MCR, particularly with respect to designated greenfield area density and residential intensification targets within the delineated built-up area, and the means to calculate these targets. Notwithstanding, the 2017 Growth Plan includes transition policies which provide for approved alternative designated greenfield area and intensification targets to remain in place, until such time as they are reviewed through the County’s next MCR. As such, the growth management framework for the Township of Springwater must conform to and implement the County of Simcoe Official Plan growth management framework.

However, there are a number of amendments to the 2017 Growth Plan which may be addressed through the Township’s OPR. The following provides an overview of the key changes to the 2017 Growth Plan and how they may be addressed through the Township’s OPR.

Complete Communities

The 2017 Growth Plan defines Complete Communities as:

“Places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities. Complete communities are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.”

This definition has largely been altered from the original definition and it is very much the driver behind the goals and objectives of the Growth Plan. Section 2.2.1(4) states that applying the policies

of this Plan will support the achievement of complete communities through the elements addressed in the Growth Plan itself. This overarching theme will need to be emphasized within local official plans, with policies to support the development of complete communities.

Protection and Conservation of Ecological, Cultural, and Hydrological Natural Environments

Originally, this Plan was seen as a guide for “where growth can occur”, largely leaving out any elements related to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage features. These elements were instead addressed through the Provincial Policy Statement, in the case of Springwater. However, the 2017 Growth Plan has incorporated planning for the protection of these areas through new policies and a number of associated definitions, which are drawn from the Greenbelt Plan and the PPS. In this regard, Growth Plan policies are consistent with the PPS.

Yet, the 2017 Growth Plan builds on these policies by providing a number of very specific criteria that must be met before development will be considered within the Natural Heritage System (NHS), which has yet to be defined (S. 4.2.2.3). The Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the NHS in order to implement the new Plan (S. 5.2.2(2)(b)). Municipalities will be required to incorporate the Provincially identified NHS as an overlay in their official plans, and include policies which address the vitality of this system (S. 4.2.2(2)).

Policy 4.2.2(4) states,

“The natural heritage system identified in official plans that are approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the relevant official plan until the Natural Heritage System has been issued.”

The 2017 Growth Plan also provides that in implementing the NHS, upper-tier municipalities may, through a MCR, refine provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan (S. 4.2.2(5)). Further consultation from the Province and the County will be required to develop the Natural Heritage System for the Township of Springwater. It is anticipated that the NHS currently identified in the County Official Plan will provide the basis for the identification of the natural heritage system in the Township’s new Official Plan, until such time as the Provincial NHS is identified and any further refinements are undertaken by the County through their municipal comprehensive review.

Climate Change

The 2017 Growth Plan gives consideration to Ontario’s Climate Change Strategy, 2015, and Ontario’s Climate Change Action Plan, 2016, which outlines a range of actions related to addressing climate change that can also assist in achieving the goals of the 2017 Growth Plan. As such, a subsection under Section 4 – Protecting What is Valuable, specifically addresses climate change. Policies within this section require municipalities to develop policies in their Official Plans to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions and address climate change adaptation goals. There is also a large focus on green infrastructure and low impact development throughout the Plan.

Agriculture and Local Food Production

The 2017 Growth Plan places more focus on the preservation and success of agricultural lands to ensure a secure local supply of food for future generations. A guiding principle of the 2017 Growth Plan recognizes the importance of supporting and enhancing the agri-food network, for both economic benefits and community health. There is new emphasis on supporting the “Agricultural System” as a whole, beyond just “Prime Agricultural Areas” (S. 4.2.6). Policies within this section require growth management to consider opportunities for supporting and enhancing the Agricultural System, and encourages municipalities to implement regional agri-food strategies, along with other approaches to sustain the system, moving beyond a sole focus on the landscape itself.

Policy 4.2.6(8) states,

“The prime agricultural areas identified in official plans that are approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the official plan until provincial mapping of the Agricultural System has been issued.”

As such, the Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the Agricultural System in order to implement the new Plan, as per s. 5.2.2(2)(a). The 2017 Growth Plan also provides that in implementing the Agricultural System, upper-tier municipalities may, through a MCR, refine or augment provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the new Growth Plan and any implementation procedures issued by the Province (S. 4.2.6(9)). This focus will further limit abilities for expanding settlement area boundaries and developing within agriculturally-viable locations. Further consultation from the Province and the County will be required to develop the Agricultural System for the Township of Springwater. It was anticipated that the Prime Agricultural Areas identified in the County Official Plan will provide the basis for the identification of prime agricultural areas in the Township’s new Official Plan, however, on February 9, 2018, the Provincial Agricultural System was issued, and takes effect immediately, and any further refinements may be undertaken by the County through their MCR. Further discussions with the Province and County will be required to confirm the appropriate designation of prime agricultural areas, as these designations vary between the County OP and the Township’s Official Plan.

Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets

All intensification and density targets have been increased within the updated Plan. Additionally, for the purpose of their implementation, upper-tier municipalities must, through a MCR, delineate the following areas within their official plans (S. 5.2.5):

- a) Delineated built-up areas;
- b) Urban growth centres;
- c) Major transit station areas;
- d) Other strategic growth areas for which a minimum density target will be established;
- e) Each portion of the designated greenfield area that is subject to a specific density target; and
- f) Excess lands.

Similar to the 2006 Growth Plan, natural heritage features and areas, flood plains, and the NHS will be excluded from the measurement of density targets for designated greenfield areas, provided development is prohibited in these areas. However, s. 2.2.7(3) identifies additional uses that will also be excluded from this density calculation, being:

- a) Rights-of-way for electrical transmission lines, energy transmission pipelines, freeways, and railways
- b) Employment areas; and
- c) Cemeteries.

These exclusions, especially in regards to employment areas, will impact how municipalities can meet their designated greenfield area density targets, and thus impact the way municipalities must plan for these targets within their respective official plans.

When the Province first released the Draft Proposed Growth Plan (2016), there was a large distinction in regards to the treatment of the undelineated built-up areas with respect to the minimum intensification target. This distinction implied that growth occurring outside of the “built-up area” (in settlement areas within the undelineated built-up areas) would contribute to the minimum intensification target. However, the approved 2017 Growth Plan has reworded this clause and redefined the delineated built boundary; whereas both delineated and undelineated built-up areas used to comprise the built boundary, the delineated built boundary now only includes those delineated built-up areas. As such, the minimum intensification target is only to be calculated in areas with a delineated built boundary (S. 2.2.2(1)). As a result, development in settlement areas with undelineated built-up areas will no longer be counted towards achieving municipal intensification targets.

The following minimum intensification targets and designated greenfield area density targets relate to the Township of Springwater. Notwithstanding, the approved alternative targets will remain in place, until such time as the County's next MCR. However, the 2017 Growth Plan policies still provide opportunity for the municipality to seek alternative minimum intensification targets and designated greenfield area density targets at the time of the next County MCR.

- **Intensification Target:** The minimum percentage of residential development occurring annually within each upper- or single-tier municipality within the delineated built boundary is 60% by the year 2031, and each year thereafter (previously 40%). However, the transition policy provides that by the time the next MCR is approved and in effect, and each year until 2031, a minimum of 50% of all residential development occurring annually within each upper- or single-tier municipality will be within the delineated built-up area (S. 2.2.2.2). However, until the next municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect, the annual minimum intensification target contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply (S. 2.2.2.3). For the Township of Springwater, the approved minimum intensification target continues to be 15%, until such time as the County's next MCR is approved. All municipalities are to develop a strategy to achieve the minimum intensification target and intensification throughout the delineated built boundary.
- **Designated Greenfield Areas Density Target** - The designated greenfield area of each upper- or single-tier municipality will be planned to achieve within the horizon of this Plan a minimum density target that is not less than 80 residents and jobs combined per hectare (previously 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare). The minimum density target is to be measured over the entire designated greenfield area of each upper- or single-tier municipality.

Notwithstanding the above, for upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring, the minimum density target for designated greenfield areas contained in the applicable official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply until the next MCR is approved (S. 2.2.7.5). For the Township of Springwater, the approved minimum intensification target continues to be 32 residents and jobs per hectare. Furthermore, for upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring, council may request an alternative to the target through the next County MCR, subject to meeting certain criteria (S. 2.2.7.6).

- **Employment Density Target** - Upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, are to

develop an employment strategy that establishes a minimum density target for all employment areas, measured in jobs per hectare, that reflects the current and anticipated type and scale of employment (S. 2.2.5.5). Employment density targets were previously included in the designated greenfield area density targets. This provides municipalities greater flexibility to establish appropriate targets for employment areas. The employment strategy is to be implemented through a County MCR, including official plan policies and designations.

Land Needs Assessment and Excess Lands

Section 2.2.1 – Managing Growth states that the Minister will establish a methodology for assessing land needs (anticipated to be completed in early 2018), which must be applied by upper- and single-tier municipalities to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth (S. 2.2.1(5)). Based on this assessment, municipalities in the outer ring may determine that they have excess lands. In this case, the Growth Plan requires these municipalities to identify this excess land and prohibit development on these lands to the horizon of the Growth Plan (S. 2.2.1(6)).

The 2017 Growth Plan explicitly provides that municipalities are allowed to plan to the horizon of the Plan, being 2041. The predecessor Growth Plan did not state this; as such, the typical 20 year horizon set out by the PPS applied. This modification now allows municipalities to plan beyond the typical 20 year horizon, subject to the Growth Plan forecasts. Additionally, Section 5.2.4 – Growth Forecasts, allows municipalities to plan for development beyond the horizon of the Plan in regards to strategic growth areas within the delineated built-up areas; these areas must be identified in official plans, and are subject to minimum density targets. Planning for these areas beyond the Plan’s horizon can only occur provided they do not exceed the existing or planned infrastructure/servicing capacity, the type and scale of built form is contextually appropriate, and that development would support the achievement of complete communities.

Housing Strategy

The 2017 Growth Plan requires that upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, will each develop a housing strategy that supports the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in the Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan by:

- identifying a diverse range and mix of housing options and densities, including second units and affordable housing to meet projected needs of current and future residents;
- establishing targets for affordable ownership housing and rental housing (S. 2.2.6); and

- identifying land use planning and financial tools, to support their implementation and align with applicable housing and homelessness plans required under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Settlement area boundaries are required to be identified in official plans. An expansion may only occur through a County MCR in accordance with the criteria provided in Section 2.2.8 of the 2017 Growth Plan. This section contains new policies which further dictate how the most appropriate location will be determined for the proposed expansion where the need for an expansion has been justified. Furthermore, the policies are less restrictive on settlement area boundary expansions that are requested by upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring that have identified excess lands, provided development is prohibited on these excess lands (S. 2.2.1(6)).

Employment Lands

The protection of employment lands is a key objective of the 2017 Growth Plan. As such, Section 2.2.5 – Employment, prohibits the conversion of employment lands, unless through a County MCR and under certain conditions. Furthermore, any change to an official plan to permit new or expanded opportunities for major retail in an employment area may only occur through a County MCR. Aside from these prohibitions, numerous other policies have been included regarding office parks, employment areas which cross a municipal boundary, and development of an employment strategy that establishes a minimum density target for all employment areas. Furthermore, the County through their next MCR will be required to designate employment areas in the County Official Plan.

A new concept within the updated 2017 Growth Plan is the distinction of Prime Employment Areas, defined as,

“areas of employment within settlement areas that are designated in an official plan and protected over the long-term for uses that are land extensive or have low employment densities and require locations that are adjacent to or near major goods movement facilities and corridors. These uses include manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, and appropriate associated uses and ancillary facilities.”

Municipalities must assess their existing inventory of employment uses and identify these areas to ensure their protection.

Public Service Facilities and Community Hubs

The 2006 Growth Plan defined Community Infrastructure as,

“... lands, buildings, and structures that support the quality of life for people and communities by providing public services for health, education, recreation, socio-cultural activities, security and safety, and affordable housing.”

The 2017 Growth Plan has replaced this term with Public Service Facilities, which are defined as,

“Lands, buildings and structures for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health and educational programs, and cultural services. Public service facilities do not include infrastructure.”

The updated definition expands the scope of Public Service Facilities, requiring municipalities to explicitly plan for these additional services and programs. Additionally, the 2017 Growth Plan promotes growth within areas with these facilities, referring to them as “Community Hubs”. As such, municipalities will need to undertake an inventory and analysis of these services to determine what is needed and identify potential for new or existing “Community Hubs” based on current conditions.

3.4.1. Implementation Measures for 2017 Growth Plan

As part of the implementation of the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province committed to establishing a Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System for the GGH. The proposed criteria, methods and mapping of the proposed regional Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and the Agricultural System were posted on Ontario’s Environmental Registry on July 6, 2017 for a 90 day consultation period, until October 4th, 2017. The Province issued the Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System on February 9, 2018, and takes effect immediately.

Development of the Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System (NHS) for the Growth Plan

The natural heritage policies for the Growth Plan for the GGH were reviewed as part of Ontario’s Coordinated Land Use Planning Review. During the public consultation for the coordinated land use planning review, the government announced that the Province would lead the development and mapping of a Natural Heritage System (NHS) for the Growth Plan for the GGH beyond the Greenbelt Plan. In support of the NHS policies of the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province is mapping a NHS comprised of natural heritage features and the lands and waters that link them. By mapping out this connected

ecological network, the NHS will help conserve biodiversity, prevent habitat loss and fragmentation, and identify opportunities for land restoration.

The purpose of the Development of the Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan (Summary of Criteria and Methods), June 2017 is to provide a summary of the criteria and methods developed by the Province to create a regional landscape NHS beyond that of the Greenbelt Plan. The criteria and mapping were not intended to identify or connect all natural areas and features; smaller features and areas could be incorporated into a local NHS that complements and connects to this regional NHS.

The objectives of the Proposed Regional NHS are to maintain and restore the overall biodiversity and ecological functions over the long term, and are not tailored to a particular species or species group. Therefore, core areas and linkages need to be large enough to encompass a wide range of species, habitats and ecological functions. The Natural Heritage Reference Manual provides general guidance for the development of NHS, but does not recommend specific criteria for the size of core areas and linkages. The reference manual does note that minimum size thresholds should consider the particular landscape context, such as identifying smaller core sizes in areas where the landscape is highly fragmented and there is limited natural cover (e.g., forests, wetlands, grasslands, lakes and streams).

The Proposed Regional NHS is based on consistently applied criteria and methods across the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The document outlines all of the criteria controls that were used in determining core area and linkages in the regional NHS, being the composition and size of core areas, and the composition, connectivity, length and width of linkages. To be consistent with regional planning approaches, the criteria used for core areas and linkages in the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan were used as a base.

As previously noted, the 2017 Growth Plan provides that in implementing the Natural Heritage System, upper- and single-tier municipalities may, through a MCR, refine provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan (S. 4.2.2(5)). As such, further consultation from the Province and the County will be required to develop the NHS for the Township of Springwater. It was anticipated that the NHS currently identified in the County Official Plan will provide the basis for the identification of the NHS in the Township's new Official Plan, however, on February 9, 2018, the Provincial NHS was issued, and takes effect immediately, and any further refinements may be undertaken by the County through their MCR.

Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System for the Growth Plan

One of the key changes arising from the 2017 Growth Plan is the development of an Agricultural System for the GGH, to better support the viability of the agri-food sector and strengthen farmland protection.

This includes adopting a consistent approach to identifying and protecting the agricultural land base across the region. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs sought input on three proposed tools that aim to help municipalities implement the new Agricultural System policies, including:

1. A draft map of the Agricultural Land Base, produced by the province, identifying prime agricultural areas. OMAFRA has indicated that it will work with municipalities to refine this mapping.
2. An online Agricultural System Portal that has 60 mapping layers for the GGH agri-food sector. The publicly available portal can be used to identify agri-food, clusters, activities and infrastructure for economic development purposes and to inform agricultural impact assessments.
3. Draft Implementation Procedures (guidelines) that will help municipalities and others understand and implement Agricultural System policies in their communities.

The document outlines Ontario's new approach to agricultural planning, referred to as the "Agricultural System approach", which recognizes the needs for an agricultural land base and agri-food infrastructure and services to co-exist along with growing communities. This framework recognizes that Agricultural Systems are dependent on a variety of interrelated factors, one being land use planning and infrastructure—with the intent of such a system being identified in municipal official plans to reach beyond the current state of farmland protection, to create conditions under which the agri-food sector can prosper.

The desired outcomes of the Agricultural System are:

- Active planning for agriculture and rural economic development based on reliable mapping, data and tools;
- Improved viability of agriculture and growth of the agri-food sector;
- Better protection of the agricultural land base;
- Increased consistency and certainty across municipalities;
- Reinforcement of the synergies between agricultural, natural heritage and water systems, as outlined in provincial policy; and
- Collaboration between the province, municipalities, farmers and businesses with a common interest in a strong agri-food sector.

The Agricultural System approach broadens the current concept of farmland protection by recognizing the importance of rural lands in the agri-food network. The document suggests incorporating certain

rural lands into the prime agricultural area to create a more continuous agricultural land base; this would remain consistent with the definition of “Prime Agricultural Lands” within the PPS.

Provincial Identification of the Agricultural System

OMAFRA has developed an agricultural land base map for the GGH to provide consistent mapping across the GGH based on the best available information. The OMAFRA agricultural land base is comprised of the following:

- **Existing Prime Agricultural Areas** – The core elements of the agricultural land base include provincially identified specialty crop areas and municipally designated prime agricultural areas. Generally, upper- and single-tier municipalities lead the identification of prime agricultural areas in the municipality. Lower-tier municipalities then adopt the upper-tier mapping in their lower tier official plans. For the agricultural land base map, existing designated prime agricultural areas in upper- and single-tier official plans were mapped as prime agricultural areas.
- **Additional Prime Agricultural Areas** – The prime agricultural areas include additional lands identified by OMAFRA through its Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) and other analysis.
 - *Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR)* - LEAR is a commonly-used tool in Ontario developed by OMAFRA to quantitatively assess the relative importance of lands for agriculture based on the inherent characteristics of the land and other factors affecting agricultural potential. LEARs are a starting point to identify prime agricultural areas. LEARs are supplemented with additional analysis and field verification prior to designating prime agricultural areas. While OMAFRA’s LEAR used consistent criteria across the GGH, it is recognized that municipal LEARs may add different data and field verification which may be used to help inform refinements to the agricultural land base mapping.
 - *Prime Agricultural Areas in the Agricultural Land Base* – OMAFRA also identified the following as prime agricultural areas for the purposes of its agricultural land base mapping: 1. Areas already designated as prime agricultural areas in approved official plans; 2. Parcels where the majority of evaluation units have a high LEAR score; and 3. Small areas of lower scoring lands that abut high scoring areas.

These areas are combined to form the prime agricultural areas layer in OMAFRA’s agricultural land base map. Prime agricultural areas are a high priority for protection for long-term agricultural use.

This prime agricultural area mapping is intended to be reviewed and refined during municipal comprehensive review based on the Province’s methodology.

Candidate Areas for the Agricultural Land Base

The definition of the Agricultural Land Base includes those rural lands, that together with prime agricultural areas, create a continuous productive land base for agriculture. Such rural lands are outside of settlement areas and prime agricultural areas and are used for agriculture, link prime agricultural areas, and/or support elements of the agri-food network. While some Agricultural System policies apply to rural lands within the agricultural land base, they are otherwise intended to be treated as rural lands are defined in the PPS, Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan which allow for a wider range of uses than prime agricultural areas.

OMAFRA identified the following areas as candidate areas for the agricultural land base (either as prime agricultural areas or rural lands):

1. Areas used for agriculture based on Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Annual Crop Inventory remote sensing
2. Areas with a medium LEAR score based on OMAFRA's analysis. These areas are likely in agriculture or have good potential to support agriculture.

Areas numbered 1 and 2 are mapped in OMAFRA's agricultural land base map as Candidate Areas for the Agricultural Land Base. There is flexibility for municipalities regarding whether or not to include these candidate areas as prime agricultural areas or rural lands within the agricultural land base.

When OMAFRA undertook the GGH LEAR and prepared the agricultural land base map, lands with natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions were included in the evaluation. This recognized that some lands within natural heritage and water resource systems are and will continue to be used for agriculture. It is important to identify large, contiguous prime agricultural areas, even where lands are crossed by wetlands or other significant features. Under OMAFRA's GGH LEAR, areas with extensive natural heritage features and areas received a lower LEAR score than lands in agricultural use because whether an area is used for agriculture is a LEAR factor. The greater the extent of natural heritage features and areas (or other non-agricultural use) in an area, the lower the LEAR score, and the less likely the area would be to be identified as a prime agricultural area.

The document outlines planning considerations for lands within the Agricultural System, and provides a list of draft policies that would be required within municipal Official Plans to conform to the Agricultural System. Along with the document, Draft provincial mapping of the Agricultural Land Base, which applies the methodology above, was also released. OMAFRA carried forward existing prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas and also conducted a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) to identify additional lands which should come under this designation; the final map will also identify the agri-food network.

As previously noted, the 2017 Growth Plan defines a MCR as a new official plan or official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the *Planning Act* that comprehensively applies the policies of the Growth Plan. The list of policies are as follow:

- Protecting prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, for long-term use in agriculture.
- Maintaining and improving the continuity of the Agricultural Land Base and respecting the important role of rural lands in the Agricultural System, which requires policies on avoidance of non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas.
- Establishing permitted uses in prime agricultural areas and rural lands, consistent with the PPS and OMAFRA’s Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas.
- Identifying when Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs) are required and what needs to be considered, consistent with Provincial guidance on AIAs. This includes addressing non-agricultural uses in proximity to prime agricultural areas.
- Where settlement area expansions are being considered as part of a municipal comprehensive review, expansion should be prioritized on land outside of prime agricultural areas.
- Strengthening the functional and economic connections between local elements of the Agricultural System and the broader Agricultural System of southern Ontario.
- Implementing strategies to sustain and enhance the Agricultural System and the long-term prosperity and viability of the agri-food sector.
- Applying the NHS and mapping using the overlay approach over the Agricultural Land Base.
- Establishing water resource systems mapping and designations to provide for the long-term protection of key hydrologic features and key hydrologic areas and their functions.
- Updating the official plan land use schedule that designates prime agricultural areas, including policies and mapping for rural lands within the agricultural land base, and rural lands outside of the agricultural land base, consistent with the implementation procedures.
- Referencing an Appendix in the official plan which provides mapping in OMAFRA’s Agricultural System Portal or another approved source showing assets listed in Section 2.2.1 of the document; this identifies (by listing and/or mapping) the critical assets, infrastructure and services in the agri-food network (i.e., transportation and drainage infrastructure, regional agri-food assets and services, agricultural inputs and services, on-farm buildings and infrastructure, and vibrant agriculture-supportive communities). It must be clear when an AIA would be required because of potential impacts to the agri-food network. Other maps and lists of the agri-food network may be useful for economic development purposes, either in the official plan or an accompanying economic development strategy.

- In addition to policies pertaining to the Agricultural System, policies on lot creation, minimum distance separation, permitted uses, and normal farm practices are needed to ensure agricultural activity is supported.

3.5. Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario Agricultural Areas, 2016

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) developed the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas (Publication 851), 2016, as a guide to assist in interpreting the PPS and outline the range of uses that are allowed in prime agricultural areas. The PPS currently permits a range of uses in Ontario's prime agricultural areas: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses.

Section 2.5.1 states that municipal official plan policies under the *Planning Act* must explicitly state that agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are permitted in prime agricultural areas. Criteria for these uses may be based on these provincial guidelines or municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives. The PPS specifically defines the permitted uses, and establishes criteria for considering what uses may be permitted as identified in Exhibit 3.3.

Exhibit 3.3 – Permitted Agricultural Uses

Type of Use and Definition	Criteria as provided by PPS policies and Definitions
<i>Agricultural uses:</i> means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The growing of crops, raising of livestock and raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre. 2. Includes associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment. 3. All types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards. 4. Normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.
<i>Agriculture-related uses:</i> means those farm-related commercial and farm-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses.

Type of Use and Definition	Criteria as provided by PPS policies and Definitions
<p>related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. 3. Directly related to farm operations in the area. 4. Supports agriculture. 5. Provides direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity. 6. Benefits from being in close proximity to farm operations.
<p><i>On-farm diversified uses:</i> means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Located on a farm. 2. Secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property. 3. Limited in area. 4. Includes, but is not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses and uses that produce value-added agricultural products. 5. Shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations.

The Guidelines further identify specific examples of permitted uses which may be considered under the three types of permitted uses, as well as recommended guidelines for determining the size and scale of an on-farm diversified use.

The intent of the Guidelines is to support a thriving agricultural industry and rural economy and allow uses in prime agricultural areas that ensure settlement areas remain the focus of growth and development. The new Official Plan will need to consider these Guidelines as much of the Township’s land is comprised of prime agricultural lands. The new Official Plan should establish policies to permit an appropriate range of agricultural, agricultural-related, and on-farm diversified uses in prime agricultural areas, and appropriate criteria to accommodate agricultural-related and on-farm diversified uses.

3.6. Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document, 2017

On March 1, 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Food and Agriculture’s (OMAFRA’s) Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formulae Document and Guidelines for Livestock Facility and Anaerobic Digester Odour Setbacks, took effect. The objective of MDS is to prevent land use conflicts and minimize

nuisance complaints related to odour. The Formulae Document establishes a two-way approach, made up of two separate but related formulas, which provides land use planning tools for determining a recommended separation distance between a livestock barn, manure storage or anaerobic digester and another land use. The MDS calculation does not account for other nuisances such as noise or dust.

MDS I – provides the minimum distance separation between proposed new development and any existing livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digesters located in areas where the keeping of livestock is permitted.

MDS II – provides the minimum distance separation between proposed new, enlarged, or remodelled livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digester and existing or approved development located in areas where the keeping of livestock is permitted.

The MDS Formulae are based on five factors:

1. the type of livestock housed;
2. the number of livestock housed (based on barn capacity or tillable hectares);
3. the percentage increase in the size of the operation (if expanding);
4. the type of manure system and storage; and
5. the type of encroaching land use.

The calculated setback distances will vary based on these five factors, and will result in unique distances for different types of operations in different circumstances and locations. In rural and prime agricultural areas, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014, requires that new land uses, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, comply with the MDS Formulae. References to MDS are to be included in municipal planning documents such as zoning by-laws and official plans. Before a land use planning approval can be given, or a building permit can be issued, conformity to MDS setbacks must be demonstrated.

