Centre Wellington

Report to Council

To: Mayor Watters and Members of Council

Report: PLN2024-34

Prepared By: Brett Salmon, Managing Director of Planning and Development

Date: 30 Sep 2024

RE: Greenfield Density and Intensification Target Preferred Scenario

Recommendation:
THAT the Council of the Township of Centre Wellington endorse Scenario 3 as the Preferred Scenario for land need associated with Settlement Area Boundary Expansion for the Fergus and Elora-Salem Urban Centres;

and,

THAT Township staff be directed to utilize the Preferred Scenario when presenting revised urban centre boundaries for Council consideration.

Report:
As part of the County of Wellington Official Plan Review (Municipal Comprehensive Review, or MCR), Watson Economists completed a Land Needs Assessment (LNA) on the County's behalf. The LNA determines the amount of land required for a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE) while taking into account population, household and employment forecasts, greenfield density assumptions, and built up area intensification assumptions. Conversions of employment (industrial) land to community use are also considered in the LNA.

The final LNA report was endorsed by County Council in December 2022. The County-endorsed LNA identifies the need for Settlement Area Boundary Expansions for the Fergus and Elora-Salem Urban Centres, as summarized below:

Total Community Land Need	238 ha
Total Employment Land Need	160 ha
Total SABE Required	398 ha

The Settlement Area Boundary expansion results are based on an assumed greenfield development density of at least 47 people and jobs per hectare, and a minimum built up

area intensification factor of 20% (i.e. future residential development is made up of at least 20% intensification within the exist built up areas of Fergus and Elora-Salem). Under current County of Wellington Official Plan provisions, the minimum County-wide greenfield density target is 40 people and jobs per hectare and the intensification target is 20%.

In January of 2023, Council authorized staff to retain Watson Economists to consider three additional density and intensification scenarios for Centre Wellington, with the goal of mitigating the amount of land required for the SABE. The entirety of Township land surrounding the Fergus and Elora Urban Centres are considered a Prime Agricultural Area and it is not possible to expand either Urban Centre without utilizing land in a Prime Agricultural Area. Council's objective of reducing the consumption of prime agricultural land is stated in its Strategic Plan.
Including the base scenario, the four scenarios under review include the following:

Scenario 1: County of Wellington Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) – Base: 20% intensification rate and 47 people and jobs/ha in DGA Community Area.
Scenario 2: 25% intensification rate and 50 people and jobs/ha in the DGA Community Area.
Scenario 3: 20% intensification rate and 53 people and jobs/ha in the DGA Community Area.
Scenario 4: 30% intensification rate and 55 people and jobs/ha in the DGA Community Area

Watson presented the results of its scenario assessment to Council in November 2023, as part of staff report PLN2023-55. In summary, Watson recommended a preferred scenario based on an overall greenfield density scenario of 53 people and jobs per hectare, and maintaining the intensification rate at 20%. Watson also accounted for the proposed South Fergus Secondary Plan under development at the time, which incorporates a change in presumed land use from employment to community of 34 hectares, which in overall terms would reduce the settlement area boundary expansion need for community use from 238 ha to 204 ha, and to increase the employment land need from 160 ha to 194 ha.

The impact of the preferred scenario as presented in November last year is to reduce the community land need from **204 hectares to 120 hectares**. The total required settlement area boundary expansion would therefore be a total of **314 hectares**.

Following the presentation of Report PLN2023-55, there have been several important developments related to the Land Needs Assessment and Settlement Area Boundary Expansion.

- The County of Wellington launched its PlanWell Urban Boundary Expansion Review Framework in February 2024
- The South Fergus Secondary Plan has been adopted by Township Council

- County OPA 120, adopting the Population, Household, and Employment forecasts for the County, the local municipalities and the Urban Centres has been approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, with no modifications to the forecasts.

The adoption of the South Fergus Secondary Plan and the approval of County OPA 120 solidify the assumptions upon which the Land Needs Assessment and the Township alternate scenario review have been undertaken.

There have also been a couple of important related provincial policy developments:

- Settlement Area Boundary Expansions impacting the Fergus and Elora-Salem Urban Centres that were imposed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing have been reversed
- In April 2024, the Province completed a review of the 2020 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (A Place to Grow) and the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), and announced that a new Provincial Planning Statement would be developed and A Place to Grow would be scrapped. In August at the AMO conference, it was announced that the new Provincial Planning Statement would take effect on 20 October 2024.

The County and Township are proceeding with the Settlement Area Boundary Expansion, which is expected to be completed this fall. Therefore, now is an appropriate time for Council to consider adopting an alternate density scenario. Whether such Settlement Area Boundary Expansion takes place under the current Growth Plan framework or a future PPS framework, there is still an obligation to ensure an adequate supply of land to meet future community and employment needs.

Township staff have reviewed the recommended preferred scenario with Watson in the context of the Urban Boundary Expansion Review. As a result of this further consideration, Scenario 3, which is the preferred scenario, has been modified to reduce the greenfield density assumption from 53 people and jobs per hectare to 52 people and jobs per hectare. Under this modified preferred scenario, the community land need for urban expansion totals **132 hectares.**

Township staff support Watson's recommended preferred scenario as modified. We believe that this scenario remains realistic and achievable while still accomplishing the goal of mitigating the need for urban expansion into Prime Agricultural Areas. Increasing the greenfield density beyond 52 people and jobs per hectare would require development in areas added to the urban centre boundary at a density greater than is proposed for the South Fergus Secondary Plan area, which is estimated at approximately 56 people and jobs per hectare. We don't foresee future political support for greenfield densities that exceed South Fergus. Similarly, given the difficulty in obtaining political support for taller buildings in the built up area, at this time we do not believe that an intensification target greater than 20% is realistic or attainable. On this basis, Scenario 3 is recommended over Scenarios 2 and 4.

Below is a table comparing the base scenario to the preferred scenario. The preferred scenario results in a net land need savings of 72 hectares, or approximately 178 acres.

	Base Scenario	**Preferred Scenario**
Total Community Land Need	238 ha	132 ha
Total Employment Land Need	160 ha	194 ha
Total SABE Required	398 ha	326 ha
Reduction in Land Need		**72 ha**

Corporate Strategic Plan:
Create the conditions for economic prosperity
Improve the activity, health & wellness of our community
Managing growth while enhancing the community's unique character
Championing environmental stewardship
Provide innovative & sustainable governance

Consultation:
Watson and Associates
County of Wellington Planning and Development

Attachments:
- PLN2023-55 - Pdf

Approved By:
Dan Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer

Report to Committee of the Whole

To: Mayor Watters and Members of Council

Report: PLN2023-55

Prepared By: Brett Salmon, Managing Director of Planning and Development

Date: 14 Nov 2023

RE: Land Needs Assessment Review

Recommendation:
THAT the Council of the Township of Centre Wellington receive for information the presentation by Watson and Associates with respect to the Centre Wellington Land Needs Review

Report:
In January of 2023, Council authorized Township staff to retain Watson and Associates (via report PLN2023-06, attached) to complete a Community Land Needs Assessment that would assess alternative greenfield and intensification targets for Centre Wellington. The approved project plan calls for the assessment of four density and intensification scenarios to determine how the Land Needs Assessment prepared on behalf of the County of Wellington would be affected by alternative scenarios. In addition, the review considers the impact of the proposed South Fergus Secondary Plan on the findings of the County of Wellington Land Needs Assessment.

Watson has now completed their review and are ready to present the draft findings to Council. Following the Council presentation, the draft report will be posted on Connect CW to obtain input prior to the preparation of a final report, which is expected to come to Council in January 2024 for endorsement.

Corporate Strategic Plan:
Managing growth while enhancing the community's unique character

Attachments:
- Centre Wellington Presentation - Land Needs Scenarios 11.14.23
- PLN2023-06 - Pdf

Approved By:
Dan Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer



Watson & Associates ECONOMISTS LTD.

Township of Centre Wellington Urban Land Needs Scenarios – Technical Results Review

Council Meeting
November 14, 2023

Introduction

Overview

Introduction

Purpose

- Prepare a local assessment of land needs that will prioritize the quantum of land that is required for servicing to 2051.
- Four scenarios to be developed based on density and intensification levels.
- The County's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) land needs assessment is considered the "base" scenario.
- The "preferred scenario" selected by Council and will be utilized for local planning, phasing and servicing plans.

