



Planning, Building and By-law Services

Prepared for: Council-in-Committee

Report: PBBS-27-2026

Meeting Date: June 8, 2026

1. Title

Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan Status Report

2. Recommendations

That: Council receive Report PBBS-27-2026 for information purposes respecting progress on the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan, and further

That: Council direct staff to continue the Secondary Plan process in consultation with stakeholders, agencies and the public, and to work collaboratively with the Consultants to finalize all supporting studies, land use concepts and policy framework.

3. Relation to Council's Corporate Strategic Plan

Priority: Sustainable and managed growth

Initiative: Initiative: 3.1 Manage growth in a responsible manner by:

- Updating the Official Plan to include density targets (including Secondary Plans) that align with the Community's ability to grow.
- Developing a strategy to accommodate growth through phased servicing.
- Determine and respond to the impacts of legislation (i.e.) Bill 23 and Bill 109 on growth, more impact on taxpayers, and fees to support growth).
- Focusing on preserving our natural heritage.

4. List of Stakeholders

Landowners: 2627781 Ontario Inc., BBFC Lands Inc. and 2585908 Ontario Inc (Vaughn Gibbons).

Developers / Residents and Business Owners

Region of Niagara

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Niagara Parks Commission and Various Agencies

Utilities

School Boards

Provincial Ministries

5. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the status of the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan project, including work completed to date, ongoing technical studies and consultation activities, key planning considerations, and anticipated next steps required to advance the Secondary Plan toward completion and adoption.

6. Background

Previous Council Direction and Approvals

Bridgeburg North was identified as the Town's highest-priority Secondary Plan project through a previous Council decision in 2021 ([PDS-105-2021](#)). Historically, planning for the area was delayed because the lands were under provincial appeal and because significant environmental and servicing studies had not yet been completed. Since the Province withdrew its appeal regarding the inclusion of the Bridgeburg North Urban Expansion Area, landowners and developers are now able to pursue development proposals. As a result, the Town is moving forward with a comprehensive planning exercise to determine how the area should develop over the long term.

Reports [PDS-22-2022](#) and [PBBS-02-2026](#) requested authorization from Council to begin the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan process and establish a Community Focus Group (CFG). The reports explain that the Town's secondary planning framework is intended to guide detailed land use planning and create complete, livable communities through Secondary Plans implemented as Official Plan Amendments.

Upper Canada Consultants represents the four major landowners within the study area and the owners have undertaken the technical studies required to support future development. These first phase studies include sanitary servicing and stormwater management existing conditions report, transportation assessments existing conditions, first phase subwatershed study, archaeological and other environmental impact investigations. The purpose of these studies is to determine which lands are suitable for development, identify environmentally sensitive areas requiring protection, and establish how infrastructure and municipal services can support future growth.

Several major planning considerations will guide the Secondary Plan process. These include managing anticipated population growth to 2051, protecting environmental features, planning appropriate land uses and residential densities, expanding parks and open spaces, improving transportation systems, and considering urban design principles. The report emphasizes the importance of balancing growth and housing demand with environmental conservation, particularly because the area contains environmentally sensitive lands, natural heritage corridors, and conservation zones.

7. Analysis

Plan Area

The Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan Area is located within the north-east portion of the Town of Fort Erie, generally within the Bridgeburg community and is bounded by Phipps Street to the South, Thompson Road to the west, Niagara River Parkway to the north and east. The existing

community of Bridgeburg is to the south. The Plan Area is approximately 165 ha in size as shown on **Figure 1**.