The 2017 version of the MDS Formulae Document is not much different from the 2006. Revisions are minor and technical in nature, align the document with the updated PPS, and clarify or elaborate on existing MDS Guidelines and provisions through improved language and text. In many instances, the 2017 revisions affect when and how the MDS Formulae is applied, and from where it is measured. The 2017 revisions to the values associated with the various factors in MDS are relatively minor, and the changes in the calculated MDS setbacks required between most land uses and livestock facilities are not extensive. The one significant exception to this statement is changes to MDS I setbacks related to the elimination of tillable hectares as an input to calculated setbacks and its replacement with a percentage increase based on livestock operation size and lot size.

The Township's new Official Plan will need to ensure that planning decisions are consistent with the PPS, and appropriately implement the Province's MDS Formulae to comply with the MDS requirements. It should be noted that in 2008, the Township adopted Official Plan Amendment #33 related to consent policies, which was not approved by the County. The applicability of OPA #33 in relation to the new Provincial Policy Statement, 2014, the Province's Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, and the new Minimum Distance Separation Document, 2017 will need to be considered in the preparation of new consent policies and permitted uses within the Agricultural and Rural Areas which conform to updated Provincial and County policies.

3.7. Green Energy Act, 2009

The *Green Energy Act, 2009* was created to expand Ontario's production of renewable energy, encourage energy conservation and promote the creation of clean-energy green jobs. The Act has various implications for Springwater in regard to the development of Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plans, allowance of designated renewable energy projects, and amendments to various governing legislation such as the *Planning Act* and the Building Code. The *Green Energy Act* essentially limits the ability of municipalities to regulate the provision of renewable energy systems through their land use planning tools. As a result, the new Official Plan will not include policies that regulate green energy uses permitted under the Act.

3.8. Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act, 2011

The *Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act, 2011* provides a wide range of actions to improve the affordable housing system, including amendments to the *Planning Act*. The amendments provide municipalities with enhanced land use planning tools to support the creation of second units and garden suites. Official plans are required to contain policies to authorize the use of a second residential unit which consists of a separate and self-contained dwelling unit accommodated within single-detached, semi-detached and row dwellings, or ancillary buildings.

In practice however, there are circumstances where second units are not appropriate based on good land use planning principles, including health and safety and environmental considerations. So while official plan policies are to be permissive and zoning by-laws should generally allow second units to be established "as of right" in all land use designations or zones that permit single detached, semi-detached, and row dwellings, or ancillary buildings, there may be situations where second units should not be allowed and/or require some specific assessment prior to their establishment (i.e, availability of municipal servicing and the provision of appropriate water and wastewater services, areas that are prone to flooding, waterfront areas/developments on private roads that are not maintained and where emergency access may be limited, areas adjacent to lakes with limited lake capacity, areas of

recreational dwellings where there may be a lack of year round roads and/or which lack other daily needs and services residents may require).

The following summarizes some consideration for authorizing secondary units which should inform the preparation of policies to permit second units within the new Official Plan:

- **Second units in existing dwellings and new dwellings** - Second units should be allowed in both newly built and existing dwellings. Designing new houses to accommodate a second unit at the outset can be more efficient than retrofitting an existing home to have a second unit. Recent changes to the *Development Charges Act, 1997* and a potential regulation to exempt second units in new homes from development charges (once in effect), and proposed changes to the Building Code, if approved, are expected to reduce the cost of constructing second units in new dwellings.
- **Parking** - The maximum parking required per second unit should be one space. In jurisdictions where transit is available, some municipalities have eliminated parking requirements for second units. Tandem parking – a parking space that is only accessed by passing through another parking space – should also be permitted. A proposed regulation under the *Planning Act* would, if approved, would restrict the maximum parking requirement for a second unit to one space while also requiring that tandem parking be allowed.
- **Servicing** - In areas with municipal services, second units should be permitted without a requirement to demonstrate sewer or water capacity, unless there are previously documented servicing constraints. For second units in dwellings serviced by septic systems and private wells, there should be a demonstration of capacity to the satisfaction of the municipality. This is because Building Code permits for septic systems are, in part, based on the number of bedrooms and plumbing fixtures, as septic systems may be old and/or there is a need to ensure there is sufficient potable water from the private well.
- **Unit Size** - The *Development Charges Act, 1997* (via Ontario Regulation 82/98) states that, in order for second units in existing homes to be exempt from development charges, they must be less than or equal to the size of the primary dwelling. To implement this, the Building Code establishes health and safety standards for second units. In this regard, it regulates the size of second units and the number of bedrooms. As such, municipal by-laws should not seek to impose size or other standards that are regulated by the Building Code.
- **Egress** - Requirements for entrances or means of egress for second units are set by the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code (which must be referenced for specific standards). In general, second units can share a joint entrance with the primary unit, subject to having a fire separation with appropriate fire resistance rating, and at least two means of egress that may include windows of an appropriate size.

- **Streetscape and Architectural Design** - Given most second units are internal to a primary dwelling, second units should have limited impact on streetscape and architectural design. In the case of an addition to a primary dwelling, there may be valid design considerations, particularly in heritage areas. If municipalities establish design standards in relation to streetscape or architectural design, they should be clearly set out in the zoning by-law so a second unit can be planned in accordance with the by-law and a homeowner can proceed directly to obtain a building permit.
- **Owner occupancy** - The *Planning Act* does not allow zoning to have the effect of distinguishing on the basis of relationship. Zoning by-laws should permit occupancy of the primary or second unit regardless of whether or not the owner of the home is a resident of either unit. A proposed regulation under the *Planning Act*, if approved, would establish a provision which precludes establishing occupancy requirements for either the primary or second unit.
- **Tracking and monitoring** - A municipality should have a means for tracking and monitoring second units. A registry, in some form, could help the municipality be aware of where second units existed. This could assist in establishing inspection processes to help ensure public safety. It could also provide emergency services with the knowledge that there are two units in the home. A registry could be established through a mandatory enrollment by the applicant when constructing a second unit or by having the municipal building official inform the appropriate office that a building permit has been issued for a second unit on a property. Ideally, there would be no or only modest fees for registration in order to encourage the creation and registration of second units.

The Township of Springwater Official Plan notes that the Township should encourage and give consideration to an appropriate amount of housing to be designed to be affordable to moderate and lower income households (S. 6.2.2) and that the provision of affordable rental accommodation can be enhanced through the intensification of existing residential areas (S. 6.2.12). Affordable housing has historically been provided almost exclusively in the community of Elmvale due to municipal servicing, social and institutional services, and the comparative ease to supply the variety of needs associated with these housing forms (S. 6.1.1). The new Official Plan will need to establish policies to permit secondary units where single detached, semi-detached and row houses are permitted, and consider appropriate criteria to accommodate them.

3.9. Source Water Protection Plan Implementation

The Ontario government has passed the *Clean Water Act* to protect the sources of municipal drinking water supplies throughout Ontario. This will take place through the implementation of source water protection plans, which are to: identify the sources of drinking water, including municipal wells, river

and lake intakes; outline the threats to the quality and quantity of water in source areas; and proposed actions needed to reduce those threats and protect source water.

The Township of Springwater is located within the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region; specifically, the Township accounts for 22 wells in the Nottawasaga Source Protection Area, and 5 wells in the Severn Sound Source Protection Area. As such, the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan, which was approved on July 1, 2015 and is now currently in effect, is applicable and must be implemented within the Township.

The Source Protection Plan identifies four different types of vulnerable areas that affect drinking water quality including:

- **Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPA)**, which are areas on the land around a municipal well, the size of which is determined by how quickly water travels underground to the well, measured in years;
- **Intake Protection Zones (IPZ)**, which are the areas on the water and land surrounding a municipal surface water intake;
- **Highly Vulnerable Aquifers (HVA)**, which are areas underground that are highly saturated with water – enough water that it can be drawn for human use ; and
- **Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas (SGRA)**, which are areas on the landscape that are characterized by porous soils, such as sand or gravel, that allows the water to seep easily into the ground and flow to an aquifer.

The new Official Plan will need to consider the proposed policies for designated vulnerable areas in order to safeguard municipal drinking water supplies and include new mapping to identify the vulnerable areas, in accordance with the Source Protection Plans. To ensure that decisions on planning matters meet the requirements of the *Clean Water Act*, the Official Plan must conform with significant threat policies and have regard to moderate and low threat policies that apply to *Planning Act* decisions on the day the source protection plan takes effect. Official Plans are required to be updated within five years of the source protection plan coming into effect, or at the time of the municipality's MCR.

3.10. Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008

A small portion of the Township in the vicinity of Centre Vespra is located within the Lake Simcoe Watershed. Section 7.1 of the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act* notes that the council of a municipality that has jurisdiction in the Lake Simcoe watershed shall amend its official plan to conform with the designated policies set out in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2009.

The Plan addresses long term environmental issues in Lake Simcoe and its watershed by: promoting immediate action to address threats to the ecosystem, such as excessive phosphorus; targeting new and emerging causes of stress such as invasive species and climate change; protecting and restoring important natural areas such as shorelines and wetlands; and restoring the health of the fish and other aquatic life.

Even though the amount of land subject to *Lake Simcoe Protection Act* is limited, the new Official Plan will need to ensure that the policies of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan are in accordance with the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act*.

3.11. County of Simcoe Official Plan

The County of Simcoe Official Plan (County Official Plan) was adopted by County Council on November 25, 2008, and was subsequently appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). On April 19, 2013 the OMB granted partial approval of the County of Simcoe Official Plan. As of June 2016, the majority of the Official Plan has been approved; outstanding appeals are site-specific and are outside of the Township's jurisdiction.

The Plan sets out goals and objectives and further outlines the policies that govern how land in the County will be used on a broad level. The policies of the Official Plan provide a framework for local municipalities to undertake more detailed planning that implements the requirements of the County Official Plan.

The over-arching goals of the County Official Plan are:

- To protect, conserve, and enhance the County's natural and cultural heritage;
- To achieve wise management and use of the County's resources;
- To implement growth management to achieve lifestyle quality and efficient and cost effective municipal servicing, development and land use;
- To achieve coordinated land use planning among the County's local municipalities and with neighbouring counties, districts, regions, and separated cities, and First Nations lands;
- To further community economic development which promotes economic sustainability in Simcoe County communities, providing employment and business opportunities; and
- To promote, protect and enhance public health and safety.

3.11.1. Growth Management

The County Official Plan also directs how and where growth should occur, informed by a County-wide Growth Management Strategy (GMS), which is based on the following four themes:

1. Direct a significant portion of growth and development to settlements where it can be effectively serviced, with a particular emphasis on primary settlement areas.
 2. Enable and manage resource-based development including agriculture, forestry, aggregates, and tourism and recreation.
 3. Protect and enhance the County's natural heritage system, cultural features and heritage resources, including water resources.
 4. Develop communities with diversified economic functions and opportunities, and a diverse range of housing options.

The GMS also contains population and employment projections/allocations based on the framework set out by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, particularly Amendment 1 (Simcoe Sub-Area). As such, the County is expected to grow by 53% from 272,000 residents in 2006 to 416,000 residents by 2031. The population located in the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia combined with the population of the County, would bring the total population of the Simcoe Sub-Area to 667,000 by 2031. The population and employment projections for Springwater are forecasted to grow to approximately 24,000 residents and 5,600 jobs by 2031.

The County OP directs population and employment growth and development to designated settlements, with a particular focus establishing primary settlement areas as strong, healthy and vibrant places. The Official Plan promotes a compact, mixed use built form, achieved through specific density and intensification targets, in keeping with the approved alternative targets for the Township.

In accordance with the Growth Plan, the communities of Midhurst and Elmvale contain delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas. For the Township of Springwater, development on designated greenfield areas will be planned to achieve a minimum alternative density target of 32 residents and jobs combined per hectare. With respect to the alternative intensification target, the Township of Springwater must also plan to achieve development of 15% of all new residential units (occurring annually) within the delineated built boundary of the settlement area.

While there are no primary settlement areas identified in the Township, the County Official Plan identifies the boundaries of the settlement areas in the Township, which include:

- Midhurst;
- Elmvale;
- Hillsdale;
- Snow Valley;
- Centre Vespra;
- Anten Mills;
- Minesing; and
- Phelpston.

Settlement areas shall be the focus of population and employment growth and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted. Residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational land uses shall be developed within settlement area boundaries on land appropriately designated in a

local municipal official plan for the use. Land use designation changes within settlement area boundaries do not require a County Official Plan amendment.

The settlement area boundaries and delineated built boundaries as shown in the County Official Plan must be identified in local official plans. A County and local municipal official plan amendment is required to amend settlement area boundaries in accordance with a MCR. The establishment and/or recognition of new settlement areas is prohibited, unless permitted through a County MCR.

Section 3.5.8 of the County Official Plan requires that local municipalities with more than one settlement area undertake growth management studies to identify the hierarchy of settlements within the municipality, and the distribution of population and employment among the identified settlements and rural areas based on criteria, including but not limited to:

- type of sewage and water servicing available and capacity of that servicing;
- density and intensification targets;
- range and mix of uses within each settlement area; and
- the settlement area role in providing services to a broader area.

Considerations for undertaking a Growth Management Strategy (GMS) based on the forecasts for each local municipality are set out in the County Official Plan.

The settlement identification, and the population allocations, shall be incorporated into local municipal official plans. The planning horizon to determine requirements for urban development is a maximum of twenty (20) years notwithstanding Section 3.5.10. Section 3.5.10 of the County Official Plan related to the County's 20,000 population program as provided for in the 2006 Growth Plan; this section is no longer applicable as the program expired on January 19, 2017, and is no longer provided for in the 2017 Growth Plan (refer to Section 3.3 and 3.4 of this Report).

3.11.2. Land Use Designations

The County Official Plan establishes four broad land use designations to provide a framework for the designation of land uses in lower-tier official plans. The County Official Plan establishes the following land use designations, applicable to the Township:

- **Settlements** – Intended to be the focus of growth and development of compact, mixed-use urban forms to promote the efficient use of land and provision of water, sewer, transportation, and other services.

- **Rural** – Intended to recognize, preserve and protect the rural character and promote long-term diversity and availability of rural economic activities. The Rural designation also encourages the maintenance, protection, and restoration of significant natural heritage features and functions, as well as the conservation of built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes associated with rural and agricultural areas. The Rural designation is more permissive than the Agricultural designation, in terms of the types of uses which may be permitted.
- **Agricultural** – Intended to protect the resource of prime agricultural lands and prime agricultural areas, while recognizing the inter-relationship with natural heritage features and areas and ecological functions. The designation also enables the agricultural industry to function effectively in prime agricultural areas by minimizing conflicting and competing uses while accommodating uses and facilities which support the agricultural economy. Prime agricultural areas are identified by the Agricultural designation on Schedule 5.1 and shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture. All types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with Provincial standards. The Plan directs development that does not satisfy the Agricultural policies of the Plan to Settlements, as well as Rural Areas for suitable uses.
- **Greenlands** – Intended to protect and restore the natural character, form, function, and connectivity of the County’s NHS for current and future generations. The designation also provides opportunities for natural heritage enjoyment and for recreational and tourism uses to promote healthy and liveable communities and enhance the sense of place and quality of life that characterize the County. The County Official Plan establishes the types of natural heritage features and areas that are included in the County’s NHS, which is supported by the 1996 background report prepared for the County of Simcoe Official Plan titled “Development of a Natural Heritage System for the County of Simcoe” (and revised in 2008 to reflect more accurate and complete information). The Greenlands designation represents the NHS of the County, in addition to the natural heritage features and areas identified in the local municipal official plans. Local municipal official plans may contain policies and mapping that implement local natural heritage systems and identify local natural heritage features and areas in addition to the County’s natural heritage system.

The Land Use Schedule for the County Official Plan is shown in Exhibit 3.4.

Exhibit 3.4 – County Official Plan Schedule 5.1: Land Use Designations

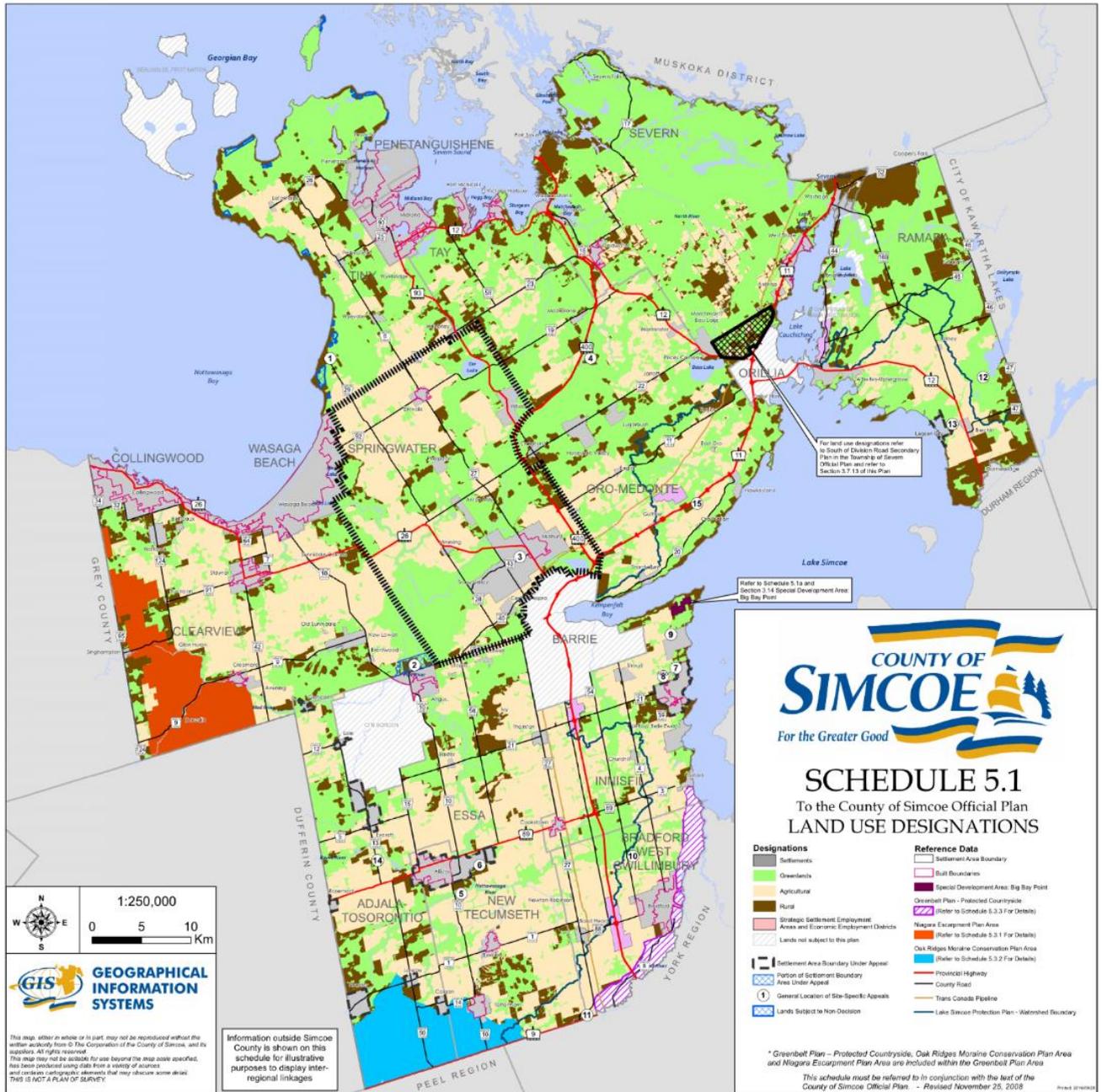
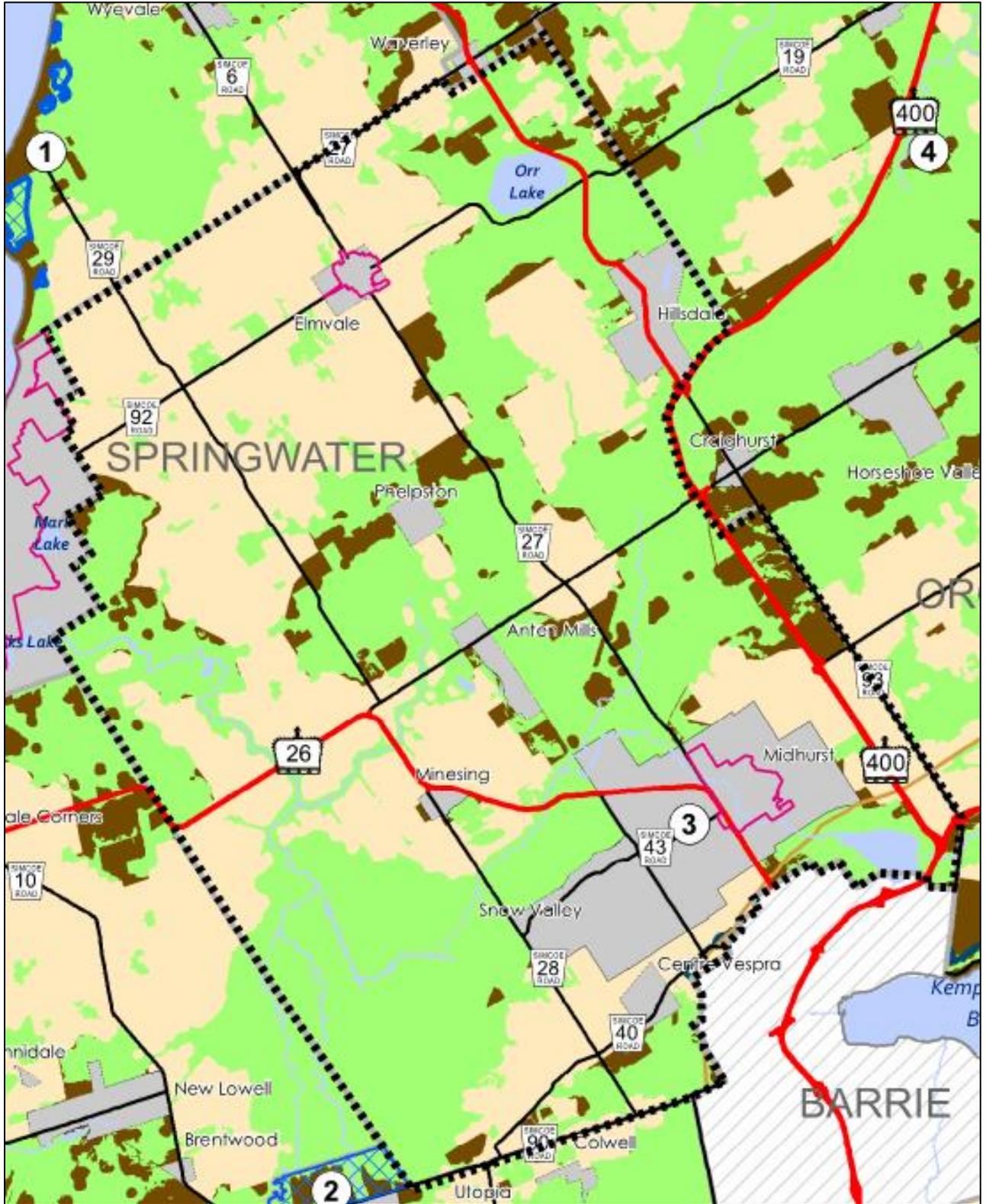


Exhibit 3.4 – County Official Plan Schedule 5.1: Land Use Designations (Excerpt)



3.11.3. Policy Statements

The County Official Plan provides further policy direction on a number of matters which must be addressed in the Township's Official Plan. These matters are identified as Policy Statements in the County Official Plan, which include, but are not limited to:

- **Healthy Communities and Housing Development (S. 4.1)** – The development of complete and healthy communities is a priority of the County Plan, to be achieved by: integration of arts, cultural and recreational facilities; accessibility to education, health, human services, culture and recreational facilities; provision of a full range of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation; accessibility for persons with disabilities or seniors; design of streetscapes, building orientation to provide safe access and movement; and an appropriate range and quantity of housing types and densities.
- **Community Facilities and Services (S. 4.2)** – Community facilities and services except public service facilities shall be directed to settlements. However, public service facilities should be directed to Settlements, but may be located outside of Settlements. Community facilities and public service facilities should be co-located in Community Hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation.
- **Affordable Housing (S. 4.3)** – The development of affordable housing is important to the County and the local municipalities to ensure individual health and long term community vitality. The County encourages the local municipalities to permit, wherever possible, individual lot intensification such as secondary or accessory suites in residential buildings. The County has a target that a minimum of ten percent (10%) of all new housing units created each year will be affordable housing units and will be achieved with the support of the local municipalities to encourage the provision of affordable housing to meet County needs.
- **Aggregate Developments (S. 4.4)** – The County OP identifies areas of High Potential Mineral Aggregate Resources (Schedule 5.2.1), which includes Sand and Gravel Resources in the Township. These areas shall be protected for potential long-term use. The Plan also identifies Licensed Pits and Quarries which include Licensed Mineral Aggregate operations; these are also to be protected from development and uses which would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use. Proposed new and/or expansions to existing mineral aggregate operations require a local municipal official plan amendment, unless otherwise permitted.

- **Resource Conservation (S. 4.5)** – Land use planning and development within the County shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water and related resources and aquatic ecosystems on an integrated watershed management basis. The Plan provides policies for directing development to areas outside of flood plains and hazard lands and human-made hazards, protecting fish habitat, significant woodlands and regionally significant landform features. Furthermore, it promotes improved air quality and the promotion of energy conservation and renewable energy.
- **Cultural Heritage Conservation (S. 4.6)** – Local municipalities are encouraged to establish policies within their official plans that promote and encourage the designation of heritage properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. These policies should work to conserve significant built and cultural heritage resources and landscapes. The County will work with local municipalities and heritage committees to create and maintain an inventory of local and significant cultural features.
- **Infrastructure: Sewage and Water Services (S. 4.7)** – The Plan promotes the development of sewage and water service systems that facilitate the conservation and protection of ground and surface water quality and quantity and natural heritage features and ecological functions. The preferred method of servicing settlement areas and other multi-lot developments is full municipal sewage services and full municipal water services. A local municipality may direct growth towards a particular settlement area to achieve this policy. The County encourages local municipalities to undertake comprehensive master servicing plans for development within settlement areas.
- **Transportation (S. 4.8)** – It is an objective of the Plan to maintain and improve the County’s multimodal transportation system to provide efficient automobile, truck, transit, and where feasible, bicycle and pedestrian routes which link settlement areas and other activity nodes throughout the region, and provide for the movement of goods. Schedule 5.5.1 identifies the County transportation system.
- **Waste Management (S. 4.9)** – It is an objective of the Plan to provide waste management systems that are of appropriate size and type to accommodate present and future requirements and to facilitate, encourage, and promote reduction, reuse, and recycling objectives. The locations of County owned and operated waste disposal sites are shown on Schedule 5.6.1, and the locations of private and local municipality owned or operated waste disposal sites are shown on Schedule 5.6.2. The locations of all waste disposal sites within each local municipality are to be mapped in the respective local official plans.