County of Wellington MCR/Official Plan Review

Summary of Urban Land Needs – Centre Wellington

- County of Wellington MCR Phase 2 Report identified the following land need for the Township of Centre Wellington:
  - **238 ha** for Community Area uses
  - **160 ha** for Employment Area uses
  - Total land need of **398 ha**

Urban Community Area Targets

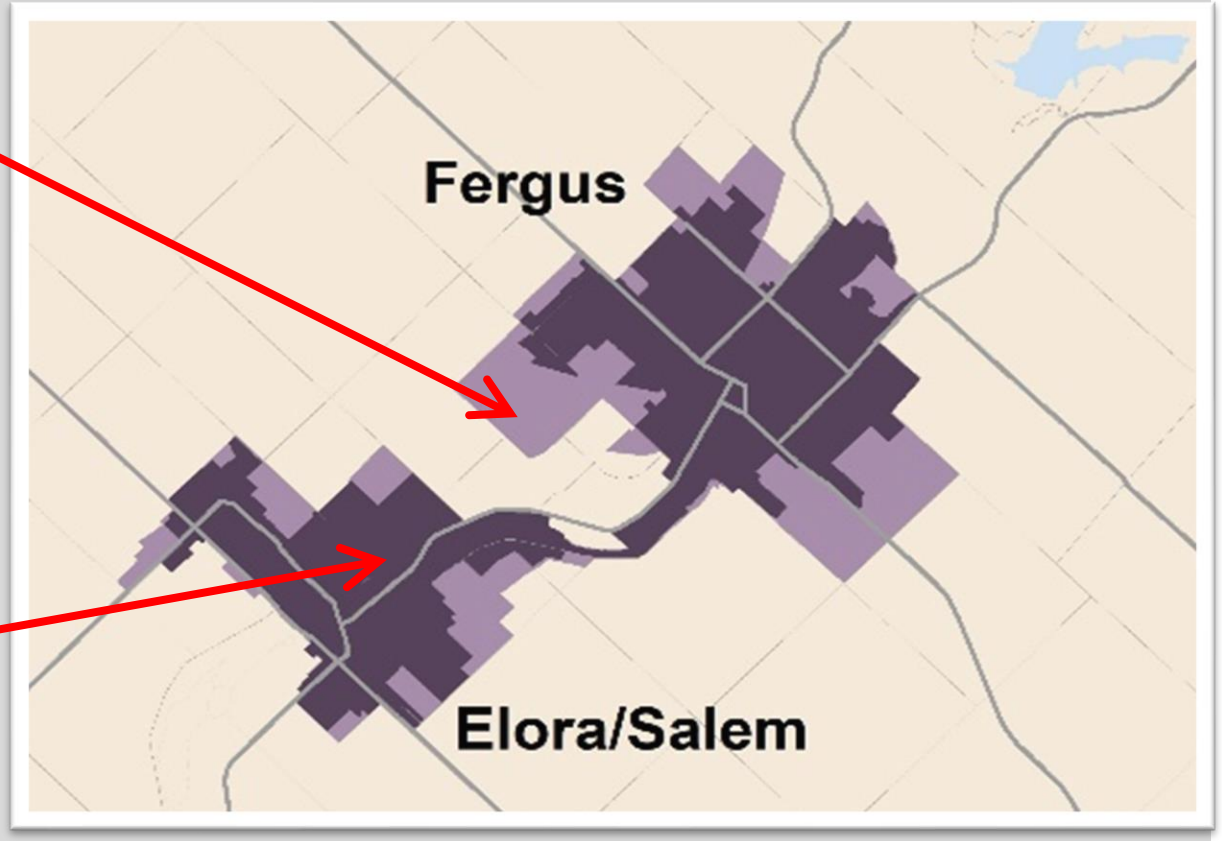
Intensification and Density Targets – County of Wellington MCR

Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) Density Target

- Minimum of 40 people and jobs per gross hectare at County-level average.
- **County of Wellington MCR: Centre Wellington's average density assumed is 47 people and jobs/ha.**

Built-up Area (BUA) Intensification Target

- An average minimum of 15% of Wellington's housing growth is planned through intensification (alternative target).
- **County of Wellington MCR: Intensification for Centre Wellington assumed is 20%.**



Source: Diagram prepared by the County of Wellington, Planning Department.
Growth Plan (2020 consolidation; and County Official Plan (January 28, 2021 consolidation).

South Fergus Secondary Plan

Wellington County MCR Land Needs Impact

- The Secondary Plan is envisioned to not include Employment Area lands. The Wellington MCR assumed **34 ha** for Employment Area lands.

South Fergus Secondary Plan Area



LNA Impact

Decrease in Community Area Land Need

34 ha

Adjusted Land Need: 204 ha (MCR: 238 ha)

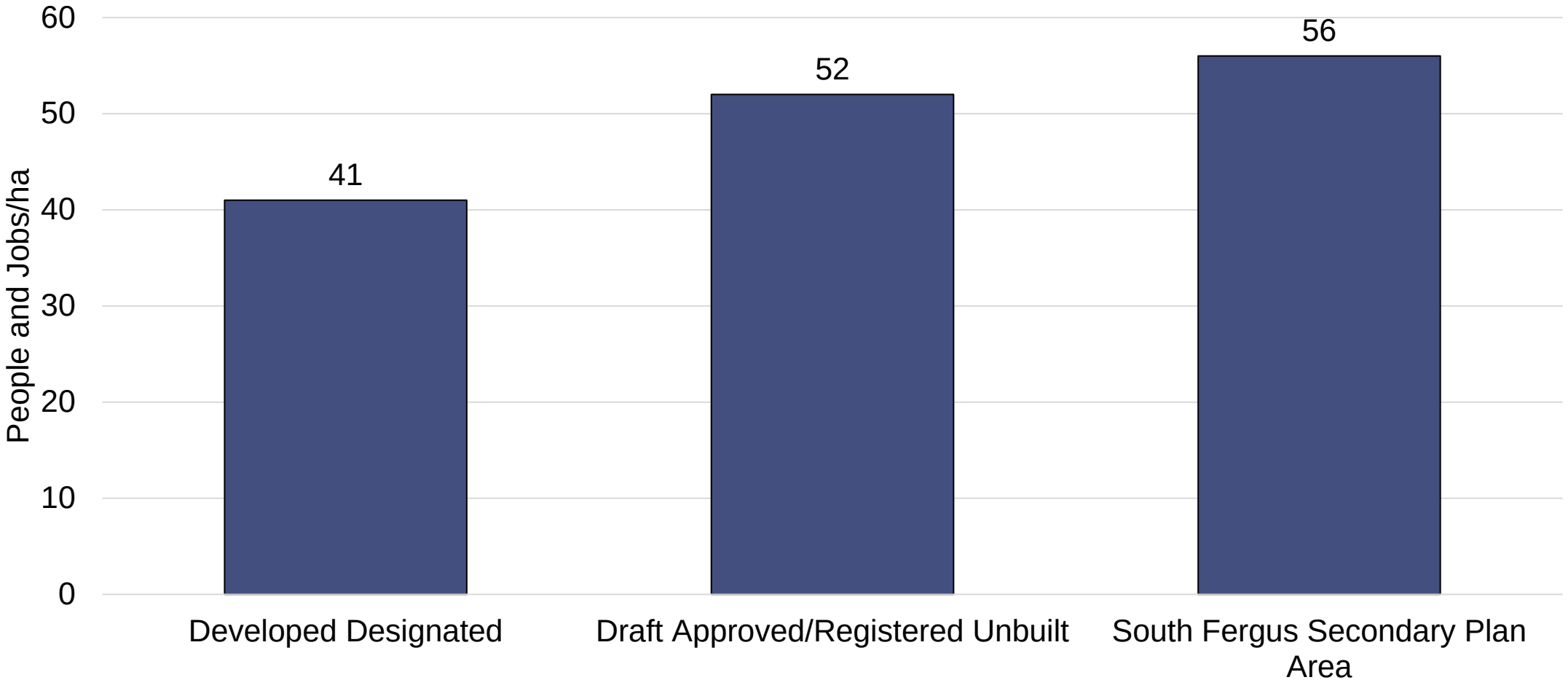
Increase in Employment Area Land Need

34 ha

Adjusted Land Need: 194 ha (MCR: 160 ha)

People and Jobs Density

By Status of Development



Source: Based on the County of Wellington MCR background work by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and the South Fergus Secondary Plan.