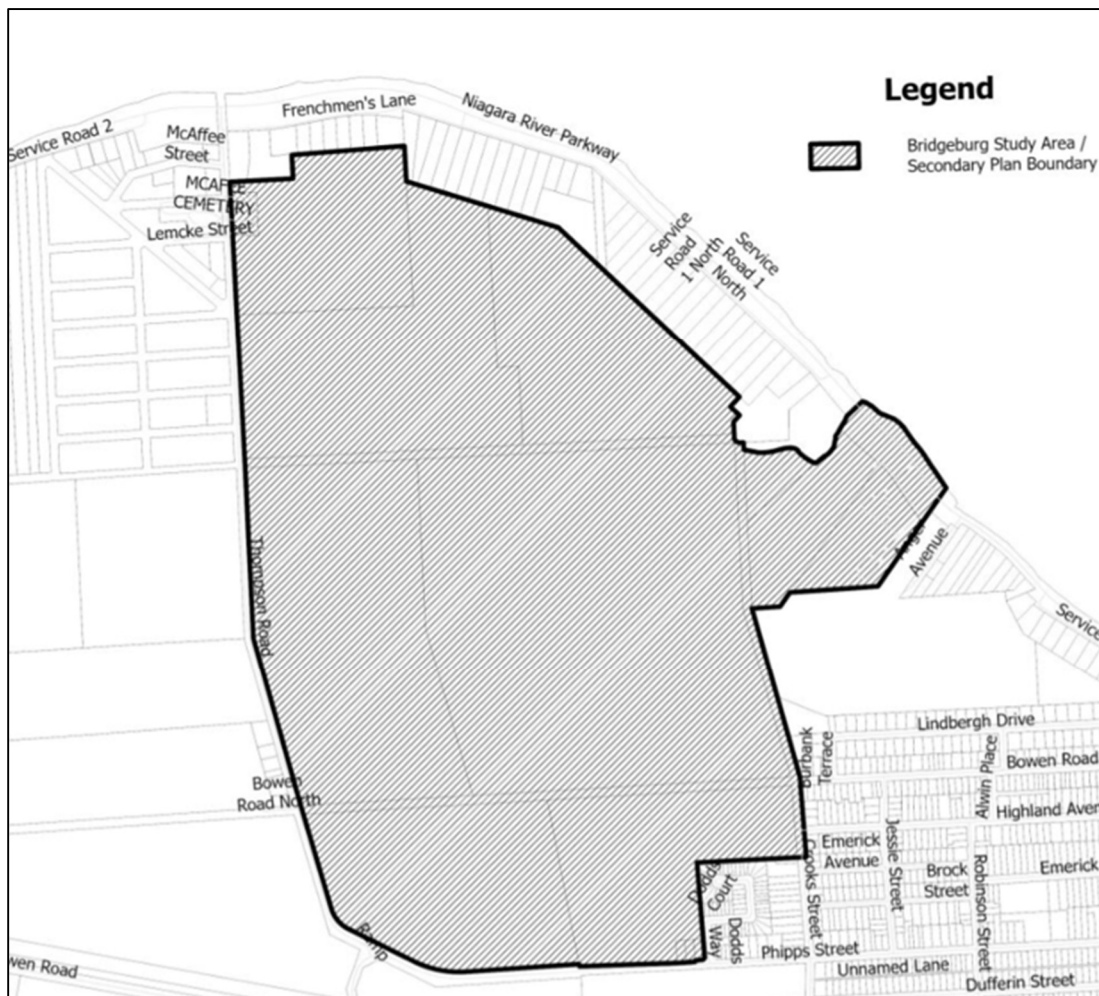


Figure 1 – Location map of Plan Area

The area is located within the Frenchman's Creek watershed, with the main branch of Frenchman's Creek and its tributaries crossing the Study area. The other existing land uses within and surrounding the study area include agricultural lands, vacant and undeveloped parcels, natural heritage areas, rural residential uses, and limited commercial and employment-related uses. Adjacent lands include established residential neighbourhoods, transportation corridors, and municipal infrastructure that will influence future development patterns within the Secondary Plan area.

Background Studies

A number of background studies and technical investigations have been undertaken to support and inform the Secondary Plan process and support preparation of the overall policy framework for the area. These studies are required under the policies of both the Town and Regional Official Plan, to ensure that planning for the area is approached comprehensively. These studies provide critical information required to assess future land use opportunities, infrastructure needs, environmental constraints, and long-term growth management strategies.

All studies completed to date are Phase 1 reports which are characterized as “existing conditions” that basically aim to document the present-day conditions found on or having influence on the lands. Not all lands within the Secondary Plan Area will be developed. Lands that require environmental protection will remain undeveloped. The background study work has identified environmental constraints and potential mitigation and compensation areas. The first phase reports will serve as benchmarks when assessing future land use options. The following studies have been provided and reviewed to date.

- Transportation Study
- Existing Servicing Conditions Report (Phase 1 Report)
- Subwatershed Study
- Land Use Compatibility Study
- Phase One ESA's
- Phase Two ESA
- Oil and Gas Well Study
- RSC and Survey
- Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment

A summary of the studies completed to date is attached as **Appendix 1** and full copies of the phase 1 background studies can be accessed through the Town of Fort Erie [Let's Talk](#) webpage for the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan by any interested person or party.

Secondary Plan Work Performed to Date

The Secondary Plan process follows a three-phase approach to developing a land use plan and policies that will require Council approval. It will be integrated through an Official Plan amendment and a Zoning By-law Amendment into the Town's Official Plan and Zoning By-law at the conclusion of the process.