Section 4.10 of the County Official Plan identifies general guidelines and requirements that are to be addressed in the local municipality’s official plan, to implement the policies of the County Official Plan. The County of Simcoe is the approval authority for the Township’s Official Plan, and amendments thereto. As such, consultation will be undertaken with the County on an ongoing basis through the development of the Township’s new Official Plan.

3.12. Simcoe County Housing Strategy, 2014

The 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy outlines the strategic opportunities and priority activities to be implemented by the County of Simcoe and its municipal partners between January 1, 2014 and January 1, 2024.

The document outlines approaches and a shared community vision of what actions are needed to effectively address housing and homelessness needs across the County. The following strategic opportunities are identified as requirements to meet the vision of achieving “adequate, appropriate, and affordable housing” for all Simcoe County residents.

1. Establish strong leadership and governance;
 2. Achieve the affordable housing targets through;
 3. Protect Existing Public Assets;
 4. Plan for the Public Good; and
 5. Create an integrated model for housing and supports

The Strategy also identifies priority activities and timelines needed to implement these strategic opportunities. This includes a long term commitment to achieve a minimum of 2,685 new affordable housing units throughout the region by 2024. Additionally, the County will initiate a Sub-Committee to explore the creation of culturally appropriate off-reserve Aboriginal housing, with a goal of creating a minimum of 66 units of affordable home ownership dwellings specifically for off-reserve persons – included in minimum target of 2,685 units. An Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (sub-committee of Council) was established in 2014, to facilitate the development of an implementation plan to turn the objectives of the Strategy into recommendations for specific actions. The 2014-2017 Implementation Plan was approved to operationalize the 10-year Strategy.

To achieve the County’s minimum target for affordable housing developments before 2024, the Township of Springwater is targeted to accommodate 96 affordable housing units. The projections also take into account different levels of support needs and different thresholds of affordability. To that end, each of the overall projections are broken down based on rental affordability by monthly income, supportive housing and affordable home ownership dwellings.

Some of the strategic opportunities and priorities that relate to the Township’s OPR include:

- Amending local Official Plans to include the provision of a full range of housing types, in order to meet diverse needs of residents.
- Encouraging the adoption of planning, financial and policy tools highlighted in the Strategy to facilitate and promote affordable housing development across the County.
- Working with the County to support policies and infrastructure for transportation modes that support access to services, amenities and employment opportunities for those living in rental, subsidized and/or low income neighbourhoods where substandard housing may exist.
- Emphasizing access to, and development of, primarily one and two bedroom units to address affordable housing pressure points and to improve the range of options available to single individuals and single-parent families who are homeless.
- Maintaining and preserving existing housing assets and seizing opportunities to renovate and improve other housing stock for the purpose of affordable housing.

3.13. Township of Springwater Official Plan, 1998

The Township of Springwater Official Plan (December 2013, Office Consolidation) provides the policy framework to “manage and direct physical change and its effects on the social, economic and natural environment in the Township” to the year 2016. The *Planning Act* requires every municipality to update its Official Plan at least once every five years. The Township’s Official Plan has undergone a number of site or area specific amendments over the years, including detailed Secondary Plans for the settlements of Midhurst, Centre Vespra, Snow Valley and Hillsdale, as well as a review in 2008, but has not undergone a major revision/update since taking effect in 1998. As such, the current Official Plan requires updating in light of recent provincial legislation and the new County Official Plan.

The following sections provide an overview of the Townships existing planning framework as identified in the Official Plan.

3.13.1. Purpose, Goals and Basis of the Plan

The purpose of the Township of Springwater’s Official Plan is to manage growth and direct physical change and its effects on the social, economic and natural environment. The goals of the Plan are to:

- Ensure the maintenance, protection and enhancement of natural heritage features;
- Preserve and protect prime agricultural areas;
- Encourage business investment and to foster a positive investment climate in the Township;

- Ensure that all land use planning decisions have regard for the conservation of significant built heritage features, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources;
- Create efficient, cost effective development and land use patterns;
- Promote the development of strong and economically viable urban communities;
- Preserve and protect the high quality of life in Springwater Township for the future;
- Direct new growth to existing urban settlement areas to encourage and provide every opportunity to create a vibrant community planning context in our villages and small urban places; and
- Ensure that all new development avoid creating adverse circumstances with existing and future development.

The Official Plan and associated Secondary Plans also provide direction on how and where planned growth is to occur. Growth and settlement in the Township is generally directed away from rural areas and towards the Urban Settlement Areas (Section 9.1.2.2). The Township of Springwater Official Plan manages growth and change in a manner that: facilitates compatibility between land uses; ensures efficient use of land, infrastructure and public utilities; supports and encourages the preservation and use of agricultural land; protects environmentally significant lands and watercourses; encourages new development to locate on an infilling basis in present urban and rural Settlement Areas and infilling areas; strikes a desirable balance between residential, commercial, industrial and farm development; and allows for the conservation and management of significant built and cultural heritage resources identified by the Township.

3.13.2. Growth Management

A Growth Management Strategy (1996 GMS) was originally prepared by the Township of Springwater as an important component in the development of the current Official Plan. The 1996 GMS was also developed in response to the PPS which encourages the increased centralization and concentration of growth and development.

The Township's Official Plan currently identifies nine urban settlement areas, two of which could be described as major communities and seven of which may be described as minor communities. The existing urban settlement areas of the Municipality are characterized as either agricultural area service centres, recreation/orientated lifestyle resort communities, or dormitory residential communities.

The existing settlement area hierarchy is characterized in the Township's current Official Plan as follows:

- The major communities of Elmvale and Midhurst are preferred locations for a significant amount of the Township's projected future growth due to the characteristics of these

settlement areas as well as the wide range of existing municipal services and facilities available in these communities. These communities are generally well positioned to capture a significant share of future growth due to the present state of existing servicing infrastructure and the amount of approved development. As discussed in Section 4.7 of this Report, it is recognized that there are servicing limitations within Elmvale that will need to be considered prior to accommodating significant growth, beyond that currently in process.

- The communities of Hillsdale, Anten Mills, Snow Valley and Centre Vespra are identified as possessing medium growth potentials.
- The communities of Minesing and Phelpston are identified as possessing low growth potentials.
- The community of Orr Lake is seen as having minimal growth potential, and it is recognized that Orr Lake is no longer considered a settlement area in the County Official Plan, and therefore not a focus of growth.

Section 5.1.5 highlights the importance of Adult Lifestyle Communities (ALCs) which comprised a unique component of the residential growth envisioned in the current Official Plan. Growth in the retirement community form of housing consisting of a variety of housing forms and densities, limited commercial, institutional, recreational and health care facilities, was anticipated during the life of the Plan. The current Official Plan specifies that since

“...the size and origin of demand for this specialized type of development is difficult to anticipate, the Township will assess the impacts as part of the Official Plan’s five year reviews and will revise the Official Plan policies as required.”

In accordance with Provincial policy, new ALC developments should be restricted to settlements areas, and the existing policy framework for establishing new ALCs should be deleted.

Growth Management Strategy Update, 2004

The Growth Management Strategy (GMS) was updated by the Township in 2004 to address the requirements of the PPS and inform the Township’s OPR. At that time, it was recognized that significant growth had occurred in Springwater since 1996 and significant growth and change was forecasted for the County and Springwater to 2026.

The 2004 GMS contained detailed information on the following issues:

- Current trends in growth management;
- The current policy framework for growth management strategies;
- The Township’s growth patterns and trends;
- Possible future growth trends and capital works that may impact Springwater; and
- Options and issues for consideration as part of the process.

The 2004 GMS identified key recommendations for refining the settlement strategy for Springwater, which generally included the following:

- The Township has experienced strong growth since 1994 and will experience stronger growth to 2026 based on its unique location, community characteristics, and physical attributes.
- The current settlement hierarchy should be revised and the forecasted land needs be allocated to the major communities of Midhurst and Hillsdale. It was recommended that 90% of the required land to accommodate future growth be allocated to Midhurst and Hillsdale, and detailed secondary plans and expansion area analysis be prepared for these communities to allocate the forecasted growth.
- A servicing hierarchy be established to support the settlement strategy, and the preferred form of servicing new development should be on full municipal services.
- Elmvale should continue to be supported as a major settlement area and a focus of growth, subject to a resolution on the sewage treatment and water capacity issues.
- Additional serviced employment lands should be designated, and preliminary locations for investigation should include the west end of Elmvale, the west side of Midhurst, the Highway 400 interchanges at Forbes Road and Horseshoe Valley Road, or by expanding the Business Park at Highway 93/400 in Hillsdale.
- New Adult Lifestyle Community (ALC) developments should be restricted to the settlement areas of Elmvale, Hillsdale and Midhurst. The Spring Lakes ALC should be recognized in the new Official Plan, but the policy framework for establishing new ALC's should be deleted.
- No new estate residential developments should be permitted in the rural areas of the Township, in order to strengthen the overall settlement area strategy and protect the rural and agricultural areas.
- The Township should maintain the "Greenbelt Buffer" around the City of Barrie and the Town of Wasaga Beach to provide clear policy direction to land owners that the Township will not consider urban uses immediately adjacent to these adjacent municipalities, in order to strengthen the separation between urban and rural and preserve the Township's rural character.

An update to the 2004 GMS was undertaken as part of this OPR due to the amount of growth related policy implemented at the Provincial and County levels of government. The purpose of the GMS Update is to address growth management components of the Growth Plan and County Official Plan and the planned growth targets in both. The 2018 GMS assesses the existing settlement area hierarchy structure/function for sustainable long term growth and development, and the appropriate locations for development. The recommendations of the 2018 GMS are summarized in Section 5.1 of this Report.

3.13.3. Land Use Designations

The Township of Springwater's land base is comprised of primarily rural and agricultural land use designations. Springwater's nine urban settlement areas and associated land use designations can generally be characterized as those that are largely residential, and those that have developed around more traditional main street or a central commercial / mixed use core.

The Township's larger settlement areas contain traditional main streets and central commercial/mixed use cores, include Elmvale, Hillsdale and Midhurst. In these areas, General Commercial land use designations are centred around a main intersection within the community, with Urban Residential designation surrounding. Furthermore, through the preparation of Secondary Plans for Hillsdale and Midhurst, the Township has acknowledged the need for more specific policies and land use designations in these areas. The Midhurst Secondary Plan (OPA 38), for example, introduces area specific designations, such as, Commercial/Mixed Use, Administration/Government, Environmental Protection Areas, Midhurst Village, Transitional Residential, Low, Medium and High Density Residential and Future Development Potential designations.

The settlement areas of Anten Mills, Centre Vespra, Minesing, Phelpsston and Snow Valley have limited commercial land use permissions and designations. Instead, they consist primarily of residential lands and associated Urban Residential, Estate Residential, Lakeside Residential and Rural Residential land use designations.

The Land Use Schedules from the Township Official Plan is shown in Exhibit 3.5. In addition to the land use designations and area specific policies summarized in the following sections, four Secondary Plans have been prepared and adopted as Official Plan Amendments, discussed in the following subsections.

The permitted uses and general policy direction for each of the land use designations are summarized in Exhibit 3.6.

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
Urban Residential (S. 9.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit a range of low to medium density residential uses, subject to servicing constraints and compatibility. • The uses permitted shall be limited to single detached dwellings, semi-detached (including linked semi-detached) or duplex dwellings, single detached dwellings converted to multiple unit dwellings, multiple unit dwellings including triplexes, four-plexes, townhouses and low rise apartment buildings, schools (excluding private schools) [Mod. #34 Jan.28/98] and group homes and home occupations established in accordance with the provisions of Section 25. Other uses considered necessary to serve residential areas may be permitted including open space uses, community facilities such as parks and playgrounds, places of worship, cemeteries and libraries (Section 9.2). • The density of new residential development within the Urban Residential designation will be dependent on the type of hard service infrastructure available and the capacity of these systems to accommodate growth. Policies which address the development density for those areas designated Urban Residential are related to the specific settlement area (Section 8).
Rural Residential (S. 9.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit low density residential uses that are typically in smaller clusters and that were generally established prior to the establishment of current planning controls. • Home occupations, open spaces, and institutional uses may also be permitted in Rural Residential areas. • Future re-designation of Rural Residential areas to non-residential uses is not anticipated and should generally be discouraged. • Further development beyond the existing built-up areas identified on the Land Use Schedule should not be permitted; however, further development may be permitted on the basis of infilling, severance or plan of subdivision, so long as it occurs in accordance with the Official Plan policies and zoning by-law provisions (Section 9.3).

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
<p>Estate Residential (S. 9.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended for permanent, single detached residential dwellings on large lots. • Open spaces and institutional uses may also be permitted in Estate Residential areas. • Only limited new Estate Residential development will be permitted and only after such time as the existing approved supply of vacant lots are substantially developed (Section 9.4).
<p>Lakeside Residential (S. 8.8.2) (Orr Lake)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands designated Lakeside Residential applies to lands generally adjacent to and surrounding Orr Lake, which are used for permanent and seasonal dwellings.
<p>Adult Lifestyle (S. 10) and Spring Lakes Adult Lifestyle Community(S. 10.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to include a variety of housing forms and density of housing units, limited commercial facilities, institutional uses, health care and continuing care services, recreational facilities, open space areas and accessory uses and facilities designed to accommodate and meet the needs of those persons typically 55 years of age and older who are nearing or have reached retirement. (Section 10.1). • All Adult Lifestyle Community development shall proceed by means of an amendment to this Plan, and subject to the criteria and goals as set out in the Plan. Council will also consider the impact of such developments on the overall growth allocations of the Township. No adult lifestyle community development may be created in areas designated “Agricultural”. • Spring Lakes Adult Lifestyle Community (ALC) is a special policy area (S. 10.3) which includes site specific land use designations and policies. The applicable land use designations include: ALC Natural Heritage (Environmental Protection – Category 1 Lands); ALC Residential Low Density; ALC Residential Medium Density (Apartments); ALC Community Commercial; ALC Community Institutional and Recreation; and ALC Open Space.

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
<p>General Commercial (S. 11.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit a range of commercial uses. • Permitted uses may include, but are not limited to, retail commercial uses, personal services, recreational and tourism uses, entertainment uses, community facilities, business and professional offices, eating establishments, service shops and medical services. • Uses are to be directed to Settlement Areas and grouped together (Section 11.2).
<p>Highway Commercial (S. 11.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit a variety of uses which typically serve vehicular traffic and rely on traffic for their economic existence. • Land-extensive retail and service uses requiring highway access, such as construction and building supply yards, may be permitted on a limited basis. • It is intended that lands designated Highway Commercial be located on the perimeter of, or distant from, lands used for other commercial activities, and uses should be grouped together with appropriate screening from the road, where necessary (Section 11.3).
<p>Tourist and Recreational Commercial (11.4) and Tourist and Recreational Open Space (1,2 & 3) (S. 8.10.5.1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is intended that commercial uses which primarily serve the tourist and recreational market be permitted, including: tourist accommodations (motel, campground, tourist cabins or a lodge), places of entertainment, ski resorts, conference centres, arenas, golf courses, private parks, amusement parks, and eating establishment. • It is encouraged that these uses be located and grouped near other tourist attractions. • New uses are to be generally directed to highways and a limited number of specific locations on arterial roads, and to waterfront areas. • Development proposals may require a supporting Feasibility or Market Study to confirm appropriateness, desirability, scope, impact and cost/benefit of use. • Limited ancillary commercial uses are also permitted (Section 11.4). • A Tourist and Recreational Open Space (Category 1, 2 &3) designation applies specifically to Snow Valley (S. 8.10.5.1). This designation and

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
	<p>associated policies permit primarily recreational activities and limited commercial uses. The permitted uses include ski runs, trails, conservation uses, and the existing golf course.</p>
Industrial (S. 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit a variety of industrial and quasi-commercial uses. Community, cultural and recreational uses and other uses with similar characteristics that can appropriately be located in an industrial designation are permitted. • It is intended that Industrial areas have a concentration or high potential for the concentration of manufacturing, assembly, warehousing and employment activities. Such uses are to be located in Urban Settlement Areas and should be grouped and concentrated in one area to minimize any undesirable effects. • Commercial uses are also permitted in so far as they are accessory to or necessary for the permitted industrial uses. • No residential uses are permitted (Section 12).
Business Park (S. 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit space-extensive commercial and industrial uses which may require outside storage, outside display, large amounts of vehicular parking, or emit noise or dust as a result of their operations. Uses are limited to those which are environmentally sustainable and typically known as dry uses. • Ancillary uses such as restaurants and office may be permitted once several primary uses have been established within the designated area. In addition to the general community design guidelines within the Official Plan, specific guidelines have been provided for Business Parks (Section 13).
Institutional (S. 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the intent of this designation to permit community oriented uses providing a public service. Such uses are to be located within or adjacent to Urban Settlement Areas in a manner that minimizes potential conflict

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
	with adjacent uses, particularly residential areas and subject to servicing constraints and the provision of adequate vehicular access (Section 14).
Open Space (S. 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended for active and passive recreational and conservation uses. Uses may include public and private parks, fairgrounds, arenas, community centres, playing fields, beaches, nature trails, picnic areas, nursery gardens, forestry, agricultural, public and institutional uses and accessory buildings and structures (Section 15).
Natural Heritage (Environmental Protection Category 1 Lands, and Environmental Protection Category 2 Lands) (S. 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Heritage features and areas are to be protected, maintained, and enhanced and not subject to the impact of incompatible and inappropriate land uses and development. The Official Plan establishes two categories of natural heritage features and areas; areas where “development will not be permitted” (Category 1); and areas where “development may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it will not negatively impact” the natural features or functions of areas (Category 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Category 1: Permitted uses include existing approved agricultural uses, forestry, passive outdoor recreation, scientific research and education, wildlife management, and other activities compatible with the conservation and preservation of the natural flora and fauna. Only accessory buildings to permitted uses, and structures for flood or erosion control are permitted. ○ Category 2: Permitted uses are those permitted within the underlying land use designation, provided that such uses conform to the policies of the Official Plan. Development may only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that negative impacts on ecological features or functions will not occur (Section 16).
Agricultural (S. 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to permit general and specialized agricultural uses, along with accessory buildings and structures such as a dwelling, barns and sheds. Secondary farming uses and agriculturally related uses are also permitted.

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary farm uses are secondary to the primary agricultural use and can include home occupations, home industries or uses which produce value-added agricultural products primarily from the farm operation on the property. • Value-added products are identified to include “farm vacations, cottage wineries, bed and breakfast, produce stands and seed cleaning and sales”. • Agricultural-related uses include small scale farm related industrial and commercial uses directly related to the farming operation. Some non-related agricultural uses are also permitted, including forestry, kennels, passive recreation and conservation. • Agricultural related uses do not include: golf courses including driving ranges, tent and trailer parks, equestrian residential developments, agrominiums, the removal of topsoil, tree nurseries, farm implement dealers and institutional uses. • New secondary farm and agricultural related uses may be subject to site plan approval. • The policies emphasize the importance of agricultural uses within the Township, noting that these should take precedence over other uses and should be protected and preserved. • Policies note that the conversion of one residential dwelling into two or more attached dwellings is not permitted (Section 17).
<p>Rural (S. 18) and Restricted Rural (S. 24.3.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permits all uses permitted under the “Agricultural” designation. • These lands are considered to be lands that do not have high resource capability for agriculture, aggregate, or natural heritage. • Agriculturally related commercial and industrial uses, along with home occupations, public utilities, and several minor non-agricultural uses, bed and breakfasts, home occupations and home based industries, and accessory uses may also be permitted. • Limited rural residential development exists in the form of individual dwelling units and small plans of subdivision (Section 18).

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Restricted Rural designation is intended to indicate predominately marginal agricultural land which, because of the proximity to County Roads 27 or 92, requires more restrictive planning policies, as is intended to protect the function of these roads by reducing the potential for strip development along the Highways.
<p>Aggregate Extractive and High Aggregate Potential (S. 19)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aggregate Extractive designation is intended to identify and protect mineral aggregate resources within the municipality, where possible, from any development which would prevent the future recovery of mineral aggregate supplies. The policies are designed to ensure the future supply of these materials to the general area, ensure the correct and orderly extraction of deposits, encourage efficient land management practices, minimize disruption and ensure rehabilitation of exhausted sites. High Aggregate Potential areas have been identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources as aggregate resources of primary significance having substantial deposits of sand and gravel. In addition, the Township is aware of secondary deposits in a few areas which are also included in the High Aggregate Potential designation.
<p>Waste Disposal (S. 20)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Waste Disposal designation relates to lands where the predominant use of land is for a waste disposal site. Generally the Township does not encourage new waste disposal sites, and the Plan provides criteria for considering amendments to the Official Plan to consider new or expanding waste disposal sites. The Plan identifies a Waste Disposal Assessment Area as an overlay designation (S. 21) to recognize the presence of landfill sites, which is generally within 500 metres of a landfill site. Development within this area may be subject to additional studies related to adverse planning or environmental constraints related to the proposed development.

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
<p>Midhurst Secondary Plan (OPA 38) Designations</p>	<p>The Midhurst Settlement Area Secondary Plan establishes specific land use designations applicable to the community of Midhurst as shown on Schedule A – Land Use. These designations provide more prescriptive policies applicable to Midhurst and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Commercial/Mixed Use Designation – permits a range of office, retail and commercial uses in addition to residential uses integrated as part of a mixed use development; ii) Administration / Government Designation – permits professional offices related to government services, schools and institutions, and parks and open space uses; iii) Employment Designation – permits a broad range of office and industrial uses and parks and open space uses; iv) Environmental Protection Area I Designation – includes protection for significant natural heritage features; v) Environmental Protection Area II Designation – includes certain natural heritage features where an Environmental Impact Study is required to determine the nature and extent of the feature and development limits; vi) Midhurst Village Designation – applies to the existing Midhurst community which includes existing predominately residential neighbourhoods; vii) Midhurst Transition Residential Designation – is intended to provide a transition between existing Midhurst neighborhoods and new development by accommodating a range of ground-related housing in the form of single detached residential dwellings; viii) Midhurst Low Density Residential Designation – permits predominately ground related housing in the form of single detached, semi-detached, and street or block townhouse dwellings; ix) Midhurst Medium Density Residential Designation – permits a range of medium density housing in the form of ground related townhouse dwellings. Single and semi-detached dwellings may be permitted to a maximum of 15% of the total housing units;

Exhibit 3.6 – Land Use Designations

Designation	Permitted Uses / General Policy Direction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="516 342 1495 464">x) Midhurst High Density Residential/Mixed Use Designation – permits higher density housing in the form of low-rise apartment buildings, townhouses, and mixed use buildings with service/commercial uses; <li data-bbox="516 474 1495 642">xi) Future Development Potential Designation – the intent of the Future Development Potential designation is to recognize the long term development potential of the land, through an amendment to the Plan; <li data-bbox="516 653 1495 821">xii) Parks symbol – is intended to combine with the Environmental Protection Areas and stormwater management systems to provide for an integrated greenlands system. Parks are to include neighbourhood parks and parkettes/urban squares; and, <li data-bbox="516 831 1495 953">xiii) Schools/Institutional symbol – identifies areas suitable to school sites in proximity to planned Neighbourhood Centres, subject to confirmation from a School Board.

In addition to the above-noted land use policies, the Official Plan establishes specific policies for the Urban Settlement Areas. In the event that a conflict is identified, specific policies for the Urban Settlement Areas take precedence over any other policies in the Official Plan.

The land use designations and the associated policies within the Official Plan need to be reviewed to determine what may be appropriate to be carried forward in the new Official Plan and what may need to be replaced based on changes to the *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan and contemporary planning issues. Section 5 of this Report identifies the recommended policy directions for the Township’s new Official Plan based on a review of conformity of the current Official Plan in relation to Provincial and County legislation, plans and policies.

3.13.4. Economic Development

The Official Plan outlines goals and objectives for economic development in the Township of Springwater. Section 4.2 outlines economic development goals of the Township, which are to:

- encourage a greater live and work ratio among residents of the Township by encouraging home based businesses;
- encourage tourist commercial development which will make the Township a destination for recreational activity and businesses supporting this industry and preserve and maintain the Township's heritage resources;
- encourage industrial development in the appropriate locations;
- ensure the visual attractiveness of the municipality, especially in areas of high corridor traffic to promote a positive awareness of the Township to potential investment;
- promote awareness of the excellent locational advantages offered by the Township to the regional market place; and
- offer a greater range of goods and services within the Township for residents.

Section 4.3 outlines the following objectives for economic development:

- Development resulting in an increase in economic activity in the Township shall be encouraged, provided it does not have an adverse impact on the natural environment, natural resources and rural character of the community.
- The concentration of economic activity in the urban settlement areas and identified nodal locations shall be encouraged. New land for commercial and industrial development may be developed as a business park near the Highway 400 interchange and Penetanguishene Road (Hwy. 93). These areas shall have precedence over the establishment of new locations.
- The development of home-based businesses shall be encouraged, provided the use is compatible with adjacent uses and complies with the specific policy requirements for each economic node.
- The visual attractiveness of these economic nodes shall be enhanced by emphasizing the importance of landscaping, building design and facade to promote a positive corporate image.

The Official Plan notes that changes in Provincial requirements related to sewage disposal and the dramatic alteration of the business environment requires a more flexible and innovative approach toward economic development.

Home based businesses were identified as a key component of the economic base of the Township and were expected to grow significantly. It is a goal of the existing Official Plan to encourage a greater live and work ratio among residents of the Township by encouraging home based businesses (S. 4.2.1). The Plan encourages the development of home-based businesses, provided the use is compatible with adjacent uses and complies with the specific policy requirements for each economic node (S. 4.3.3). Section 25.3 provides more detailed policies to regulate home occupations and permits them in all designations where residential uses are permitted.

3.13.5. Agricultural and Rural Lands

The Township of Springwater is comprised primarily of lands designated rural and agricultural, and policies relating to agricultural lands are based on the recognition that agriculture is the most important segment of the Township's economy. Section 17.1.1 of the Official Plan notes that the agricultural industry must be protected in recognition of the increasing pressure from urban development and the danger of the encroachment of non-agricultural uses into agricultural areas. The rural landscape, and the built heritage resources which contribute to it are to be protected. Lands designated "Rural" do not have high resource capability for agriculture, aggregate or natural heritage purposes. Limited rural residential development exists in the form of individual dwelling units and small plans of subdivision.

