



MEMO

To:	Nicole Martin, Township of Amaranth
From:	Pierre Chauvin, Nick Bogaert, Chelsea Brooks
Date:	September 11 th , 2026
File:	Amaranth Official Plan update, MHBC File "23368 B"
Subject:	Review of comments received and final policy changes

Following the release of July 2026 Draft Official Plan (which built on the February 2026 Draft Official Plan), MHBC has worked to accommodate the comments received from the community and public agencies, as well as the direction received from Council. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding the changes that have been made to the Official Plan since the previous draft, and to outline the various comments have been addressed. This document is accompanied by an updated Official Plan to be presented for Council consideration, as well as an updated comment response table prepared by MHBC.

Recommendation to Council

It is recommended that Township of Amaranth Council adopt an updated Official plan as attached to this report.

It is further recommended that Council consider additional comments received from the community when making a decision regarding the adoption of the Official Plan.

It is further recommended that Council direct Township staff to forward the Official Plan to Dufferin County for final review and approval.

It is further recommended that Council direct Dufferin County staff to make any necessary amendments to the County Official Plan, which would implement the updated direction of the Township Official Plan. This includes Schedule B & C, which identify the updated settlement areas and rural / agricultural lands.



Background

MHBC was retained in 2025 to complete an update to the Township's Official Plan. The Official Plan was originally approved in 2004, so updates were required in order to conform to recent County Official Plan updates, Provincial policy direction and environmental mapping available from the Province and Conservation Authorities. The project built on previous work completed by a different consulting firm that had been started on behalf of the Township but not completed.

In addition to the updates which were required to conform to the recent policy direction, the project also had goals to improve usability and readability, as well as implement the Province's new standard Official Plan layout as per Bill 98.

As part of the work related to the Official Plan update, MHBC prepared a Background Report which incorporated the results of the initial review to identify policy gaps and key themes for updating the policy framework. This work led to an updated Official Plan and mapping being released for community review / comment. Through input received through the Open House and from community comments, the Official Plan was updated further in advance of a required Public Meeting. Additional comments were received, which led to the final draft being presented to Council at this time.

Comment Summary

In addition to the comments received at the Open House (attended by approximately 20 members of the public), through community review (18 property owners submitted comments), and agency review, further comments were received regarding the July 2026 draft of the Official Plan. These included 8 comments received at the Statutory Public Meeting held on August 6th, 2026, as well as 11 community members who submitted comments following the meeting.

The July 2026 Draft Official Plan addressed comments received at the Open House and also leading up to the release of the Official Plan. Additional comments received since the July 2026 Draft Official Plan are addressed in the updated comment response table attached to this memo. In general, comments received following the release of the July 2026 Draft Official Plan covered the following:

- Requests for consideration of additional employment lands along County Road 109 adjacent to and near Farmington (three separate requests).
- Concerns with the addition of new employment lands to 'round out' Farmington, given sourcewater protection policies applicable in the area. Related request to de-designate existing lands identified for employment uses.
- Requested revisions to permitted uses within Employment Area designation to clarify intent of 'material storage' policies.
- Concerns with removal of lands from the Laurel Settlement Area, given previous Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) decision approving inclusion of the lands.
- Concerns with identification of additional lands near the Town of Shelburne for residential purposes, given adjacent employment uses within Shelburne.

- Requests for review of additional areas for inclusion as Prime Agricultural land, rather than Rural designation (and vice versa).
- Request for Official Plan updates to incorporate Official Plan Amendments currently in progress.

It is anticipated that County staff and County Council would further consider the community and agency comments when making a final decision regarding the updated Official Plan.

Policy and mapping changes

The following summarizes the areas of policy change and mapping changes which have occurred since the release of the July 2026 Draft Official Plan. The revisions include:

- Revisions to Rural policies to clarify small-scale commercial and industrial uses are permitted.
- Revisions to employment area policies, to clarify permissions regarding outdoor storage (specific to contractor yards).
- Addition of policy and definition to address data centres and large load facilities.
- Addition of policies regarding the applicability of MDS to existing lots of record.
- Updates to sourcewater protection area policies to reflect comments received regarding implementation direction.
- Further revisions to the Laurel and Waldemar settlement areas, to put the boundaries back to the February 2026 Official Plan draft, at the direction of Township Council.
- Further revisions to the Estate Residential areas near Shelburne to add additional lands for future residential growth, at the direction of Township Council. In order to address comments regarding nearby business park uses, additional wording regarding land use compatibility is included in the updated policies. Additional policies are also included to require an Agricultural Impact Assessment and confirm compliance with MDS.