Conceptual Land Use Plan

The developable lands are limited given the significant natural features within the plan area. Currently, a Phase 1 Subwatershed Study has been completed that identifies environmentally significant features, ecological constraints, drainage systems, and opportunities for environmental protection and enhancement within the study area. Technical work has included review of woodlands, watercourses, wetlands, and natural heritage linkages to inform future development planning and infrastructure design. The findings of this phase of the study have

aided in the development of the initial land use plan and will assist in establishing appropriate environmental protection policies and development limits within the Secondary Plan area.

The conceptual land use plan illustrates a mixture of land uses including community areas, environmental protection areas, open space, park locations, SWM pond locations, trail locations and a road crossing over the creek that will ensure connectivity between the north and south lands. The concept also identifies environmental restoration and enhancement areas. The plan is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The next phase of the project will focus on preparing a more detailed land use concept, including estimated unit/density numbers. The plan will identify a mix of land uses, including low-density residential uses such as detached homes, semi-detached dwellings, and street townhouses, as well as medium-density residential uses such as low-rise apartments and block townhouses. Open space areas will also be more precisely identified to accommodate active parkland and stormwater management facilities. Opportunities for active transportation will be incorporated throughout the open space system, and along buffer areas adjacent to environmental protection lands.

Environmental protection areas identified through the technical studies, including wetland staking and the final phases of the Subwatershed Study (SWS), will be shown on the final conceptual plan and protected from development. As additional technical work is completed, there may be refinements to the boundaries of the environmental protection areas than what is shown in the first plan attached. This final plan will form the basis of the policy framework for the secondary plan area.

8. Financial, Staffing and Accessibility (AODA) Implications

No immediate financial implications are anticipated. Accessibility accommodations will be provided upon request, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

9. Policies Affecting Proposal

The Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statements support the development of Secondary Plans as a way to promote managed, smart growth and to encourage greater densities to reduce urban sprawl. The Town's Official Plan also identifies the need for the completion of Secondary Plans as a means of implementing its goals and policies at a more detailed level.

The Town's Official Plan places strong emphasis on Secondary Planning as a key tool for achieving detailed land use planning and supporting the development of complete communities to accommodate long-term growth throughout Fort Erie. In particular, Section F.4.1 of the Official Plan establishes the policy framework and guiding principles for the preparation and implementation of Secondary Plans.

10. Comments from Departments, Community and Corporate Partners

Technical Review Committee

A Technical Review Committee has been established to guide the Secondary Plan process and includes representatives from key internal Town departments, Niagara Region, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Niagara Parks Commission. To date, the Committee has met twice. The first meeting focused on the review of the Phase 1 studies, while the second meeting provided an opportunity to review and discuss the draft conceptual land use plan and identify areas for further refinement.

The Committee provided high level comments related to the Phase 1 studies that did not identify any major concerns with the information provided to date. The majority of the review centred around the subwatershed study and the existing environmental constraints on the lands. The Committee will continue to meet throughout the process to review ongoing work and provide comments and technical input as the studies progress through the remaining phases.

Community Focus Group (CFG)

The first workshop of the CFG was held on February 25, 2026. The group was given a brief presentation of the Plan area and the work completed to date. The group undertook a strength, weakness, opportunities and constraints (SWOC) analysis aimed at gathering views and opinions of the members. Additional information gathered included some objectives for the Town to consider when planning the community and to help guide the remaining steps of preparing a Secondary Plan.

The workshop feedback highlighted a strong desire to balance future growth with environmental stewardship. Overall, the workshop findings highlight a shared vision for Bridgeburg North as a connected, environmentally conscious and livable community that accommodates growth while preserving its natural character. The key themes include:

1. **Balancing Growth with Environmental Protection**
Participants consistently emphasized that future development must respect and integrate natural heritage systems, watercourses and environmentally sensitive lands.
2. **Improving Connectivity**
Connectivity challenges were one of the most common concerns. Participants identified the need for better road, pedestrian, cycling and trail connections across natural and rail barriers.
3. **Supporting a Complete Community**
There was strong interest in creating a more self-sustaining community through:
 - Additional housing choices
 - Local retail and services
 - Walkability
 - Access to parks and recreation.
4. **Leveraging Natural and Recreational Assets**
The Niagara River, trails and natural systems were repeatedly identified as defining features that should shape the identity and future planning of Bridgeburg North.

5. Infrastructure Readiness

Participants noted that future growth will depend heavily on infrastructure capacity, including sanitary servicing, transportation access and safe crossings.

The SWOC exercise identifies both the opportunities and limitations that should guide future land use, infrastructure planning, environmental protection, and community design within the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan area.