Section 17.2 outlines the following objectives related to Agricultural lands:

- To make available lands for agricultural use on a long term basis.
- To promote conditions which encourage the efficient operation and economic viability of agricultural operations within the Township.
- To keep to an absolute minimum those uses that are incompatible, disruptive and/or competitive with farming activity and practices.
- To encourage good farm and land stewardship practices.
- To encourage the preservation and conservation of heritage resources which contribute to the rural landscape.

Section 18.2 outlines the following objectives related to Rural designated lands:

- To preserve the rural character of the Township and the maintenance of the open countryside.
- To prevent the intrusion of land uses which are incompatible with the rural and/or resource activities of the area.
- To prevent uncontrolled, scattered and ribbon development.
- To implement the Growth Management Strategy in terms of directing new growth to urban settlement areas.
- To indicate marginal agricultural lands which are not good agricultural lands as defined in Section 17 of this Plan and are not otherwise designated.
- To permit farm related and certain non-farm related development which would be appropriate to the area and consistent with the policies of this Plan.

As previously discussed, and in accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the Agricultural System in order to implement the new Plan. On February 9, 2018, the Provincial Agricultural System was issued, and takes effect immediately, the

County may, through a MCR, refine or augment the provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan and any implementation procedures issued by the Province.

3.13.6. Natural Heritage and Open Space

The Township's Natural Heritage System (NHS) is a diverse and environmentally complex system comprised of various natural features or landforms which include: extensive Provincially and locally significant wetlands; areas of natural and scientific interest; areas of significant biological habitat; aquifer recharge/discharge and headwaters areas; and, a vast forest and woodland areas. Natural heritage features and areas are to be protected, maintained, and enhanced and not subject to the impact of incompatible and inappropriate land uses and development. In order to provide adequate protection to especially sensitive and significant environmental features, two categories of natural heritage features and areas have been established:

- Category 1 – represents areas where a development will not be permitted; and
- Category 2 – represents where development may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it will not negatively impact the natural features or functions of areas (S. 16.2.1).

The Plan establishes policies for the protection of natural heritage features, which must be reviewed in the context of current Provincial policy and approaches to a natural heritage system strategy.

The Plan includes policies for constraint and hazard lands in the Township to prevent loss of life and minimize property damage and social disruption through the regulation and management of lands subject to natural constraints and/or hazards and to protect these areas from incompatible development. These include areas which may possess characteristics such as organic soils, soil or bedrock instability, high water tables, steep slopes, or lands which may be susceptible to flooding events and erosion hazards.

The Open Space designation is generally for active and passive recreational and conservation uses. Uses may include public and private parks, fairgrounds, arenas, community centres, playing fields, beaches, nature trails, picnic areas, nursery gardens, forestry, agricultural, public and institutional uses and accessory buildings and structures. The Plan recognizes the importance of existing natural greenways, historic paths, and trails situated along former rail line right-of-ways. These existing greenways and travel corridors include the Ganaraska Trail, Nine Mile Portage and the North Simcoe Rail Trail as well as numerous snowmobile trails. These greenways are important in the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles while providing access to open spaces.

As previously discussed, and in accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the NHS for the GGH in order to implement the new Plan. Once

established, the County may, through a MCR, refine the provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan. Until such time, the NHS identified in official plans that are approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the Official Plan.

3.13.7. Community Design

Community design policies focus on features considered important to the creation of high quality built and natural environments. These features have been translated into objectives which set out the Township's overall approach to community design (Section 7.1). The Township's main goal for community design is to promote developments at various scales which – through their adherence to principles of good, high quality community design – will produce built and natural environments in Springwater that evoke a desirable image and sense of place for the Township (Section 7.2). The community design policies are related to the following detailed design considerations:

- Community Image – through community design, the Township can foster an image of Springwater that recognizes and promotes the high quality of the natural and built environment, through retention and enhancement of distinctive built and natural features and the siting of buildings of significant form and use at important locations within urban settlements to enhance visual and functional use.
- Design with Nature – encourage development that is properly integrated and connected to natural features and resources while enhancing ecological and hydrological functions.
- Development and Subdivision Design – ensure that new development is compact in form and integrated with existing built form, heritage and natural features through the design of streets that provide appropriate access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, and are safe and comfortable.
- Streetscapes – design streets that contribute to the character of the immediate area and provide a high level of amenities for users and enhance landscape design.
- Signage – signage should contribute to the visual attractiveness of development and surrounding area.

3.13.8. Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage resources of the Township generally include, but are not limited to archaeological sites of historic and prehistoric origins including cemeteries and unmarked burials; buildings and structural remains of historical and architectural value; rural, village and urban areas of development which are of historic and scenic interest; identified heritage districts and cultural heritage landscapes (S. 27.1.1). It is the intent of the current Official Plan that the Township's cultural heritage resources

be conserved, preserved and maintained wherever possible and that all development shall occur in a manner which respects the Township's physical cultural heritage.

3.13.9. Infrastructure

The Township's General Development Policies outlined in Section 3 of the Official Plan identify policies which relate to the use, expansion or upgrade of existing infrastructure and public facilities to accommodate growth. Prior to the consideration of any development proposal, Council may undertake or direct to be undertaken, planning studies to ensure that the objectives of the Official Plan are met. Such studies may include the ecological, social and economic impact, delineation of internal road patterns, distribution of housing types, location of schools including capacity of schools and ability to accommodate additional pupils, parks, and other community uses, shopping facilities, pedestrian walkways, buffer strips, noise implications, consideration of urban and landscape design concepts; and effect on the municipal tax base (S. 3.2).

The Township's transportation policies outlined in Section 26 identify policies related to road infrastructure. The objectives of the Township's transportation policies are to provide the safest and most efficient flow of traffic, facilitate the movement of people and goods and foster an overall road pattern and standard which is consistent with the existing and proposed road patterns of the adjoining municipalities, the County road system, as well as with the Provincial Highway system, and to recognize and reduce potential noise impacts created by road and rail transportation facilities.

The Official Plan recognizes a hierarchy of roads which include:

- **Provincial Highways** – Intended for major traffic volumes.
- **Arterial Roads** – Intended to be major transportation routes for carrying significant volumes of through or local traffic. Arterial roads have a minimum right-of-way (ROW) of 30 m with 2 traffic lanes.
- **Collector Roads** – Intended to collect traffic from individual local roads and direct traffic to arterial roads. Collector roads have a minimum ROW of 20 to 25 m with 2 traffic lanes.
- **Local Roads** – Intended to represent the remainder of roads designed to provide access to abutting properties. Local Roads have a minimum ROW of 20 m with 2 traffic lanes.

Furthermore, the current Official Plan includes policies related to waste water treatment (S. 22) and stormwater management (S. 23). The Township will promote and encourage the use of modern and cost effective measures and systems which may include full municipal wastewater treatment plants and communal or individual wastewater systems or package plants which may involve surface or subsurface discharge.

3.13.10. Secondary Plan Areas

Hillsdale Secondary Plan (OPA 37)

The Hillsdale Secondary Plan was adopted by Council in 2008. The Plan was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The purpose of the amendment was to update the land use policies and schedule for the Hillsdale settlement area, which is approximately 700 hectares in size with a population of approximately 912 people in 304 dwelling units. The Secondary Plan more specifically addresses the anticipated development pressures associated with the development of a large portion of vacant land in the northeast section of the community, which is the subject of a significant development proposal, referred to as “Heritage Village”. The Heritage Village development was anticipated to add approximately 500 additional fully serviced units to Hillsdale; however, recent changes to the planning applications are anticipated to result in a reduced unit yield on communal sanitary services.

Existing land use designations within Hillsdale are shown in Exhibit 3.7a, and include Urban Residential, General Commercial, Institutional, Business Park, Categories 1 and 2 Natural Heritage Environmental Protection, and Open Space (Exhibit 3.7a). Land use permissions associated with these designations are similar to that of the Official Plan.

Additional lands designated Residential and Business Park (through OPA 37, not yet approved) were expected to meet the anticipated population and employment growth for the Settlement Area and Township, as shown in Exhibit 3.7b. OPA 37 seeks to designate additional employment lands to promote a concentration of economic development in a nodal location by providing for new land for industrial uses in a business park setting at the intersection of Highway 400/93, which is intended to take precedence over other new locations, and can occur within the existing settlement area. The location of these lands have strategic importance to the Township as a Business Park, as it meets the following criteria:

- excellent highway transportation linkages, being served by two Provincial Highways and major arterials;
- poorer agricultural lands;
- level topography;
- non-aggregate lands;
- relatively isolated from residential areas; and
- located within a defined Settlement Area.

Exhibit 3.7a – Hillsdale Schedule ‘A-7’ Land Use and Road Plan

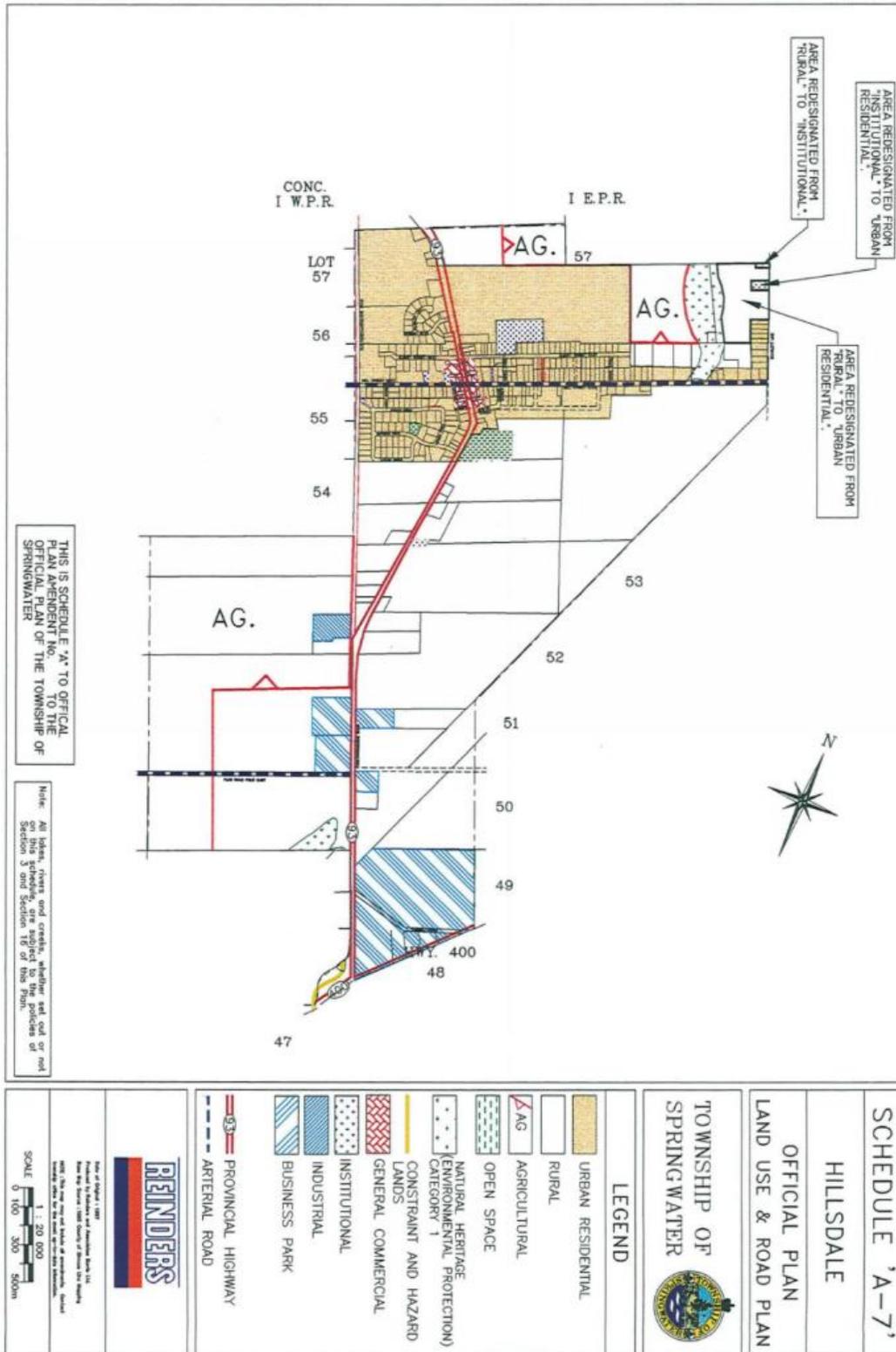
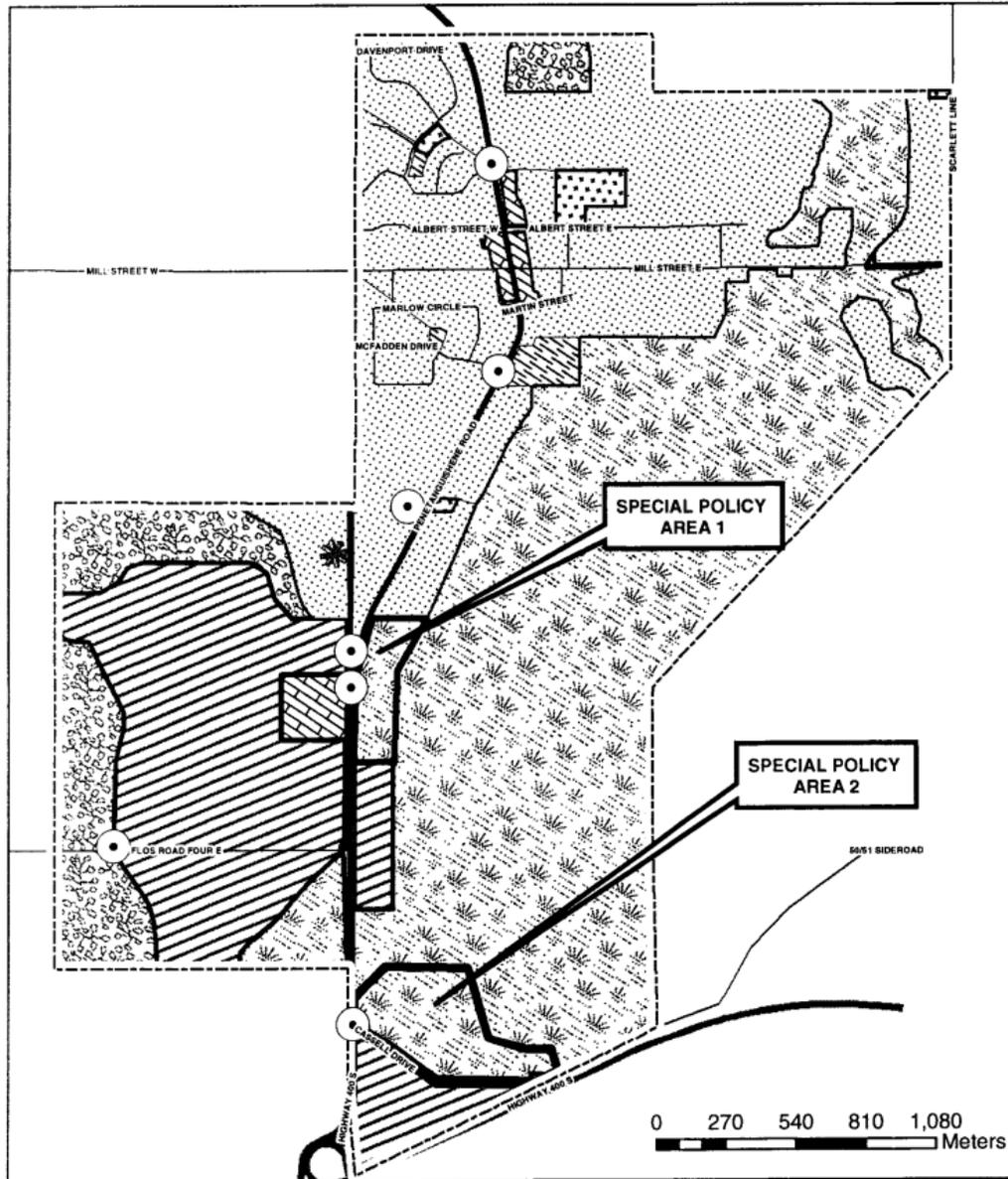


Exhibit 3.7b – Hillsdale (OPA 37) Schedule A-7 (not approved)

Township of Springwater Proposed Official Plan Amendment No. 37
 Hillsdale Settlement Area Secondary Plan

SCHEDULE A-7

HILLSDALE



LEGEND	
	URBAN RESIDENTIAL
	GENERAL COMMERCIAL
	OR * INSTITUTIONAL
	BUSINESS PARK
	NATURAL HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CATEGORY 1
	NATURAL HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CATEGORY 2
	OPEN SPACE
	TRANSPORTATION NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Midhurst Secondary Plan (OPA 38)

The Midhurst Secondary Plan was adopted by Council in November of 2008 as OPA 38; however, it was appealed to the OMB by several parties including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA), which appealed the Secondary Plan in its entirety. Since the time of the appeal, the Province unilaterally amended the Provincial Regulations governing the application of the Growth Plan. Through the enactment of a “Special Rule”, development applications totalling 300 hectares of land within the Midhurst Secondary Plan were permitted to proceed through the rezoning and draft plan of subdivision approval stages, provided a list of criteria were met. In the fall of 2012, MMA withdrew its appeal as it pertains to the first 300 hectares of developable land within the Secondary Plan and the lands were then deemed approved.

Following a settlement hearing in July 2014, the OMB approved draft plans of subdivision and zoning by-law amendments permitting the development of a total of 4,595 new residential units within the first 300 hectares in Midhurst, as discussed in Section 3.3.1. As discussed in Section 3.3.2, in an Order issued January 4, 2017, the OMB approved an additional population allocation of 2,961 additional residents, which comprise a portion of the County’s 20,000 population allocation program. These lands equate to roughly 130 hectares. The remaining lands designated for urban uses within the Midhurst Secondary Plan continue to be under appeal, as discussed in Section 3.3.1.

The Township also initiated a Class Environmental Assessment Study for the Midhurst Water, Wastewater and Transportation Master Plan. A Phase 1 and 2 Report was released in July 2009 to identify and evaluate options for the provision of municipal water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure along with transportation upgrades to service future growth within the Midhurst Secondary Plan area. It was the intention of the Township to undertake the servicing Master Plan in conjunction with the Secondary Plan to confirm the servicing feasibility of future growth projections. The study proposed a number of road network and intersection/interchange improvements, the construction of a wastewater collection and treatment facility and the construction of a water supply, treatment, distribution and storage facility.

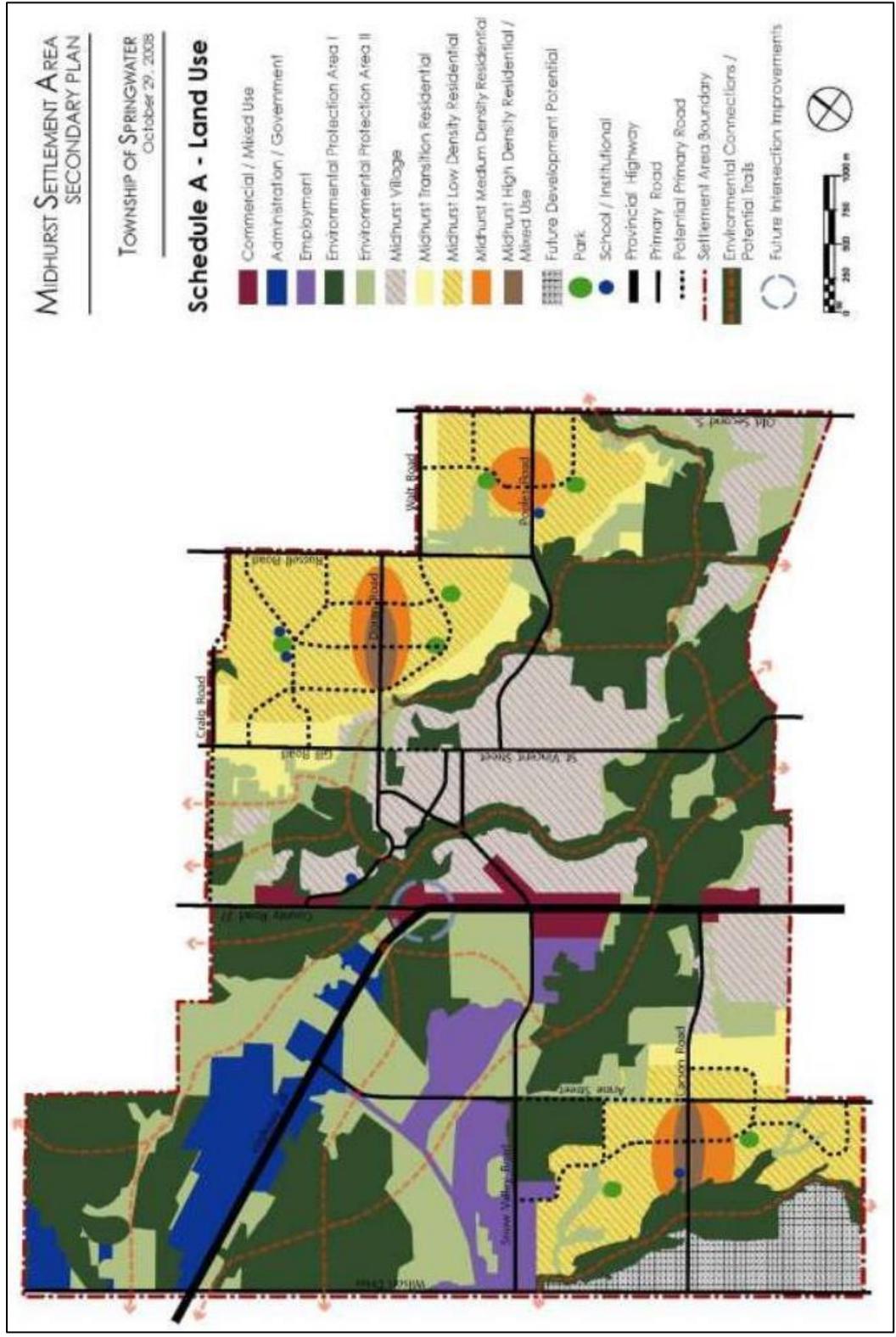
The Midhurst Secondary Plan refines the land use plan and land use policies set forth in the Official Plan for the Midhurst settlement area. It is the intent of the Plan to protect the existing character of the community by limiting development potential within existing neighbourhoods, while promoting sensitive intensification within the Bayfield Street Corridor through mixed use and higher density housing forms. The Intersection of Bayfield Street and Snow Valley Road has also been identified as a location for higher order retail and other employment generating uses, as well as community facilities. Given the importance of this intersection to the Township, particular attention will be paid to its design and function through the development approvals process.

Other employment opportunities, such as moderately scaled retail, office uses, institutional activities and industrial uses are to be located along Snow Valley Road in areas designated as “Employment”, and along the Bayfield Street North corridor in areas designated as “Commercial/Mixed use”. The “Employment” designation permits office uses of all types, as well as various industrial uses, some ancillary uses, public parks and open spaces, utilities, and storm water management and transportation facilities. Principle uses permitted within the “Commercial/Mixed Use” designation include various types of services, office uses, restaurants, various retail and other commercial uses as well as parks and open spaces, utilities, storm water management and transportation facilities, day care centres and places of worship. The “Commercial/Mixed Use” designation also permits residential uses so long as they are wholly integrated as part of a mixed use development.

The Secondary Plan also establishes a set of urban design and amenity policies for the Midhurst Settlement Area. The policies set out to achieve a set of objectives including, consistency in built form, a clearly defined public realm, a safe accessible and comfortable pedestrian environment, and energy efficiency. Regarding the built environment, new development is to be compatible with adjacent neighbouring development in terms of siting and massing. It is the intent of the Secondary Plan that the public realm will be designed in such a manner as to ensure that: roads and lanes are accessible to vehicles, pedestrians and active modes of transportation; vistas and view corridors are created, preserved and enhanced; pedestrian amenities are provided; along with adequate space for utilities and services. In addition to the urban design and amenity policies outlined in the Secondary Plan, a set of Urban Design Guidelines have also been developed.

The Land Use Schedule for the Midhurst Secondary Plan is shown in Exhibit 3.8.

