



Dufferin County – Governance and Service Review

County Council Meeting

July 11, 2024

Agenda

Item	Time
1 Welcome and introductory remarks	7:00-7:05 p.m.
2 External factors: What's needed and what's doable? Overview of interview findings	7:10-7:25 p.m.
3 Overview of what we heard: Findings from Council and CAO interviews	7:25-7:40 p.m.
4 Moving forward: Concluding insights and principles	7:40-7:45 p.m.
5 Discussion	

Introduction | A note of caution

- Governments evolve – ideally in accordance with the principle “form follows function”
- It is the function of Council to consider and plan for evolution to meet the needs of the community
- Governance and restructuring is inherently political
- Administrations are not “things” – they are collections of people
- Human resources considerations

External Factors and Context

- What's doable?
- What's needed

Form follows function

Your thinking about the future of Dufferin is influenced by two major concerns:

1. What mix of governance and services do we need to manage growth and shape our future?

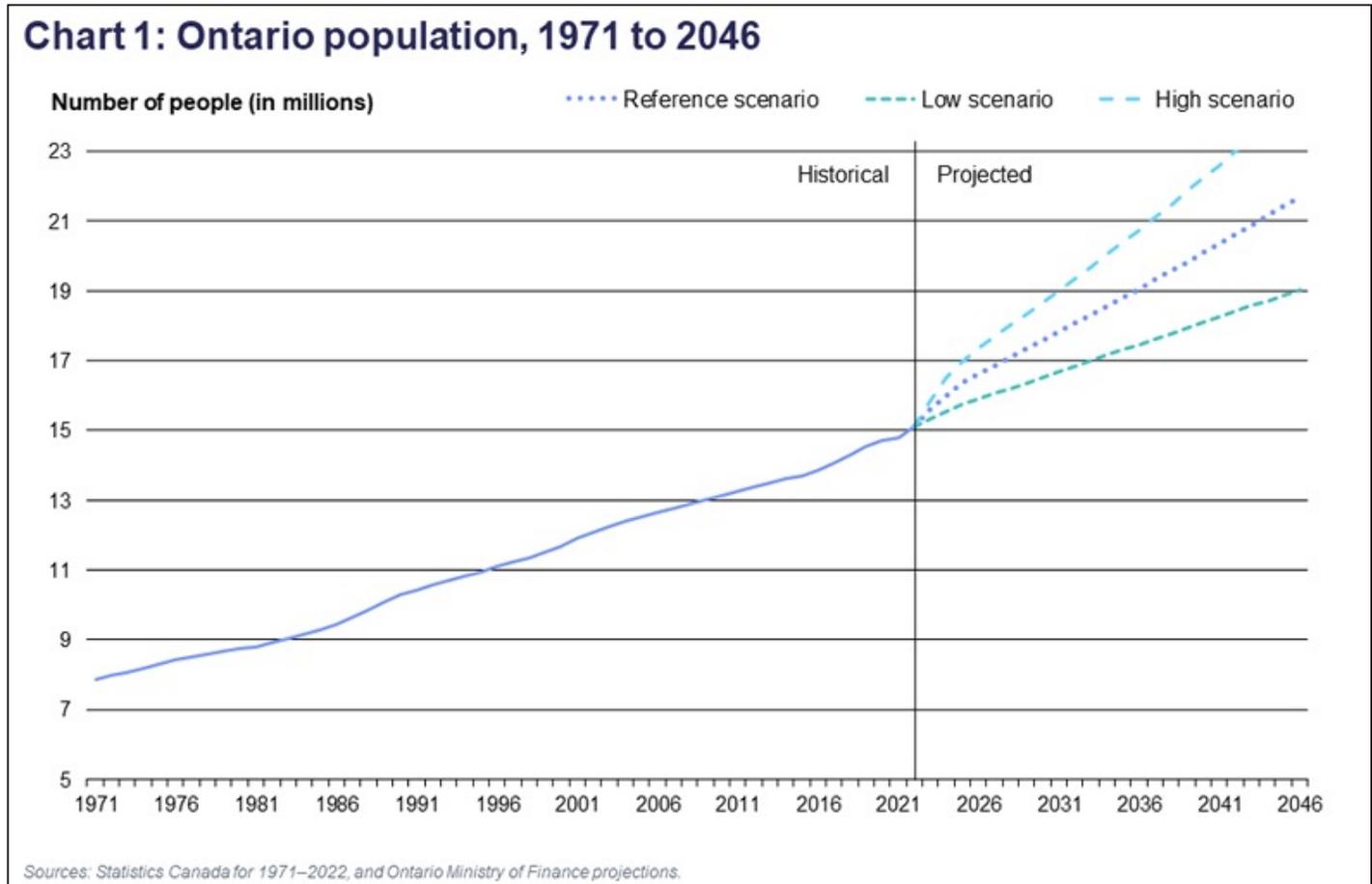
2. What is politically possible to begin to implement, today?

Starting with growth: Ontario is projected to increase from 15 to 21 million residents by 2046

Central Ontario is projected to be the fastest growing region of the province, increasing by 1.6M people (or 48.1%) from 3.3M in 2022 to 4.9M in 2026.

