

TOWN OF ERIN Town of Erin
ERIN Corporate Report

Department: Planning & Development	Report Number: PD2025-10
Business Unit: Planning & Development	Meeting Date: 4/10/2025
Presented/ Prepared By: David Waters, Manager of Planning & Development	

Subject

County of Wellington Official Plan Review - 2024 Rural Residential Growth Analysis

Recommendation

That Council hereby receives report number PD2025-10 “County of Wellington Official Plan Review - 2024 Rural Residential Growth Analysis” for information;

And Council endorses the policy option of a minor expansion of the Hamlet Settlement Area boundaries within the Town of Erin outside of the Greenbelt Plan to accommodate the additional units required to achieve the 2051 rural growth forecast.

Highlights

- The purpose of this report is to recommend a preferred policy approach to accommodate 2051 rural growth as part of the County’s Official Plan Review.
- County Planning staff reviewed the long-term rural growth needs of a number of municipalities in Wellington County. The County concluded that forecasted rural growth for Centre Wellington, Guelph/Eramosa, Mapleton, and Minto can be accommodated through current supply opportunities in the rural area.
- As shown in Table 1 of the County’s report, 600 and 580 additional units are required in Puslinch and Erin, respectively, to achieve their respective 2051 rural growth forecasts.
- The preferred policy approach for allocating future rural growth in the Town of Erin is a minor expansion of the Hamlet Settlement Area boundaries outside the Greenbelt Plan.
- An existing community structure already exists within these Rural Settlement Areas to accommodate limited infill development rather than expanding existing rural cluster areas or amending the lot creation criteria of Section 10.4.4 of the County Official Plan for the Secondary Agriculture designation.

Background

The September 2024 County of Wellington Planning Committee staff report entitled “Official Plan Review - 2024 Rural Residential Growth Analysis”, dated September 12,

2024, presents a review of the rural residential growth needs for the County and identifies policy options to accommodate forecasted demand. The County’s report is attached hereto as Appendix A.

As shown in Table 1 of the County Planning Committee staff report, 580 additional units are required in Erin to achieve its 2051 growth forecasts. After reviewing the vacant residential supply available in the rural areas in the Town of Erin, the County Planning Committee report states that a significant proportion of forecasted growth can be accommodated by existing vacant supply options.

Table 1 below shows the supply of vacant units located outside the Urban Area in the Town of Erin as presented in the County Planning report.

Table 1
Supply of Vacant Units Outside the Urban Area
in the Town of Erin (July 2024)

Supply Category	Units
Vacant units in Secondary Urban Centers, Hamlets and other Rural Residential Areas	112
Existing Vacant Rural Lots	70
Potential Supply from New Rural Severances under Current Policies	278
Total Vacant Supply	460

Table 2 below combines the long-term demand and existing vacant supply to highlight the remaining growth that needs to be accommodated in the Town of Erin through rural growth policy options as identified in the County Planning report.

Table 2
Vacant Unit Supply Outside the Urban Area
in the Town of Erin (July 2024)

	Units
Long-Term Rural Housing Demand	580
Existing Vacant Rural Residential Supply	460
Rural Area Need	-120

Discussion

To address the forecasted supply shortfall in the rural areas of the County in accordance with the direction of the County Official Plan, the report identifies the following four policy options under consideration:

- 1) Rural Settlement Area Expansions

Current Provincial and County policies permit the expansion of settlement areas, subject to detailed criteria being met. The Official Plan prioritizes rural growth to rural settlement areas, as these areas are established and often have existing amenities present to service the community.

2) Country Residential Areas

Existing Country Residential Areas are designated on Schedule B of the County Official Plan. These areas exist in Puslinch, Erin and Wellington North but are largely built out. The County Official Plan does not permit new Country Residential Areas to be established.

3) Secondary Agricultural Area Lot Creation

The Secondary Agricultural Area designation provides for a wider variety of uses than the Prime Agricultural Areas and includes a limited opportunity for new rural residential lot creation by severance. Both the Township of Puslinch and Town of Erin have received consistent demand for rural lots over the years.

4) Rural Clusters

Rural clusters are long-established small groups of housing with occasional commercial, industrial or institutional uses located in the Secondary Agricultural Area designation. These areas are not designated on Schedule "A" or "B" in the County Official Plan and are not expected to grow but they may be recognized in the zoning by-law. Any opportunities for lot creation in rural clusters can be facilitated in accordance with the secondary agricultural area lot creation policies of the County Official Plan

Based on the results of the County's rural residential growth analysis, changes to the rural area policies of the Official Plan will need to be considered to address forecasted rural residential growth needs identified in Puslinch, Erin, and Wellington North. While the Official Plan establishes a hierarchy for directing growth, County Planning is considering a combination of policy options to address the unique characteristics of each municipality and is requesting comments from the Town of Erin.

The Greenbelt Plan/Growth Plan limits settlement area boundary expansion to Towns/Villages. This means that Hamlets like Brisbane and Ballinafad in the Town of Erin are not permitted to expand their current settlement area boundaries.

Staff Response

Staff do not recommend the policy approach of expanding existing rural cluster areas or amending the criteria of Section 10.4.4. of the County Official Plan in the Secondary Agriculture designation to increase opportunity for lot severances in the rural area which will exacerbate the following:

- Continued fragmented residential development in the rural area resulting in a proliferation of driveway entrances that impact the existing rural streetscape outside of a designated settlement area boundary.

- Conflicts between agricultural operations and new residents.
- Increasing farmland prices and servicing costs for municipalities.

Therefore, Staff's preferred policy approach for allocating additional rural growth forecasted for the Town of Erin is a minor expansion of the Rural Settlement Area boundaries where a community structure already exists to accommodate limited infill development.

Strategic Pillar

Growth Management

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with the recommendations of this report.

Conclusion

County Planning staff reviewed the long-term rural growth needs of the area municipalities in Wellington County. An additional 120 units are required in Erin's rural area to accommodate 2051 forecasted growth.

Staff's preferred policy approach for the County to allocate forecasted rural growth in the Town of Erin is a minor expansion of the Rural Settlement Area boundaries outside the Greenbelt Plan where a community structure already exists to accommodate limited infill development.

Attachments

Appendix A – County of Wellington Planning Committee Report, September 12, 2024

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Manager of Planning and Development

Rob Adams

Chief Administrative Officer