Exhibit 3.8 – Midhurst Schedule 'A' Land Use Plan

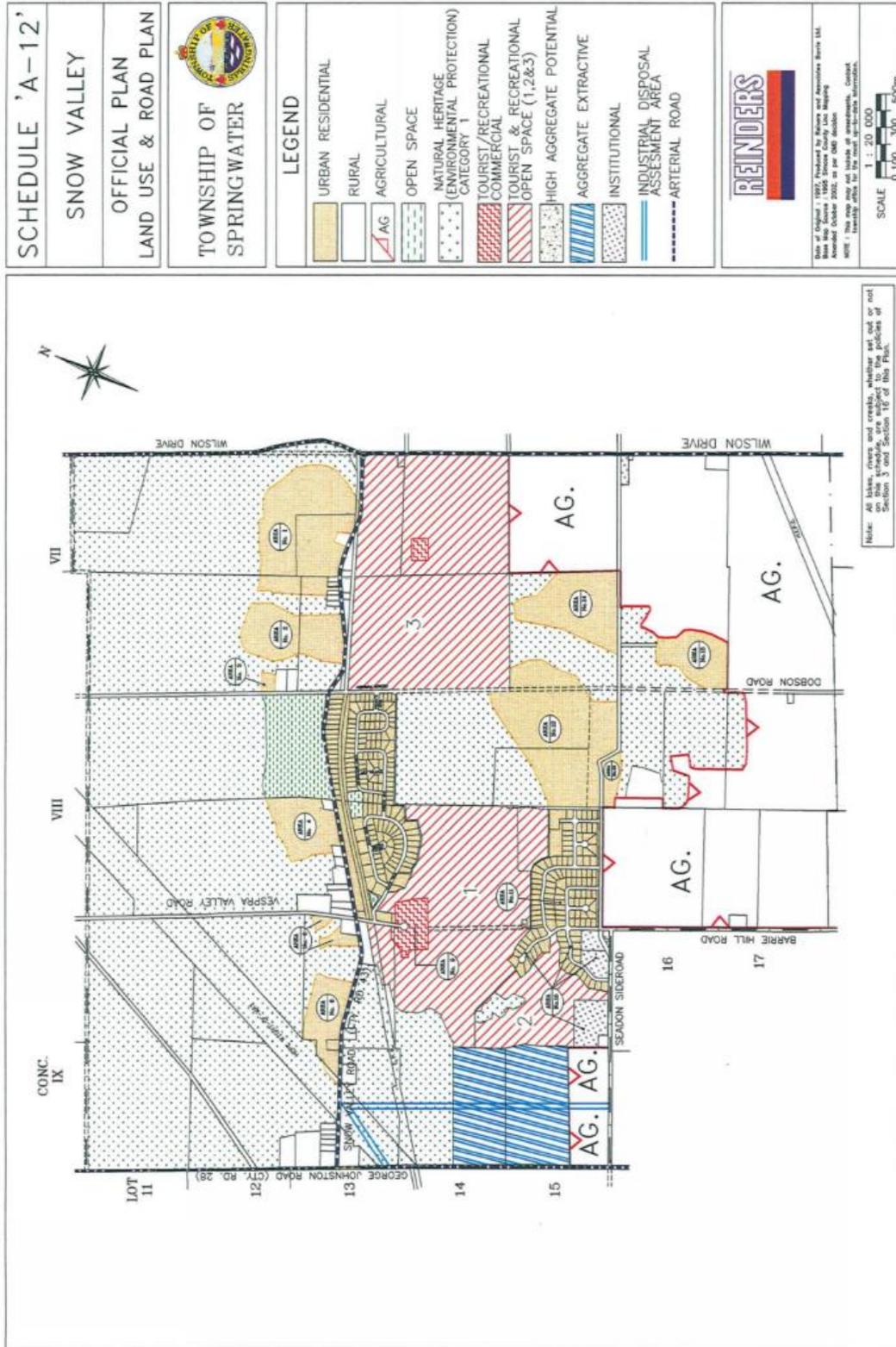


Snow Valley Secondary Plan (OPA 13)

The Snow Valley Secondary Plan (OPA 13) was approved in January 2003. The purpose of the amendment was to provide policies to: secure the health and safety, convenience and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the Snow Valley Settlement Area; protect the Minesing Swamp from environmental degradation while enhancing the existing features of the natural environment, community heritage and other unique attributes; establish the future development pattern and associated servicing required of the Snow Valley Settlement Area; create provisions for future monitoring, review and amendment of the Official Plan; and to provide guidelines for the implementation of the Plan through zoning by-laws, subdivision and/or condominium plan, other development control measures and municipal programs.

The Secondary Plan establishes various land use designations which include clusters of Urban Residential and Tourist/Recreational Commercial uses, surrounded by a Natural Heritage designation to protect significant natural features. The Land Use Schedule for the Snow Valley Secondary Plan is shown in Exhibit 3.9.

Exhibit 3.9 – Snow Valley Schedule ‘A-12’ Land Use and Road Plan

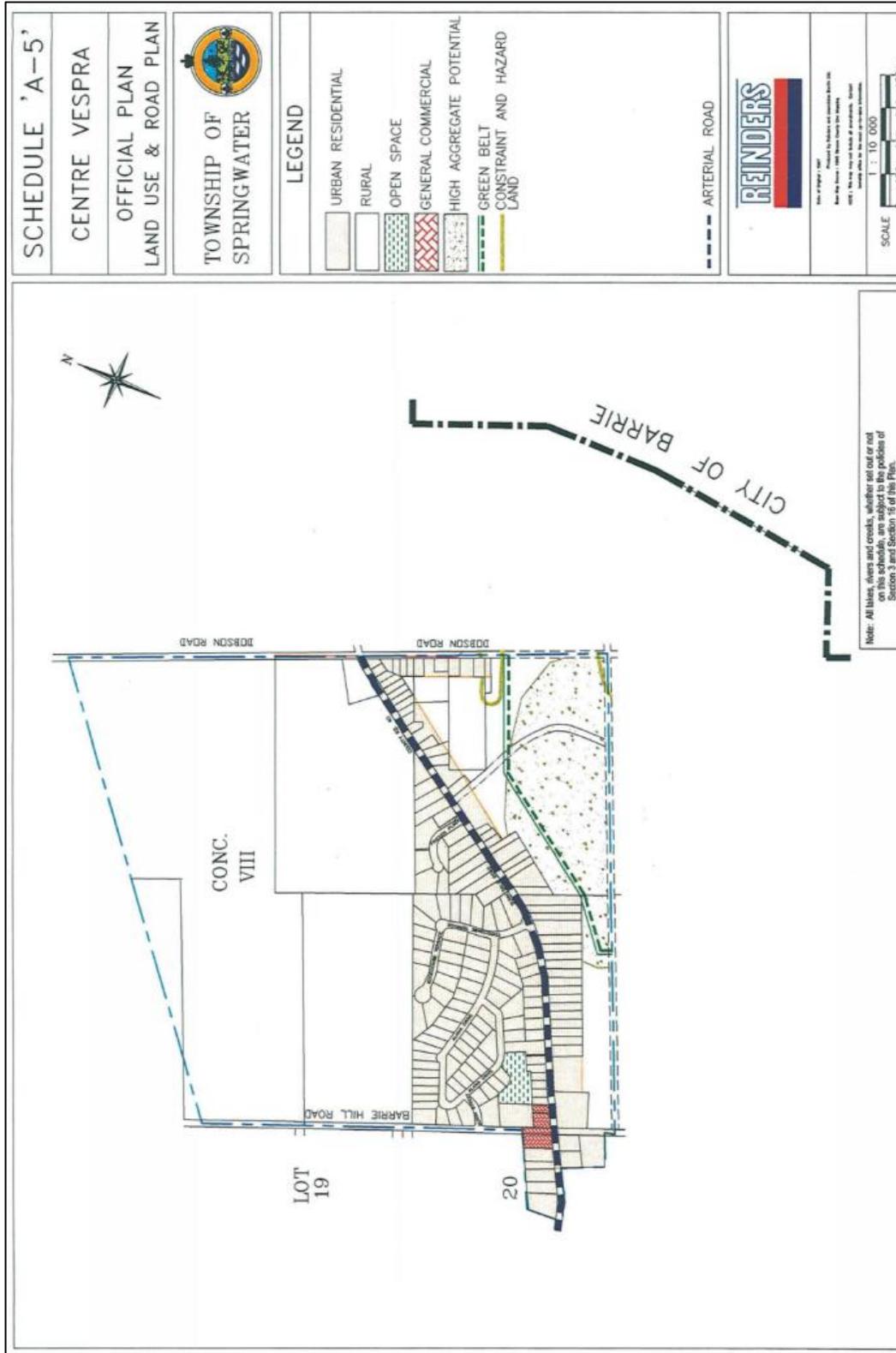


Centre Vespra Community Plan (OPA 28)

The Centre Vespra Community Plan was adopted by Council in November of 2006 as OPA 28. The lands redesignated by this OPA are located in the Centre Vespra settlement area and are considered appropriate for subdivision development. The lands redesignated by OPA 28 are located in the north part of the community has resulted in contiguous development with the existing residential uses. The anticipated densities of the proposed developments are approximately 4 to 6 units per gross hectare. The proposed low density subdivisions will generally be in keeping with the existing residential density and character of the area. All new development is on full municipal services and minor infill situations will require further review for potential connection.

The Land Use Schedule for the Centre Vespra Community Plan is shown in Exhibit 3.10.

Exhibit 3.10 – Centre Vespra Schedule 'A-5' Land Use and Road Plan



4. Township Studies

4.1. Long Range Financial Plan

In 2016, the Township prepared the Long Range Financial Plan (LRFP), which is a comprehensive plan that examines all of the municipality's capital and operating expenditures/revenues and addresses in detail, issues related to asset management, development charges, and adequacy of reserves, debt management, property tax, utility rates and growth management. The LRFP develops new objectives, policies, targets and a long term financial planning model that integrates both capital and operating resources, to guide the Township in achieving financial sustainability.

The results of a 20 year financial forecast for the Township were presented and discussed in the context of Low, Medium, and High Growth Scenarios. The report concludes that the Low Growth Scenario represents a continuation of historical growth trends in Springwater and the rate of growth under the Medium and High Growth Scenarios would exceed historical trends within the Township.

The 2018 GMS reviewed the LRFP Growth Scenarios for comparison in establishing the 2018 GMS growth forecasts. The population forecast prepared in support of the 2018 GMS is comparable to the LRFP Medium Growth Scenario until approximately 2021, after which it falls between the LRFP Medium and High forecasts to 2036. The LRFP Low Growth Scenario was predicated on no growth occurring in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area and closely aligns with the Growth Plan Schedule 7 forecast population of 24,000 by 2031. The LRFP Medium Growth Scenario was predicated on 4,623 housing units being developed on the additional 300 approved hectares in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area. The LRFP High Growth Scenario was predicated on up to 7,858 dwelling units being developed in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area by 2036.

The key issue that the LRFP process identified is a funding gap between the operating and capital needs of the Township and the revenues available to pay for them under all growth scenarios. The report recommends financial planning principles and policies that would allow Council to begin to address this and other financial challenges in the future, such as:

- Delivering services in a cost-effective and efficient manner;
- Ensuring that operating revenues are sustainable and consider community-wide and individual benefits;
- Addressing social equity objectives;
- Managing Township capital assets to maintain a "state of good repair";
- Considering issuing debt for major long-term assets;
- Making decisions on capital investment based on strategic priorities and financial impacts;

- Actively managing growth and use development charges for purposes for which they were collected;
- Continuing use of reserves and reserve funds; and
- Investing cautiously to maximize income stability and liquidity, and minimize risk.

A key recommendation stemming from the LRFP, as it relates to the Official Plan and managing growth in the Township, was for the Township to continue to actively manage growth and use Development Charges (DCs) for the purposes for which they were collected. DC's are a critical component of the Township's LRFP. In order to ensure that capital service levels are maintained it is important for the Township to regularly acquire new capital assets as generally planned in the DC Background Study. The Township is currently undertaking an update to the DC Background Study to manage and account for the costs associated with new development. The DC Background Study will inform the Township's Official Plan Review (OPR).

The LRFP provides the following recommendations with respect to growth management and development charges:

- Ensure that DCs are used to fund growth-related capital costs to the full extent permitted by the Development Charges Act.
- Ensure that 50 % of projected development charge revenues are available when determining whether projects are to be undertaken in a given year.
- Closely monitor the quantum, location and timing of development and development prospects in light of the growth forecasts set out in the DC Background Study, particularly in respect of development of employment lands in the Midhurst Secondary Plan area.
- Seek to ensure that the growth-related capital forecast included in the DC Background Study is adhered to through the annual budget process to the extent possible.
- Should increases in the scope of growth-related capital projects be identified that would increase the estimated cost (inflation adjusted) for the project, identify where offsetting savings can be found in other projects within the same service or review the intended scope in order to adhere to plan.
- Annually review actual costs against estimates included in the growth-related capital forecast. Should actual costs exceed estimates by more than 10 % over two consecutive years, review the need to revise the development charges by-law before its planned expiry date.
- Ensure that the 10 % mandatory discounts for growth-related capital projects are provided from taxation in the capital budget and forecast.
- When a plan of subdivision, plan of condominium or site plan applications is being considered by the Township, require payment for "hard service" DCs (roads and related, water,

wastewater, stormwater) prior to registration of the subdivision/condominium. The default collection point for DCs for other services should be building permit issuance.

- The Township shall secure, through agreements with developers, advanced payment of costs of all hard service infrastructure (roads and related, water, wastewater, stormwater) identified for the MSP through applicable Environmental Assessments (including any benefit to existing shares of costs that may exist).

The new Official Plan may establish policies for the monitoring of development in light of the growth forecasts and ensure the DCs are collected to maximize benefit to the Township.

4.2. Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Township recently completed an update to the 2005 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The initiative examines:

- The way parks, culture and recreation services are provided;
- The role of the Municipality, volunteers and additional service providers;
- The ability of the Municipality to finance culture and recreation and will make recommendations for funding strategies;
- Current and future demand for recreation and leisure;
- Parks and open space, including parkland acquisition and development; and
- Recreation and culture facilities and provide an assessment of future needs.

A draft of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update was released in February 2016. The report provided a total of 80 recommendations which focused on: organization and staffing; partnerships and strategic alliances; Recreation Service Boards; volunteer engagement; programming; the Recreation Advisory Committee; planning and research (including performance measurements); and the current provision model for parks and recreation services. Recommendations were informed by a detailed analysis of current conditions (provision, supply, distribution, utilization, facility condition, community profile, etc.), current and predicted demand, anticipated population growth and change, and other pertinent information.

The new Official Plan will need to implement the policy recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, particularly with respect to: the recommended Park/Open Space Classification System and provision levels; Park Planning Guidelines; the Park and Open Space Development Strategy to address parkland deficiencies in future development areas and existing communities; and the parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu of parkland policy.

4.3. Township of Springwater Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan

The Township of Springwater Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan (CIP) details revitalization and improvement strategies for the Township's urban and rural areas that support local industry, businesses, tourism, agri-tourism, and value-added agricultural facilities. The final CIP is dated January 2017, obtaining Council approval on March 1, 2017. Section 24.2 of the Township of Springwater Official Plan provides policies for community improvement, including criteria for the selection of Community Improvement Areas, the prioritization of community improvement projects and the implementation of Community Improvement Plans or programs.

The CIP takes a long-term approach to the revitalization of Springwater, understanding that revitalization and change will take time and is best accomplished through a series of small investments that collectively contribute to the revitalization of the Township. These investments will, over time, result in more significant and visible changes.

The purpose of the CIP is to support local industry, businesses, tourism, agri-tourism, and value-added agricultural uses through strategies that promote private sector investment and revitalization. To accomplish this, the CIP enables the use of financial incentives to private property owners and tenants throughout the Township and outlines a governance and implementation strategy for the Township to participate in on-going revitalization and improvement.

The CIP offers the following Financial Incentive Programs:

- **Façade Improvement Grant** – to encourage commercial and agricultural property owners and tenants to revitalize, rehabilitate and restore building façades in order to encourage high-quality, attractive improvements to eligible commercial, mixed-use, and agricultural-related commercial buildings.
- **Signage Improvement Grant** – to promote the creation, improvement and/or replacement of wall signage that is consistent with the character of the area, in order to attract customers to a commercial business.
- **Building Restoration, Renovation or Improvement Grant (Interior Improvements or Expansions)** – to allow for the re-use of vacant or underutilized commercial or industrial buildings and the re-purposing of agricultural buildings to support value-added agricultural facilities, or on-farm diversified uses, such as agri-tourism.
- **Development Charge Rebate** – to provide assistance for the development and redevelopment of sites by reducing Development Charges (DC) in both the settlement and rural areas of the Township.

- **Planning and Building Permit Fee Rebate** – to reduce the costs to making major private property improvements and encourage desired improvements throughout the Township.
- **Historic Property Improvement Grant** – to provide incentives for owners of historic properties to renovate or refurbish the properties in a manner that is consistent with and complementary to the heritage character.
- **Tax Increment Equivalent Financing Grant** – to remove the perception of a tax increase as a barrier to investment in property, and encourage significant property investments.
- **Accessibility Improvements Grant** – to encourage property owners to make accessibility improvements to their commercial, tourist or recreational properties in order to bring them into compliance with Provincial Legislation.

The CIP's Leadership and Implementation Strategy outlines a series of actions, projects, programs and tools that have been identified as opportunities for the Township and key stakeholders to improve the community, in conjunction with the private sector investment through the Financial Incentive Programs. Some of the projects require additional capital investment, studies, or municipal staff time, while others re-emphasize the need to implement recommendations contained within existing plans.

The following projects were identified in the CIP Strategy Report and through consultation with the community:

- **Cultural and Agri-Tourism Strategy** - The Township's Municipal Cultural Plan (2012) recommended the development of an integrated Cultural and Agri-Tourism Strategy to promote "local agricultural products and rural life activities available to locals and visitors through events, fixed attractions or products and services". The Cultural and Agri-Tourism Strategy will also help to achieve the goals and objectives of the CIP by ensuring that the Strategy supports the agricultural community in developing, growing and effectively marketing agri-tourism, value-added agricultural facilities, and on-farm diversified uses.
- **Implementation of Directions and Wayfinding Signage** - The Township's Municipal Signage Program was developed in 2012, in response to a need for additional signage to better connect community assets and tourist attractions. In early stages of the signage program, Gateway and Community Signage was implemented. The next phase of implementation is the Directional and Wayfinding Signage. During the public consultation meetings, directional and wayfinding signage was identified as a priority to further enhance tourism and support local businesses. In support of the CIP Financial Incentive Programs, the Township should continue to implement the recommendations of the Municipal Signage Program, with specific priority for the implementation of Directional and Wayfinding Signage. The Directional and Wayfinding

Signage will help promote and advertise the Township’s tourist attractions, cultural heritage, and settlement areas.

- **Comprehensive Urban Design Guidelines** - The Township has developed design guidelines as part of the Midhurst Secondary Plan and the Elmvale Commercial District Façade Guidelines. The Township may consider developing a more comprehensive set of design guidelines that address private property improvements in the Settlement and Rural areas, as well as public realm improvements for the Township as a whole. The guidelines will assist in the evaluation of Financial Incentive Program and development applications, and will address:
 - Streetscape and Public Realm – to create a consistent, pedestrian-oriented approach to streetscaping throughout the Township that will complement the Township’s Municipal Signage Program, visually unify the spaces, and enhance visual connections and relationships. This would include a consistent approach to street furniture, lighting, planting, as well as the identification of key gateways or focal points throughout the Township, where additional design features may be added (i.e., upgrading cross walks at key intersections, or the introduction of banner advertisements along lamp posts).
 - Accessibility – to improve universal accessibility throughout the Township, in both the public and private realms. In the public realm, this relates to the introduction of a consistent approach to streetscaping that accommodates persons of all ages and mobility. In the private realm, design guidelines will provide private property owners with direction on how best to implement accessible infrastructure while continuing to maintain and enhance a building’s character.
 - Façade Improvement Guidelines – to encourage façade improvements that are sensitive and consistent with the historic built form and that enhance the overall streetscape. Guidelines will encourage property owners to restore historic façades, where feasible. In non-historic buildings, improvements should consider the surrounding context in terms of materials, colours and scale.
 - Signage Improvement Guidelines – to provide direction for those private property owners wishing to upgrade or update commercial signage.
 - New Buildings and/or Additions – to provide direction for property owners wishing to redevelop or add an addition to an existing commercial or agricultural building either in the settlement or rural areas. Guidelines will provide direction on the location, scale, and architectural features of these structures. For example, buildings should be setback from the street edge and be of a scale that is consistent with the surrounding built form and additions should be sensitive to the existing built form character, and utilize materials that are complementary, not necessarily consistent with, the existing building materials. New buildings or additions to provide for value-added agricultural facilities

or on-farm diversified uses should similarly be consistent with the predominant built form and setbacks associated with that property.

- Implementation Plan – to identify the types of development proposals that are to be consistent with the guidelines, and roles and responsibilities of the Township and private developers, including the responsibilities of the Township in implementing the public realm improvements. Implementation of streetscaping elements should, where feasible, occur as part of other roadway maintenance activities and may also seek to integrate with any County road upgrades or ongoing studies and required roadway improvements.

The guidelines will ensure that new development, additions and upgrades create accessible, safe and vibrant pedestrian and cyclist friendly streetscapes, with a safe interface between modes of traffic (motorist, cyclist, pedestrian), particularly within settlement areas.

- **Trails and Pathways Implementation** - The Township is home to a unique network of trails, conservation areas and heritage features that are located throughout the municipality, acting as links between the settlement and rural areas. In 2008, the Township completed a Trails Master Plan that established a framework for the development of a comprehensive interconnected trail system. More recently, the Township of Springwater Municipal Cultural Plan (2012) noted that the future development and promotion of the trail system is a priority for residents. In 2014, the County of Simcoe developed a Trails Strategy. These plans and strategies provide a strong foundation for trail network expansion. Through the implementation of the CIP, the Township may seek to further implement the recommendations of the Trails Master Plan and work together with the County with respect to their Trails Strategy. Furthermore, and consistent with the recommendations of the Municipal Cultural Plan, the Township may seek to further promote the trail system and the tourist attractions that the trails connect. Improvements to existing trails may include signage and wayfinding tools that communicate the area's natural and cultural history, and that further enhances connectivity through active transportation between settlement areas.
- **Preparation of Lands for Future Development** - *Planning Act* Sections 28 (3) and (6) provide municipalities with the authority to assist in the preparation of lands for community improvement through:
 - acquisition, holding, clearing, grading, or other activities,
 - construction, rehabilitation, improvement or repair to buildings on these lands; and
 - selling, leasing or disposing of the lands.

As such, the Township may, acquire underutilized lands or buildings for the purposes of revitalization or to establish or link trail systems; and/or sell or lease properties or buildings that have been acquired by the Township. The goal of this strategy is to allow the Township to assist in readying underutilized or derelict lands for development by the private sector, or in partnership with the public sector.

Section 7 of the Official Plan provides objectives and policies with respect to community design to promote the creation of high quality built and natural environments. There will be opportunities in the Official Plan to support community revitalization and implement the urban design and sustainable development objectives of the CIP by enhancing the Township’s community design objectives and policies, and/or undertaking the recommended strategies identified in the CIP, as discussed in Section 5 of this Report.

4.4. Township of Springwater Strategic Plan

The 2016-2018 Strategic Plan outlines priorities for the remainder of the four year Council term. The process of drafting a new Strategic Plan began in 2015 and the resulting Plan will provide Council and staff with guidance, direction and priorities.

The Plan sets out the Vision, Mission and Core Values of the Township, and also identifies four Strategic Pillars of Commitment and several key work initiatives for each pillar. The Pillars of Commitment are:

- **Community Development** – Strategic goals and objectives include the optimization and promotion of facility assets across the Township, the design and implementation of an integrated community-centred governance structure, the establishment of an economic development strategy and strengthened partnerships for education and health services.
- **Smart Growth Management** – Strategic goals and objectives include a definition of “smart growth” in simple terms with respect to scale and scope for the Township in relation to its residents, businesses, stakeholders, the County and the Province; a smart growth strategy that focuses on the economic, environmental and social well-being of Springwater; and an urban sprawl and farmland protection strategy.
- **Infrastructure – Financial Management – Service Delivery** – Strategic goals and objectives include the development of a financial strategy to maintain fiscal responsibility, the development of a sustainable approach to address effective deployment and productive life cycle of assets, and the development of a regional shared services strategy for government and private services.
- **Governance & Leadership** – Strategic goals and objectives include the evolution of the public consultation process to utilize multiple channels of communication to reach and engage all

citizens, the strengthening of the community, people and services through the use of best practices and recognition programs, and the expansion of the Springwater training and development program to better serve staff, and develop a Council government framework.

All staff reports identify which of the Pillars of Commitment are represented and all decisions of Council will be reflective of the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The new Official Plan will build on the vision set out in the Strategic Plan, which describes “a rich history, a dynamic future, and growth and prosperity”. The new Official Plan’s vision, goals and policy objectives should align with the Township’s Strategic Plan directions and be further embellished based on the community consultations which formed the vision and goals for the Township.

4.5. Economic Development Strategy

The Township of Springwater undertook the preparation of an Economic Development Strategy in 2010. The purpose of the Strategy is to develop an understanding of the Township’s economic strengths, and to translate those strengths into opportunities for new growth.

The Strategy outlined the following five key goals, which are intended to support the continued growth of the Township and encourage a greater level of prosperity in Springwater:

1. Enhance opportunities for the retention and expansion of local businesses, and to help support the attraction of new business investment and entrepreneurs to the community;
 2. Support strategic and collaborative economic development by engaging the County, other municipalities and other economic development stakeholders and community groups;
 3. Promote local assets, workforce skills and opportunities for business expansion and entrepreneurial investment in the community effectively, and increase brand recognition;
 4. Ensure continued business development and local employment growth based on the Township’s competitive advantages and strengths; and
 5. Ensure the preservation and enhancement of Springwater’s physical, social and service infrastructure.

Among priority economic sectors, the Economic Development Strategy recognizes the importance of the agricultural and agri-business sector in Springwater and notes that agri-tourism represents a market opportunity for the Township, as does the ‘creative’ food economy sub-sector, which “takes advantage of the shift in consumer preferences towards specialty, organic and local foods”.

The Strategy also recognizes that the tourism industry presents an opportunity for Springwater, given the availability of outdoor recreational opportunities and cultural heritage resources. However, the Strategy also notes that limited attractions and bed and breakfasts in the region hinder the attraction of overnight visitors. To this end, the Strategy recommends identifying, promoting and leveraging existing and potential tourism assets, and capitalizing on the Townships strong foundation of events and amenities.

There are opportunities in the new Official Plan to support the goals and actions of the Township of Springwater Economic Development Strategy as they pertain to the promotion of the Township’s agricultural and tourism sectors, and overall economic development objectives and strategies.

4.6. Municipal Cultural Plan

The Township of Springwater prepared a Municipal Cultural Plan in 2012. The Plan was prepared to “leverage the cultural resources of the community to inform community development decisions, initiatives and investment”. More specifically, the Plan seeks to integrate culture into municipal planning and decision-making, strengthen cultural networks, address cultural facility needs, develop a public art policy program, expand cultural-led economic development including the development of more integrated experience-based tourism offerings, support creative cultural enterprises, strengthen festivals, develop an integrate cultural and agri-tourism strategy, support retail businesses, and strengthen awareness of the Township’s history and heritage.

Communities in rural and suburban Ontario are undergoing a shift in their economic base away from manufacturing and ‘traditional’ industries toward a creative economy. The Cultural Plan notes that there are opportunities for small and medium sized creative businesses to respond to new consumer demands for original and local place-based products and services.

The new Official Plan presents an opportunity to support the initiatives outlined in the Township of Springwater Municipal Cultural Plan, through policies that enhance the Township’s competitiveness, and through municipal leadership programs that invest in cultural assets that contribute to the overall attractiveness and vitality of the Township.

4.7. Village of Elmvale Sewage Capacity Allocation Strategy

Due to capacity constraints in the Elmvale Water Pollution Control Plant, the Township passed By-law No. 2003-057 in May 2003, placing a moratorium on the allocation of new sewage capacity to development until such time as the following had been completed:

- A review of the policies of the Official Plan, and the related Growth Management Plan, for the area served by the facility;
- A review of the Development Charge By-law and related study for the Township of Springwater, particularly as they relate to the area served by the facility; and,
- A review of the process for allocation of sewage treatment capacity for the facility.