Four census divisions of Central Ontario are projected to continue experiencing population growth significantly above the provincial average:

- Waterloo: 67.6 %
- **Dufferin: 59.5%**
- Wellington: 57.2 %
- Simcoe: 49.7%



Dufferin County will be very different in 25 years...forecast to grow by 100,000 by 2051

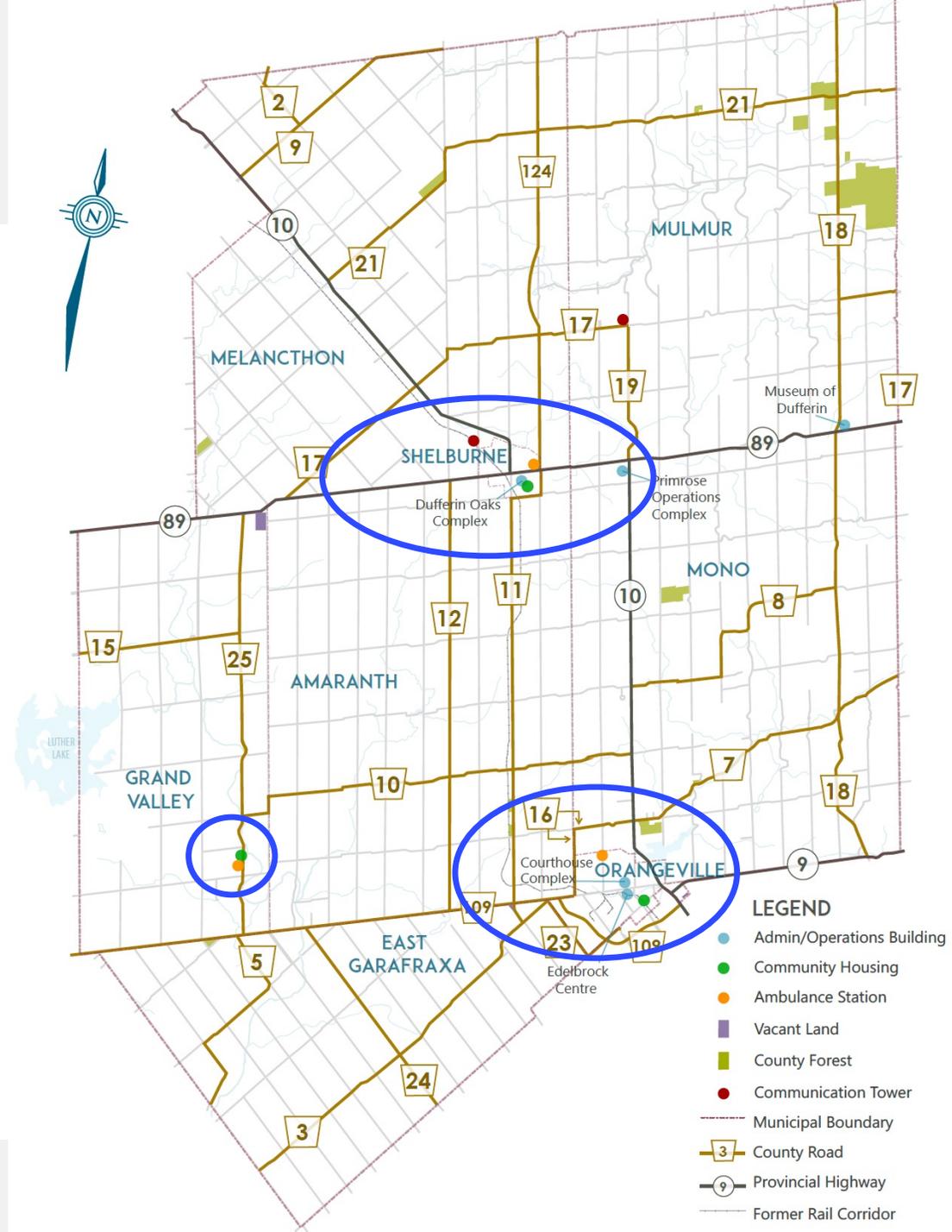
- **Current population (2021 census):** 66,257
- **By 2051:**
 - ~95,000 people
 - ~39,000 jobs
- **County intensification target: 40%**
- **Growth allocations:**
 - 84.5% of population growth allocated to Grand Valley, Shelburne, and Orangeville
 - 15.5% to be accommodated in the other municipalities
- Land shortages (for settlement and employment) in some area municipalities

Table 3.1 Proposed 2051 Population and Employment Allocations

Municipality	Population			Employment		
	2021 (estimate)	2051	Growth 2021-2051	2021 (estimate)	2051	Growth 2021-2051
Amaranth	4,459	5,112	653	1,337	1,738	401
East Garafraxa	2,839	3,961	1,122	657	995	338
Grand Valley	3,831	9,437	5,606	846	2,318	1,472
Melancthon	3,344	3,783	439	641	807	166
Mono	10,189	11,404	1,215	2,962	3,898	936
Mulmur	3,814	4,439	625	905	1,268	363
Orangeville	30,891	38,636	7,745	14,556	21,499	6,943
Shelburne	9,516	18,328	8,812	3,097	6,477	3,380
Dufferin County Total (rounded)	68,783	95,000	26,217	25,000	39,000	14,000