Density Impact of South Fergus Secondary Plan Area

Comparison

County of Wellington MCR



- Developed: 41 p&j/ha
- Vacant: 50 p&j/ha

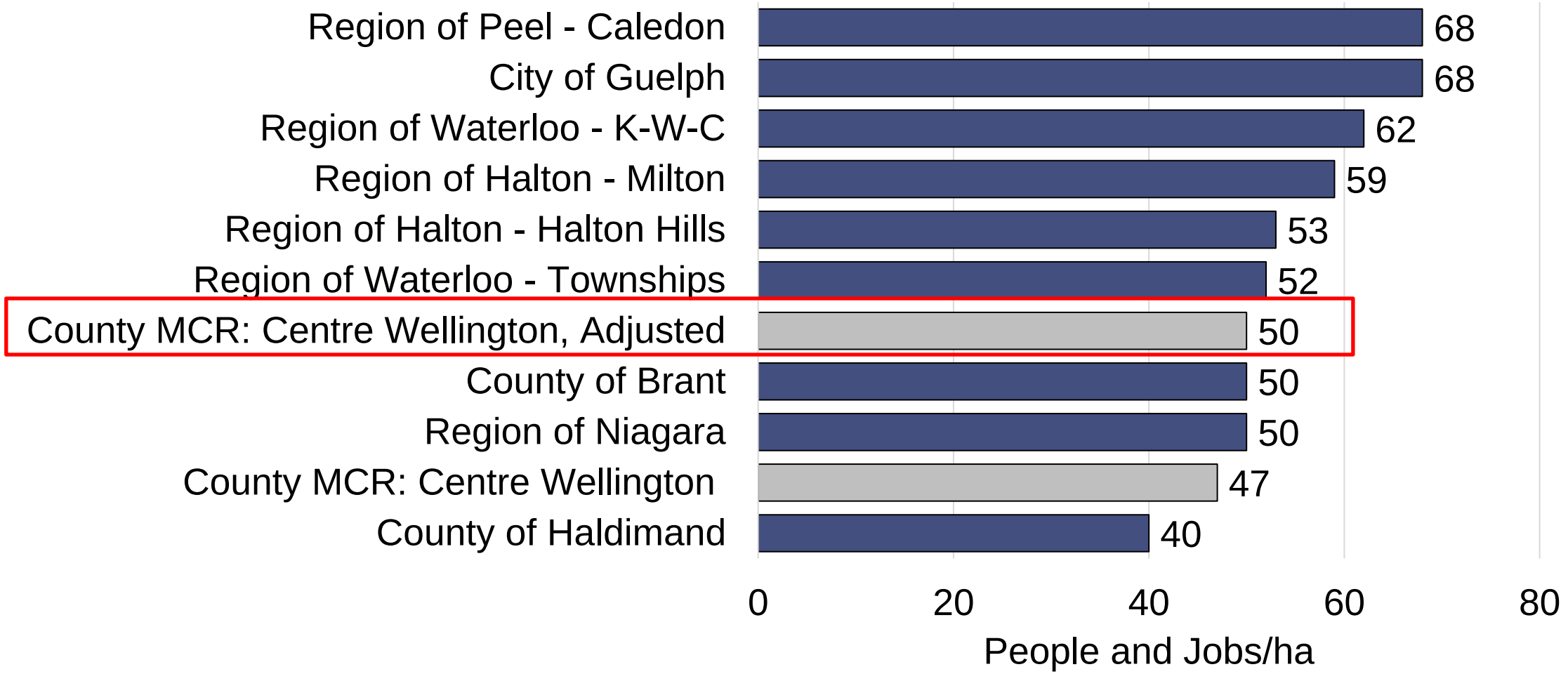
Impact of South Fergus SP



- Developed: 41 p&j/ha
- South Fergus SP: 56 p&j/ha
- Remaining Vacant: 50 p&j/ha

Forecast Density in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region

Comparison of Planning for Density



Source: Based on Municipal Comprehensive Reviews across the GGH.
Notes: Centre Wellington adjusted based on density anticipated in the South Fergus Secondary Plan Area.
K-W-C = Cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.

Scenarios

Overview

County of Wellington MCR/OPR

Overview

1. County of Wellington M.C.R. – Base:

- 20% intensification rate
- 47 people and jobs/ha in DGA Community Area

2. Moderate Increase to Intensification and Density Targets:

- 25% intensification rate
- 50 people and jobs/ha in DGA Community Area

3. Increase to DGA Density, No Change to Residential Intensification Rate

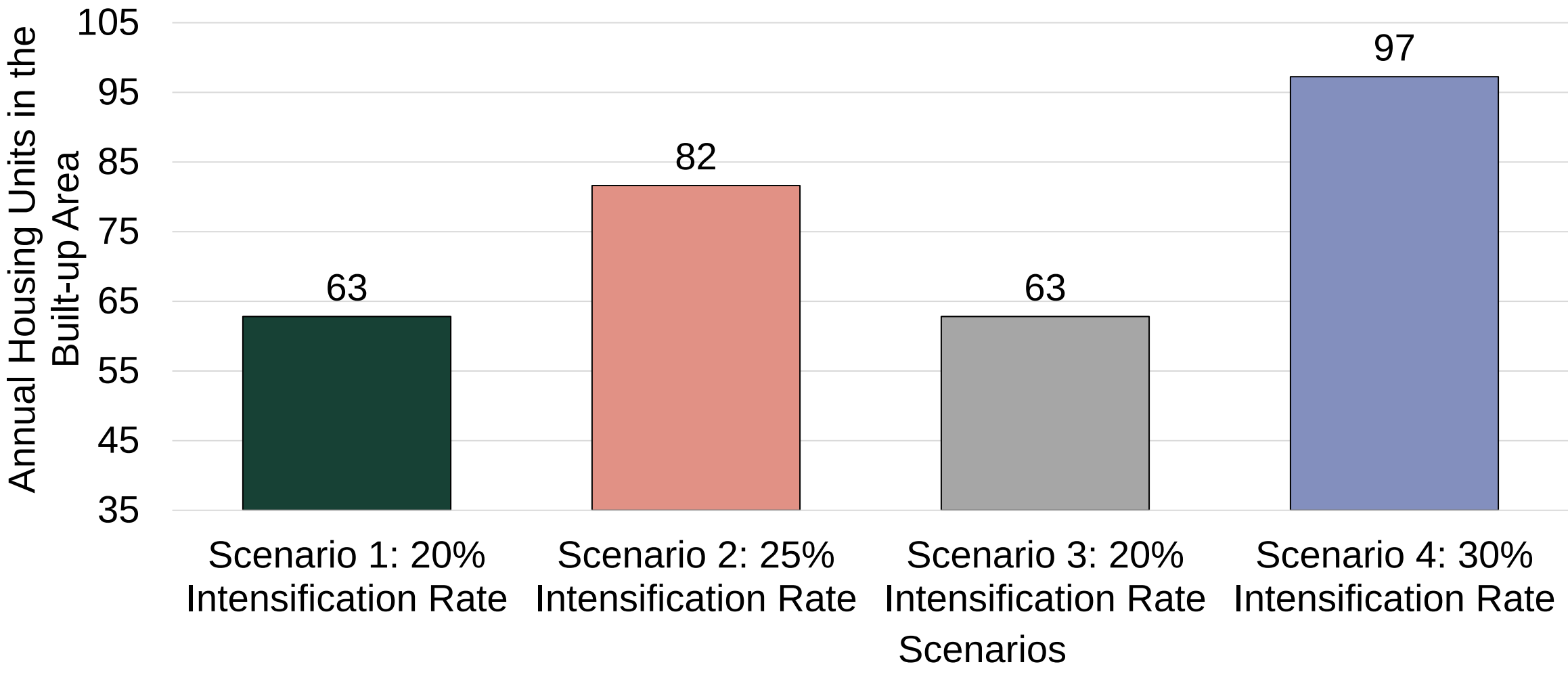
- 20% intensification rate
- 53 people and jobs/ha in DGA Community Area

4. Significant Increase to Intensification and Density Targets:

- 30% intensification rate
- 55 people and jobs/ha in DGA Community Area

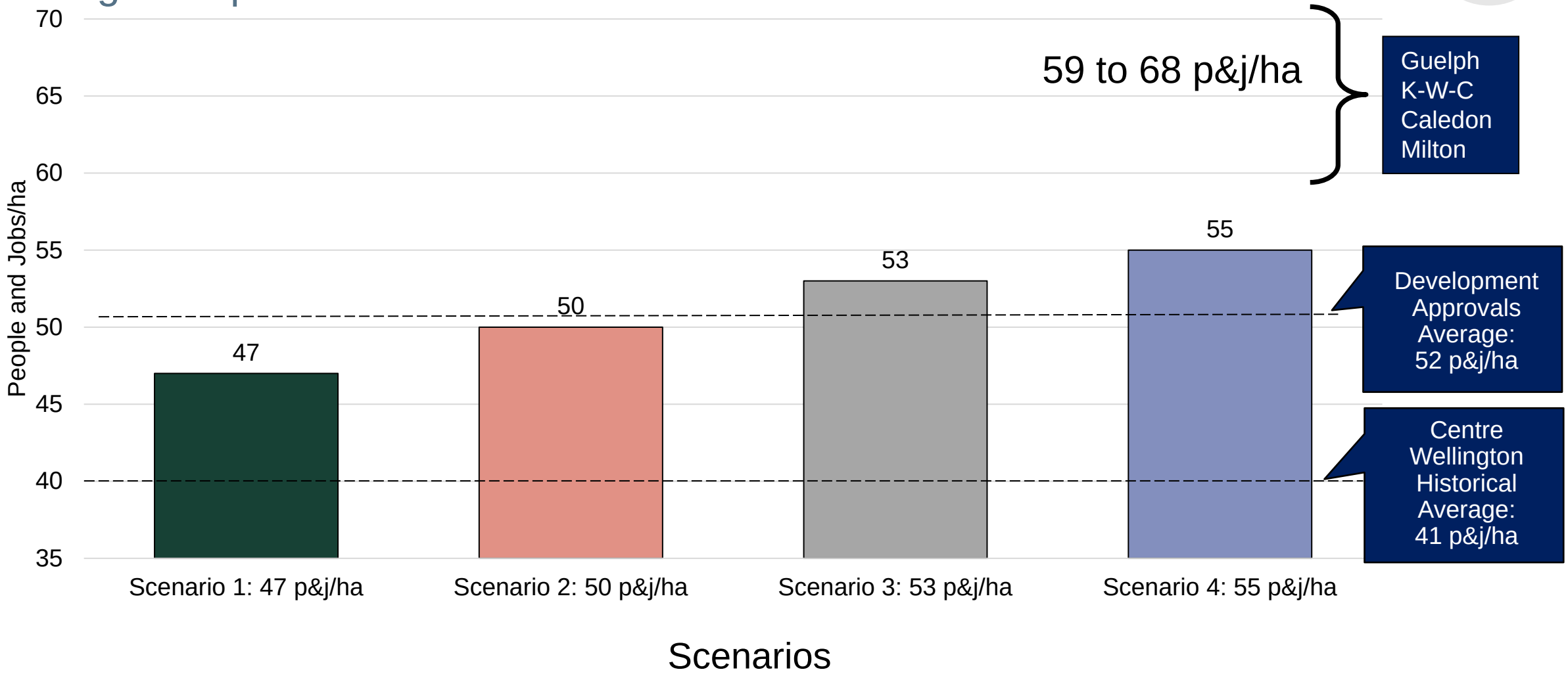
Comparing Intensification Levels by Scenario