The focus of the Elmvale Sewage Capacity Allocation Strategy (2005) was to track and manage sewer servicing capacity to provide for continued growth in Elmvale in all sectors of the settlement area including commercial, industrial, residential and institutional uses. The Strategy was intended to allow for final approval and progression of various development applications in Elmvale, while maintaining a reserve to account for unforeseen activities. Elmvale Sewage Capacity Allocation Strategy identified sufficient capacity to accommodate development on the lands currently designated for urban development, however, the additional designation of lands and future intensification will require plant upgrades. Settlement areas that are serviced by full municipal sewage and water services, such as Elmvale, are to be serviced by full municipal services. A servicing strategy update will be required to assess and plan for the build-out of Elmvale based on full municipal services.

4.8. Growth Management Strategy, 2017

The Growth Management Strategy (GMS), 2017 was undertaken in support of the Town's current OPR to ensure that its Official Plan reflects the current and emerging values and growth management framework of the Township and is consistent with Provincial and County requirements. The GMS assesses the sufficiency of lands designated in its Official Plan to meet anticipated growth to the year 2031. The GMS addresses these requirements by: characterizing the extent and nature of land demand that Springwater is projected to experience to 2031; reviewing the adequacy of Springwater's designated land supply to accommodate that projected growth; and, providing recommendations regarding the growth management framework to be established in the Township's new Official Plan.

WSP conducted the GMS on the basis of population, housing and employment forecasts prepared by MetroEconomics, which were carried out to the 2031 planning horizon in keeping with the County Official Plan. MetroEconomics' forecasts were informed by previous work contained in the Township's 2016 Long Range Financial Plan Final Report, as well as by Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) decisions regarding the Midhurst Secondary Plan. MetroEconomics' projections are premised on expanding the 2031 population forecast of 24,000 persons allocated to Springwater under the County Official Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to account for the full build-out of the residentially designated lands in the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, including additional population allocation approved by the OMB.

Taking into account that development in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area has already been approved (beyond the Growth Plan forecast to 2031), MetroEconomics projects that the Growth Plan 2031 forecast of 24,000 persons will be reached by 2023 with an occupied dwelling projection of approximately 8,300 dwelling units. On this basis, MetroEconomics projects that the Township will reach a total post-censal population of 37, 800 by 2031. The GMS identified a Township-wide settlement area dwelling supply of 12,107 units, equating to an estimated potential to house 37,500 people at full build out. In comparing the projected residential demand to this residential supply, it was determined that Springwater has sufficient overall dwelling unit supply to accommodate projected population forecasts to 2031.

Employment demand is categorized by Employment Serving (ES) and Population Serving (PS) employment uses. ES employment is generally accommodated in areas with specialized non-residential land use designations and associated policies which enable business operations that typically require larger parcels with a critical business need to locate in clustered areas which are serviced by appropriate transportation and utility infrastructure (i.e. manufacturing, warehouses and business parks). PS employment refers to jobs that serve the local population. This includes virtually all commercial and institutional employment uses, which can occur on both residential and non-residential designated lands.

MetroEconomics projects that total employment in the Township, taking the areas already approved for development in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area into account, will reach 11,800 jobs by 2031. The GMS determined that there is sufficient land supply to accommodate projected employment needs to 2031 based on non-residential lands designated for ES and PS employment uses.

With respect to the Growth Plan targets, the GMS confirms that the Township is on track to achieve its approved alternative minimum residential intensification target of 15% and its alternative minimum designated greenfield area density target of 32 persons and jobs per hectare. However, the minimum residential intensification target includes development potential associated with both the delineated and undelineated built boundary areas. Under the new 2017 Growth Plan, only development in the delineated built boundary in the communities of Midhurst and Elmvale will be counted toward the minimum intensification target. However, the existing targets are to remain in place until such time as the County's municipal comprehensive review (MCR) re-evaluates them. There is a need to reassess these targets and determine what is appropriate through the County's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) in light of directives from the 2017 Growth Plan.

Other key conclusions and recommendations made by the GMS are summarized here, and Section 5 of this Report, including:

(1) Utilize the GMS recommended settlement hierarchy to inform policy decisions.

The GMS draws conclusions based on the Growth Plan and County Official Plan directives, presence and capacity of municipal servicing, and assessment of land availability to recommend a settlement hierarchy for the Township. This hierarchy branches from the identified major and minor settlement areas identified in the Township's Official Plan, and recommends the following structure:

- Midhurst and Elmvale as **major settlement areas**, given the Growth Plan directives to focus growth to settlement areas with delineated built boundaries, municipal servicing capacity (existing/planned) and amount of uncommitted and developable land;
- Hillsdale is also identified as a **major settlement area** in the Township. Hillsdale has a superior quality of employment land supply relative to the other non-major communities. After Midhurst and Elmvale; Hillsdale has the most ES land designated in the Township and is the most strategically located settlement area with respect to proximity and access to Highway 400, and represents a prime location to accommodate future prime employment area development within the Township. Furthermore, as part of the Heritage Village subdivision, servicing solutions are being considered to accommodate the planned growth within Hillsdale. The expansion of the municipal water system and establishment of appropriate sanitary servicing options within the settlement area are being explored.
- Snow Valley and Centre Vespra as **intermediate settlement areas**, given the Growth Plan direction to accommodate more limited growth in settlement areas without delineated built boundaries, yet provides land which is situated appropriately for development based on location and existing municipal servicing infrastructure; and
- Anten Mills, Minesing and Phelpston as **minor settlement areas**, given the Growth Plan direction to accommodate more limited growth, shortage of uncommitted land, and lack of municipal servicing capacity.

(2) Encourage a greater mix of land designations and housing supply through policy directives.

Increased housing mix within the delineated built-up area will ensure the minimum intensification target is met and avoid an undersupply of medium density dwellings, which may occur given existing development trends. To obtain this increased mix, the Township should look to adjust land use policies to support the development of medium density housing, and through infill and redevelopment opportunities.

(3) Undertake an Intensification Study as part of Phase 2 of the Official Plan Review.

Given intensification challenges due to the limited opportunities presented by the existing character of the settlement areas, an Intensification Study would assist in identifying intensification opportunities and supporting intensification targets. This Study should provide further guidance in what an appropriate level of intensification is within the Township's delineated built-up areas, which should provide input into the County's next MCR.

(4) Review the Township's non-residential land use designation provisions.

The Township should explore options for increasing non-residential development densities, particularly in conjunction with long term infrastructure planning, to encourage more intensive employment serving land uses on underutilized lands.

(5) Undertake a Population Serving Employment Market Study.

A Population Serving Employment Market Study should be undertaken to support intensification priorities on non-residential lands. The intent of this Study is to identify underutilized population serving developments – through a commercial and institutional establishment inventory and review of market demand within Springwater – and support further non-residential intensification.

(6) Consider identification of Prime Employment Areas.

The Township should collaborate with the County to prioritize key lands along strategic corridors for employment uses like the employment lands within Hillsdale, protect designated employment areas from conversion and satisfy strategic employment objectives by identifying Prime Employment Areas, as defined by the 2017 Growth Plan. Dating back prior to 2008, Hillsdale has been anticipated to accommodate a significant portion of employment growth within the Township. OPA 37 (not yet approved) was adopted by Council in 2008 to designate additional employment lands to promote a concentration of economic development (centered around the existing employment area) by providing for new land for commercial and industrial uses in a business park setting at the intersection of Highway 400/93, within the existing settlement area. The location of these lands have strategic importance to the Township as a Business Park, as they provide accessible highway transportation linkages, being served by two Provincial Highways and major arterials, and are located within a defined settlement area. The Hillsdale employment area provides an ideal opportunity to be designated as a Prime Employment Area, through the County's MCR.

(7) Use the GMS to inform the Township's ongoing Development Charges Study in regards to infrastructure investment and phasing of development.

The settlement hierarchy recommended in the GMS provides direction on where growth should be focused and the extent to which it should be anticipated. As such, the on-going

Development Charges Study should take into consideration this hierarchy to ensure new growth is appropriately funded.

(8) Seek alternative intensification and density targets through the County's next Official Plan Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR).

Given the implications of the 2017 Growth Plan, there is a need to establish new targets within the Township to appropriately address the changes in calculating these targets and challenges to achieving them. The outcomes of the future Intensification Study, Population Serving Employment Market Study, and ongoing Development Charges Study should inform the establishment of these new targets.

(9) Monitor and revisit Springwater's land needs every five years.

Given the fluidity of development, population and employment growth trends, intensification rates, land supply and residential and employment densities should be monitored every five years to ensure this GMS is updated and implemented accordingly.

The 2018 GMS will inform the growth management framework of the Township's new Official Plan. In essence, these directions will assist Springwater in its continual growth toward becoming a complete community which maintains its character while creating an inclusive community for all.

5. Recommended Official Plan Policy Directions

Based on the Project Team's review of the Official Plan and the input received through the Community Visioning Workshops, the following section outlines the key issues that need to be addressed through the new Official Plan and recommended policy directions. The over-arching policy objectives are to ensure that the new Official Plan conforms with Provincial policy documents and legislation, such as the PPS, 2017 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, as well as the new County of Simcoe Official Plan.

The Township's Official Plan was approved in 1998 with a purpose to manage development and physical change in the Township of Springwater to the year 2016. The Official Plan has not undergone a major revision/update in nearly 20 years. As such, a new Official Plan is required to establish a new vision, goals and objectives for managing growth and land use planning decisions to the planning horizon of 2031, and provide updated policies in conformity with the Provincial and County planning frameworks. With the enactment of the new Growth Plan, 2017, it is recognized that the implementation of some of the key policies of the Growth Plan must be addressed through the County's next MCR. Section 6.0 of this Report outlines a path forward for the Township to proceed with the current OPR, while identifying the matters that must be addressed through the County's MCR.

The following subsections identify the key issues and proposed policy recommendations to align with the current planning framework and address the aspirations of the Township's residents. The key issues and policy directions have been organized by the draft goals that have been expressed by the community through the Community Visioning Workshops (Section 2.0).

5.1. Healthy and Complete Communities (Growth Management)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Growth Plan and County of Simcoe Official Plan have introduced new policies for managing and planning to accommodate growth in the Township, which are intended to contribute to the development of healthy and complete communities. Policy changes are intended to make better use of land and infrastructure by directing growth to settlement areas and prioritizing intensification in built-up areas with a focus on strategic growth areas, and planning for more compact development within designated greenfield areas. To this end, the policy framework focuses on directing growth to existing settlement areas, which provide the infrastructure, services and facilities to support growth.

Amendments to the Official Plan will be required to implement an integrated approach to planning and managing growth, with a greater emphasis on defining a settlement area hierarchy for directing growth to appropriate locations.

The current Official Plan includes goals related to the building of complete communities to “create efficient, cost effective development and land use patterns” (S. 2.2.5); “preserve and protect the high quality of life in Springwater Township for the long term future” (S. 2.2.7); and to “direct new growth to existing urban settlement areas to encourage and provide every opportunity to create a vibrant community planning context in our villages and small urban places” (S. 2.2.8).

It is also important to note that the County Official Plan should address the definition of “Complete Communities”, which refers to,

“meeting people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space for their residents, convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel”.

The following outlines key policy directions that the new Township Official Plan must address with respect to the development of healthy and complete communities and how growth should be managed. Furthermore, this section summarizes the key recommendations of the 2018 GMS as it relates to managing growth in the Township.

5.1.1. Growth Management

The growth management policies of the new Official Plan should be updated to reflect the findings and recommendations of the 2018 GMS, prepared in support of this Official Plan Review (OPR) and implement Provincial and County policy. Consideration must also be given to implementing the 2017 Growth Plan to the extent possible, as discussed in Section 3.4.

As discussed in Section 3.4, the 2017 Growth Plan took effect on July 1, 2017. All decisions on planning matters must conform with the new 2017 Growth Plan. However, changes with respect to growth management that impact the County will need to be incorporated into the County Official Plan through a County MCR, and then subsequent to that, the Township’s Official Plan. A key change to the 2017 Growth Plan is the definition of MCR which is defined as:

“A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan.”

The MCR is required to be undertaken by the County, to comprehensively apply the policies of the 2017 Growth Plan. The County of Simcoe has recently embarked upon this process. Upper- and single-tier municipalities’ are required to complete their conformity work by July 1, 2022.

Growth management matters that will need to be addressed through the next County MCR include:

- allocating forecasted growth to lower-tier municipalities to the year 2041 (S. 2.2.1);
- identifying minimum intensification targets within delineated built-up areas (S. 2.2.2);
- developing an employment strategy and identifying minimum density targets for employment areas, and designating employment lands in the County Official Plan (S. 2.2.5(5));
- identifying minimum density targets within designated greenfield areas (S. 2.2.7(5));
- considering settlement area boundary expansions where required to accommodate the growth forecasts (S. 2.2.8(2)); and
- identifying excess lands based on a lands needs assessment using methodology established by the Province and used by upper-tier municipalities to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan. (S. 2.2.1(5) and 2.2.1(6);

Until such time as the MCR is completed by the County, the Township is expected to bring its planning policy framework into conformity with the growth management framework established in the approved County Official Plan, through the 2006 Growth Plan, and locally-specific, Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, while conforming to the 2017 Growth Plan to the extent possible.

Population and Employment Forecasts

Exhibit 5.1 summarizes the population and employment forecasts as expressed in the Growth Plan and the 2018 GMS.

Exhibit 5.1 – Population and Employment Forecasts (2016 – 2031)

Projection	Description	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	
Population	Growth Plan						24,000
	2018 GMS (Including Undercount ²)	18,700	19,600	21,000	29,300	37,800	
Employment	Growth Plan						5,600
	2018 GMS	6,000	6,200	8,100	9,900	11,800	

² Census undercount refers to persons who were not present to be counted on Census day. As such, a census undercount figure needs to be applied in order to derive a total population figure which includes people who were not present to be counted. The information necessary to estimate undercount for 2016 had not yet been released by Statistics Canada when this report was prepared. As a result, the Study Team applied the same 2011 County-wide Census undercount factor of 2.88% that was applied by the County Land Budget.

The 2018 GMS forecasts were conducted based on independent population, housing and employment forecasts prepared by MetroEconomics. Adjustments to the forecasts were made to account for:

- Updated information from the 2016 Census;
- OMB decisions regarding the “Midhurst Special Rule” which accommodates additional development on 300 hectares of land in the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area, which equates to 4,595 units, in addition to mixed use development; and
- An additional population of 2,961 persons within the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, as approved by the OMB, as part of the County’s 20,000 population program (expired after January 19, 2017).

Furthermore, it is anticipated that this additional population may be accommodated beyond the 2031 planning horizon.

The following outlines key policy considerations and directions with respect to population and employment forecasts:

1. The Official Plan should expressly identify the planned population and employment growth forecasts, in accordance with the County Official Plan and 2017 Growth Plan. The Township is forecasted to grow to approximately 24,000 persons and 5,600 jobs by 2031.
2. The GMS 2017 forecasted that the Townships’ total population will grow to 37,800 persons by 2031, which is 13,800 people above the 2031 forecast currently identified in the County Official Plan and Growth Plan (Schedule 7). This level of total population growth represents the addition of 18,100 people between 2016 and 2031. Under this projection, the Growth Plan 2031 forecast of 24,000 would be reached by 2023 with an occupied dwelling projection of approximately 8,300 dwelling units. This would result in 5,720 new units, in which 860 are located within the built boundary and 4,860 new units located in the designated greenfield area.
3. Considering the increased population forecast associated with the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, the Project Team estimates that 11,800 jobs will need to be accommodated on a Township-wide basis by 2031. This represents growth of 5,540 jobs between 2016 and 2031, and is 6,170 jobs higher than the 5,600 jobs projected by the Growth Plan (Schedule 7). However, two portions of this projected employment growth – being Work from Home Jobs and No Fixed Place of Work Jobs – do not consume land that is designated for non-residential purposes. As such, only 3,930 new jobs will consume non-residential designated settlement

area lands between 2016 and 2031, in which 1,230 would be on Employment Serving lands and 2,700 would be on Population Serving lands.

4. The planning horizon for the Official Plan should be to the year 2031 in accordance with the County of Simcoe Official Plan. It is recognized that the County of Simcoe MCR will extend the planning horizon to 2041 and allocate additional growth to the Township.

Land Needs

The following outlines key policy considerations and directions with respect to land needs:

1. The 2018 GMS has identified that there is sufficient residential and non-residential designated land supply to meet projected forecasts to 2031.
2. In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the identification of excess lands will need to be determined through the County's next MCR, using the land needs assessment methodology to be developed by the Province, and implemented by the County. As such, the identification of excess lands has not been considered through this OPR.

Community Settlement Area Hierarchy

The following outlines key policy considerations and directions with respect to the settlement hierarchy:

1. The Official Plan must establish a clear settlement hierarchy for directing and managing growth. The settlement areas in the Township include: Midhurst; Snow Valley; Elmvale; Centre Vespra; Minesing; Anten Mills; Phelpston; and Hillsdale.
2. The GMS has identified a recommended settlement hierarchy for the eight settlement areas based on the settlement areas character and development potential, and Provincial and County planning frameworks. The recommended settlement hierarchy is summarized in Exhibit 5.2, and builds upon the major and minor settlement framework set out in the existing Official Plan, adding a level of detail in between to further clarify the Township's priorities for focusing and directing growth. We note that the County MCR will be required to establish an official settlement hierarchy, and these recommendation should provide input to this future work.

Exhibit 5.2 – Recommended Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement Area	Description
Major	Midhurst Elmvale Hillsdale	<p>The major settlement areas of Midhurst and Elmvale contain both a delineated built boundary and designated greenfield areas, thus establishing them as prime locations for focusing growth based on Growth Plan directives. Additionally, they either currently provide or are planned to accommodate full municipal water and sanitary servicing to accommodate growth. Furthermore, in regards to supply, both of these areas contain the largest amounts of uncommitted land, presenting the most potential for future growth, outside of infill and redevelopment initiatives.</p> <p>Hillsdale is also identified as a major settlement area in the Township. Hillsdale has a superior quality of employment land supply relative to the other non-major communities. After Midhurst and Elmvale; Hillsdale has the most ES land designated in the Township and is the most strategically located settlement area with respect to proximity and access to Highway 400, and represents a prime location to accommodate future prime employment area development within the Township. Furthermore, as part of the Heritage Village subdivision, servicing solutions are being considered to accommodate the planned growth within Hillsdale. The expansion of the municipal water system and establishment of appropriate sanitary servicing options within the settlement area are being explored.</p> <p>Dating back prior to 2008, Hillsdale has been anticipated to accommodate a significant portion of residential and employment growth within the Township. OPA 37 (not yet approved) was adopted by Council in 2008 to designate additional employment lands to promote a concentration of economic development (centered around the existing employment area) by providing for new land for industrial uses in a business park setting at the intersection of Highway 400/93, within the existing settlement area.</p>
Intermediate	Snow Valley Centre Vespra	<p>Intermediate settlement areas present an appropriate development context for more limited growth, seeing as they are located within the undelineated built-up area. Snow Valley and Centre Vespra both contain existing municipal water and sanitary servicing facilities, which may be expanded as needed to accommodate growth.</p>

Exhibit 5.2 – Recommended Settlement Hierarchy		
Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement Area	Description
Minor	Anten Mills Minesing Phelpston	Minor settlement areas consist entirely of undelineated built-up area, do not contain full municipal servicing at this time, and provide more limited growth opportunities. As such, significant growth within these areas would be inefficient and unaligned with objectives of the Growth Plan. Furthermore, these settlement areas contain the smallest amounts of uncommitted residential and non-residential land, implying that the majority of growth would have to be through redevelopment or infill development; in a manner that appropriately reflects the character and pattern of existing development.

1. The settlement area boundaries must be clearly defined in the Official Plan, in accordance with the County of Simcoe Official Plan settlement area boundaries. It is recognized that under the 2017 Growth Plan settlement area expansions are only permitted through a County MCR.
2. The current policy framework related to Adult Lifestyle Communities (ALCs) should be revised to only direct ALC’s to settlement areas. Existing policies (Section 10 of the Official Plan) for establishing new ALCs should be revised, as they are no longer consistent with provincial policy and where growth and development is to be focused. Furthermore, in rural and agricultural areas where current Official Plan policies would permit development that is inconsistent with the recommendations of directing growth to settlement areas, the OPR process should consider modernizing these policies to bring them into conformity with Provincial policy, and engage in dialogue with these landowners.
3. New Estate Residential development should not be permitted in the Rural Areas, as only limited residential development should be permitted. The Official Plan should provide direction for permitted uses in the Rural Areas, in accordance with Provincial policy and the County Official Plan.

Minimum Residential Intensification Target

1. The Official Plan must identify the approved minimum alternative intensification targets, under the 2006 Growth Plan for the settlement areas of Midhurst and Elmvale, which is 15% of all new residential development, occurring annually to be within the delineated built boundary. The delineated built boundary should be clearly identified on the Official Plan schedules. In

accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, until the next County MCR is approved and in effect, the annual minimum intensification target contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply (2017 Growth Plan, S. 2.2.2(3)).

2. The 2018 GMS identified that there is sufficient residential dwelling supply (1,831 dwelling units of capacity) within the Township's built boundary – inclusive of capacity in the undelineated built-up area – to accommodate the alternative minimum intensification target of 15%. However, excluding supply in the undelineated built-up areas (as per the 2017 Growth Plan), would reduce the delineated built boundary supply to 72 units, which represents an approximate intensification rate of only 1.3%. At the time of the County's next MCR, the Township should work with the County to determine an appropriate target based on the revised minimum intensification target calculations within the Growth Plan, and seek an alternative minimum intensification target.
3. Policies should provide a strategy and identify opportunities to achieving the minimum intensification targets on an annual basis, with consideration given to appropriate built forms and densities that are in keeping with the character of these communities.
4. The 2018 GMS identified the challenges to intensification, based on limited opportunities presented by the character of existing communities and recommended that an Intensification Study be undertaken as part of Phase 2 of the OPR. The Intensification Strategy should determine an appropriate level of intensification for the Township and ways in which this level of intensification can best be accommodated while still meeting the broader policy direction of the local Official Plan, County Official Plan and Provincial policy framework. Specifically, the Intensification Study should focus on settlement areas which are subject to the Growth Plan minimum intensification target, being Midhurst and Elmvale, and key corridors including Bayfield Street within Midhurst. The Intensification Study should provide input to the County's next MCR.

Designated Greenfield Areas

1. The Official Plan must identify the approved minimum alternative density target of 32 residents and jobs per hectare, under the Growth Plan for the settlement areas of Midhurst and Elmvale which have designated greenfield areas. Furthermore, it is recognized that the Midhurst Secondary Plan policies provide alternative density targets applicable to the new neighbourhoods, which exceed the minimum alternative density target. The calculation of the

minimum density target is to be measured over the entire designated greenfield area of each upper-tier municipality, excluding certain areas as specified in the Growth Plan. In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, for upper-tier municipalities in the outer ring, the minimum density target for designated greenfield areas contained in the applicable official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply until the next County MCR is approved and in effect 2017 Growth Plan S. 2.2.7(5)).

2. The 2018 GMS identified that the Township can achieve a total designated greenfield area density of 33.95 persons and jobs per hectare within the designated greenfield areas, before considering additional development potential on mixed use designations or in the Future Development Potential designated lands in the Midhurst Secondary Plan area. This surpasses the approved alternative minimum designated greenfield area density target of 32 persons and jobs per hectare.
3. Notwithstanding, the 2017 Growth Plan has increased the designated greenfield area density target to 80 people and jobs per hectare, which is out of context and character for a Township such as Springwater. As such, the Township should work with the County during their next MCR to determine an appropriate alternative target for Springwater. This analysis will have to take into consideration the 2017 Growth Plan requirements for calculating minimum designated greenfield area density targets, which includes the exclusion of additional constrained lands as well as employment areas.
4. Policies should provide a strategy and consider more intensive built forms and a variety of housing types to assist in achieving this density target for lands within designated greenfield areas, while ensuring that the intensity of development is compatible with the character of the individual settlement area.
5. Policies should also contemplate the appropriate phasing of new development within settlement areas to ensure that development is contiguous and supported by the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

Settlement Area Expansions (Municipal Comprehensive Review Requirements)

1. The settlement area boundaries must conform to and implement such boundaries as established in the County Official Plan. The need for Settlement Area expansions are not anticipated over the planning horizon, as the 2018 GMS has identified sufficient residential and non-residential land supply to meet projected needs to 2031, and achieve its alternative minimum intensification rate and designated greenfield area density targets, in accordance

with the 2006 Growth Plan and County Official Plan. However, the Township Official Plan is recommended to include a policy framework for contemplating urban boundary expansions or adjustments which may only occur through a County Official Plan MCR, in accordance with Provincial requirements of the 2017 Growth Plan (S. 2.2.8(2)) and the County Official Plan (S. 3.5.17).

2. The 2018 GMS recommends that the Township continue to monitor population and employment growth trends, intensification rates and residential and employment densities every five years to ensure sufficient supply of land to accommodate forecasted growth.
3. Consideration should be given to maintaining the “Green Belt” buffer area policies of the Official Plan (S. 24.4) to provide separation from adjacent municipal urban areas and restrict new non-farm development within the “Green belt” buffer area in the Township.

5.1.2. Housing

The following outlines key policy considerations and directions with respect to housing:

1. In accordance with the PPS (S. 1.4.1), municipalities are required to provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities required to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area by :
 - maintaining at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification and redevelopment, and, if necessary, lands which are designated and available for residential development; and
 - ensuring that where new development is to occur, land with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a 3 year supply of residential units in draft approved and registered plans, or in cases of residential intensification and redevelopment, lands are appropriately zoned in the Zoning By-law and available for development or redevelopment.
- The 2018 GMS identified that the medium density housing supply and projected average annual demand (based on recent trends) is very low. However, a portion of the impact of eliminating undelineated built-up areas from the intensification target calculation can be mitigated by the Township by increasing housing unit mix within the delineated built-up area. This will also help avoid an undersupply of medium density dwellings (townhouse and mid-rise apartment dwellings) and an oversupply of low density dwellings (single-detached and semi-detached dwellings).