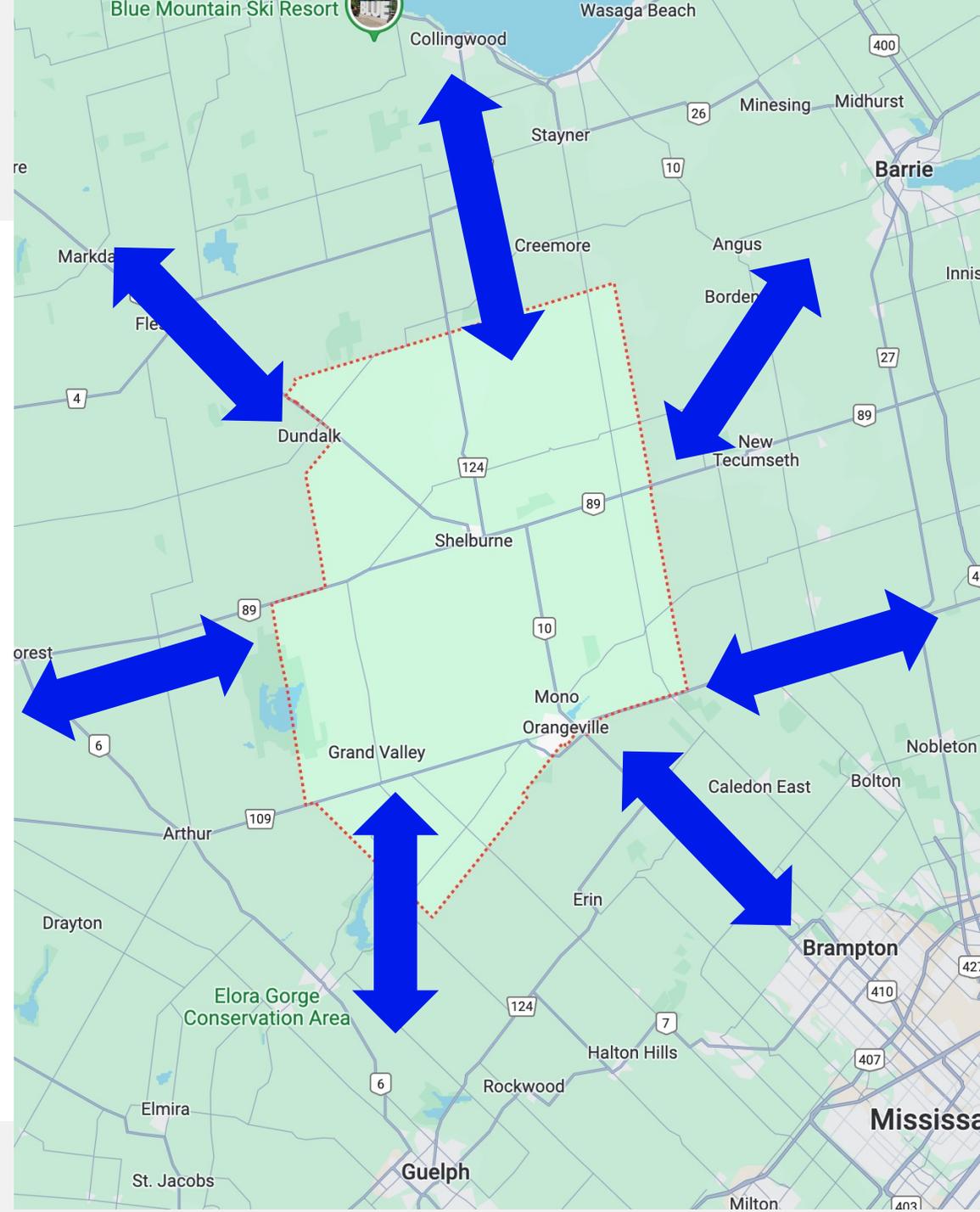
County facilities and services

The clustering of services is another lens through which to view the various “poles” of growth and settlement of the County.

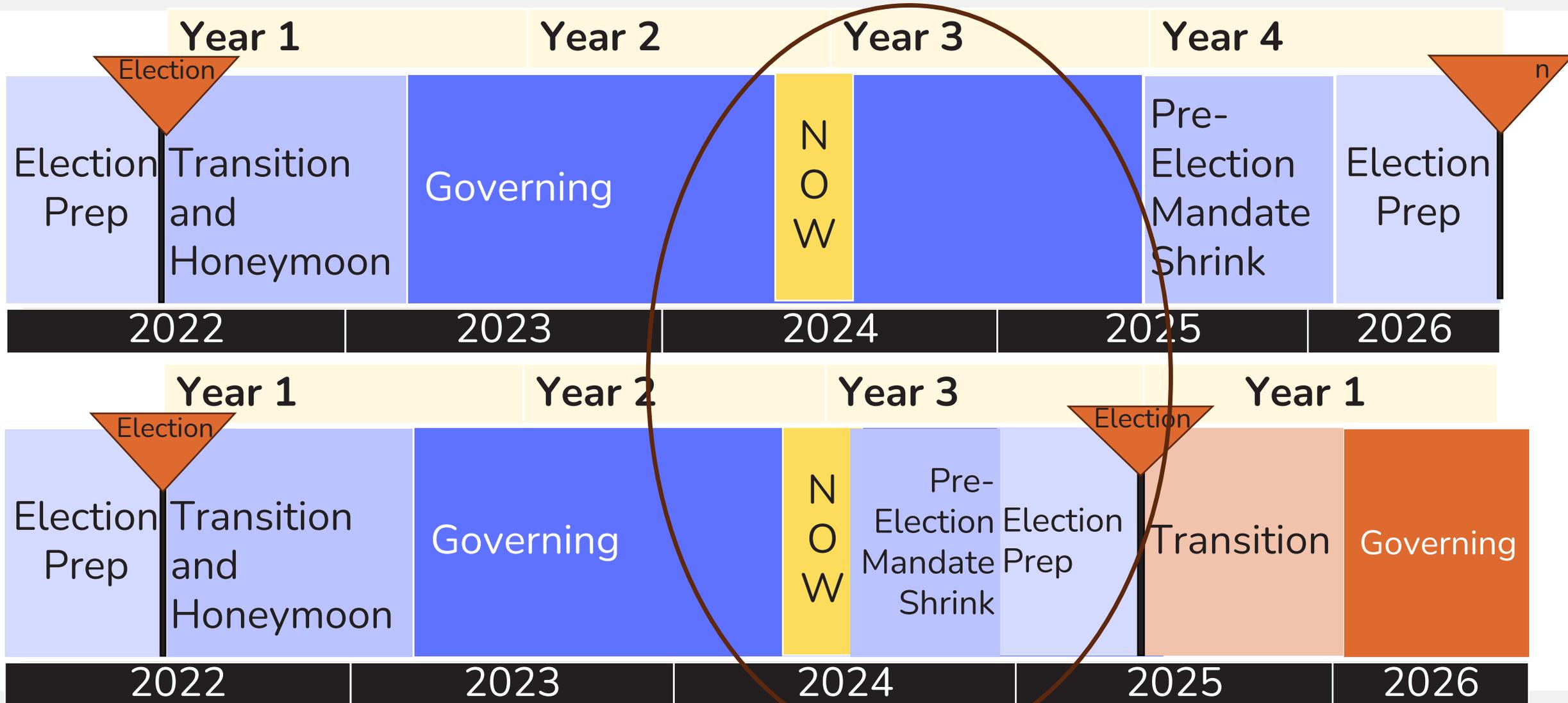


Dufferin County in its wider geographic context

- Growth is on the mind of everyone we spoke with in this process
- Yet, there are differing views as to:
 - What is coming, and how soon
 - What we should encourage
 - What we should discourage
 - What we should preserve
- Given the strategic importance of growth to the future of Dufferin, Council may benefit from further workshops designed to address each of the above questions