Staff anticipate 2 additional meetings with the CFG, one to develop a vision statement, goals and objectives to consider as part of the policies and to discuss the staff refined land use options. A third meeting will be held to discuss the preferred land use plan and draft policies.

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and the Town's Senior Environmental Planner have reviewed the Phase 1 Subwatershed Study and associated conceptual plans through a series of meetings held throughout the process. Detailed comments and recommendations were provided to the consulting team, and revisions have been incorporated into the plans to address the requested updates and modifications. Given the presence of significant environmental features and environmentally sensitive lands within the study area, the EAC will continue to play an active role throughout the establishment of the Secondary Plan.

Open House

A Public Information Open House was held in the Atrium of Town Hall on March 25, 2026, at 5:00 PM. All property owners within 250 metres of the subject lands were notified of the Open House via notice by regular mail sent on March 3, 2026. Town Planning Staff and the Consultants for the landowner group were in attendance to answer questions. Approximately 40 people attended the open house.

A number of conceptual land use plans were on display for discussion. The plans identified the community areas, open space and environmental protection areas, a conceptual crossing location, SWM pond areas and a multi-use trail and parks. The plans also illustrated the natural heritage constraints, along with areas identified for removal and compensation. It should be noted that the proposed enhancement areas are intended to strengthen significant features and improve the overall system. The areas identified for removal consist of marginal features with low ecological function, largely dominated by invasive species.

The following summarizes what we heard from those in attendance:

- A number of individuals asked questions centred around the protection of the environmental lands and the Frenchman's Creek area. In particular, questions were raised with respect to proper review and circulation of the studies, to the appropriate commenting agencies. Staff advised that the prescribed agencies and bodies will be circulated for formal consultation once the studies have completed the phase 3 reviews.
- Questions were asked about the timing of the development and when to expect construction. Staff advised that the current process is to designate the lands only and that there will be further applications (ie. Plan of Subdivision) in the future.
- An adjacent landowner inquired if they would be required to hook up to municipal services once this development was underway as they are currently on private services.

- An attendee inquired about development on their lands which is outside of the Plan Area. Staff directed them to the appropriate staff person to request a pre-consultation on their lands.
- An attendee inquired about making changes to the Secondary Plan after it was approved. Staff advised it would be part of the Official Plan once approved and persons can make private applications to amend land use designations or zoning.
- An attendee inquired whether there would be a school provided in this area. Staff advised that the school board will be consulted later in the process during formal circulation.

An additional Open House is planned for late summer to discuss the land use concept and draft policies.

Next Steps

Following completion of the constraint mapping, the Phase 2 and 3 studies will be finalized and used to inform the preparation of a final conceptual land use plan. At the same time, staff will continue developing the policy framework for the Secondary Plan. The conceptual land use plan, phase 2 studies, and draft policy framework will be reviewed by the Technical Review Committee before being presented to the public and the CFG for additional input, feedback, and refinement.

Once the draft Secondary Plan policies have been prepared, staff will undertake a statutory public meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act. Staff will schedule Indigenous consultation, consultation with school boards, key internal departments and circulation to all other prescribed agencies and bodies as required for any formal amendment processing to ensure thorough consultation is being achieved.

11. Alternatives

N/A

12. Communicating Results

Information regarding the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan will continue to be communicated to the public through a variety of engagement and communication methods, including:

Public information meetings and open houses;
 The Town of Fort Erie [Let's Talk](#) page for the Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan;
 Public notices and Council reports;
 Stakeholder and agency consultation meetings;
 Community Focus Group discussions; and
 Social media and digital communications.

Draft policies, technical studies, and project updates will be made available to the public as the process advances. Opportunities for public review and comment will continue throughout the preparation of the Secondary Plan.

13. Conclusion

The Bridgeburg North Secondary Plan represents an important opportunity for the Town of Fort Erie to proactively plan for future growth and development within a strategically significant area of the municipality.

The Secondary Plan process will provide a comprehensive framework to guide land use, transportation, infrastructure, housing, environmental protection, and community development in a coordinated and sustainable manner. The initiative supports provincial, regional, and municipal growth objectives while recognizing the importance of community engagement, infrastructure planning, and environmental stewardship.

As technical studies and public consultation activities continue, the Town will be better positioned to establish a long-term vision and implementation strategy for the Bridgeburg North area that supports complete communities, economic growth, and enhanced quality of life for residents. Current work is focused on refining the overall planning framework, reviewing infrastructure and environmental matters and preparing draft Secondary Plan policies and land use concepts for future public review and Council consideration.

14. Report Approval

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15. Attachments

Appendix 1 – Summary of Completed Studies
Appendix 2 – Land Use Concept