Annual Housing Units in the Built-up Area



Comparing Density Levels by Scenario

Average People and Jobs/ha



Density Visuals

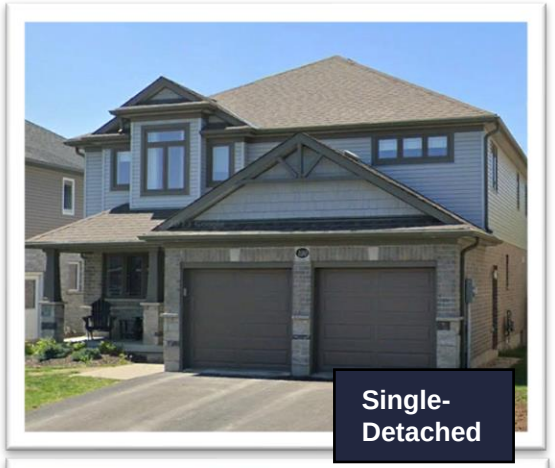
Overview


< 45 people
& jobs/ha

Density Example #1: 37 People and Jobs/ha

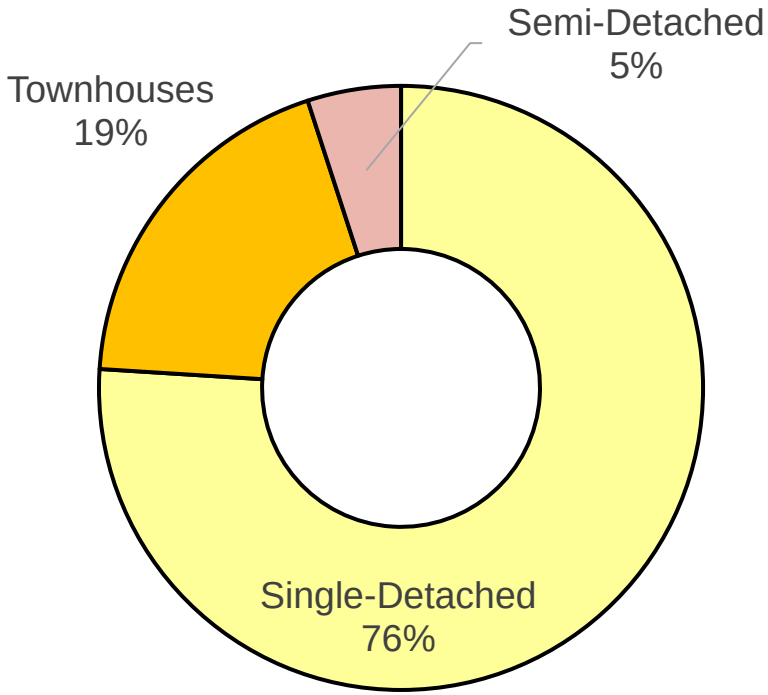
Elora – Spencer Dr. S./1 Line











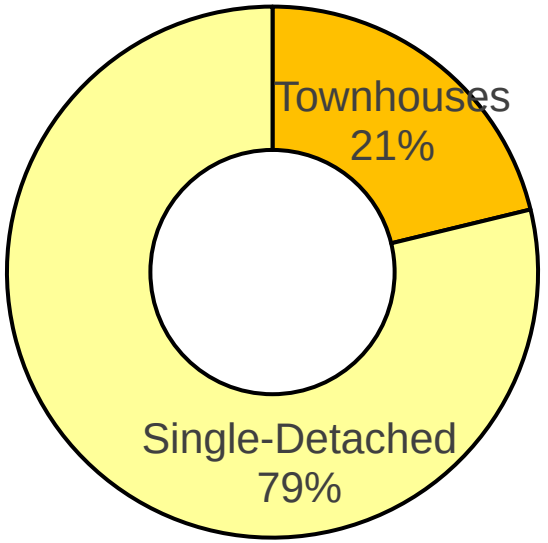
Units per ha: 13

People and Jobs: 670
Land Area: 18 ha

Density Example #2: 42 People and Jobs/ha

Fergus – Courtney St. & Steele St. (Designated Greenfield Area)





42 people & jobs/ha

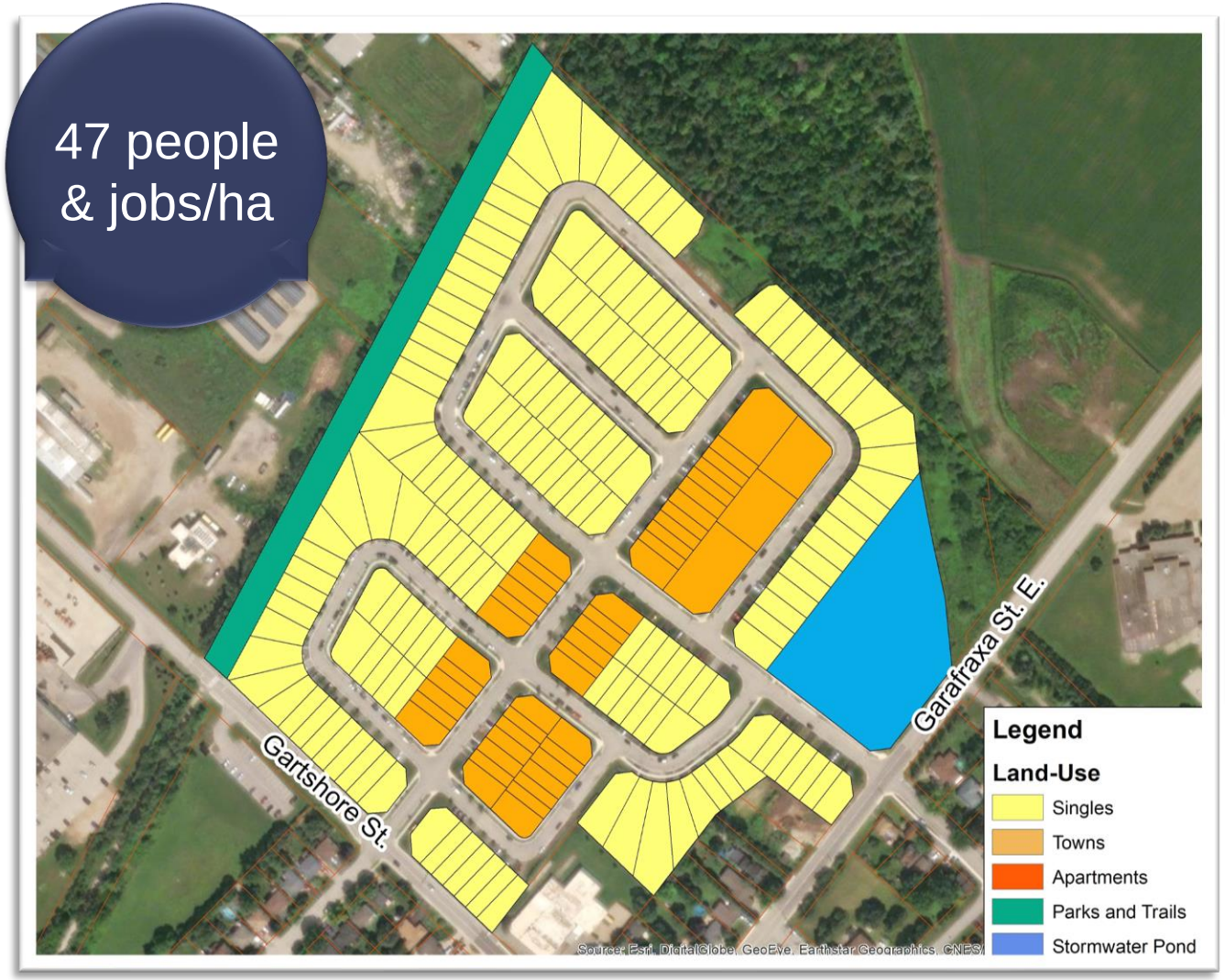
Units per ha: 15

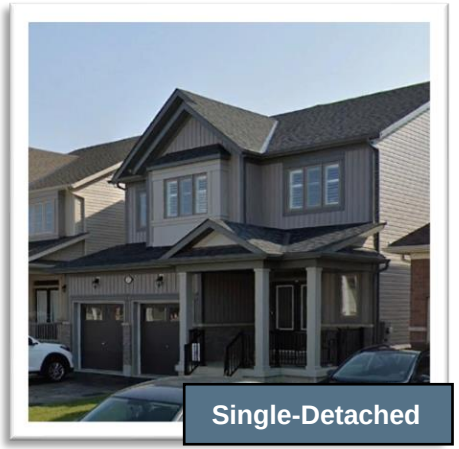
People and Jobs: 630
Land Area: 15.2 ha


47 p&j/ha

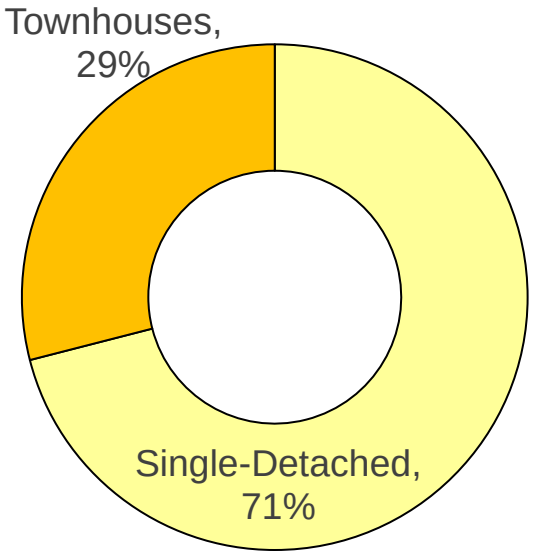
Density Example #3: 47 People and Jobs/ha

