



WELCOME!

Town of Fort Erie

Zoning By-law Review



Public Open House #1
July 14, 2026

Overview of Today's Open House

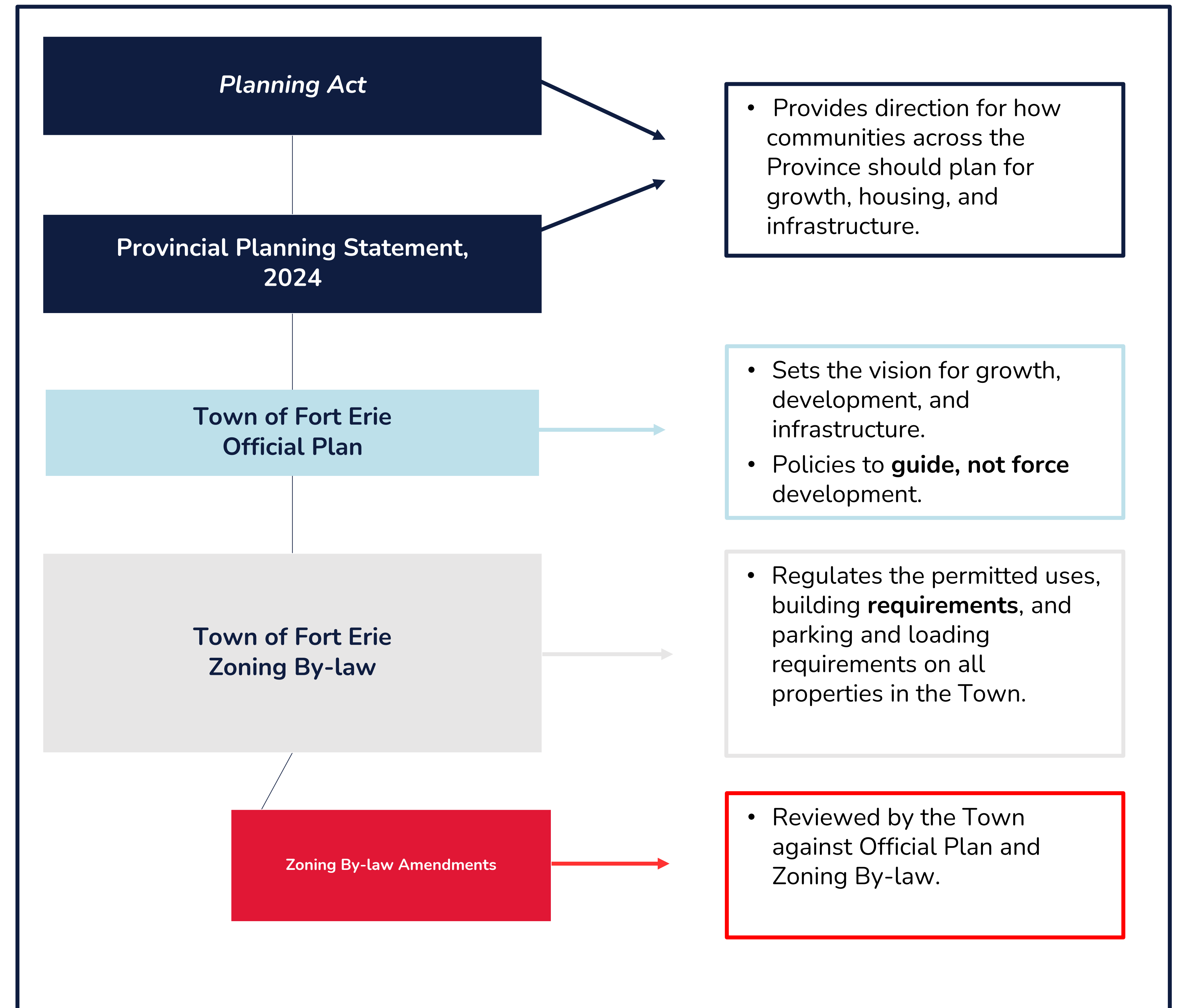
The purpose of today's open house is to...