It is recommended that County staff bring forward a compendium amendment to the County Official Plan at the time the Township Official Plan is approved by the County, so that both documents are updated concurrently. The County Official Plan amendment should include the final settlement area boundaries to be approved by County Council, updated environmental feature mapping as included in the Township Official Plan, direction regarding Estate Residential uses within the rural areas of the Township, as well as updated sourcewater protection mapping and policies.

Settlement area boundary rationalization

As part of the work conducted through the Background Report, MHBC undertook a review of the Township's three settlement areas, as well as lands identified for estate residential uses (given the contribution to overall Township growth). While the County population and employment projections

did not identify the need for settlement area expansions to accommodate projected growth¹, there was a desire to review existing boundaries. The goal therefore was to re-allocate lands amongst the Township's settlement areas, so that substantially the same area of designated settlement or residential lands is maintained but that the lands are shifted between the rural settlements.

The focus initially was to re-distribute lands from the Laurel community settlement area to the Waldemar settlement area, as well as on identifying potential areas for additional estate residential development within the Township. Given that Laurel remains un-serviced and Waldemar has water services, that served as the focus for the exercise. The northeast area of the Township was also explored for candidate lands for estate residential development, given the findings of the Township's LEAR study, which identified Rural Lands in this part of the Township. Farmington, as a predominantly employment area was not included in this exercise since there was no identified need for additional employment lands.

The results of the boundary rationalization process were included in the Background Report prepared by MHBC, which formed the basis of the initial work to prepare the February 2026 Official Plan draft. Council direction provided on February 18th, 2026 regarding the Background Report was to not add any new areas of prime agricultural land to Waldemar and preserve agricultural lands in Laurel. MHBC carried this forward to the February 2026 Draft Official Plan. The following depicts the boundaries of Laurel, Waldemar and Farmington as included in the February 2026 Official Plan.

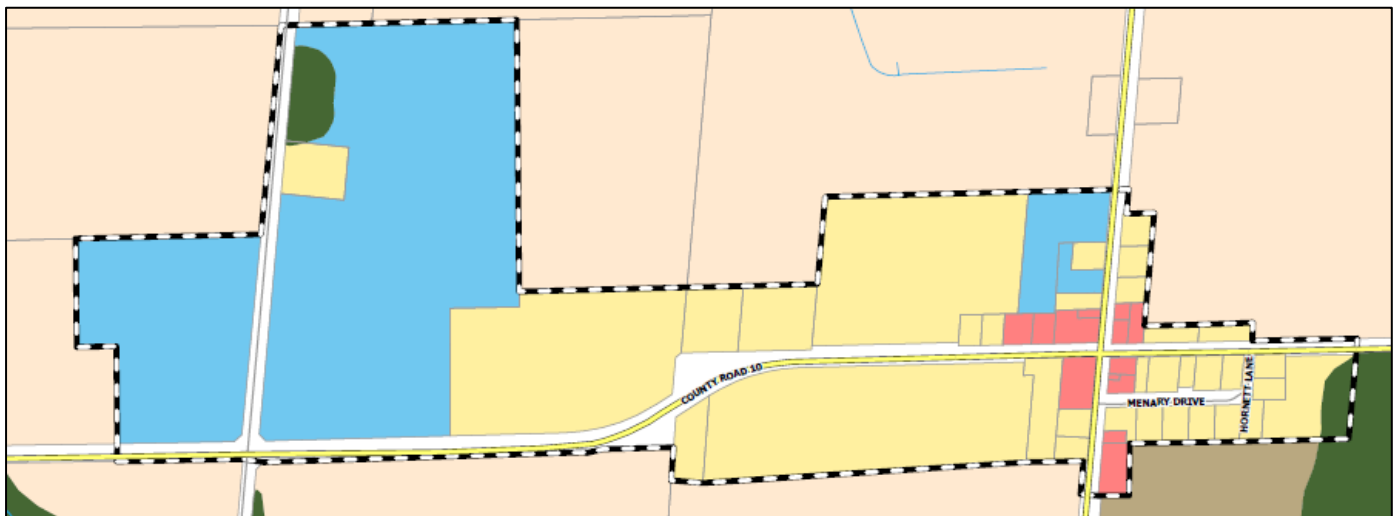


Figure 1: Laurel boundaries as noted in initial (February 2026) draft Official Plan.