Fergus – Garafaxa St. E./Gartshore St. (Designated Greenfield Area)









Units per ha: 16

People and Jobs: 660
Land Area: 14.2 ha

Density Example #4: 47 People and Jobs/ha

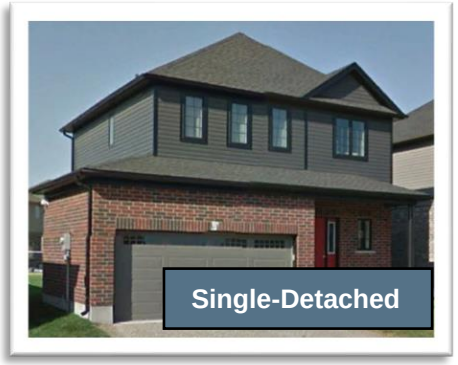
Stratford – Newly Developing Greenfield Area (Avon West Development)

47 people & jobs/ha



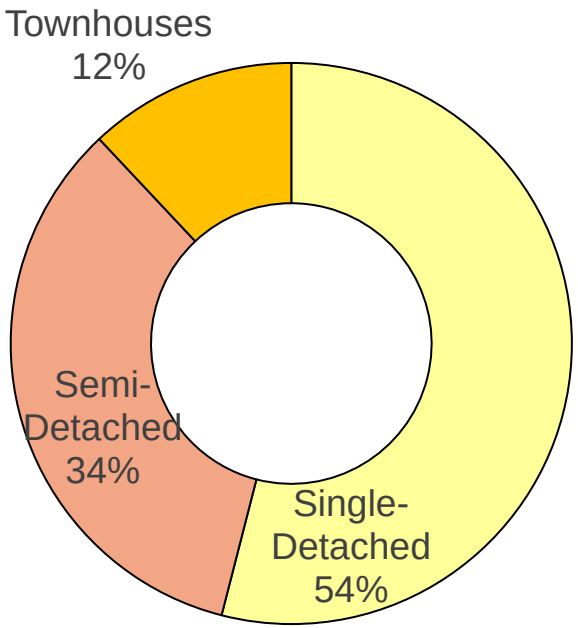
Units per ha: 16

People and Jobs: 880
Land Area: 18.9 ha





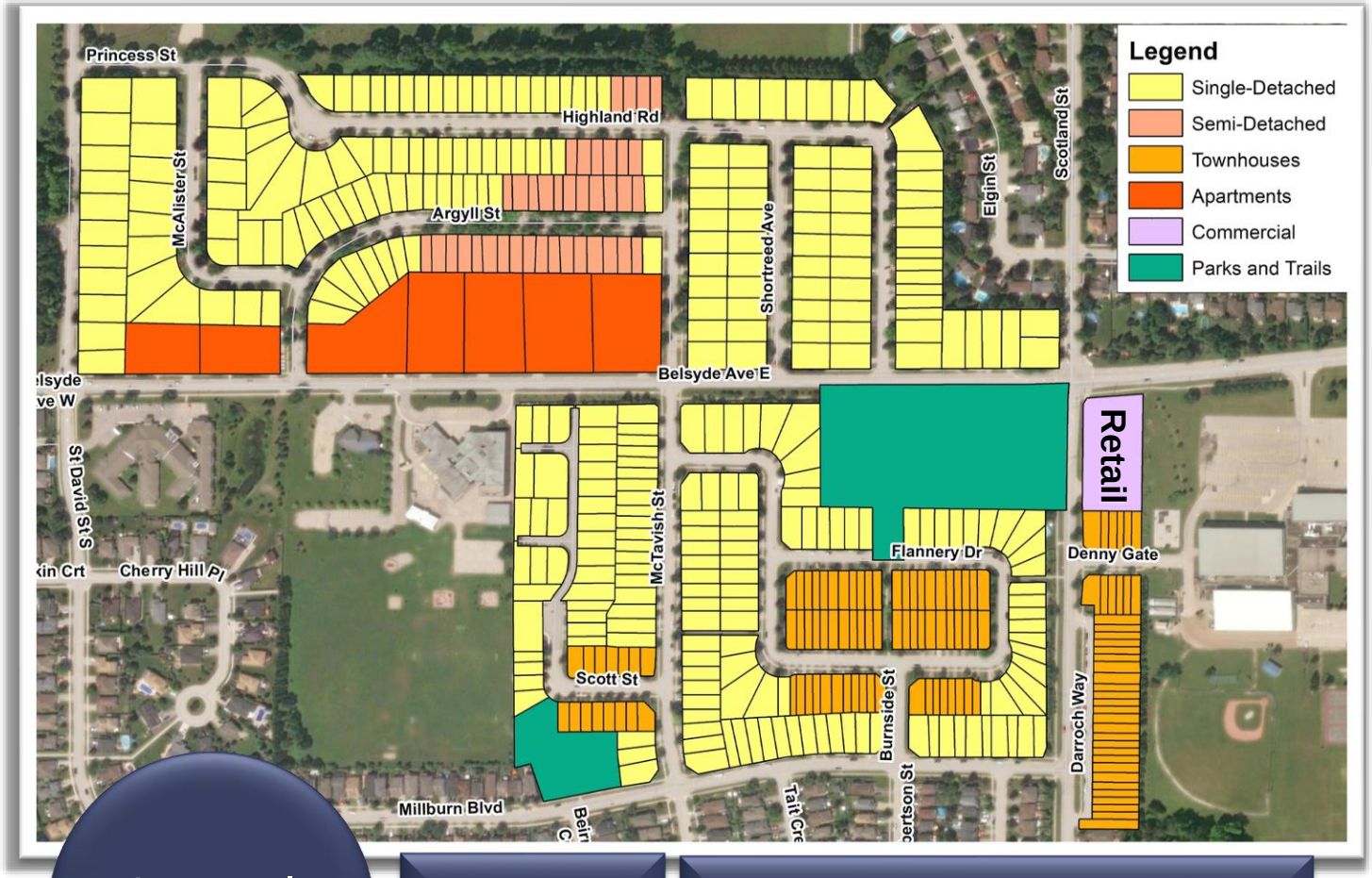




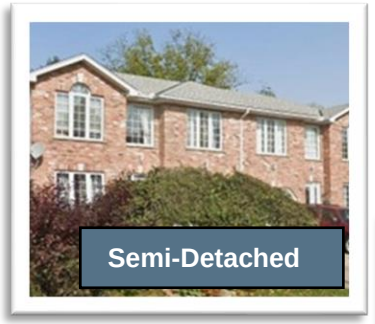

50 to 60
p&j/ha

Density Example #5: 50 People and Jobs/ha

Fergus – Belyside Ave./McTavish St. (Built-up Area)



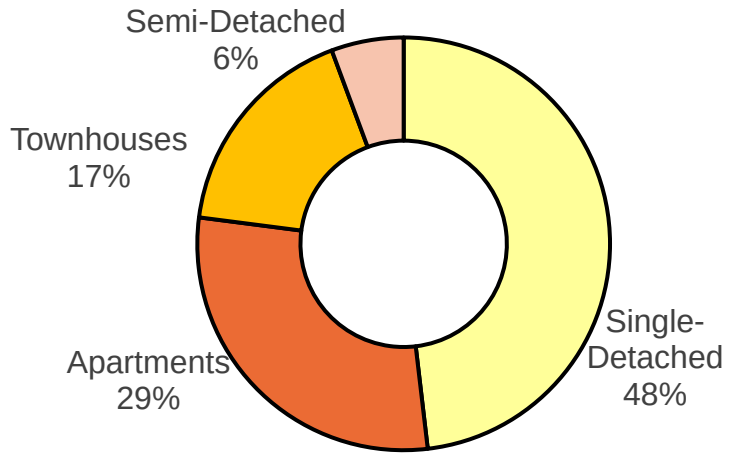












50 people & jobs/ha

Units per ha: 18

People and Jobs: 1,800
Land Area: 36.6 ha

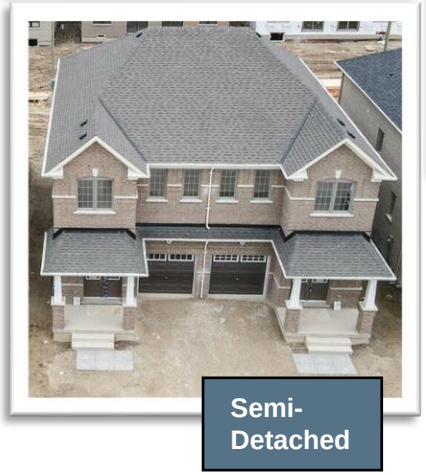
Density Example #6: 51 People and Jobs/ha