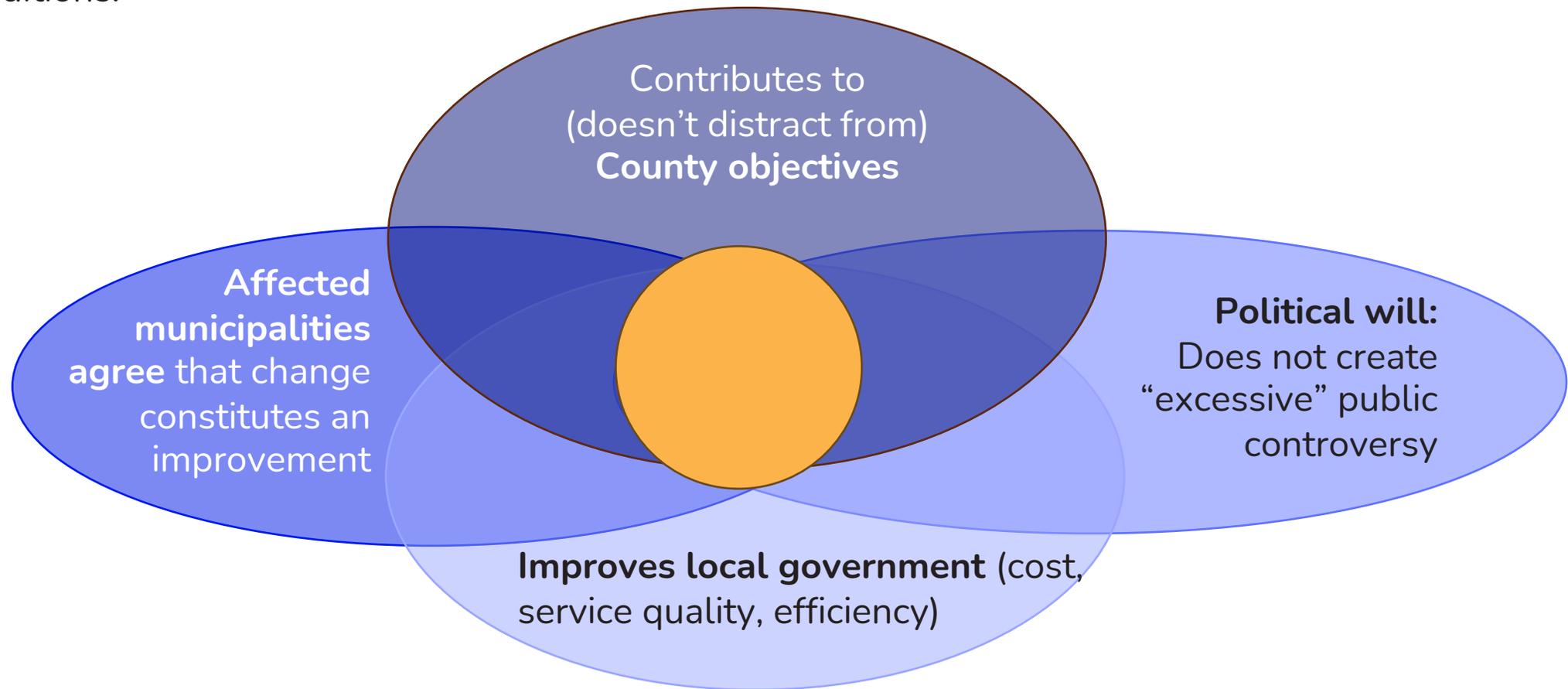


The provincial context | Early election speculation means there isn't much time left



What's most doable?

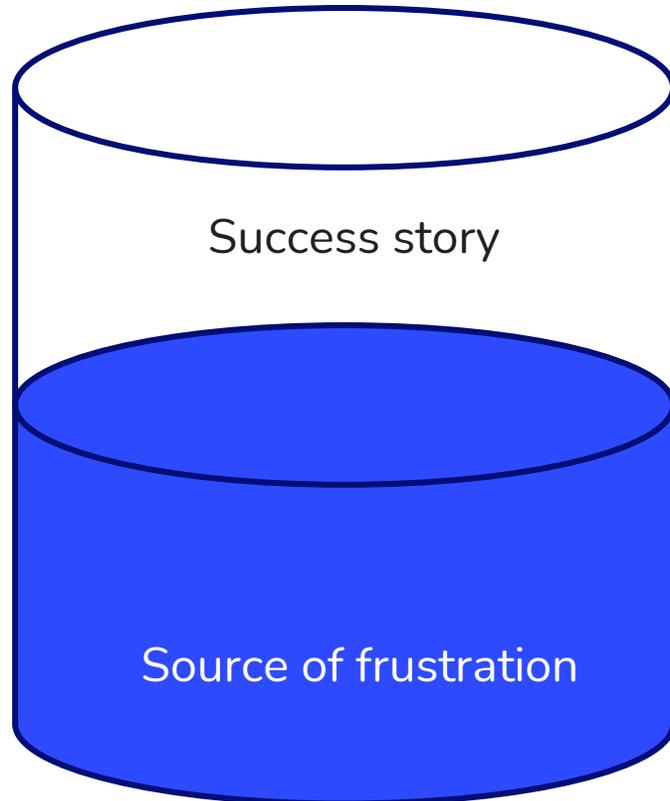
For locally approved options (i.e., not provincially imposed) a workable solution must meet all four conditions.