1. **Introduce** and explain why a new Zoning By-law is being developed.
2. **Highlight** key elements of what a Zoning By-law regulates, and preliminary work completed on the project to date.
3. **Seek your input** and comments on the direction of the Zoning By-law Review.



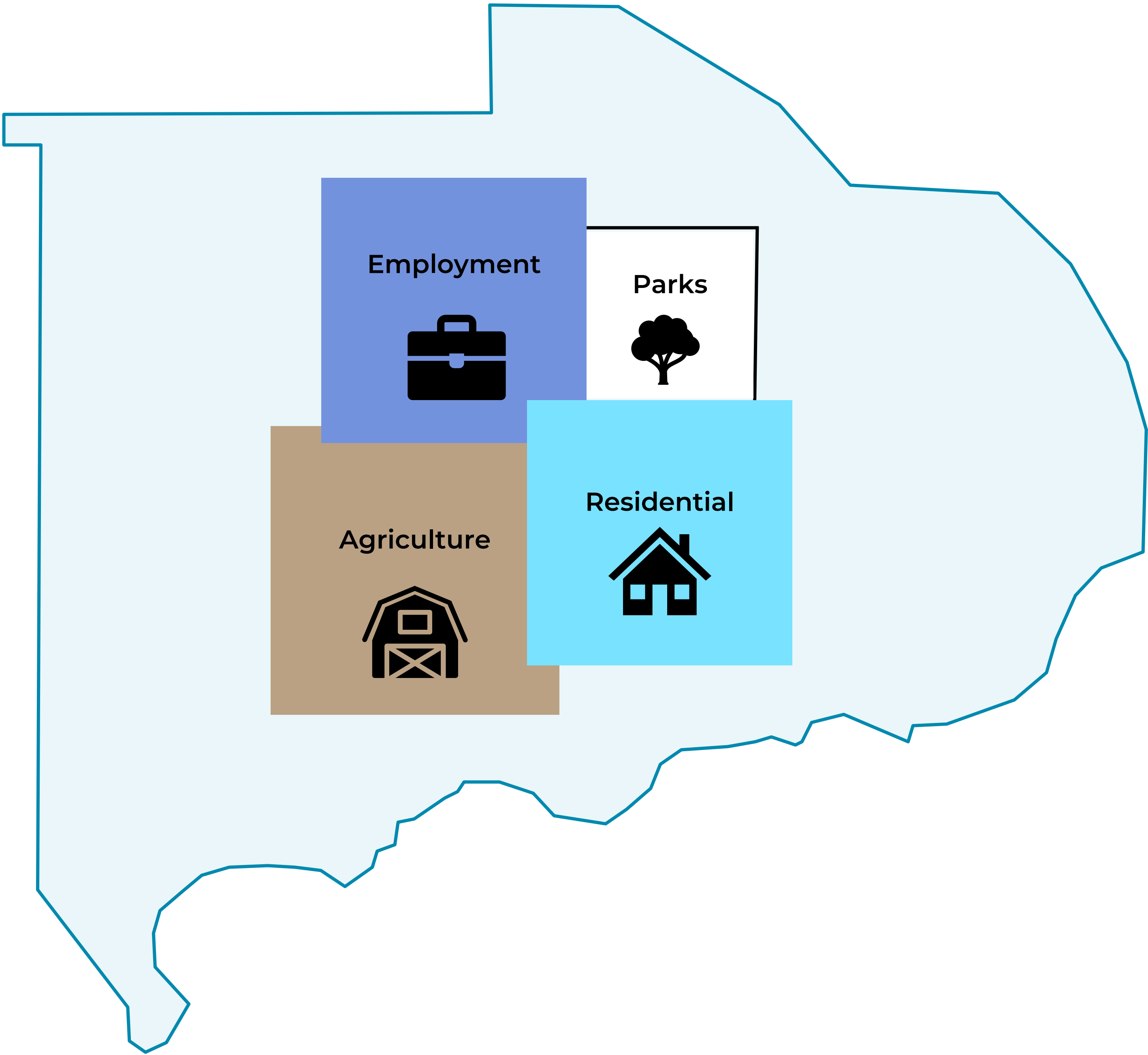
How Did We Get Here?