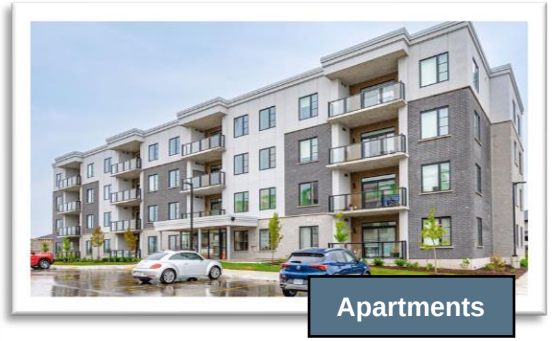
Fergus – Storybrook/Beatty Line Subdivision (Designated Greenfield Area)

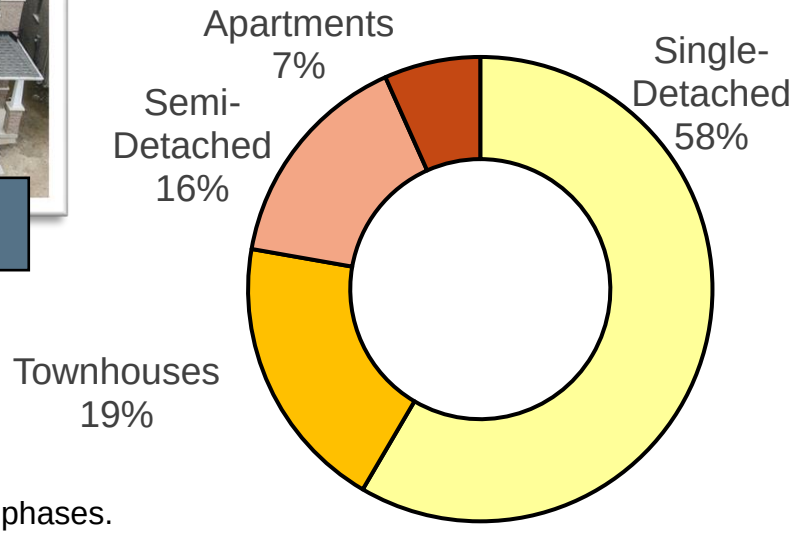












51 people & jobs/ha

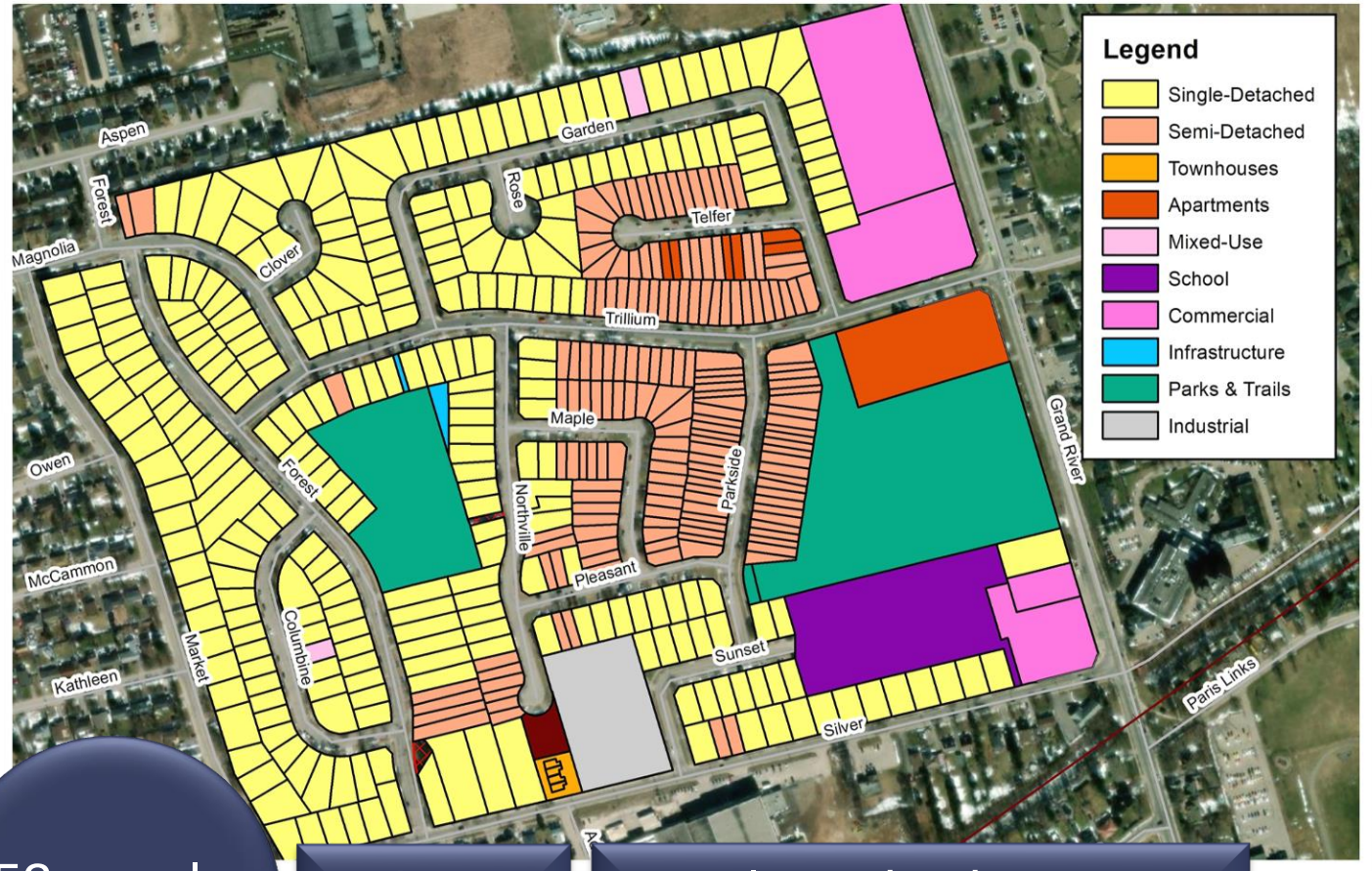
Units per ha: 17

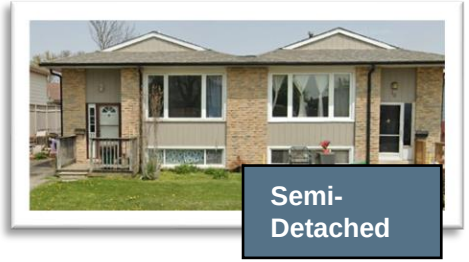
People and Jobs: 3,200
Land Area: 62.3 ha

Note: Based on draft approved plans. Photos are based on housing completed in the first phases.

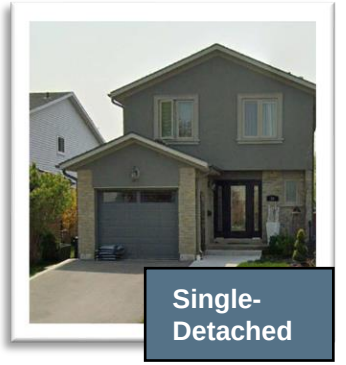
Density Example #7: 52 People and Jobs/ha

Paris (County of Brant) – Mixed-Use Area in Built-up Area

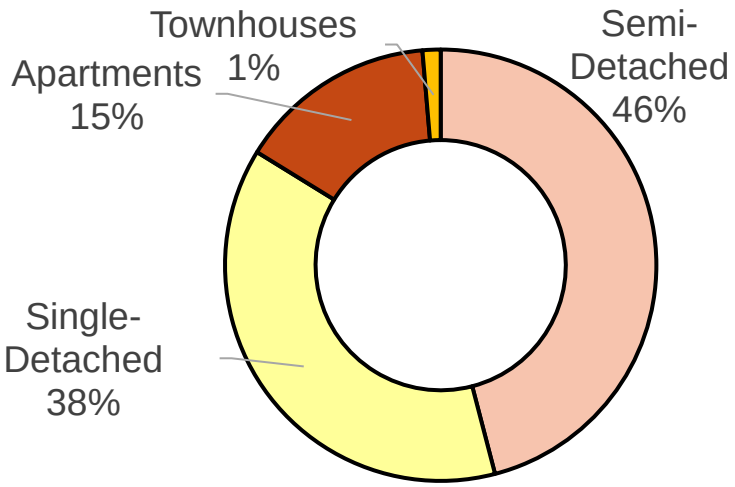












52 people & jobs/ha

Units per ha: 13

People and Jobs: 1,500
Land Area: 29 ha

Note: Industrial site excluded in calculations.