- Through policy, the Township can stimulate a greater dwelling mix and housing opportunities by encouraging or requiring the development of more medium and high-density dwellings (i.e. row or block townhouses and small-scale apartments), rather than low density units. This approach is in keeping with Provincial and County policy direction of establishing complete, compact, and inclusive communities.
2. Encourage the preservation and maintenance of the existing housing stock, supplemented by various forms of residential intensification such as infilling and the creation of accessory dwelling units, which are compatible with the neighbourhood, in terms of density, design, and function.
 3. The County Official Plan requires that the Township Official Plan be used to facilitate the development of affordable housing (S. 4.3). The Township is required to implement the recommendations of the Simcoe Housing Strategy, and develop policies to address housing needs in the Township and the provision of affordable housing. Policies and implementation measures should be identified to address how the Township will work to achieve the County target of 10% of all new housing units created each year to be affordable. The Township of Springwater is targeted to accommodate 96 affordable housing units by 2024 to achieve the County's minimum target for affordable housing.

With respect to affordable housing, the County Official Plan defines Affordable as:

- a) In the case of home ownership, the least expensive of:
 - 1) Housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 - 2) Housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;
 - b) In the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:
 - 1) A unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 - 2) A unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.
- The provision of housing that is affordable and accessible to lower income households be a priority. Encourage the provision of affordable housing by:

- supporting increased residential densities in appropriate locations (delineated built-up areas) and a full range of housing types, adequate land supply, redevelopment and residential intensification, where practical;
 - the timely provision of infrastructure;
 - supporting the reduction of housing costs by streamlining the development approvals process;
 - negotiating agreements with the public and private sectors to address the provision of affordable housing through the draft plan of subdivision and condominium approval process;
 - considering innovative and alternative residential development standards that facilitate affordable housing and more compact development form;
 - consider surplus municipal lands for affordable housing and work with other levels of government to make surplus lands available to providers of affordable housing at little or no cost; and
 - developing a Municipal Housing Strategy with annual housing targets, mixes of housing types, affordability thresholds and related data.
- Include new policies to permit second units in various dwelling types (single detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings, and accessory structures), subject to satisfying certain criteria (i.e., servicing, parking availability, among other matters as deemed appropriate). Secondary suites can be a useful means for the provision of adequate affordable housing options and support intensification objectives.
 - Continue to permit Garden Suites on a temporary basis and subject to specific provisions.
 - Discourage the conversion of affordable rental housing stock to freehold if such conversion results in a reduction in the amount of rental housing available to an unacceptable level.
4. Ensure that a full range of housing types and densities are provided to meet the anticipated demand and demographic change (young families, seniors etc.), including those with special needs.
- Encourage the provision and retention of special needs housing through:
 - establishing provisions that outline a strategy for providing special needs housing through collaboration with the Township, County, and its providers; and
 - working with the providers of special needs housing and housing developers to ensure that adequate opportunities for new special needs housing can be provided
 - Permit appropriately scaled special needs housing in any land use designation that permits residential uses, provided there is no correctional component. Should there be a correctional component, they should be designated Institutional.

- Group homes are recognized as a special form of housing to accommodate special needs within the Township (S. 25.5). Based on recent decisions from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, policies with respect to group homes must be revised and updated to remove limitations associated with minimum distance separation requirements, remove policies which identify specific groups/users, and generally support such housing forms.

5.1.3. Mix of Uses

The following outlines key policy considerations and directions with respect to a mix of uses:

1. Accommodating a mix of land uses, which provides for grade related uses (i.e., commercial/retail uses) and residential uses above the ground floor, to invigorate streets and add vitality to downtown core areas.
2. Strengthen policies to promote and enhance settlement areas (particularly traditional core areas) as mixed-use centres of commerce, employment and residential growth.
3. Review the residential and commercial land use designations to investigate opportunities for mixed use corridors and areas. Consider a new Commercial/Mixed Use designation (similar to the Midhurst Secondary Plan), which accommodates a range of office, retail and commercial uses at grade, with residential uses above.
4. Promote commercially viable, mixed use cores by providing flexibility in permitted uses, encouraging residential uses above grade and “live-work” units.
5. The intersection of Bayfield Street and Snow Valley Road has been identified as a major community focus for Midhurst, as is the promotion of sensitive intensification within the Bayfield Street Corridor, with a mixture of uses, including higher density forms of housing. In order to facilitate the planned land use and built form changes for this important corridor, the Township should consider undertaking a land use, urban/architectural design and transportation study for the Bayfield Corridor, to address such matters as: accommodating a mix of commercial and residential uses, appropriate intensification and higher density development forms, consolidating and limiting the number of access locations, urban/architectural design and streetscape improvements.

5.1.4. Community Design

The following outlines key policy considerations and directions with respect to community design:

1. Maintain and enhance the existing community design policies (S. 7.0), which relate to high quality built and natural environments (community image, design with nature, subdivision design, streetscape, signage).
2. Encourage new development to adopt a high quality of design that is reflective of the character of the Township and supportive of the existing area.
3. Mitigate impacts from commercial uses on surrounding residential communities through a variety of measures, which will be implemented through the Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control.
4. Encourage the development of “complete streets” which support pedestrian and cycling activity, and accessible public spaces.
5. Support the development of walkable and pedestrian oriented communities.
6. Encouraging new development to sustain and enhance the character and the identity of existing stable residential neighbourhoods, through appropriate infill and redevelopment policies.
7. Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policies to promote the development of safe communities.
8. Consider policies to ensure accessibility for all persons and promote universal design principles.
9. Consider policies to establish and enhance the Township’s identity, including the identification of “gateways” to Springwater to reinforce the community image and distinct community identities while unifying the Township as a whole.
10. Consider more detailed built form and urban design policies, particularly in core areas to enhance the sense of place, define the street edge, require active uses at grade, compatible land use transitions with adjacent uses, among other matters.
11. Ensure the equitable distribution of publicly accessible parks and open spaces, recreation and community services and facilities where feasible.

12. Consider the submission of community design guidelines for new developments to ensure a high level of community design is achieved.
13. The current Official Plan for the Midhurst Secondary Plan area requires that through Site Plan Control, all proposed built form shall be subject to an architectural review which may include review of exterior design, character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings, in accordance with the Midhurst Urban Design Guidelines. At the discretion of the Township, the development of Architectural Design Guidelines may be required for any proposed subdivisions within the Midhurst Secondary Plan Area (S. 9.6). To ensure a high quality of urban design is achieved, the Township may consider establishing Township-wide urban design guidelines and/or architectural design guidelines to assist in the review of development applications.

5.2. Protect Agriculture

An existing goal of the current Official Plan is to “preserve and protect prime agricultural areas” (Section 2.2.2). The existing planning framework continues to emphasize the importance of the protection of agricultural areas, with a greater emphasis on sustaining and enhancing the agricultural system and the long-term economic prosperity and viability of the agri-food sector, including the maintenance and improvement of the agricultural support network.

In addition to new Provincial policies, the Official Plan must also consider agricultural policies of the PPS and the guidelines established by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, with respect to consents and permitted uses in agricultural and rural areas. The applicability of OPA #33, which was adopted by the Township in 2008, but not approved by the County, will need to be considered in the preparation of new consent policies and in identifying permitted uses within the Agricultural and Rural Areas which conform to the updated Provincial and County policies.

The County Official Plan identifies Prime Agricultural areas by the Agricultural designation on Schedule 5.1 and are intended to be protected for long-term use for agriculture. It is noted that all types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards (Section 3.6.5).

It should be noted that the 2017 Growth Plan establishes that the Province will identify and map the agricultural system for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. On February 9, 2018, the Provincial Agricultural System was issued, and takes effect immediately, and any further refinements may be undertaken by the County through their MCR. The agricultural system includes prime agricultural areas, specialty crop areas and rural lands, as an agricultural support network, as discussed in Section 3.4.

The 2017 Growth Plan (Policy 4.2.6(8)) states that *“The prime agricultural areas identified in official plans that are approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the official plan until provincial mapping of the Agricultural System has been issued.”* The Growth Plan also provides that in implementing the Agricultural System, upper-tier municipalities may, through a MCR, refine or augment provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan and any implementation procedures issued by the Province (S. 4.2.6(9)). On February 9, 2018, the Provincial Agricultural System was issued, and takes effect immediately, and any further refinements may be undertaken by the County through their MCR. As a result, further direction from the Province and the County will be required to develop the agricultural system and mapping for the Township of Springwater.

The following outlines the key policy directions the new Official Plan must have regard for with respect to agricultural and rural areas:

5.2.1. Agricultural Areas

1. The County Official Plan identifies prime agricultural areas by the Agricultural designation, for which lands shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture. Consideration should be given to applying the County Official Plan Agricultural designation to the Township. It is recognized that the existing Agricultural designation in the Township Official Plan varies from that in the County Official Plan. Further confirmation of the extent of the prime agricultural areas of the Township is required.
2. Prime agricultural areas are lands where prime agricultural lands predominate, and prime agricultural areas must be protected for agricultural use.
3. The permitted uses within the Agricultural designation should be refined to be consistent with the PPS and County policies, which permit agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, processing of agricultural products, and on-farm diversified uses, as defined by the PPS. Consideration will be given to the OMAFRA Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario Agricultural Areas, 2016, with a view to permitting the broadest range of agricultural uses to support and enhance the viability of the agricultural industry.
4. Consideration should be given to applying OMAFRA’s Minimum Distance Separation Guidelines and Formulae to determine appropriate setbacks from livestock barns, manure storage or anaerobic digester and other land uses. The Township Official Plan should provide policy direction on the appropriate application of the Formulae to existing lots, consent applications

for surplus farm dwellings, within settlement areas, and following destruction of all or part of a dwelling by catastrophe.

5. The Official Plan should discourage lot creation in the Agricultural designation, and only permit lot creation in accordance with the PPS and the County Official Plan (3.6.7) (i.e., for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, a residence surplus to a farming operation, and infrastructure, subject to specific policy requirements).
6. The Official Plan should establish a minimum lot size of not less than 40 hectares, or the original survey lot size for lot creation for agricultural uses in the Agricultural designation, in accordance with the County Official Plan. The existing Official Plan policies may permit a new agricultural use with an approximate minimum lot size of 35 hectares.
7. Where a residence is surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, a consent may be permitted provided that the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the residential use and appropriate sewage and water services, and should be an approximate size of 1 hectare.
8. The Official Plan should include policies for non-agricultural uses that may be permitted in prime agricultural areas in accordance with the PPS and County Official Plan (S. 3.6.12). These uses may relate to the extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources. Limited non-residential uses are only to be permitted through a site-specific local Official Plan amendment and subject to satisfying various criteria.
9. Policies should support opportunities for local food, urban and near-urban agriculture, and promote the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food and agri-product businesses through protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts.
10. New policies should consider the agricultural support network in planning decisions to protect or enhance critical agricultural assets. Where negative impacts on the agricultural system are unavoidable, they will be assessed and mitigated to the extent feasible.

5.2.2. Rural Areas

1. The Rural designation should continue to be the focus of rural and agricultural land uses.
2. Rural area character should be protected for a viable rural economy and environmentally sensitive recreation and only permit limited residential development.
3. In Rural areas, rural settlements are to be the focus of growth and development to promote their vitality.
4. The County Official Plan directs that limited residential development may be created by consent, provided that the lots should be restricted in size in order to conserve other lands in larger blocks for agricultural uses or environmental purposes. Consent lots should be developed to an approximate maximum size of one hectare, except where larger sizes may be suitable because of environmental constraints or design considerations. The number of lots on the grid road system shall be restricted in order to maintain the rural character and road function and to avoid strip development (S. 3.7.8). Grid Roads refer to roads such as concession and sideroads which form part of the original rural road system of the County, plus all arterial roads which now serve as Provincial Highways, County Roads, and local municipal arterial roads. Furthermore, new multiple lots and units for residential development are to be directed to settlement areas, and may only be allowed in rural areas in site-specific locations with approved zoning or designation that permits such development in a local Official Plan as of June 16, 2006 (S. 3.7.11). In such instances, the local municipal official plan may continue to recognize this type of development permitted under this policy and provide appropriate policies for development. Section 28 of the current Township Official Plan outlines the consent policies. The Rural consent policies of S. 28.6 apply to existing residential areas within the Rural designation, where a consent may be permitted subject to meeting certain criteria which define a residential cluster (i.e., avoiding strip development). Since the Township's Official Plan currently provides policies permitting rural consents in certain locations (where they meet the criteria for defining a "cluster"), these consent policies may be permitted.
5. Rural industrial and commercial development should only be permitted in the Rural designation where it cannot be appropriately located within a settlement area, and subject to certain criteria established in the County Official Plan (S. 3.7.5), which should be reflected in the Township's policies.

6. Rural employment areas that are identified in local official plans may continue to be recognized and may permit a minor expansion provided it does not extend into the Agricultural or Greenlands designation, per Section 3.7.7 of the County Official Plan.

5.3. Protect the Environment and Natural Resources

The current Official Plan includes policies that identify a natural heritage system which comprises natural heritage features and areas that are to be protected, maintained and enhanced to avoid incompatible development. To provide adequate protection to especially sensitive and significant environmental features, the Plan establishes two categories of natural heritage features and areas as discussed in Section 3.11 of this Report.

PPS, 2014 requires municipalities identify natural heritage systems in their Official Plans. The PPS defines a Natural Heritage System as:

“a system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. The Province has a recommended approach for identifying natural heritage systems, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.”

The 2017 Growth Plan, in particular, directs municipalities to consider natural heritage features and areas in a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach, in order to maintain, restore and enhance their diversity and connectivity, and their long term ecological function. It should be noted, that the 2017 Growth Plan identifies that the Province will map natural heritage systems and municipal official plans will incorporate the systems, and apply appropriate designations and policies to maintain, restore or improve the diversity and connectivity of the system, and the long term hydrological functions of the features and areas (Policy 4.2.2.2). Policy 4.2.2(4) states,

“The natural heritage system identified in official plans that are approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the relevant official plan until the Natural Heritage System has been issued.”

The Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the Natural Heritage System for the GGH in order to implement the new Plan, (S. 5.2.2(2)(b)). The 2017 Growth Plan also provides that

in implementing the Natural Heritage System, upper-tier municipalities may, through a municipal comprehensive review, refine provincial mapping in a manner that is consistent with the Plan (S. 4.2.2(5)).

In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Province's NHS is to be implemented as an overlay in municipal official plans, which is contrary to how the County's NHS is currently implemented through the Greenlands designation. The Provincial Natural Heritage System for the GGH was issued on February 9, 2018, and is currently in effect, and may be refined through the County MCR. Further direction from the Province and the County will be required to develop the Natural Heritage System for the Township of Springwater and the preferred approach for implementing a NHS.

The County Official Plan identifies a Greenlands designation comprised of various natural features and areas as identified in Section 3.8.10 of the County Official Plan. The Greenlands designation represents the County NHS, in addition to the natural heritage features and areas identified in the local municipal official plans. Local municipal official plans may contain policies and mapping that implement local natural heritage systems that establish a local NHS, which identifies natural heritage features and areas. The County's Official Plan 'Greenlands' mapping includes potential linkage areas which the County has identified as an area in which it would be desirable to restore lost or severed natural corridors through natural succession and/or supplementary planting. Policies related to linkage areas are expected to be contained in the local official plans.

The Official Plan will also be required to provide new and updated policies related to water resources to implement the Source Protection Plan, natural hazard lands and policies to protect and conserve mineral aggregate resources.

The following subsections outlines the key policy directions the new Official Plan must have regard for with respect to the protection of the environment and natural resources:

5.3.1. Natural Environment

1. The Official Plan will require updated policies and mapping that implement the Provincial Natural Heritage System for the GGH and the County's Greenlands NHS and natural heritage policies which are currently in effect. It is recognized that further direction from the Province and the County will be required to develop the Natural Heritage System for the Township of Springwater, through the County's next MCR to implement the 2017 Growth Plan. During the County's MCR there will be opportunity to refine the Provincial Natural Heritage System mapping as it relates to the Township of Springwater.

2. The 2014 PPS, 2017 Growth Plan, and the Province's Natural Heritage Reference Manual will provide guidance for the identification and significance of natural heritage features and areas, and natural heritage systems, including the establishment of natural linkages and corridors.
3. The Official Plan should identify criteria for establishing the significance of a woodlot within a settlement area. For woodlots outside of a settlement area, the County Official Plan provides criteria for determining its significance (S. 3.8.14), which should be considered in the Township's Official Plan. Development and site alteration within significant woodlands is not permitted unless it has been demonstrated through an Environmental Impact Assessment that there will be no negative impacts on the natural feature or ecological functions.
4. The extent of adjacent lands abutting a natural heritage feature or area should be further reviewed to ensure consistency with the Province's Natural Heritage Reference Manual, with respect to development and site alteration within proximity to a natural heritage feature, and requirements for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
5. Updating environmental sustainability policies to adequately address the protection of water resources (quality and quantity), wetlands, woodlands, significant wildlife, fish and species at risk habitats.
6. Strengthen natural heritage policies to include enhancement and restoration opportunities (for example natural shorelines, urban and rural forests, linkages).

5.3.2. Aggregate Resources

1. Recognize the importance of mineral aggregates as essential non-renewable resources and ensures the wise management of these limited resources.
2. In accordance with the County Official Plan, proposed new and/or expansions to existing mineral aggregate operations require an amendment to the local municipal official plan (S. 4.4). The Township's current Official Plan may permit a new or expanded pit or quarry through a zoning by-law amendment on land designated Aggregate Extractive or High Aggregate Potential. These policies must be updated to be consistent with the County policies.
3. New policies should be included to identify areas within which mineral aggregate operations are not permitted in accordance with the County Official Plan (S. 4.4.1).

4. Consideration should be given to identifying the High Potential for Aggregate Resources as an overlay in the Township's Official Plan, as opposed to a land use designation to be consistent with the County Official Plan, and recognize the underlying land use designation (i.e., agricultural or rural designation). A comprehensive approach to aggregate resources is required, particularly in proximity to settlement areas and land use compatibility associated with extraction activities.
5. The Official Plan should provide policy direction with respect to the rehabilitation of prime agricultural areas, where the land is used for mineral aggregate extraction, in accordance with Provincial policy.

5.3.3. Water Resources

1. New policies will be required to implement the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan, with respect to wellhead protection areas and designated vulnerable areas to protect municipal drinking water sources.
2. New Wellhead Protection Area studies will be required for the proposed new municipal wells to accommodate development in Midhurst and Hillsdale.
3. Consideration must be given to implementing the policies of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan as it applies to a small portion of the Township near the community of Centre Vespra.
4. The Official Plan will be required to identify and protect highly vulnerable aquifers and significant groundwater recharge areas, while prohibiting and restricting certain uses which may pose a risk to municipal drinking water sources.

5.3.4. Hazard Lands

1. Hazard land policies will need to be revised to be consistent with provincial policy. Development is not permitted to locate in hazardous lands and hazardous sites where the use is: an institutional use (i.e., hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, schools or day cares); an essential emergency service; or the use is associated with the disposal, manufacture, or treatment of hazardous substances.
2. While it is the policy of the Plan to implement the "One Zone Concept" for flood plain management, the Township may consider utilizing a "Two Zone Concept", which may permit

development in the flood fringe subject to appropriate flood mitigation techniques. Alternatively, development may continue to be directed to areas outside of the flooding hazard limit, as defined by the PPS.

3. The Official Plan should consider the potential impacts of climate change that may increase the risks associated with natural hazards.

5.4. Preserve Cultural Heritage Resources

A goal of the current Official Plan is “to ensure that all land use planning decisions have regard for the conservation of significant built heritage features, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources” (S. 2.2.4).

In relation, the County Official Plan directs local municipalities to: “establish policies within their official plans that promote and encourage the designation of heritage properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and include within these policies the criteria to be used to evaluate the architectural and historic significance; create and support a heritage committee within their community to deal with heritage matters considered appropriate; zone sites containing significant cultural features sites to ensure preservation in accordance with Section 34(1) 3.3 of the *Planning Act*; and apply the objectives and criteria set out in the County’s Cultural Heritage Guidelines” (S. 4.6.11).

The following outlines the key policy directions with respect to the preservation of cultural heritage resources:

1. Strengthening cultural and built heritage policies to ensure protection of the Township’s unique character and identity.
2. Consider policies for encouraging the repurposing/adaptive reuse of significant cultural heritage resources.
3. Policies should be considered to conserve significant cultural heritage landscapes, which may assist in conserving the Township’s unique rural character.
4. Consideration may be given to establishing additional policies to support the designation of a heritage conservation district, to assist in conserving and enhancing traditional community cores.
5. Consideration should be given to policies to protect and conserve archaeological resources.

6. The Official Plan should include policies to assist in implementing the Township's Municipal Cultural Plan, which addressed matters to leverage the Township's history and awareness to support local business and agri-tourism, for example.
7. The interests of Aboriginal communities should be considered in conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

5.5. Enhance Community Services, Facilities and Amenities

The PPS and County Official Plan provides policies which support the provision of community facilities and public service facilities to be co-located in community hubs, to promote cost effectiveness and facilitate service integration and access to active transportation and transit. Public service facilities include the provision of services or programs provided by a government agency, and includes social assistance, recreation, emergency services and cultural services. Such services are to be planned to be accessible to all residents and strategically located to support the delivery of community services.

The following outlines the key policy directions the new Official Plan must have regard for with respect to enhancing community services, facilities and amenities:

5.5.1. Parks, Open Spaces and Recreation

1. Promote the development of a comprehensive parks, open space and trails network to encourage healthy communities. Official Plan policies may further promote active transportation and connections through the review of development applications. While not required as part of the OPR, in the future the Township may consider undertaking an Active Transportation Master Plan to identify a comprehensive trails network including pedestrian and on and off-road cycling facilities.
2. Implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update, including: the recommended Park/Open Space Classification System and provision levels; park Planning Guidelines; the Park and Open Space Development Strategy to address parkland deficiencies in future development areas and existing communities; and parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu of parkland policy to secure the maximum benefit permitted in the *Planning Act*.
3. Policies supporting the Townships tourist and recreational amenities should be enhanced to capitalize on these unique environmental attributes of the Township.

4. Consideration should be given to encouraging year-round recreational opportunities to enhance economic development opportunities.

5.5.2. Community Services and Facilities

1. Providing flexibility to allow for existing institutional uses to expand and promoting the co-location of community and public service facilities in community hubs.
2. Providing flexibility on existing vacant or underutilized institutional lands, which would encourage mixed uses and redevelopment.

5.5.3. Seniors Housing

1. The Official Plan should promote the development of seniors housing, retirement homes, and alternative housing forms that are accessible to seniors to support ageing in place and accommodate this demographic of the community.
2. Supportive facilities and services for seniors should be encouraged and directed to settlement areas, where supportive community facilities and services are provided.
3. The Official Plan should include policies related to accessibility to ensure that new development and public spaces are accessible to seniors and those with disabilities.

5.6. Promote Economic Development

The promotion of economic development opportunities was identified as an important policy direction through the community visioning workshops, in order for Springwater to be a healthy and vital community, promote local jobs, and retain a skilled labour force. The current Official Plan supports a greater live and work ratio among the residents. Emphasis on economic growth is related to home based businesses, tourist commercial development, and industrial development in appropriate locations.

The 2017 Growth Plan requires that the County, in consultation with the lower-tiers will establish an employment strategy through a County MCR, that: establishes minimum density targets for all employment areas; and identifies opportunities for the intensification of employment areas (S. 2.2.5.5). The County is also required to designate all employment lands in the County Official Plan to protect them for employment uses over the long-term, this may include consideration for identifying prime employment areas, which are areas of employment within settlement areas that are land

extensive or have lower employment densities and require locations adjacent to major goods movement facilities and corridors (i.e., uses include manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, and ancillary uses).

The following outlines the key policy directions the new Official Plan must have regard for to promote economic development:

5.6.1. Protect Employment Lands

1. Ensure that there are adequate employment designations and lands designated for employment uses in appropriate locations to concentrate areas of economic activity. The 2018 GMS identified that the Township has sufficient non-residential designated land supply to meet projected forecasts to 2031.
2. Consider designating prime employment areas to implement the 2017 Growth Plan. The delineation of employment and prime employment areas would assist the County in identifying employment areas in the Township through the County's next MCR. The 2018 GMS identified that employment lands in Hillsdale should be considered for the designation of prime employment areas, given the lot sizes of these lands and their proximity to the highway.
3. An employment strategy will need to be undertaken through the County's MCR, in order to establish minimum employment densities and opportunities for intensification of employment areas.
4. The 2018 GMS recommended that the Township explore options for increasing non-residential development densities particularly in conjunction with long term infrastructure planning. A possible option for consideration is to investigate the suitability to accommodate and encourage higher order Employment Serving uses in Elmvale while encouraging more land extensive dry employment uses in Hillsdale (subject to the preferred servicing regime). Opportunities for more intensive Employment Serving development may include the development of underutilized parking areas, remnant lots suitable for infill and intensification, and underutilized land with low density development.
5. The 2018 GMS identified the opportunity to increase densities of Population Serving employment uses, recommending that the Township undertake a Population Serving Employment Market Study to investigate commercial and institutional market demand in Springwater and the potential to capture a larger share of local shopping and service needs of existing and future residents. Specifically, it is recommended that a detailed analysis be

undertaken to identify underutilized Population Serving employment developments from an economic development standpoint, especially within Midhurst and Elmvale. This study should be undertaken in conjunction with the recommended Intensification Study.

6. Ensuring compatibility between economic development and land use policies.
7. Strengthen economic development policies to foster local job opportunities.
8. Ensure the protection and adequate servicing of appropriate lands for long-term employment uses.
9. Encouraging new employment-related development to occur within the existing employment areas to allow for the efficient use of land and infrastructure.
10. Providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment uses to meet long term needs, and clearly define appropriate uses permitted in employment areas, while providing sufficient land use flexibility.
11. Planning for the protection and preservation of employment areas for future uses.
12. Ensuring the long-term economic viability of the Township by identifying strategic lands outside of the existing employment area that should be protected for future employment use, in accordance with the PPS (i.e., additional land for employment uses near Highway 400 and Penetanguishene Road, in the Hillsdale settlement area).
13. Strengthen employment land conversion policies to retain employment lands. The 2017 Growth Plan now requires that employment area conversions may only be contemplated through a County municipal comprehensive review, this policy direction should be provided in the Township's new Official Plan.
14. Requiring buffering and landscaping to address visual impacts and ensure physical separation between employment specific land uses and adjacent non-employment uses.

5.6.2. Tourism/Recreational development

1. Update policies to promote local tourism with an emphasis on Township attributes, including policies to promote the Township as a destination.