- The Zoning By-law update is required to **reflect changes in Ontario's planning framework**
 - In 2024, the Province introduced the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024
 - New Official Plan (May 2026) establishes the Town's vision for managing growth
- Authority to enact the Zoning By-law is established under Section 34 of the *Planning Act*
- Town must now update its Zoning By-law to align with the new Official Plan



What is a Zoning By-law?

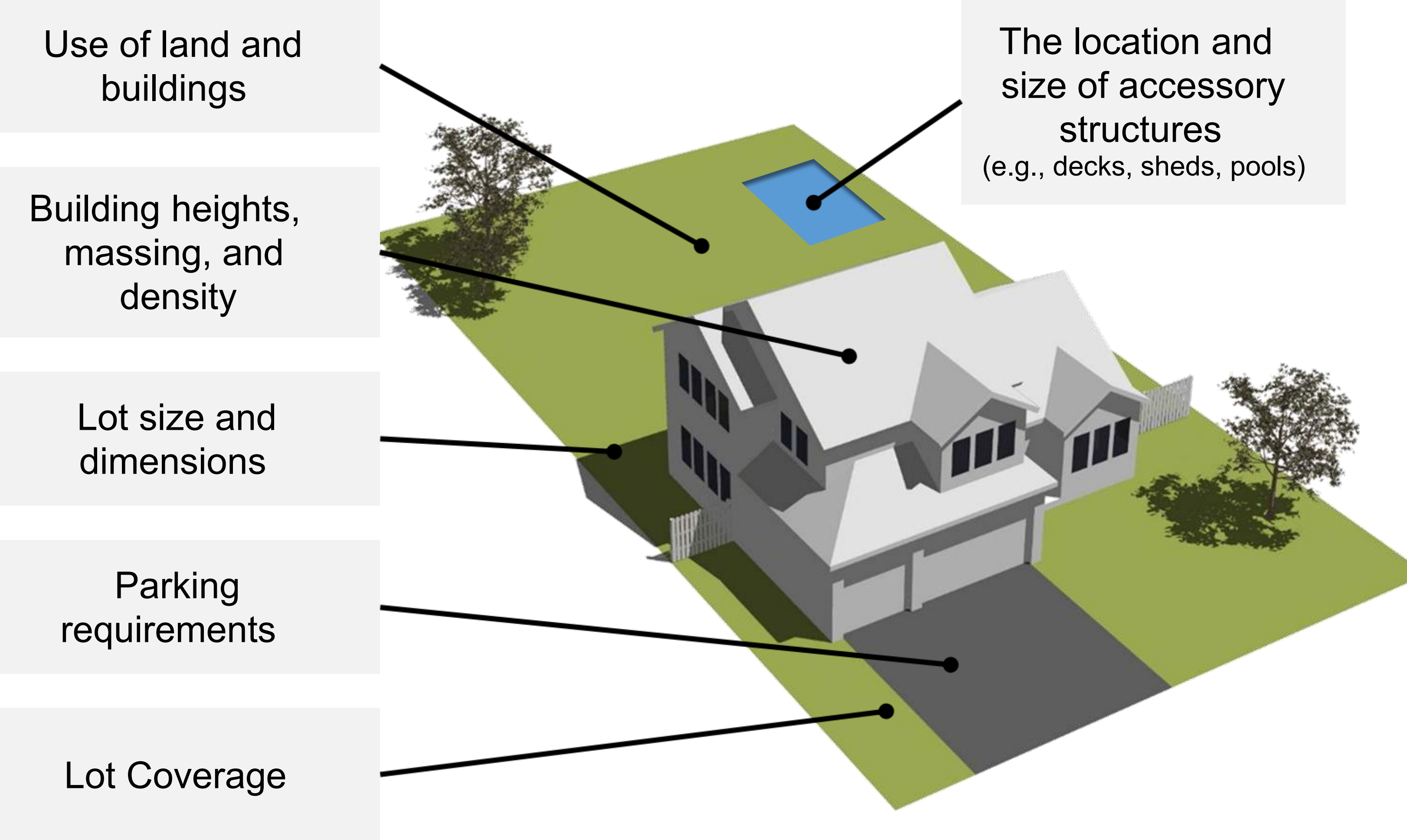
- ✓ **A legal tool** that controls how land is used and what can be built on each property.
- ✓ **Implements the Official Plan**, which sets broader direction for land use in Town.
- ✓ All land in Fort Erie is ‘zoned,’ and each zone has its own permitted uses and rules.
- ✓ Used by landowners, residents, Town staff, and Council to **inform development decisions and the use of land**.
- ✓ Development that doesn’t meet the By-law requires the applicant to **apply to amend the Zoning By-law** (a rezoning) or apply for a ‘minor variance’ for a small change.