Overview of what we heard

- Summary of findings from interviews with County Council and CAOs

The County: More “half full” than “half empty”



Generally, most agree that the County is working well, particularly when reflecting on the past.

- There are some opportunities to optimize services.
- Solutions may focus as much on service enhancement as structural change.

“Most things are going well. They used to be worse; there used to be mistrust between the municipalities and the County.”

General observations

- **A majority of respondents said the County doing a good job in its core areas:**
 - *“It should be doing those things that we can’t do on our own or do efficiently.”*
 - *“The County should be delivering provincial services (OW, ODSP) and then anything else that the 8 municipalities can’t do on their own.”*
 - *“What’s working well? Wherever it’s a County responsibility.”*
 - *“Health and human services is going well. We’re confident this is a core County function, there’s no overlap, no duplication.”*
 - *“Health and human services can stay. Everything else should go. Burn it down.”*
- **Many expressed concern about the perceived duplication of services and related cost and customer impacts:**
 - *“For some of us, we are duplicating the services that maybe we don’t use or need.”*
 - *“There is duplication in the planning department for application review – have to do it twice for pre-consultation.”*
 - *“We are concerned where they are going beyond what they need to do and how the tax dollars are being spent.”*
- **Many identified an opportunity for improved Council-staff relationships, collaboration and communications between County and local municipalities:**
 - *“Communication is poor. Comms staff are good...But we just want to know more of what’s going on.”*
 - *“There has been a gap of consultation; there should be consultation with the local councils.”*

Governance structure | At present, most do not support significant governance changes

- There is little support for change to governance structure or boundaries, today...
- Although several could see this happening at some point in the future, particularly among the smaller municipalities.

Status quo governance	Wind up County and devolve to locals	Some consolidation of local municipalities	Single-tier municipality
Majority support	No support	Some support	No support (today)
<p><i>“No political will for change. So, let’s make the best with what we’ve got.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Don’t see the County disappearing – that’s a pipe dream.”</i></p>	<p><i>“[With respect to some of the smaller municipalities] I would love to see amalgamation.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s hard to know if amalgamation would be really beneficial...to understand the business case.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I am unequivocally not a fan of single-tier City of Dufferin.”</i></p> <p><i>“In reality, single-tier probably makes sense. But it won’t fly. ‘Dufferin County bedeviled by boundaries’ – so what can we do outside of single-tier to eliminate some of these boundaries?”</i></p>

County services | A range of opinions

Services where there is a high level of satisfaction

- Health and Human Services
- Emergency management
- Waste management
- Roads and operations (generally)
- IT / GIS

...Services generally delivered efficiently and effectively (to a greater or lesser degree) and that should remain at the County-level.

Services identified as opportunities for greater County support / activity...

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Climate action

...Services where the County could provide more assistance or resources to support the local area municipalities in advancing these priorities locally.

Main areas of comment

- Planning
- Building
- Economic development
- Fire

...Services identified as the most significant areas for improvement. Note that there were a range of opinions on how the service could/should be improved.

Service delivery | At present, most prefer incremental improvement vs. realignment of services

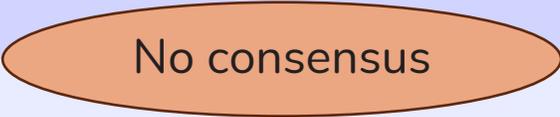
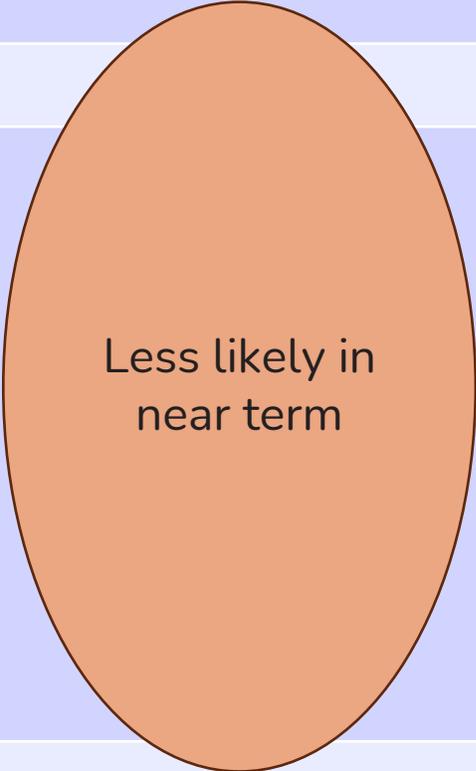
County exactly as is (status quo)	Limited support: “There is always room for improvement”
County with service improvements	Majority support
Devolve some services to locals	Some support focused on a few key areas
Devolve all but social services to locals	Limited support

- The vast majority see some role for the County in delivering some services (e.g., social services) and supporting overall regional coordination and collaboration.
- Most identified that there is room for improvement in some services (e.g., efficiency, responsiveness, customer service).
- Some interest to devolve some services, like economic development, to the local municipalities...but also concern about capacity to deliver.

Moving forward

- Concluding Insights
- Key Principles
- Discussion

Summary | The main opportunities for improvement relate to service delivery, not governance or boundary changes

Possible Change	Locally-Led	Provincially-Led
Governance	 <p>No consensus</p>	 <p>Less likely in near term</p>
Boundary		
Who delivers services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. From County to locals b. From locals to County c. Shared services among willing local partners 	 <p>Main areas of immediate opportunity</p>	
How services are delivered		

The biggest questions are all about growth..

- The main services respondents identified for improvement all relate to or play a role in growth planning and management.
- **Form follows function:**
 - A focus should be on building a vision for growth
 - Decision could then be made to determine what Dufferin County needs to “get there”

Services most commented on...but not necessarily consensus on the path forward:

Planning

Building

Economic
Development

Council members appear to share many values that could inform next steps, should you take them...

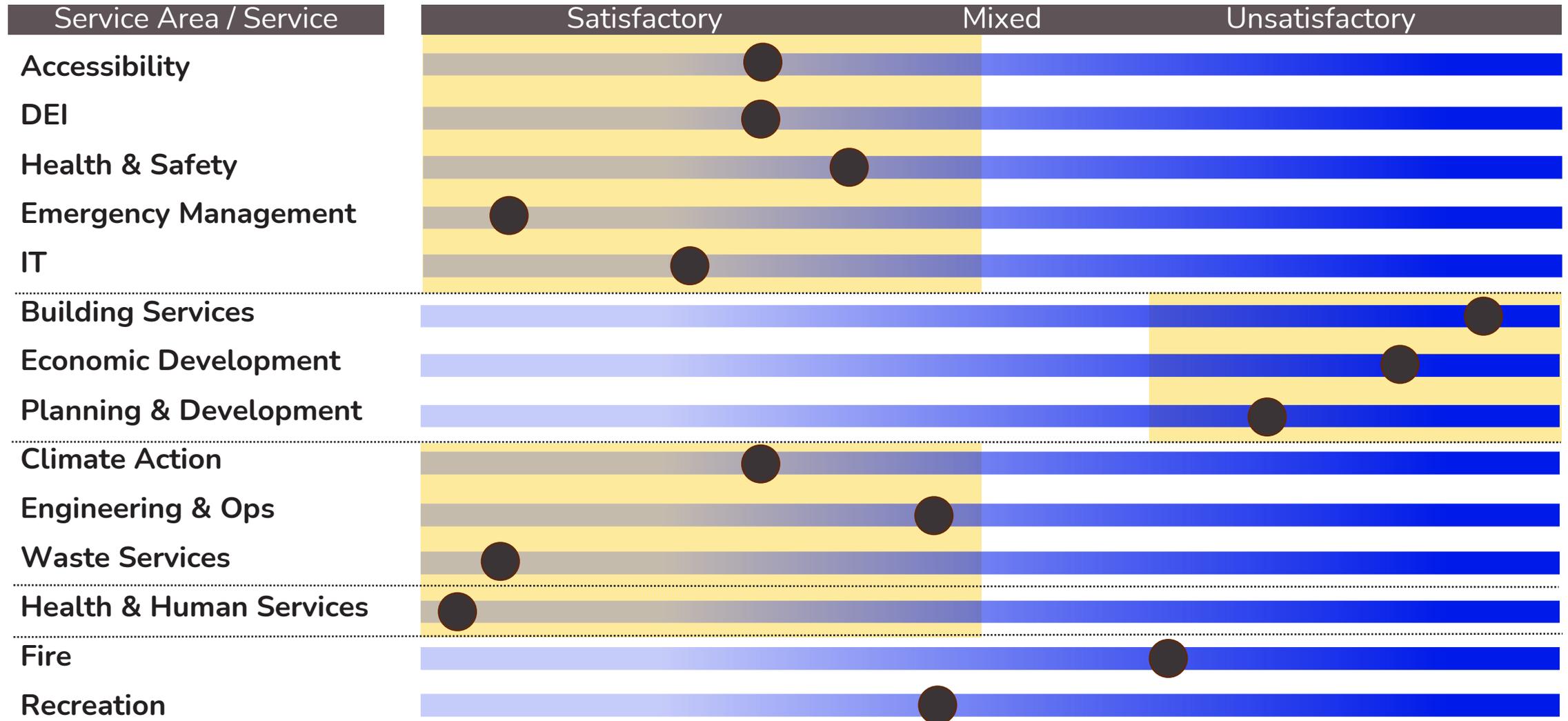
These “draft principles to inform change” are concepts that arise from the interviews as having a high degree of support. They could be useful as a starting point for future discussions.

Theme	Any changes to governance or service delivery should....
Vision	Create and achieve a shared vision to facilitate / manage sustainable growth and prosperity
Efficiency	Save money / time through improved delivery, wherever possible
Service improvement	Deliver better, more responsive services to local municipalities and residents
Service duplication	Reduce / remove duplication and overlap in service delivery between County and local municipalities
Promote local democracy	Respect local municipal autonomy
Deliver economic growth	Attract business and job growth
Protect rural vitality	Recognize unique attributes of rural communities need to be maintained and where practical, enhanced
Core County responsibilities	Focus the County on implementing its core mandate
County as a convenor	Consider where the County may be best positioned to convene or facilitate a process as opposed to directly delivering a service
Collaboration and communication	Enable improved collaboration, communication and coordination between the County and the local area municipalities.
Fairness in cost sharing	Ensure that County funds and services are allocated fairly across the County

Appendix

- Detailed findings from CAO and Council interviews on key services/service areas

County services | High-level summary*



General Government | Human Resources / DEI / Accessibility / Health & Safety

What's Working Well:

- **County doing a good job on DEI:** Building up expertise and staff to support the organization in making progress against its Equity Strategic Plan.
- **Support in meeting accessibility requirements:** County supports and collaborates with some of the smaller municipalities
- **Some satisfied with Health & Safety:** Some that contract the service believe it works well.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **More HR support – DEI in particular:** Some local municipalities see an opportunity for the County to provide more support re: human resources services. DEI was most often mentioned as one of these key opportunities. DEI is currently an internal County service, but many local municipalities want to advance similar work within their own organizations and seek greater County support/expertise (e.g., contracted service, information-sharing, joint DEI committee)
 - Some noted that it is not feasible for there to be 8 separate DEI committees or specific staff positions.
- **Unclear progress on accessibility:** Need for more regular communication and updates about the status of accessibility initiatives. Many see room for the County to support them on meeting AODA requirements.
- **Several question value-for-money in contracting Health & Safety from the County:** Some considering alternative options for H&S services, noting the degradation of the service.

General Government | IT, GIS, Emergency Mgmt

What's Working Well:

- **IT as a contracted service** (Amaranth, Melancthon, East Garafraxa, Shelburne): Most are satisfied and believe they receive value for money.
- **GIS:** Same as above.
- **Emergency management:** County staff have the right knowledge and expertise and and there is good collaboration between the County and area municipalities.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Some concern about how IT as an external service is funded:** Those not using the service would prefer not to subsidize it for others and want to ensure the costs are recovered from the municipalities that are using County IT services.
- **Collaborative or shared purchasing:** Some interest in exploring joint purchasing to generate cost savings.

Community Development & Tourism | Economic Development

What's Working Well:

- **Importance of coordination:** What happens in one area can have county-wide benefit. A single entity – like the County – can be helpful in facilitating this coordination.
- **Integration with other services:** Economic development is intertwined with other services – planning, building, water/wastewater – which further suggests the importance of coordination.
- **Efficiency:** One department at the County vs. 8 lower-tier departments.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **“Too many cooks in the kitchen”:** County, some lower-tiers (Orangeville, Shelburne, Grand Valley), Dufferin Board of Trade are all engaged in economic development. Some feel there is a duplication of services.
- **Unclear value at County:** Many noted that there have been few tangible initiatives or outcomes from the County, which may in part be due to a fair amount of staff turnover in recent years. As a result, some local municipalities have concern about value-for-money, particularly if they also provide comparable services locally.
- **No clear consensus on a solution**, but a range of options for further consideration:
 - Download (but some concern about budget and staff impacts, especially for smaller municipalities).
 - Share / support Orangeville's economic development services.
 - Dufferin Board of Trade takes over economic development.
 - Mixed service model (like Huron County): County provides some overarching direction (e.g., major studies) and direct services for smaller municipalities that cannot provide it in-house (subsidized OR fee for service).

Community Development & Tourism | Planning (1/2)

What's Working Well:

- **Regional approach is required:** Most agreed that the County continues to play an important role in planning, particularly as it can take a region-wide approach that will help foster an integrated and connected community.
- **Urban/rural differences:** Larger centres (Orangeville, Shelburne, Grand Valley) have their own planning functions, while a few of the smaller municipalities use the County's planning staff. Most think this arrangement is appropriate, but want to ensure that the costs of those services are being allocated to the municipalities using them and that there is no conflict of interest.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **A minority would like to get rid of planning at the County level:** There are a few that would like to see the province dissolve the role of the County in planning as part of overall regional reform. This is in part due to some of the concerns identified below but also a sense that “local is the best approach” in deciding where and how to grow and build.
- **Duplication of services:** There is concern about potential duplication or overlap between planning services provided locally and at the County and the potential cost implications.
- **Customer service:** There is a desire to review and improve existing processes to address potential barriers for applicants and improve approval timelines (e.g., it can sometimes take 2 months to schedule a pre-consultation meeting).
- **County role in the “big picture”:** Given the ways in which Dufferin is changing and growing, many identified the need for improved coordination among planning, building and economic development to ensure that there is a holistic plan and system of processes in place that will allow the County to take advantage of opportunities (e.g., investment, job growth, etc.) and address key challenges (e.g., availability of land, growth in bordering municipalities, etc.)

Community Development & Tourism | Planning (2/2)

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Communications:** Better communication between the County's planning department and local area municipalities is required, particularly given the diversity of local needs. What the County does in one local municipality will not be the same as another, and there needs to be greater awareness of this diversity in staff-to-staff relationships.

Community Development & Tourism | Building

What's Working Well:

- **Some satisfied with status quo:** A few are satisfied with the services provided by the County's Department (but this is a minority).
- **Recognition that there is not capacity at the local level in all cases:** Even among those dissatisfied, there is understanding that it would likely not be feasible for all of the local area municipalities to have their own building departments due to staffing and financial considerations.
- **Some understanding of key barriers:** There is acknowledgement that building is constantly changing, and that staff may be challenged in keeping up with the changing legislative landscape. In addition, building services in general has become more tightly regulated, which may be reflected in staff's more cautious approach.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Top area for improvement:** Consistently recognized as a challenging area, with some municipalities currently exploring other options for the delivery of building services, including by external consultants.
- **Customer service:** Many expressed that Building Services can be inflexible and not responsive to local area municipalities (Council and staff) or applicants. Staff can be difficult to access, and some attributed this to the hybrid working environment. Approval timelines can also be long. There has also been some staff turnover that may be contributing to these service delivery challenges. Given these customer service issues, several noted that it may be more feasible to focus on improving, rather than realigning the service.
- **Disjointed service:** There was wide recognition that land use planning and building are integrated but that effective communication and coordination between the area municipalities and the County's Building Services is a critical gap.

Infrastructure & Environmental Services

What's Working Well:

- **Solid waste:** Service was uploaded in 2013, and there is no desire for a reversion as there is significance consensus that the County delivers this service well.
- **Roads:** Most are satisfied with County road operations and maintenance and consider the current roads rationalization process to function well, even if they are not always satisfied with the outcomes.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Concern about growth and traffic impacts:** There is some concern in the County's rural communities about the impacts of growth, including the ability of the road infrastructure to withstand the type and flow of traffic as well as increasing traffic volumes.
- **Focus on long-term planning:** The County recently completed a Transportation Master Plan (a recommendation in the 2020 SDR), and there is interest in continuing to improve and mature how the County engages in long-term planning, including coordinating among various services areas, including road operations, land use planning and economic development.
- **A minority think the County does not require a roads department.**

Health and Human Services

What's Working Well:

- **HHS ranked highest:** Consistently identified as working well in terms of the services provided to the local area municipalities.
 - Specific call-outs for Dufferin Oaks, housing and homelessness response, County's administration of ODSP, OW, etc., as well as ongoing collaboration with service providers and partner agencies.
- **County does best in those areas within its jurisdiction:** Most acknowledged that social services are a core upper-tier function and that the local municipalities would not have the capacity / expertise to be able to deliver these services.
- **No appetite for change in service delivery model:** No interest in any realignment of social services delivery responsibilities between the upper-tier and local municipalities.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Opportunity to do more?** Some identified the need for additional resources (financial, etc.) to be able to more effectively meet community needs, including the rising incidence of homelessness.

Other | Fire (1/2)

What's Working Well:

- **General satisfaction on the service delivery side:** Most are generally satisfied with the quality of fire services delivered across the County, with the majority of concerns focusing on the current governance model as well as the necessity to ensure appropriate future planning and coordination given the size and cost of fire services and the need for better overall coordination and information-sharing.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Split views on fire boards...some in favour:** Some want to keep the boards to allow for local input, diversity of opinions, and ongoing accountability and transparency to the public and believe that the boards serve as a system of “checks and balances.” A few noted that there could be improved coordination across boards to address inconsistencies and coordinate major capital investments / joint purchasing, among other things.
- **Some against:** Others consider the boards to be an archaic and outdated structure out of alignment with current practices in Ontario regarding fire service delivery. Noting that the boards tend to lack the technical expertise required to oversee such a complex service, several stated that the current governance structure is adversely impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of operations as well as the ability to plan for the future, including significant investments in fleet and technology. There are options that could be considered to allow for continued local input without the current board structure, such as a Fire Service Advisory Committee as in the Town of Orangeville.

Other | Fire (2/2)

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Silos:** Many mentioned the need for improved coordination among the various fire services across the County and in neighbouring out-of-County municipalities, including on public education and communications (e.g., different messaging about fire bans).
- **No clear consensus on future model, but several options for consideration as part of the ongoing Fire Services Review:**
 - Upload fire to the County (minority view), but there is concern about cost and the impact to the County levy
 - Orangeville provides fire services
 - Fire service should be made a municipal service (i.e., Fire services as a department of the municipality where it is physically located). Municipalities without a fire service can contract it from neighbouring municipalities through fee-for-service agreements.
 - Shared service model between local communities (e.g. like Lincoln and Grimsby)

Other | Library & Recreation

What's Working Well:

- **Most satisfied with status quo:** Library and recreation should be kept at the local level, with many identifying that the shared agreements among local municipalities are working effectively.
- **No appetite for an upload of recreation services:** Most do not support County involvement in directly *delivering* recreation services. A few expressed concern about the costs of migrating recreation services to the County.

Opportunities / Areas for Improvement:

- **Recreation Boards:** There are some that do not believe the current recreation boards are not working effectively and may be limiting opportunities that should be explored (e.g., consideration of other programs/facilities than a hockey arena).
- **Desire for a plan and improved coordination:** Due to the impacts of growth as well as the condition of some aging facilities across the County, there is interest in more coordinated and focused planning and ongoing collaboration at the local level to support recreation services and facilities and ensure residents have access to those services critical to community health and vibrancy, including in the rural areas. An option would be to advance with the regional recreation strategy and user needs assessment identified in the 2020 SDR.
- **County should still be at the table:** Although there is little desire for a direct County role in delivering recreation services, most believe the County can play a convener role in supporting a process or strategy to improve local collaboration.

On growth | The majority perspective is that the County fills a core function in planning and growth...

Arguments include:

- **Provincial requirement:** Ontario still requires the County to play a role in terms of growth allocations.
- **Big picture perspective:** If growth happens somewhere in the County, it benefits everyone in some way.
- **County support needed to tackle challenges:** Orangeville is built out, so where can/should growth occur? How can Dufferin attract business and job growth?
- **Growth management:** County can help ensure growth happens where there is servicing, protect rural areas and agricultural land.

“County should be managing growth and ensuring it happens in the most appropriate places.”

“We need the County to preserve the overall growth management strategy. Growth could ruin the agricultural community.”

“It’s a good thing to have some planning at the upper-tier. If you allow the lower-tiers to have their own way in planning, you’ll end up with a patchwork.”

On growth | The minority perspective is that local municipalities should have greater responsibility for planning and growth...

Arguments include:

- **Local context:** The local municipalities know their context best and have relationships in the community that the County doesn't.
- **Current planning processes are inefficient:** MCR has been long and complicated and there is still disagreement about the path forward.
- **Duplication:** Some County and local planning services overlap...can be hard to see the value.
- **Stay in your lane:** "If the County has a mandate to comment, it should. Otherwise everything else should fall to the local planning authority."

"I like the Wellington County model. There's a County role but the locals still feel like they have their own flavour, input and independence to coordinate things. This could be a win-win."

"Our County colleagues are great, but they don't know what's happening here. They shouldn't be making decisions for us."

"Let the lower-tier decide what they want to do and how they want to grow. The County can help or provide comments on HOW to do that in terms of facilitating that growth."

Conclusion | Some voices we heard

“There’s a real opportunity for us to lead. If we can come up with a structure that works, don’t you think other areas will be looking at us? We can set the path before it’s set for us.”

“I’m a big defender of local tier municipalities. They are closest to residents. The County is remote and poorly understood.”

“We think we can handle everything pretty much on our own. Or through partnerships with each other. We need a different way of doing things – a mindset change.”

“We need to start the conversation about what do we want to be and how do we get there...it’s not by having us stay in our own corners.”

“Is there anything that [the County] should not be doing’ is the question.”

“We are maybe trying to paint a broad brush with services – everyone gets the same.”

“I want the County to be thinned down version and be good at what it does.”



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