¹ It should be noted that Dufferin County is undertaking an additional update to their Official Plan to reflect the most recent Ministry of Finance population projections. This may result in future required changes within Amaranth Township as well.

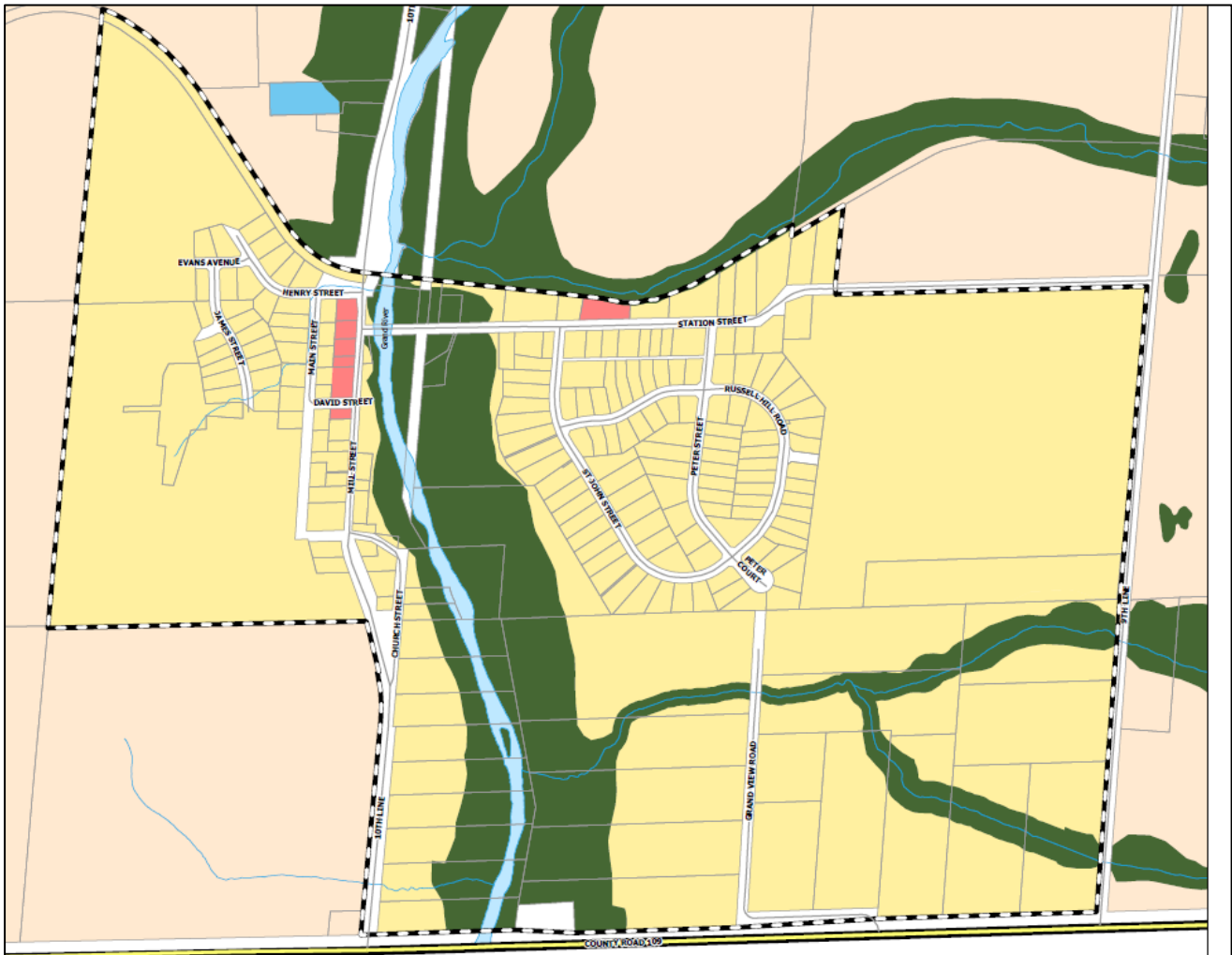


Figure 2: Waldemar boundaries as noted in initial (February 2026) draft Official Plan.



Figure 3: Farmington boundaries as noted in initial (February 2026) draft Official Plan.