Density Example #8: 53 People and Jobs/ha

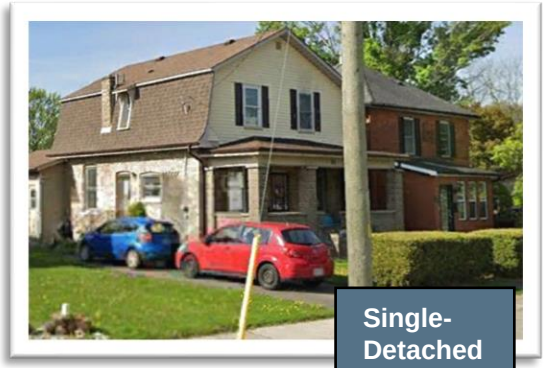
Paris (County of Brant) – Mixed-Use Area in Built-up Area



53 people & jobs/ha

Units per ha: 12

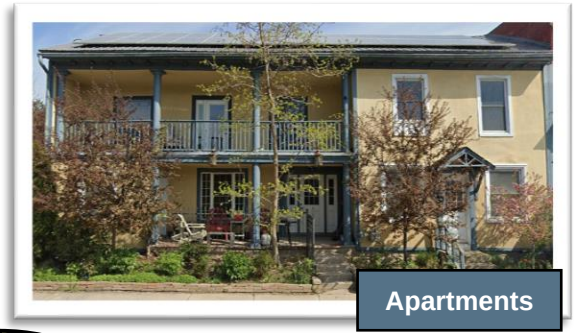
People and Jobs: 1,300
Land Area: 25 ha



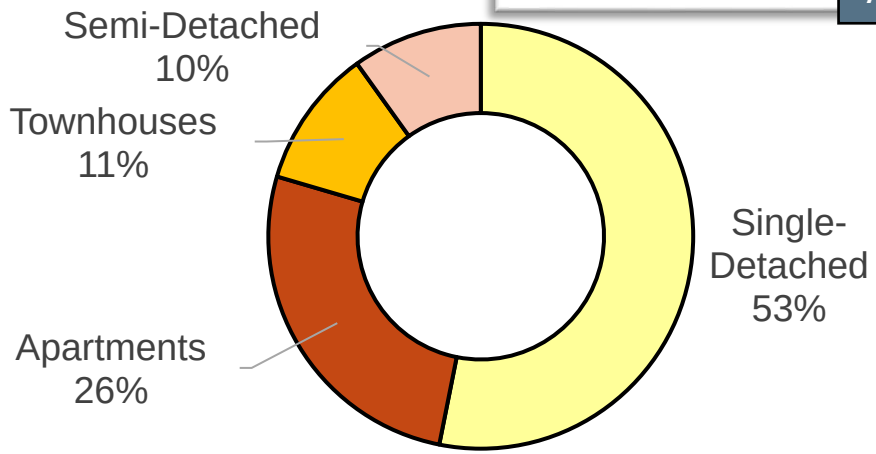
Single-Detached



Retail & Apartments

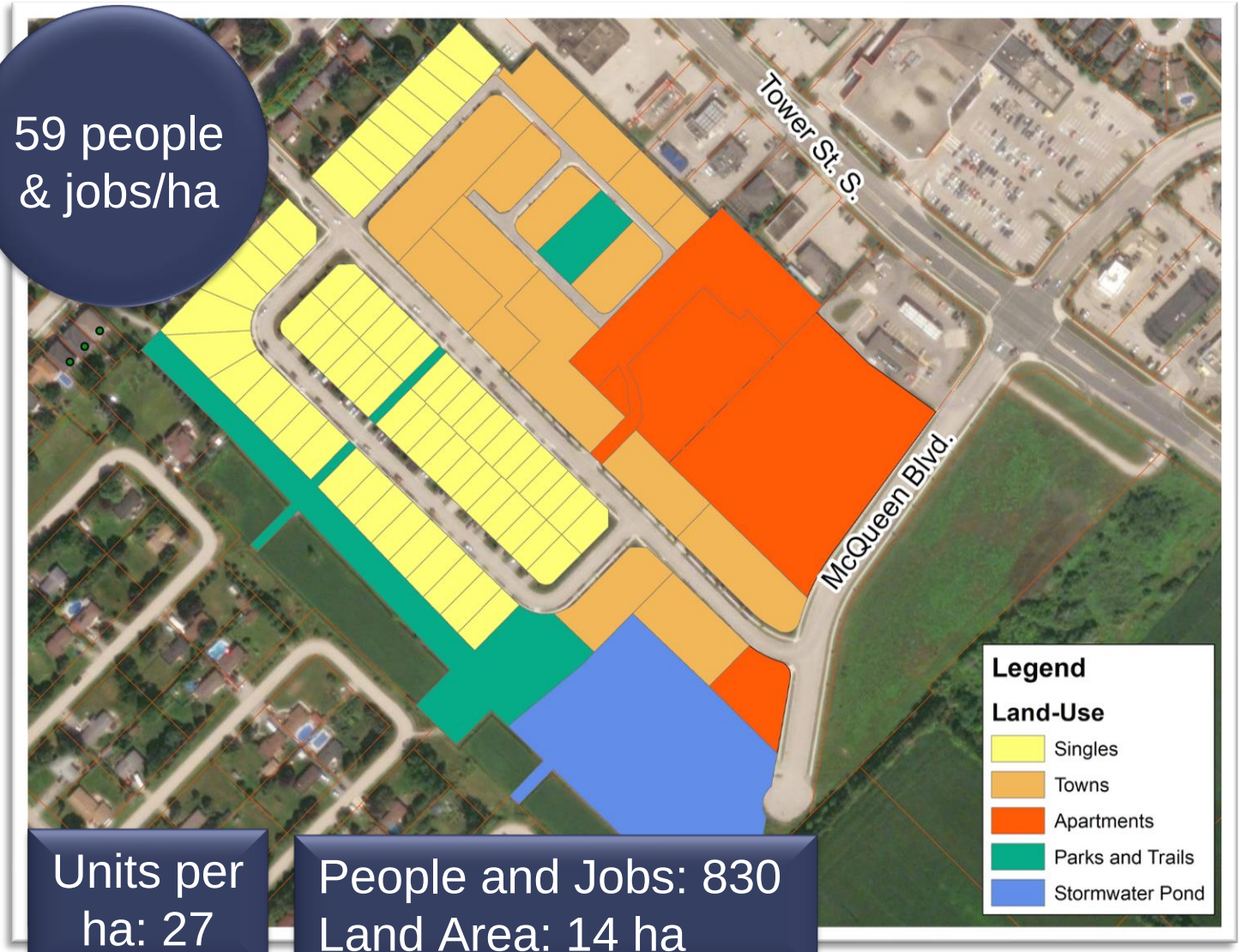


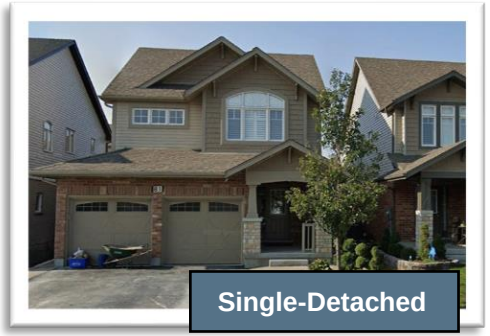
Apartments



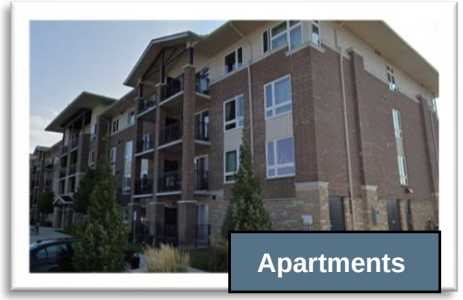
Density Example #9: 59 People and Jobs/ha

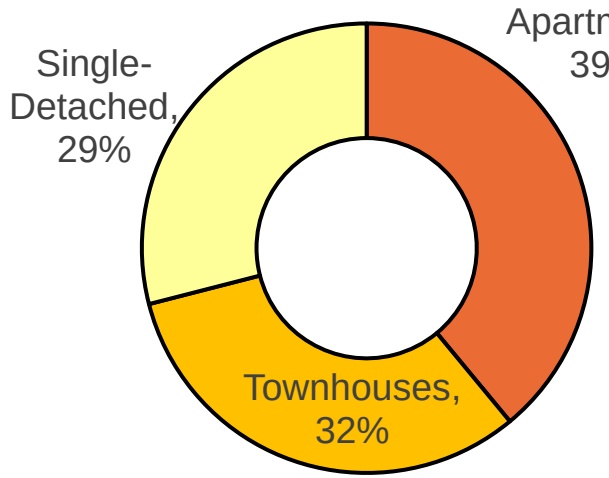
Fergus – Tower St. S./McQueen Blvd. (Designated Greenfield Area)