	Residential 1 (R1) Zone	Residential 3 (R3) Zone
Permitted Uses (simplified)	• 1 single-detached dwelling	• 1 single detached dwelling • Semi-detached dwellings • Duplex dwellings • Home occupations

What does a Zoning By-law Regulate?

Zoning By-laws contain many regulations and standards to guide development, such as:



New Zoning By-law Principles

The following are some guiding principles for preparing the new Zoning By-law:

- ✓ Create a user-friendly Zoning By-law
- ✓ Establish consistent regulations
- ✓ Modernize zoning
- ✓ Respond to public and stakeholder input and comments to improve the Zoning By-law

What is Being Reviewed?

The Zoning By-law Review will look at each property in the Town to determine if the current zone and rules are still appropriate. This includes residential, commercial, and employment land uses.

Zoning By-law 129-90 – By the Numbers

- Over time, the Town's Zoning By-law has become:
 - Increasingly complex
 - Subject to outdated definitions and regulations
 - Reliant on site-specific exceptions
- The new Zoning By-law will streamline and clarify these rules to create a more consistent and user-friendly framework.

36

Age

42

Sections

45

Zones

377

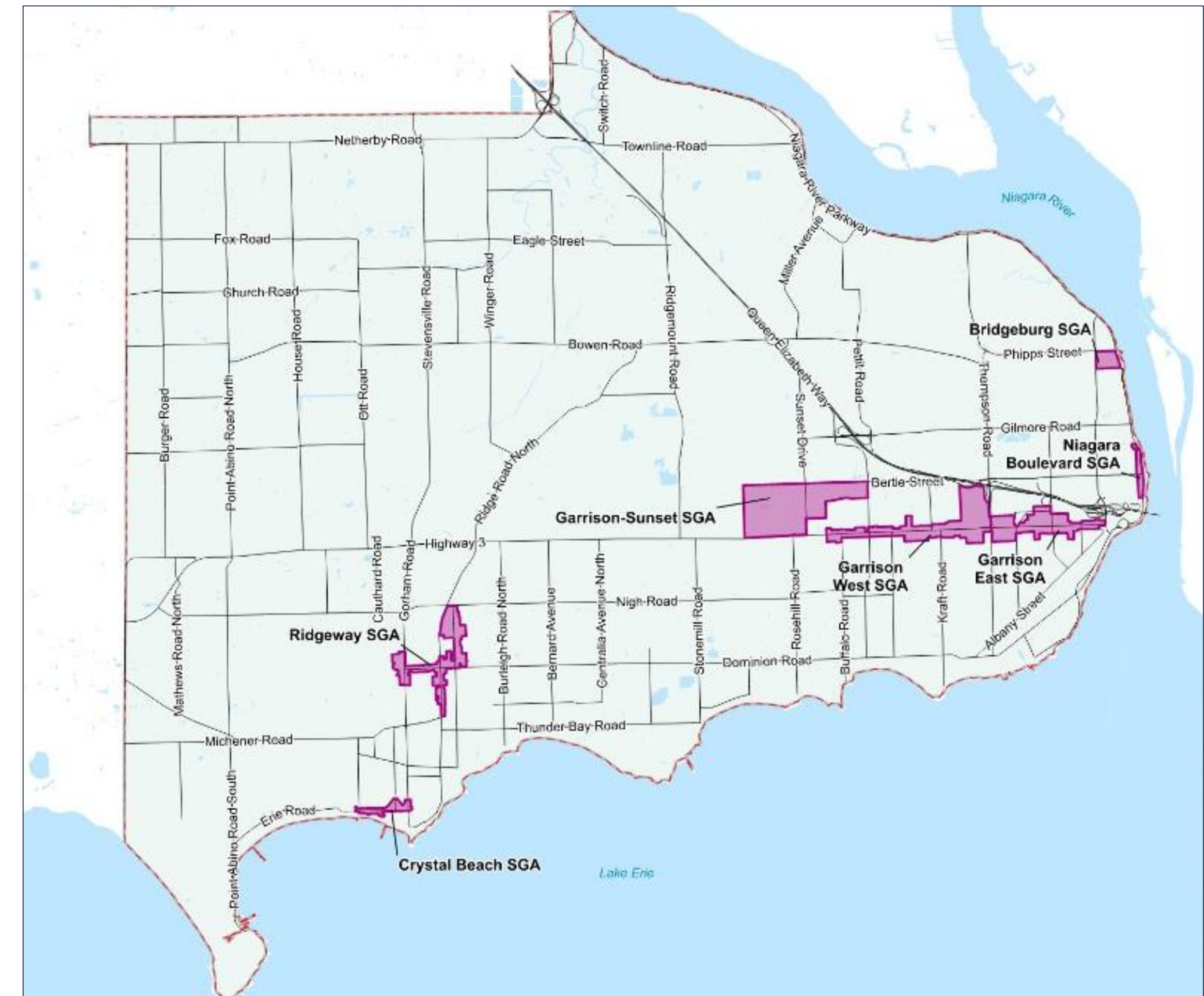
Definitions

801

Exceptions

Relationship to the CPPS

- Town is developing a **Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)** for its 'Strategic Growth Areas'
- The CPPS project is proceeding in tandem with the Zoning By-law Review, but they deal with separate areas of the Town
- A CPPS is a tool that can be used to streamline development approvals
- This system provides several benefits, including:
 - increased transparency with the public;
 - reduced planning approval timelines; and
 - accelerated delivery of housing options to meet community needs.



Community Planning Permit System

Zoning By-law Amendment

A request to change the zoning rules for a property, such as allowing a different use or larger building than currently permitted.

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Minor Variance

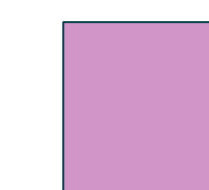
A request for small adjustments to zoning rules (like setbacks or height) when the proposal is mostly compliant but needs minor relief.