Following release of the February 2026 draft, additional comments were received regarding the extent of the settlement area boundaries and rural residential areas (both from Council and a local landowner). MHBC further reviewed the settlement areas and brought forward a revised allocation which removed lands from Laurel that included the school and Township buildings, thereby supporting adding further rural lands and some agricultural lands in Laurel. The extent of rural residential lands near Shelburne was reviewed, but no further allocation was provided as compared to the earlier draft.

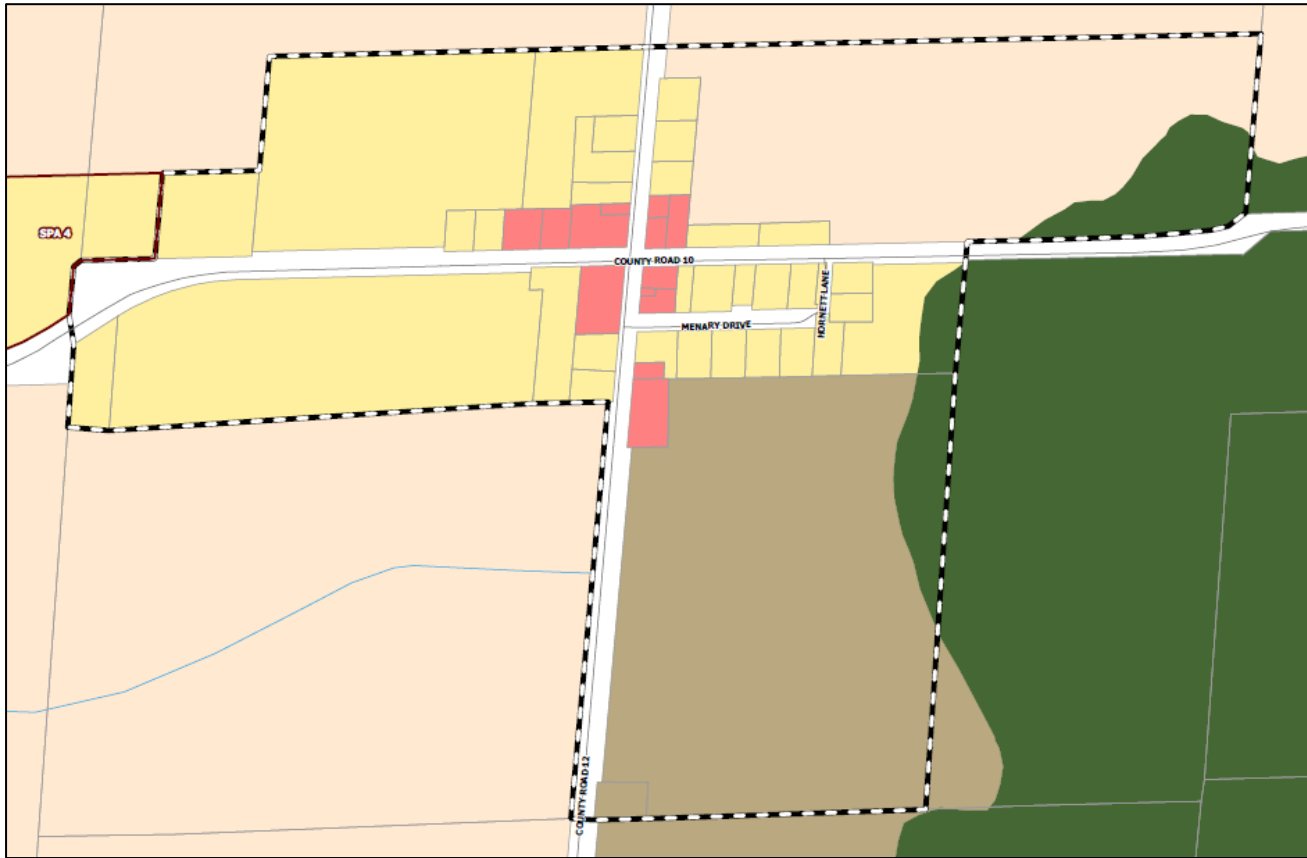


Figure 4: Laurel boundaries as noted in July 2026 draft Official Plan.

Based on comments received leading up to the release of the July 2026 Official Plan, some additional changes were recommended to the Farmington employment area designations. These included designating portions of properties that appeared to have been omitted during earlier delineation of areas within Farmington (see below).



Figure 5: Farmington boundaries as noted in July 2026 draft Official Plan.