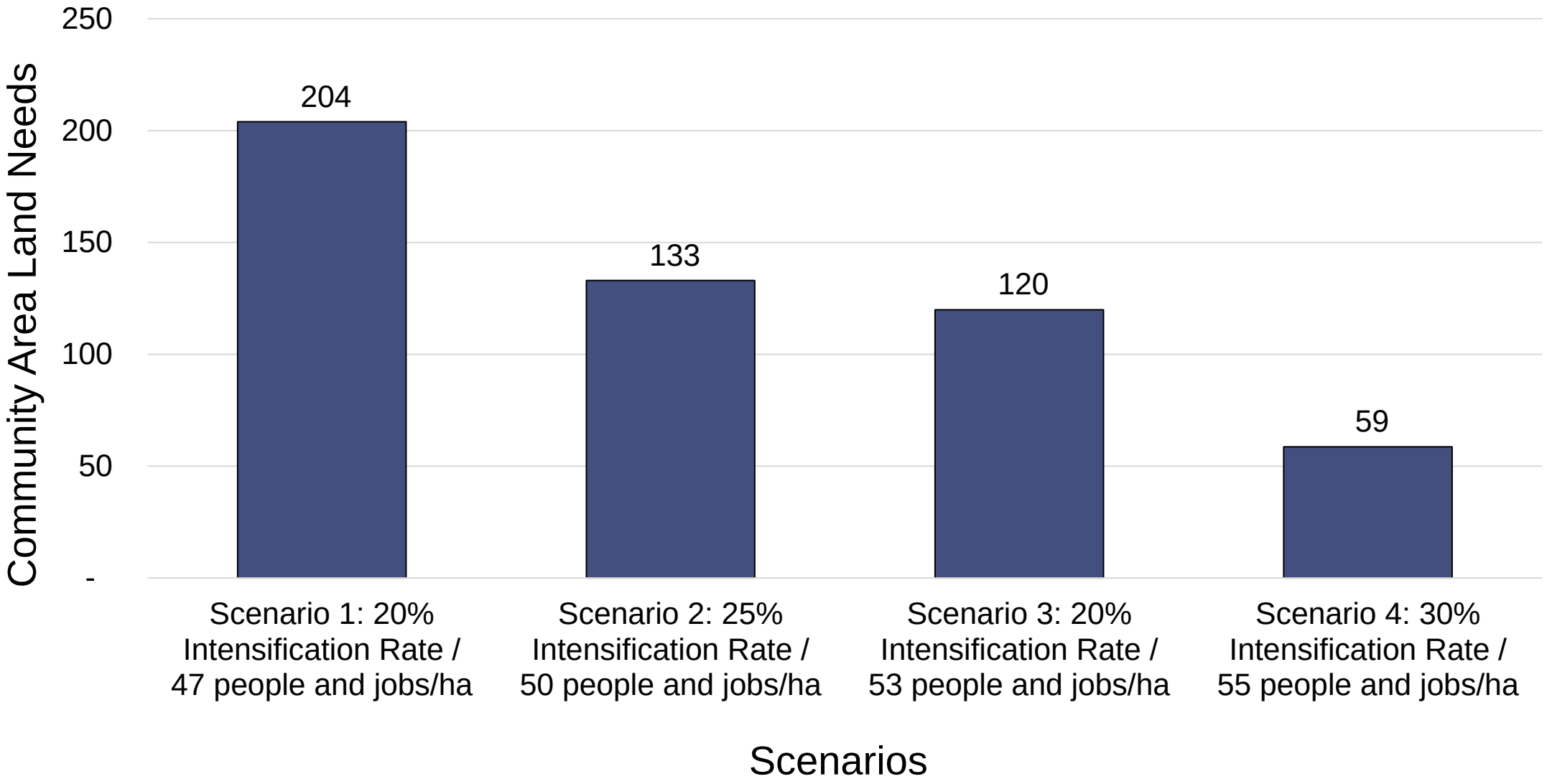




Land Needs Results

Overview

Land Needs Scenarios

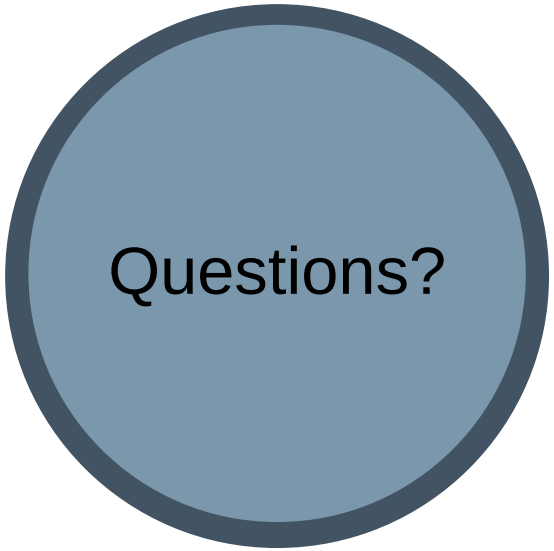


Assessment of Scenarios

- Based on review of the scenarios, the recommended preferred scenario is Scenario 3.
- **Scenario 3: Increase to DGA Density, No Change to Residential Intensification Rate**
  - 20% intensification rate
  - 53 people and jobs/ha in DGA Community Area
  - Land Need of 120 ha for growth to 2051
- There is the potential to incorporate a modest upward adjustment to the DGA density based on a review of comparable municipalities, as well as a review of the South Fergus SP.

Assessment of Scenarios

- This scenario retains the existing intensification rate and allows the Township to gradually increase the amount of high-density units in the built-up area.
- Increasing the intensification rate would involve the greatest amount of transformation for the Township.


Questions?

Centre Wellington

Report to Council

To: Mayor Watters and Members of Council

Report: PLN2023-06

Prepared By: Brett Salmon, Managing Director of Planning and Development

Date: 30 Jan 2023

RE: Community Land Needs Review

Recommendation:
THAT Council of the Township of Centre Wellington authorize staff to retain Watson & Associates Economists to prepare a Community Land Needs Assessment as per staff report PLN2023-06 dated January 30, 2023.

Report:
County of Wellington Planning and Development staff are attending the January 30, 2023 Council meeting to provide Council with an update on the Comprehensive Review of the County Official Plan (MCR). On major component of the MCR process is the completion of a Land Needs Assessment. A Land Needs Assessment is a technical, County-led process that determines:

- the amount of land required to accommodate the Provincially-projected growth to the 2051 planning horizon;
- the need for any Employment Area land conversions to non-industrial uses;
- the need for any urban settlement area boundary expansions; and
- the quantity of Excess lands.

The County is required to use a standard Land Needs Assessment methodology established by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The County retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. to complete the Land Needs Assessment. A draft Land Needs Report was presented to County Council in April 2022 and circulated for comment. County Planning staff attended Centre Wellington Council in to provide an update on the growth projections and the results of the Land Needs Assessment. The final Land Needs Assessment report was endorsed by County Council in September of 2022.

The Land Needs Assessment addresses two broad categories of land use: Community Area land (residential, commercial, office, institutional) and Employment Area land (industrial). The Land Needs Assessment report drew the following conclusions with respect to land needs in the County and Township:

- The County has an overall shortfall of about 677 ha of designated land to meet urban growth forecasts to 2051.
- A portion of the shortfall can be met by redesignating Future Development land and identifying Excess Lands. However, Settlement Area Boundary Expansion is required to address the balance of these shortfalls.
- For Centre Wellington, Settlement Area Boundary Expansion of 238 ha is required to meet Community Area land needs, and an additional 160 ha is required to meet Employment Area land needs

The County is ready to initiate Phase 3 of its MCR, which includes consideration of the Official Plan changes needed to accommodate the Land Needs Assessment result, such as the redesignation of Future Development lands, location options for urban settlement area boundary expansion(s), location options for excess lands, and addressing rural residential and employment area needs.

The County Land Needs Assessment noted that the land needs results for Centre Wellington may be impacted by the South Fergus Secondary Plan which is underway.

Since Centre Wellington is a key participant in the review of location options for urban settlement area boundary expansions, Township staff, in consultation with County staff, are recommending that the Township retain Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson) to further review the urban area land needs on behalf of the Township. This review will build upon the County of Wellington Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) Phase 2 Report and identify potential opportunities to optimize urban land requirements through a review of key input assumptions of the County's urban land needs assessment (LNA), including greenfield density and residential intensification assumptions.

It is anticipated that the review will assess three growth scenarios including the County Land Needs report as a Base Case and two other alternative scenarios that will include an opportunity to increase the Township's Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) density, intensification rate in the Built-up Area (BUA), or a combination of the two.

Staff are recommending retaining Watson as the sole source vendor for this analysis based on the following:

- Watson had completed the Land Needs Assessment for the County to date and have access to the data required to complete the alternative scenarios;
- Watson have not been retained by the County to work on Phase 3, so there is no conflict in working for the Township
- The work needs to be completed in approximately 4 months in order to complement the timing of the County's Phase 3 workplan.
- Watson is already the Township's preferred vendor for development charges and fee studies that rely on growth forecasting and development economics

Financial Implications:
The estimated cost of completing this review is $32,800 not including taxes. The project is a growth related study and can be funded from Development Charges.

Consultation:
Dan Wilson, CAO
County of Wellington Planning and Development

Approved By:
Dan Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer