Town of Fort Erie Official Plan Review

Public Open House

February 20, 2025



Purpose of Today's Workshop

1. Provide an overview and update on the Official Plan Review

2. Collect feedback on the Draft Official Plan



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Workshop Agenda

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions
2. Project Updates
3. Draft Official Plan
4. Next Steps



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Project Updates

Official Plan Review Work Program







Phase 1

Engagement and Background Research

- Background Research Report
- Engagement Summary

Fall 2023 – Spring 2024

Phase 2

Policy Development

- Draft Official Plan
- Public & Council Review and Phase 2 Engagement Report

Spring – Winter 2024

Phase 3

Final Official Plan & Adoption

- Council Adoption
- Approval of the Final Official Plan

Spring 2025

We Are Here!

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Official Plan Review Engagement Strategy



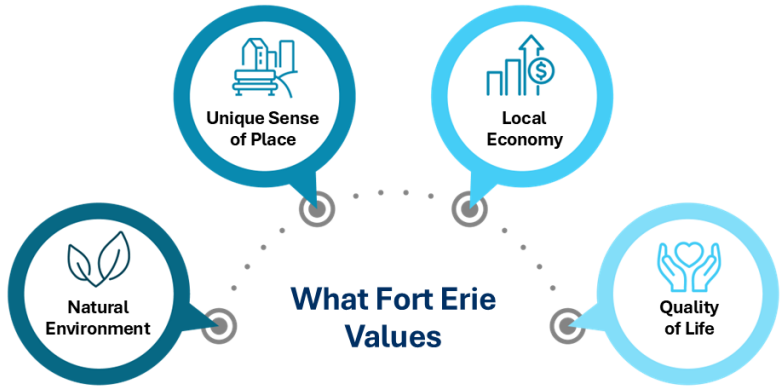
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Work Completed to Date

Phase 1: Background Research and Reporting

- ✓ Online public launch and ongoing updates
- ✓ Background Review Report
- ✓ Stakeholder Engagement
  - Indigenous Engagement
  - Special Committee of the Whole Meeting (Section 26)
  - Vision Workshop
  - Vision Survey
  - Community Focus Group
  - Five (5) Planners in Public Spaces Pop-Ups
  - Established Technical Advisory Committee
- ✓ Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report



Total Survey Responses
13 Responses

Project Website
1800 Total Visitors

Vision Workshop
40+ In Attendance

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What is an Official Plan?

What is an Official Plan?

- An Official Plan is a strategic land use planning policy document that contains a series of goals, objectives, and policies that work together to shape development and guide land use planning decisions. It addresses a range of topics, including, but not limited to:



Housing



Employment



Agriculture



Natural heritage



Economic development

- Official Plan policies are accompanied by a series of maps or schedules which show where different policies apply.
- An Official Plan is required to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and conform with all applicable Provincial and Regional legislation

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Purpose of the Official Plan Review



- The *Planning Act* requires a review of a new plan no less than 10 years after it comes into effect, and every 5 years thereafter.
- Changes to provincial and regional land use planning policy has occurred since the Town's Official Plan was adopted in 2011, such as the Niagara Official Plan approved in November 2022.
- This project represents an opportunity to review the entire document to ensure that it aligns with the most recent direction.
- The Official Plan Review also creates an opportunity to consider the changing local context and ensure that the evolving needs and priorities of the community are met.
- The Town's updated Official Plan will establish a new vision and supporting policy framework for how growth and change will be managed to the year 2051.

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Current Official Plan

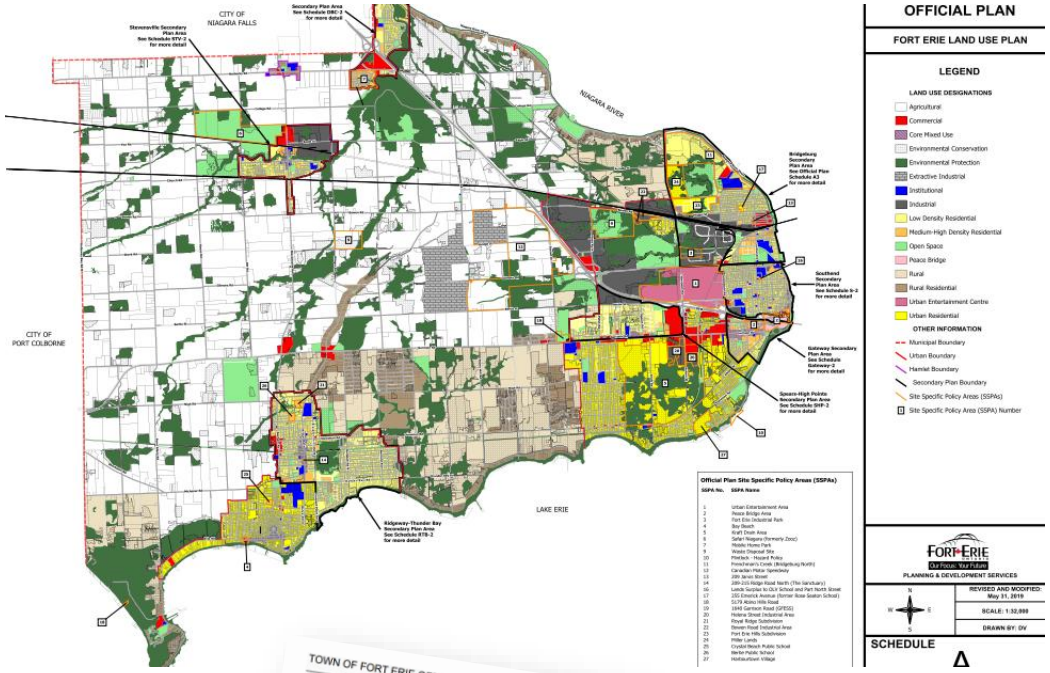
The Town's current Official Plan was approved in 2011. It identifies 12 key policy areas and develops a series of goals and objectives for each one. These include objectives related to urban design, neighbourhood plans and the protection of agriculture. Each objective is supported by specific policies.

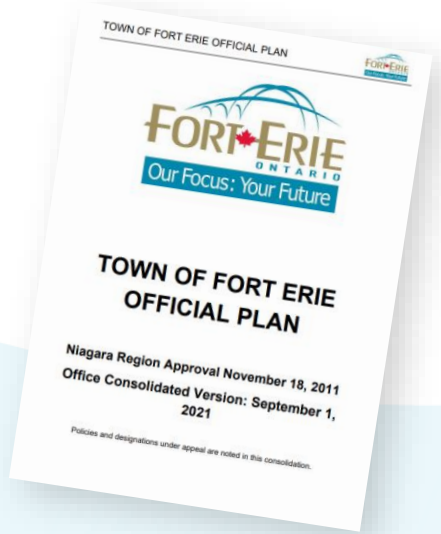
The Plan provides policies to guide decisions related to:

- Development;
- Roads and transportation;
- Archaeological resources and built heritage;
- Aggregate and petroleum resources; and,
- Application processing policies.

The schedules in the Plan illustrate:

- Land Use;
- Mineral Aggregate and Petroleum Resources;
- Natural Heritage Features;
- Natural Hazards & Fish Habitats;
- Cultural Heritage Archeological Zones; and
- Transportation Plans





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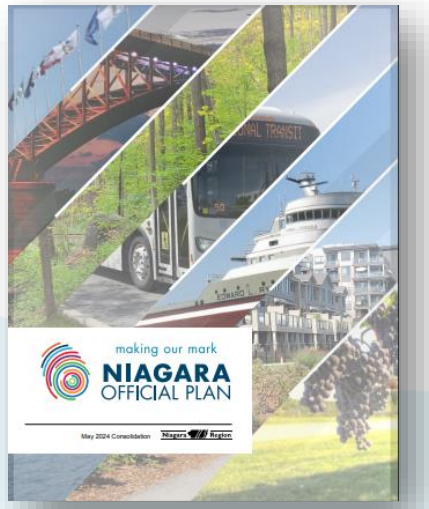
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The Role of the Province and the Region

- Under Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, **the Planning Act was amended to remove most planning functions from certain upper-tier municipalities** and distinguished between an upper-tier municipality with planning responsibilities and an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities.

- As of April 1, 2025, the Regional Municipality of Niagara will **become an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities**

- The Region has retained **other planning-related roles** associated with infrastructure planning and growth management. The Region will also **continue its role as commenting agency for development approvals** to ensure appropriate service capacity and growth-related infrastructure needs are met.



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Draft Official Plan

Draft Official Plan

Part A: Introduction

- New Land Acknowledgement
- Revised introduction that includes details on Fort Erie and the history of the Town
- Updated “Purpose of this Official Plan” section that highlights how the Official Plan sets out a planning policy framework in accordance with the *Planning Act* and other relevant Provincial policies and guidelines, as well as contains policies and schedules that provide a long-term vision for the Town
- Streamlined organization of the Official Plan, with a section that describes how the Official Plan is organized to support readability of the document

Draft Official Plan

Part B: Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles will establish broad direction for desirable land use planning matters outcomes in the Town of Fort Erie.

Vision Statement

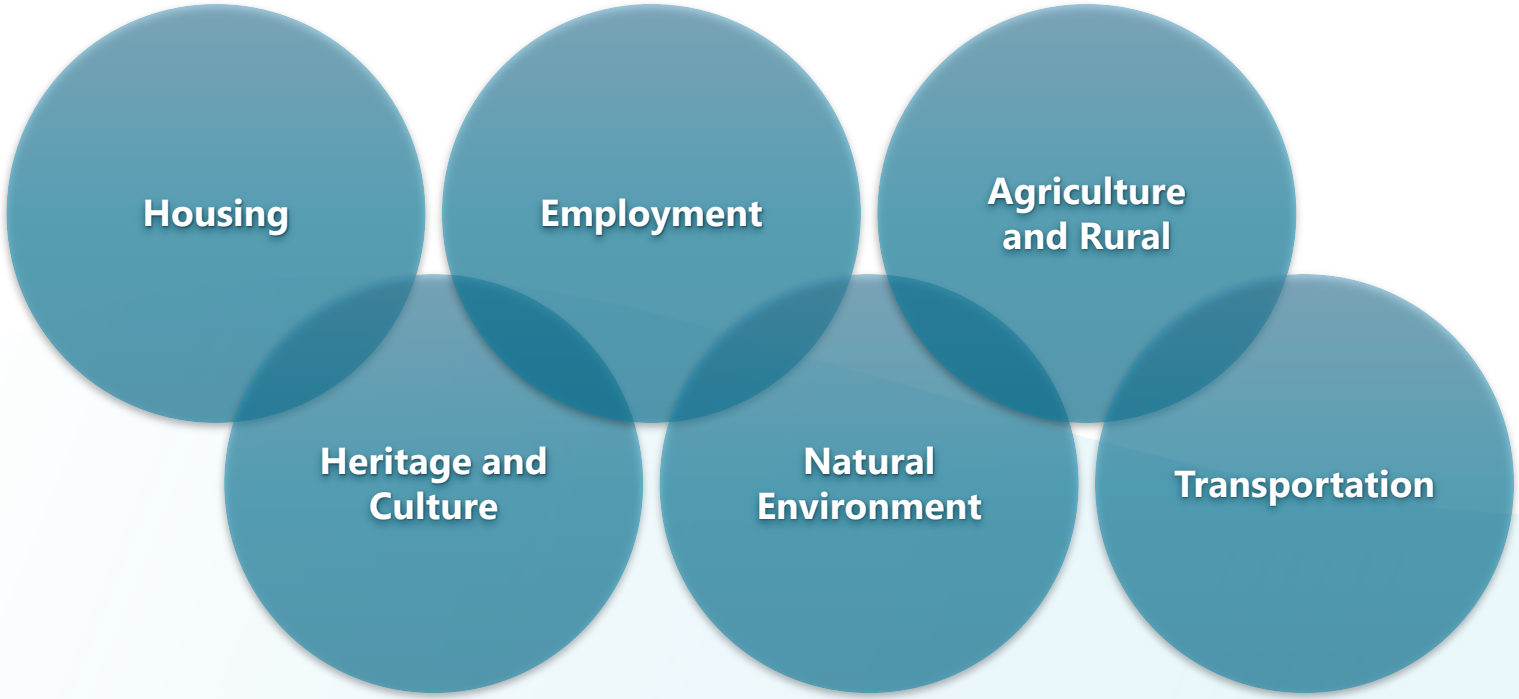
"Fort Erie will be an inclusive, welcoming and diverse community that balances growth with the natural environment and the agricultural base. The Town will promote walkable communities that support convenient access to retail and parks while enhancing connectivity throughout the Region. This Plan will guide the creation of accessible and safe spaces that promote a sense of community and recognize the Town's unique history and heritage, while building a prosperous economy and providing a range of housing options."

Draft Official Plan

Part B: Goals and Objectives

The Goals and Objectives of this Plan reflect the aspirations and priorities of the Fort Erie community and provide general direction for planning and development within the Town.

Goals and Objectives have been set out related to the following key theme areas:



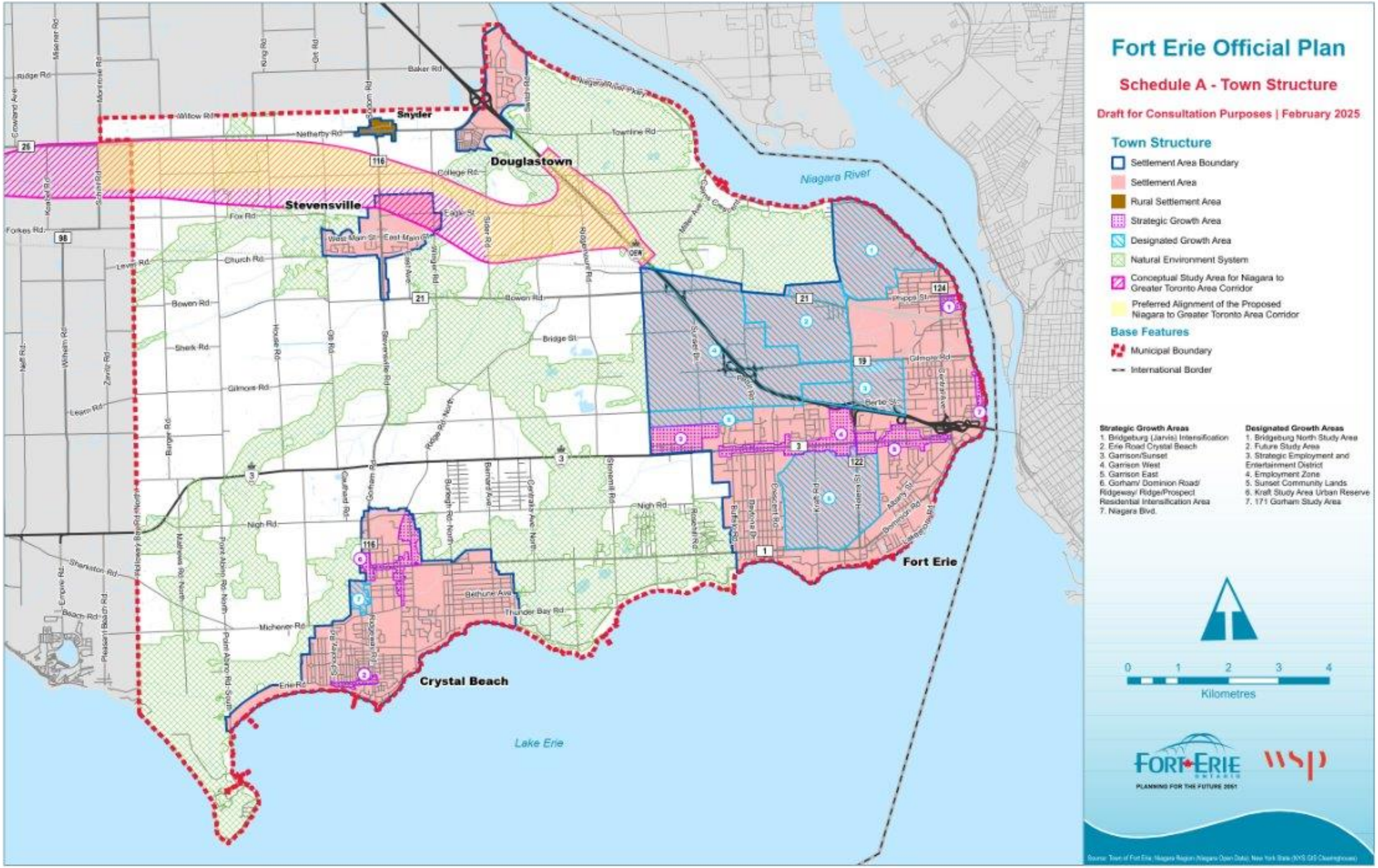
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Part C: Growth Management

- Population and Employment Growth Forecasts
  - The Town of Fort Erie is projected to **grow to 48,050 residents and 18,430 jobs** by the year 2051.
  - This means the Town will need to accommodate **15,230 new residents, or 508 new residents annually for 30 years between 2021 and 2051**.
- The provision of a **range and mix of housing options is a key growth management objective**.
- The built form policies of this Plan function to provide further direction regarding the location and organization of development within the existing and planned context of the Town.
- Updated Town Structure as shown on Schedule A


Fort Erie Official Plan
Schedule A - Town Structure
Draft for Consultation Purposes | February 2025
Town Structure
Settlement Area Boundary
Settlement Area
Rural Settlement Area
Strategic Growth Area
Designated Growth Area
Natural Environment System
Conceptual Study Area for Niagara to Greater Toronto Area Corridor
Preferred Alignment of the Proposed Niagara to Greater Toronto Area Corridor
Base Features
Municipal Boundary
International Border
Strategic Growth Areas
1. Bridgeburg (Jarvis) Intensification
2. Erie Road Crystal Beach
3. Garrison/Sunset
4. Garrison West
5. Garrison East
6. Gorham/ Dominion Road/ Ridgeway/ Ridge/Prospect Residential Intensification Area
7. Niagara Blvd.
Designated Growth Areas
1. Bridgeburg North Study Area
2. Future Study Area
3. Strategic Employment and Entertainment District
4. Employment Zone
5. Sunset Community Lands
6. Kraft Study Area Urban Reserve
7. 171 Gorham Study Area
0 1 2 3 4
Kilometres
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Snyder
Douglastown
Stevensville
Crystal Beach
Fort Erie
Niagara River
Lake Erie

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Part D: Land Use Designations

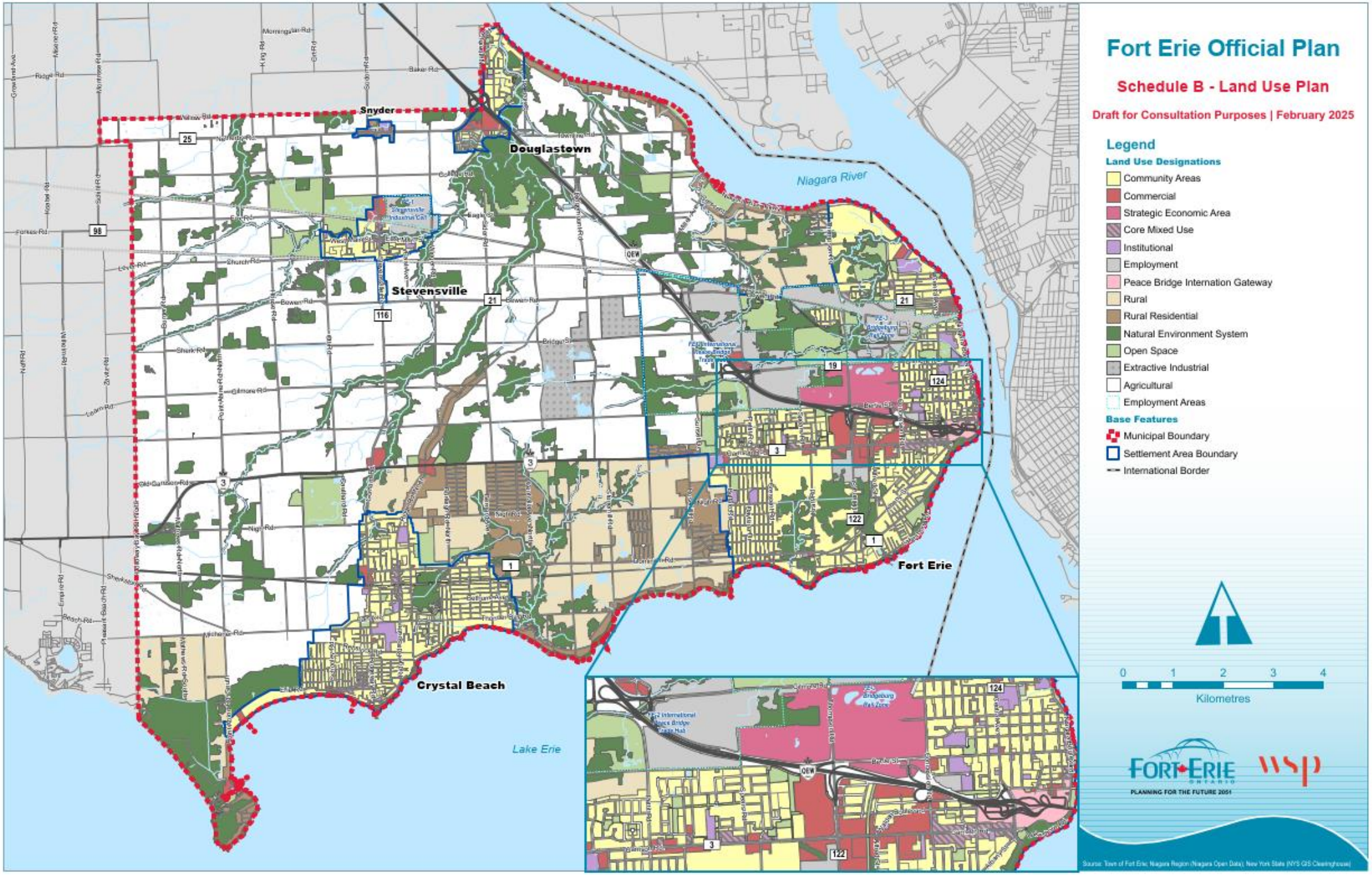
Land use designations establishes the general uses that are provided for in each designation. Together, they describe where housing can be built, where stores, offices and industry can locate and where a mix of uses is desired.

Land Use Designations in the Draft Official Plan include:

- **Settlement Areas:** Settlement Areas are planned to accommodate most of the Town's projected population and employment growth over the planning horizon. Settlement Areas will evolve to be compact, complete and accessible communities where the greatest concentration and mix of land uses are located.
- **Countryside:** The Countryside is made up of many unique natural and cultural heritage features as well as valuable natural resources, including large areas of land dedicated to agriculture and normal farm practices.
- **Environment and Open Space:** It is an overall objective of this Plan to protect, maintain, and enhance the Natural Environment System's health and biodiversity for long-term sustainability, while protecting development from natural hazards.

Draft Official Plan

Part D: Land Use Designations



Draft Official Plan

Part E: Town-wide Policies

The policies of this section apply to the entirety of the Town and contribute to the development of a complete, sustainable, and safe community. The implementation of these policies will be undertaken in co-operation with other levels of government, public and private agencies, and the broader community to improve the overall wellbeing and health of people living, working, and visiting Fort Erie.

Town-wide policies include policies on:

- Housing
- The Agriculture System
- Transportation and Mobility
- Employment
- Cultural Heritage
- Community Design
- Contaminated Lands
- Climate Change
- Open Space and Parkland
- Community Facilities

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Draft Official Plan

Part F: Implementation

- Achieving the objectives of this Plan requires an ongoing commitment to implementing the policies of this Plan.
- The Town has many tools available to it to implement the policies of the Official Plan and achieve the vision, goals and objectives of its policies.
- Policies in this section include:
  - New and updated policies on the Duty to Consult, Public Participation and Public Meetings
  - Implementation tools including zoning by-laws and Community Planning Permit System
  - Complete Application requirements
  - Glossary of defined terms

Next Steps

Additional Policies

- Site-specific Policy Areas
- Interim Control By-law
- Short-term Rental Accommodations

Next Steps

Stakeholder Engagement Meetings (Q1 2025)

Consultation with the MMAH (Q1 2025)

Statutory Public Meeting (Q2 2025)

Final Official Plan (Q2 2025)

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Thank You!