Within the area abutting Shelburne, MHBC implemented a Special Policy Area (SPA) which permitted estate residential development within the Rural designation adjacent to Shelburne (see below). This included applying the SPA to existing Estate Residential areas and in accordance with Council's direction adding a new SPA area immediately south of Shelburne.

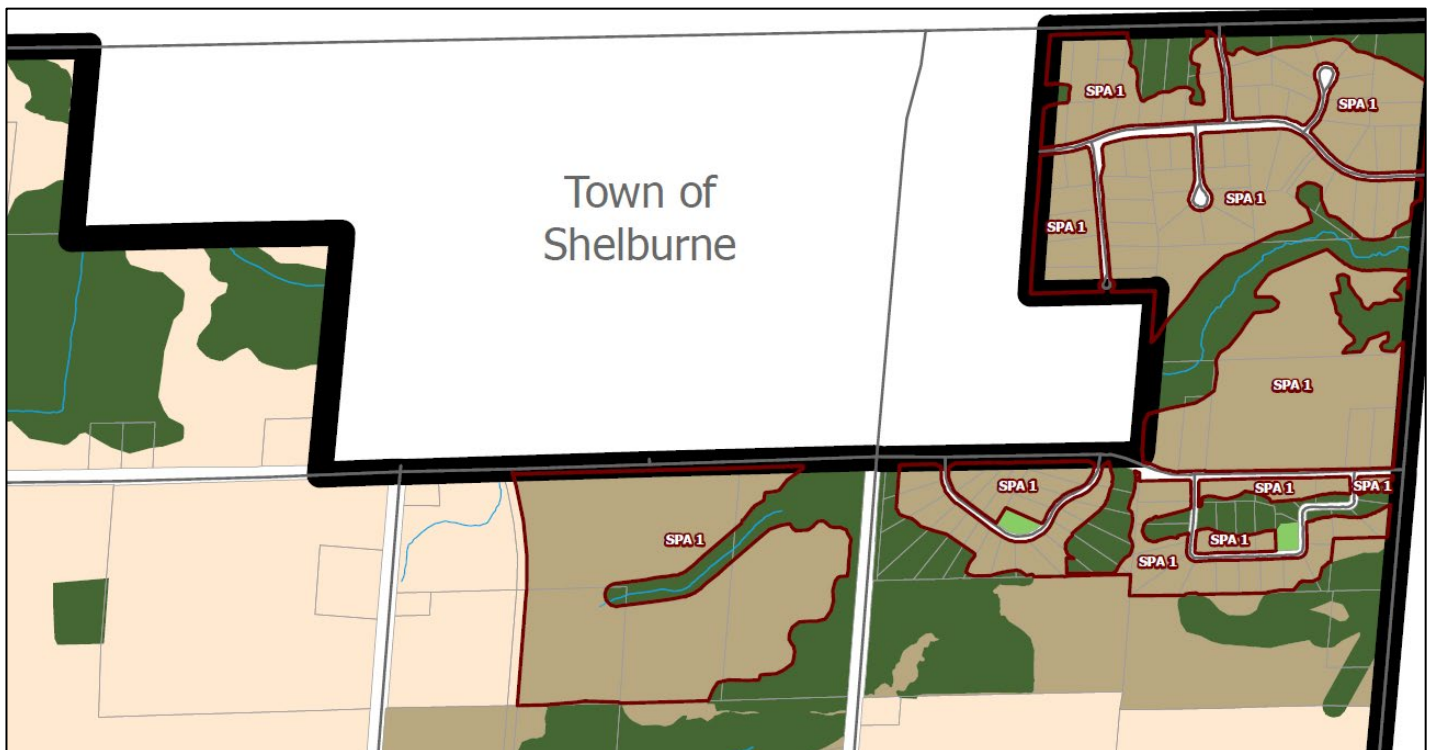


Figure 6: Excerpt depicting estate residential areas south of Shelburne as noted in Jul 2026 draft Official Plan.

Based on comments received at the public meeting and a subsequent Council meeting, MHBC undertook a further review of settlement area boundaries and the extent of rural residential areas adjacent to Shelburne. Further, comments were received from the Town of Shelburne and an adjacent business park landowner raising concerns with estate residential uses immediately south of Shelburne. MHBC recommended to Council that boundaries as shown in the July 2026 Draft Official Plan be retained, with a requirement for a land use compatibility study, or alternatively that boundaries remain as indicated in the original Official Plan until such time as County staff complete their further boundary rationalization / growth allocation exercise. This would allow for the most up to date information to be available, as well as potentially provide for further need for employment uses, which would be well-suited adjacent to Shelburne's employment area. MHBC cautioned that there was not policy support for further estate residential uses abutting Shelburne.