2. Opportunities related to commercial tourism, recreation, and agri-tourism should be promoted.

5.6.3. Home Based Businesses

1. Promote home based businesses as a key component of the economic base of the Township.
2. Strengthen existing policies in the Official Plan (S. 25.3) to promote and encourage home based businesses within single detached dwellings, and provide flexibility in the types and intensity of permitted uses provided potential nuances can be appropriately mitigated. The Official Plan may provide greater direction on the types of uses permitted, number of employees, accessory retail sales, permitted gross floor areas, the use of accessory structures, among other matters.
3. Home industries are uses located outside of settlement areas, and generally permit a greater intensity of employment use. Greater policy direction may be provided to promote home industries in association with the residential or agricultural use of the property, in keeping with on-farm diversified uses permitted in the Agricultural designation.

5.7. Provide Sustainable Infrastructure

The PPS and County Official Plan provide a strong policy basis to ensure that infrastructure is provided in a coordinated, efficient and cost-effective manner to accommodate projected needs. Infrastructure includes physical structures (facilities and corridors) that form the foundation for development, including: sewage and water systems, septage treatment systems, stormwater management systems, waste management systems, electricity generation facilities, electricity transmission and distribution systems, communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities.

The 2018 GMS has identified where growth should be focused and the extent to which it should be expected; which is reflected in the recommended settlement area hierarchy. The Township will have to ensure appropriate infrastructure, including transportation and community services are in place to support growth within these areas, based on this framework. As these elements are all growth-related capital infrastructure requirements, their costs are supported through development charges, being one-time fees levied by the Township on new development.

The Township is currently updating their Development Charges By-law to ensure new growth is appropriately funded. This study should be informed by the 2018 GMS in regards to settlement hierarchy and required infrastructure investments, specifically pertaining water and wastewater

servicing, based on the Township’s 20 Year Capital Plan for Water Supply Facilities and Waste Water Systems (the “Capital Plan”), released in April 2017. In particular, the settlement hierarchy establishes a framework for focusing growth. However, more specific timelines for phasing should be established commensurate with the provision of required infrastructure improvements.

The following outlines the key policy directions the new Official Plan must have regard for with respect to the provision of infrastructure in a sustainable manner:

5.7.1. Servicing Infrastructure

1. The 2018 GMS provides an overview of the existing municipal water and wastewater services, and available capacities, based on the Township’s 20 Year Capital Plan for Water Supply Facilities and Waste Water System, prepared in April 2017. The available capacity of municipal servicing within Springwater’s communities will affect the level of growth and timing for growth which the communities can support. The 2018 GMS provides a summary of the municipal water and wastewater servicing capacities of these communities, based on the Capital Plan.

Given the conditions that exist and the expansion plans for the next 20 years in regards to servicing, it has been concluded that Midhurst and Elmvale are the only communities able to take on projected growth on the basis of full municipal servicing at this time. As the 2017 Growth Plan focuses development within these communities, seeing as they contain both delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas, investment should be prioritized here to ensure servicing within the Township can accommodate required growth.

2. Addressing the need to appropriately service areas and development while in keeping with the policy direction of the Provincial Policy Statement (S. 1.6.6) and Growth Plan (S. 3.2.6). Growth should be focused to settlements with full municipal services, and to a lesser extent to settlement areas which do not provide full municipal services.
3. Planning for infrastructure should be coordinated with land use planning decisions to meet current and projected needs, while ensuring the infrastructure is viable over its life cycle.
4. Policies should promote the use of green infrastructure.
5. Consideration should be given to encouraging stormwater management policies which promote infiltration and green infrastructure.

5.7.2. Transportation

1. Provide policies to ensure that the existing transportation infrastructure can serve the needs of existing and future development, and that adequate infrastructure is in place prior to proceeding with new development.
2. Review the existing road hierarchy in the Official Plan to confirm whether it is still appropriate with respect to right-of-way widths and access requirements.
3. Undertake a detailed review of the road networks and road classifications to determine which roads need to be widened and/or expanded.
4. Consider identifying planned or proposed road connections in a Schedule to the Official Plan.
5. Consider undertaking a Transportation Master Plan to identify transportation requirements to meet projected needs, which includes an active transportation strategy. An active transportation network may be included as a Schedule to the Official Plan.
6. Consider undertaking the construction of new roads and development projects through the lens of complete streets to facilitate alternative travel modes where appropriate, and enhanced pedestrian/public space.
7. Corridors and rights-of-way for significant transportation facilities shall be planned for and protected to serve long-term needs. Development that could preclude the use of a corridor or right-of-way for its long-term purpose should not be permitted.
8. Assess parking needs in the downtown areas in order to provide adequate on- and off-street parking.

5.7.3. Active Transportation and Trails

1. Strengthen transportation policies aimed at expanding and promoting transit use and active transportation for the entire Township.
2. Encourage active transportation in the Township, including the development and implementation of trails strategies.

3. Consider policies for requiring active transportation facilities such as bicycle lanes as a component of major road reconstruction projects.

5.7.4. Public Transit

1. Policies to work with transit services to develop a transit system should be retained and encouraged, as provided in the Midhurst Secondary Plan.
2. The Township should promote public transit connections to major community destinations and primary settlement areas.
3. Policies for transit supportive development should be considered in the planning for new communities (i.e., local road patterns conducive to pedestrian access).

5.7.5. Addressing Climate Change

1. The new Official Plan will be required to implement policy that promotes the identification of actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change adaptation goals, in alignment with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and Action Plan.
2. The Township should develop strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve resilience to climate change through land use planning and planning for infrastructure.
3. The Official Plan will be required to incorporate policies and provide direction to local municipalities for the development of greenhouse gas inventories for transportation, buildings, waste management and municipal operations.
4. The Township will also be required to establish an interim and long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that support provincial targets and reflect the goal of net-zero communities.
5. The Official Plan should consider the potential impacts of climate change that may increase the risk associated with natural hazards.

6. Phase 2 New Official Plan Path Forward and Work Program Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to outline the recommended direction for the Township to take in updating its current Official Plan, particularly within the context of the new 2017 Growth Plan. Furthermore, it identifies additional supporting studies that the Township is recommended to undertake at this time in support of the OPR, and studies the Township may consider pending the outcome of the County's next MCR to implement the 2017 Growth Plan.

6.1. Path Forward

The Township's current Official Plan took effect in February 1998 with a purpose to manage development and physical change to the year 2016. It is important that the Township update its current Official Plan at this time to conform to the new Provincial and County planning frameworks currently in place.

In accordance with Section 26 (1) of the *Planning Act*, if an official plan is in effect in a municipality, the Council of the municipality that adopted the official plan shall revise the official plan as required to ensure that it:

- a. conforms with provincial plans or does not conflict with them, as the case may be;
- b. has regard to the matters of provincial interest listed in section 2; and
- c. is consistent with policy statements issued under subsection 3 (1).

As such, the Township's Official Plan is required to be consistent with the 2014 PPS, have regard to matters of Provincial interest identified in section 2 of the *Planning Act*, and conform or not conflict with the 2017 Growth Plan.

The 2017 Growth Plan also outlines the policies and standards that will remain in effect until the next County MCR. These clauses allow for a transition period in which lower-tier municipalities can still operate in conformity with the 2017 Growth Plan while awaiting for further policy direction from their upper-tier planning authority.

Furthermore, the *Planning Act* requires that the Council of a lower-tier municipality amend their Official Plan to conform with a plan that comes into effect as the Official Plan of the upper-tier municipality (S. 27). As such, the Township of Springwater's Official Plan is required to conform to the County of Simcoe Official Plan that is currently in effect.

The over-arching objective of the Township's OPR is to conform to the in force and effect County of Simcoe Official Plan, conform to the 2017 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. The current County of Simcoe Official Plan was approved prior to the effective date of the 2017 Growth Plan. In accordance with the Growth Plan, the County is required to undertake a MCR, to comprehensively apply the 2017 Growth Plan at the time of their next MCR, which is to be completed by July 1, 2022.

The 2017 Growth Plan places much greater emphasis on the need for the upper-tier municipality to initiate the implementation of the 2017 Growth Plan policies. The preamble to Section 5 of the Growth Plan, states:

“The timely implementation of this Plan relies on the strong leadership of upper- and single-tier municipalities to provide more specific planning direction for their respective jurisdictions through a municipal comprehensive review.”

This indicates that lower-tier municipalities, such as the Township of Springwater, must take specific planning direction from Simcoe County in regards to implementation of 2017 Growth Plan policies, which must be directed through the County's MCR. Section 2.2.13(e) further confirms this interpretation:

“Upper- and single-tier municipalities will undertake integrated planning to manage forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan, which will...(e) be implemented through a municipal comprehensive review and, where applicable, include direction to lower-tier municipalities.”

It is not in the Township's best interest to wait until such time as the County's MCR is undertaken and amendments to the County Official Plan are approved, to conform to and implement the 2017 Growth Plan. The intended planning horizon of the Township's current Official Plan has expired and an updated planning framework is required at this time to ensure that the Official Plan implements current Provincial and County planning policy to appropriately manage growth and development in the Township.

While the Township's Official Plan is required to conform to the 2017 Growth Plan, it is recognized that certain conformity matters are required to be addressed through the upper-tier municipal comprehensive review. Until such time as that is completed, the Township's Official Plan cannot fully implement the policies of the 2017 Growth Plan. As such, the focus of the Township's current Official Plan Review is to conform to the County Official Plan, while deferring certain matters of the 2017 Growth Plan, which can only be addressed through the County MCR.

While there are policies of the 2017 Growth Plan that the Township’s current Official Plan Review may address, the following key matters, will need to be considered in the context of the County’s next MCR.

6.1.1. Growth Management

The following growth management related matters of the 2017 Growth Plan must be addressed through the County’s next MCR, in consultation with the Township, which will then be considered by the Township of Springwater at the time of their next Official Plan Review.

Allocation of Growth

The County is responsible for applying the growth forecasts in Schedule 3 through a MCR (S. 5.2.4.2). Furthermore, the population and employment forecasts and plan horizon contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will apply to all planning matters in that municipality, including lower-tier planning matters where applicable, until the upper-tier municipality has applied the forecasts in Schedule 3 in accordance with policy 5.2.4.2 and those forecasts are approved and in effect in the upper-tier official plan (S. 5.2.4.3).

Until such time as the County’s next MCR is approved and in effect, the Township of Springwater Official Plan must apply the population and employment forecasts to the year 2031 as outlined in Schedule 7 of the Growth Plan. The County’s next MCR will establish a planning horizon to the year 2041 and allocate forecasted growth to the lower-tier municipalities to the year 2041. Therefore, the Townships’ current OPR must conform to the population and employment forecasts to the year 2031 as provided in Schedule 7 to the 2017 Growth Plan, which remain unchanged from the previous Growth Plan, and are established in the County’s Official Plan.

Minimum Delineated Built-up Area Residential Intensification Target

Section 2.2.2.3 of the 2017 Growth Plan states that,

“Until the next municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect, the annual minimum intensification target contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply”.

Furthermore, during the County’s next MCR, an alternative intensification target may be requested (S. 2.2.2.6). For the purposes of implementing the minimum intensification targets in the Growth Plan, upper-tier municipalities will, through a MCR, delineate in their official

plans: delineated built-up areas; other strategic growth areas for which a minimum density target will be established; and each portion of the designated greenfield area that is subject to a specific density target (S. 5.2.5.3). Therefore, the Township's Official Plan Review will need to apply the approved alternative minimum intensification target of 15% of all residential development occurring annually to be within the delineated built-up area.

Notwithstanding, the Township's Official Plan may encourage greater intensification within the delineated built-up areas to move towards a higher intensification target, in anticipation of the higher intensification targets outlined in the 2017 Growth Plan. In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Township's approved minimum intensification target will remain in place until such time as a new alternative target is approved under the 2017 Growth Plan.

Designated Greenfield Area Minimum Density Target

Section 2.2.7.5 of the 2017 Growth Plan states that,

“For upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring, the minimum density target for designated greenfield areas contained in the applicable official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply until the next municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect”.

During the County's next MCR, an alternative designated greenfield area density target may be requested (S. 2.2.7.6). For the purposes of implementing the minimum density targets in the Growth Plan, upper-tier municipalities will, through a MCR, delineate in their official plans: delineated built-up areas; other strategic growth areas for which a minimum density target will be established; and each portion of the designated greenfield area that is subject to a specific density target (S. 5.2.5.3). Therefore, the Township's OPR will need to apply the approved alternative minimum designated greenfield area density target of 32 residents and jobs per hectare.

Notwithstanding, the Township's Official Plan may encourage greater densities within the designated greenfield areas to move towards a higher density target, in anticipation of the higher density targets outlined in the 2017 Growth Plan. In accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Township's approved minimum designated greenfield area density target will remain in place until such time as a new alternative target is approved under the 2017 Growth Plan.

Employment Area Minimum Density Target

Section 2.2.5.5 of the 2017 Growth Plan establishes that upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, will each develop an employment strategy that establishes a minimum density

target for all employment areas, and identifies opportunities for the intensification of employment areas. The employment strategy is to be implemented through a County MCR. For the purposes of the Township's OPR, the Township will continue to apply the minimum designated greenfield area density targets of 32 residents and jobs per hectare, as it relates to both residential and employment development.

Employment Area Conversions

The 2017 Growth Plan requires that the conversion of lands within employment areas or prime employment areas to non-employment uses may be permitted only through a County MCR, subject to meeting certain criteria. For the purposes of the Township's OPR, conversion of employment areas to non-employment uses may not be contemplated at this time, but may only be considered through the County's next MCR. The Township may consider distinguishing employment areas from prime employment areas, which are areas of employment within settlement areas that are land extensive or have lower employment densities and require locations adjacent to major goods movement facilities and corridors (i.e., uses include manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, and ancillary uses). Employment area conversions may not be contemplated through the Township's OPR.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

The 2017 Growth Plan requires that a settlement area boundary expansion may only occur through a County MCR, subject to meeting the criteria established in Section 2.2.8.2, and the applicable policies of the PPS. For the purposes of the Township's Official Plan Review, expansions to settlement areas may not be contemplated at this time, and the settlement area boundaries must conform to the settlement boundaries established in the approved County Official Plan. Settlement Area expansions may only be considered through the County's next MCR.

Excess Lands

The 2017 Growth Plan states that the Minister will establish a methodology for assessing land needs to implement the Plan, including relevant assumptions and other direction as required. This methodology has been released and will be used by upper- and single-tier municipalities to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan (s 2.2.1.5). Based on this land needs assessment, some upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring will determine that they have excess lands. These municipalities will: a) determine which lands will be identified as excess lands based on the hierarchy of settlement areas established in accordance with Section 2.2.1.3; and b) prohibit development on all excess lands to the horizon of this Plan. For the purposes of the Township's Official Plan

Review, the identification of excess lands will need to be identified based on the Provincial land needs methodology (once available) and excess lands are identified in the County Official Plan, at the time of the next County MCR (S. 5.2.5.3). Therefore, the Township's current OPR will not consider the identification of excess lands.

6.1.2. Natural Heritage System

The Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the Natural Heritage System (NHS) for the GGH to implement the 2017 Growth Plan (S. 5.2.2(2)(b)). The Provincial Natural Heritage System for the GGH was issued on February 9, 2018, and is currently in effect, and may only be refined through the County MCR. Until such time, as the County undertakes any refinements to the NHS it would be premature for the Township to undertake a Natural Heritage System Strategy. Therefore, the Township should work with the Province in refining the NHS through the County's next MCR. Until such time as the County's MCR is approved, the Township's Official Plan will need to conform to, and implement the Provincial NHS.

6.1.3. Agricultural System

The Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the Agricultural System to implement the new Growth Plan, as per policy 5.2.2(2)(a). On February 9, 2018, the Provincial Agricultural System was issued, and takes effect immediately, and any further refinements may only be undertaken by the County through their MCR, consistent with the implementation procedures issued by the Province (S. 4.2.6(9)). The Provincial Agricultural System mapping provides the current basis for the mapping of prime agricultural areas, until such time as it may be refined through the County MCR. Further discussions with the Province and County are recommended to confirm the appropriate designation of prime agricultural areas, as these designations vary between the new County Official Plan and the Township's Official Plan. Until such time as the County's MCR is approved, the Township's Official Plan will need to conform to, and implement the Provincial Agricultural System.

In light of the above, it is recommended that the Township proceed with updating their Official Plan to bring it into conformity with the County Official Plan and the 2017 Growth Plan, to the extent permitted, until such time as the County's next MCR is approved. It is recognized that in accordance with the 2017 Growth Plan, the Township will be required to subsequently update their Official Plan, within one year of a new County Official Plan coming into effect, which implements the 2017 Growth Plan.

6.2. County Municipal Comprehensive Review and Supporting Studies

In light of the new 2017 Growth Plan, the County is required to undertake a number of supporting studies at the time of their next MCR to implement the policies of the 2017 Growth. In turn, this will provide further direction and guidance to the Township to update their Official Plan, at the time of the Township's next Official Plan Review.

It is anticipated that as part of the County's next MCR, and to satisfy the requirements of the 2017 Growth Plan, the County will initiate and undertake a number of studies, including:

- Watershed Plans;
- Settlement Area Hierarchy Criteria (to establish growth allocations to lower-tier municipalities and settlement areas);
- an Employment Strategy;
- a Sewer and Water Servicing Analysis and Assimilative Capacity Analysis;
- Financial Considerations and Scenario Testing;
- an Intensification Strategy;
- setting designated greenfield area targets across the County;
- Land Needs Assessment;
- Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System mapping prepared by the Province;
- a Housing Strategy; and
- a Climate Change Strategy.

The completion of these studies, through the County's next MCR is critical in the County implementing the 2017 Growth Plan. It is anticipated that the County MCR could take at least two years to undertake, in addition to the statutory approvals process. Since these studies are required to be undertaken by the County, it may be premature for the Township to consider undertaking any of these studies or related studies at this time, as further policy direction from the County is required. The Township should actively be engaged in the County's MCR and the preparation of supporting studies to ensure coordination with the Township.

6.3. Township Phase 2 Official Plan Review Supporting Studies

In response to the County's next MCR and to assist the Township in their current OPR, the following sections identify additional supporting studies that the Township is recommended to undertake at this time, and studies the Township may consider in the future, pending the outcome of the County's next MCR to implement the 2017 Growth Plan.

In addition, it is recognized that the Township is currently undertaking a Development Charges (DC) Background Study to update their Development Charges By-law, in regards to infrastructure investment to ensure growth is appropriately funded. The 2018 GMS has helped determine where growth should be focused and the extent to which it should be expected, through the recommended settlement hierarchy. The Township will have to ensure appropriate municipal infrastructure, including transportation and community services are in place to support growth within these areas, based on this framework. As these elements are all growth-related capital infrastructure requirements, their costs are supported through development charges, being one-time fees levied by the Township on new development. The findings and recommendations arising from the DC Background Study will provide input into Phase 2 of the OPR process.

6.3.1. Recommended Studies

In support of preparing the Township's new Official Plan (Phase 2), the following supporting studies are recommended to be undertaken as part of the current Official Plan Review:

1. **Intensification Strategy** – Recognizing the challenges to intensification, and based on limited opportunities for intensification within the existing communities, it is recommended that an Intensification Study be conducted to identify intensification opportunities and support the Township's residential intensification targets. The Intensification Study should determine an appropriate level of intensification for the Township and ways in which this level of intensification can best be accommodated while still meeting the broader policy direction of the local Official Plan, County Official Plan and Provincial policy framework. Specifically, the Intensification Study should focus on settlement areas which are subject to the Growth Plan minimum intensification target, being Midhurst and Elmvale and key corridors including Bayfield Street within Midhurst. Given the exclusion of undelineated built-up areas from the calculation of the minimum intensification target in the 2017 Growth Plan, the Township must reassess what an appropriate alternative intensification target would be for the land that remains within the delineated built boundary.

Overall, the Intensification Study should provide input to the County's next MCR. However, the Study should specifically determine an appropriate alternative minimum intensification target for the Township which should be brought forward to the County through their MCR process.

It is estimated that an Intensification Strategy may cost in the order of \$25,000 - \$35,000 depending on the scope of the work and extent of public consultation.

2. **Population Serving Employment Market Study** - The GMS determined that estimated existing Employment Serving employment densities in Springwater are within reason of the 23

job/hectare assumption. However, there was insufficient reliable data to confirm existing Population Serving employment densities. As a result, it was assumed that Population Serving lands within the Township will be developed at similar densities to comparable municipalities. Further analysis, including a review of 2016 Census employment data when that becomes available, will be necessary to determine the extent to which Population Serving employment densities can be intensified.

To support intensification priorities on non-residential lands, it is recommended that the Township consider undertaking a Population Serving Employment Market Study, including a commercial and institutional establishment inventory. The Study should investigate commercial and institutional market demand in Springwater and the potential to capture a larger share of local shopping and service needs of existing and future residents. Objectives of the Study should include: (1) the protection of existing Population Serving employment supplies for population serving employment uses (i.e. commercial, retail, institutional); (2) identification of opportunities for Population Serving employment development on mixed-use lands and commercial blocks; (3) determination of complementary land uses in support of Population Serving employment uses; and (4) establishment of an appropriate mix of accessory commercial uses within the Township. Specifically, it is recommended that a detailed analysis be undertaken to identify underutilized Population Serving employment developments from an economic development standpoint, especially within Midhurst and Elmvale. This study should be undertaken in conjunction with the recommended Intensification Study.

It is estimated that a Population Serving Employment Market Study may cost in the order of \$30,000 - \$35,000 depending on the scope of the work and extent of public consultation. Furthermore, there would be efficiencies in having both studies completed concurrently.

3. **Midhurst Corridor Study** - The intersection of Bayfield Street and Snow Valley Road has been identified as a major community focus for Midhurst, as is the promotion of sensitive intensification within the Bayfield Street Corridor, with a mixture of uses, including higher density forms of housing. In order to facilitate the planned land use and built form changes for this important corridor, the Township may consider undertaking a land use and urban design study for the Bayfield Corridor, to address such matters as: accommodating a mix of commercial and residential uses, appropriate intensification and higher density development forms, consolidating and limiting the number of access locations, urban design and streetscape improvements.

In light the County's next MCR, the County will need to provide policy direction with regards to minimum intensification targets for delineated built-up areas, which may also include minimum density targets for strategic growth areas. These targets may have a bearing on the type and

density of development that should be planned for the Midhurst Corridor. However, it may be prudent for the Township to undertake the Midhurst Corridor Study at this time, as it would help inform the Township and County as to the appropriate level of intensification that should be planned for this corridor. Notwithstanding, undertaking the Midhurst Corridor Study is not required for the Township to update its Official Plan at this time, but may be considered in the future.

Depending upon the scope and extent of the Midhurst Corridor Study, it is anticipated that a budget in the order of \$40,000 to \$50,000 may be required to develop a new planning framework (land use designations and policies), engage in community and stakeholder consultations, and prepare associated urban design guidelines for the Corridor.

6.3.2. Potential Future Studies

The following identifies potential future studies that the Township may consider to implement the 2017 Growth Plan pending the outcome of the County's next MCR, or in providing further input to the County's MCR, once population and employment forecasts and allocations have been established to the 2041 planning horizon:

1. **Natural Heritage System Strategy** – The Township may consider undertaking a natural heritage systems strategy to implement the Provincial NHS, and in consideration of any refinements which may be undertaken through the County's next MCR. However, until such time, it may be premature to undertake a Township-wide NHS. A County NHS may refine and augment the Provincial NHS and identify additional local natural heritage features and areas, and linkage opportunities for restoration and enhancement, at a more detailed level than contemplated in the Provincial NHS. As such, it is recommended that the Township inform the County's work on the MCR and potential refinements to the Provincial NHS.
2. **Transportation Master Plan** – The Township may consider undertaking a comprehensive Transportation Master Plan to identify transportation requirements to meet projected needs on a Township-wide basis to 2041, once growth has been allocated by the County. The Transportation Master Plan may include the development of an active transportation strategy. However, in light the County's next MCR, it is recommended that the Township defer such study, until population and employment forecasts have been allocated to the Township to the 2041 planning horizon.

Active Transportation Master Plan – The Township may undertake an Active Transportation Master Plan as a background study to the Official Plan or at some time in the future. The Official Plan should promote the development of a comprehensive parks, open space and trails network to encourage healthy communities, including the identification of a

comprehensive trails network including pedestrian and on and off-road cycling facilities. An Active Transportation Master Plan is not required to update the Official Plan, and may be considered at a future time.

4. **Water and Wastewater Master Plan** – The Township may consider undertaking a comprehensive Water and Wastewater Master Plan to assess opportunities for providing full municipal services to settlement areas identified for growth, in light of the Township’s 20 Year Capital Plan for Water Supply Facilities and Waste Water System. However, in anticipation of the County’s next MCR, it is recognized that the County will be undertaking a sewer and water servicing analysis and assimilative capacity analysis, and identify a settlement area hierarchy for future growth. As such, it is recommended that the Town work in consultation with the County to undertake the water and wastewater analysis, which will be contingent upon the population and employment forecasts allocated to the Township to the 2041 planning horizon.

7. Next Steps

This Discussion Paper has been prepared concurrently with the 2018 GMS which characterizes the extent and nature of land demand that the Township is projected to experience to the year 2031, reviews the adequacy of Springwater's designated land supply to accommodate the projected growth, and provides recommendations to establish growth management policies in the Township's new Official Plan.

Furthermore, this Discussion Paper outlines the key issues and policy directions to be addressed in the new Official Plan based on the current Provincial and County planning frameworks, as well as recent Township studies and initiatives. The key recommendations of the 2018 GMS have been summarized in Section 5 of this Discussion Paper, including the recommended Official Plan policy directions stemming from this Discussion Paper.

Section 6 of this Report outlines a path forward for the municipality to proceed in undertaking their OPR at this time, particularly in light of the new 2017 Growth Plan. While it is recognized that a number of matters related to the 2017 Growth Plan must first be addressed through the County's MCR, it is important for the Township to update its Official Plan at this time to ensure conformity with the County Official Plan and the 2017 Growth Plan, to the extent permitted, and to ensure the Township's Official Plan addresses the growth and development aspirations of the Township. Furthermore, Section 6 identifies recommended supporting studies to be undertaken in Phase 2 of the Official Plan Review to support the preparation of new Official Plan policies.

The Discussion Paper and the 2018 GMS will be reviewed with Township staff, and stakeholders, including the County of Simcoe, and will be subsequently presented to the public for review and input. The Discussion Paper is intended to assist in guiding the development of new policies for the Official Plan, and will be presented to Council for endorsement. Phase 2 will integrate work undertaken in Phase 1, including the policy recommendations identified in this Report, and will culminate in the preparation of the new Official Plan, which will be brought forward to Township Council for adoption.