Notwithstanding this recommendation, Township Council directed that the February 2026 boundaries of Waldemar and Laurel be maintained, thereby maximizing the opportunity for additional estate residential lands adjacent to Shelburne. The final draft Official Plan reflects this Council direction, and includes additional SPA areas surrounding Shelburne, as illustrated below.

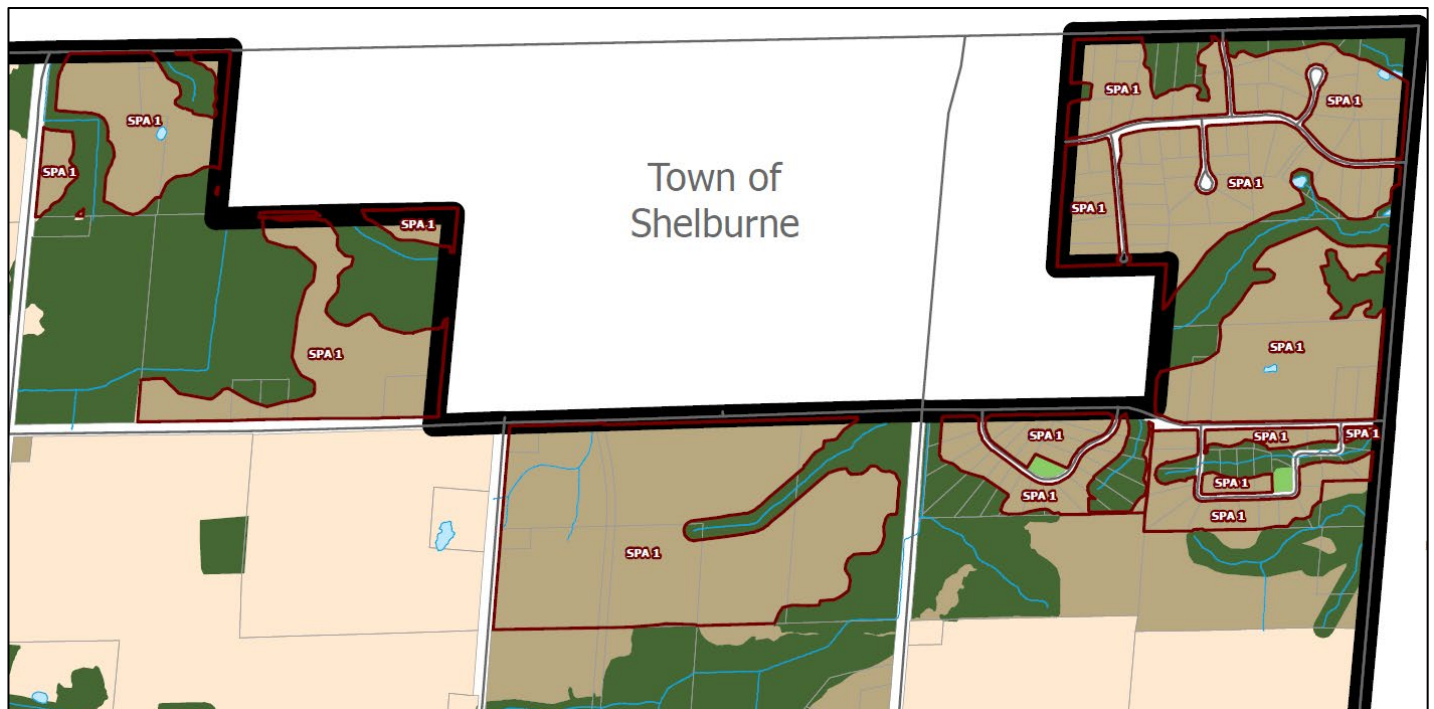


Figure 7: Excerpt depicting estate residential areas adjacent to Shelburne as noted in final September 2026 Official Plan.

Closing

The Official Plan update undertaken by MHBC has been a thorough and comprehensive process, resulting in appropriate updates and revisions being made to the Official Plan. The outcome is a modern policy document, which will guide future land use changes within the Township for the coming decades. We look forward to working with Township and County staff as the Official Plan is finalized and approved.