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Site Plan Application

A review process that focuses on how a development is designed and laid out on the site, including things like building placement, landscaping, and access.

Study Area Map



CPPS Study Area



ZBLR Study Area

Zoning By-law vs. Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) – What's the Difference?

Zoning By-law (ZBL)

A Zoning By-law is the Town's standard rulebook for development across the municipality. It sets clear, fixed rules such as:

- What uses are allowed on a property (e.g., residential, commercial)
- How tall buildings can be
- How far they must be set back from property lines

These rules apply broadly and are used for day-to-day development decisions

The baseline rules for properties based on general categories of use

VS.

Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)

A CPPS is a more flexible tool used in specific areas, usually where the Town wants to guide a higher level of change or growth. Instead of relying only on fixed rules, a CPPS:

- Combines zoning, minor variance, and site plan approval into one system.
- Allows for more flexibility, while still meeting clear policy goals
- Can include both: Firm rules and Discretion to adjust things like height or layout within set limits.

A tailored but flexible planning approach for areas expected to grow or change more quickly.

Overview of Preliminary Work

As part of the Town of Fort Erie's Zoning By-law Review, the Project Team has conducted background research and identified specific issues and trends to inform future zoning directions. Key tasks included:

- ✓ Establish the key principles that will guide the Zoning By-law Review
- ✓ Identify opportunities to improve the clarity, usability, and effectiveness of the Town's zoning framework.
- ✓ Review the current Zoning By-law 129-90
- ✓ Highlight best practices from other municipalities
- ✓ Establish direction on Zone structure, development standards, permitted uses, and parking and loading

Key Areas:



Residential Areas



Commercial and
Employment Areas



Agriculture and Rural
Areas



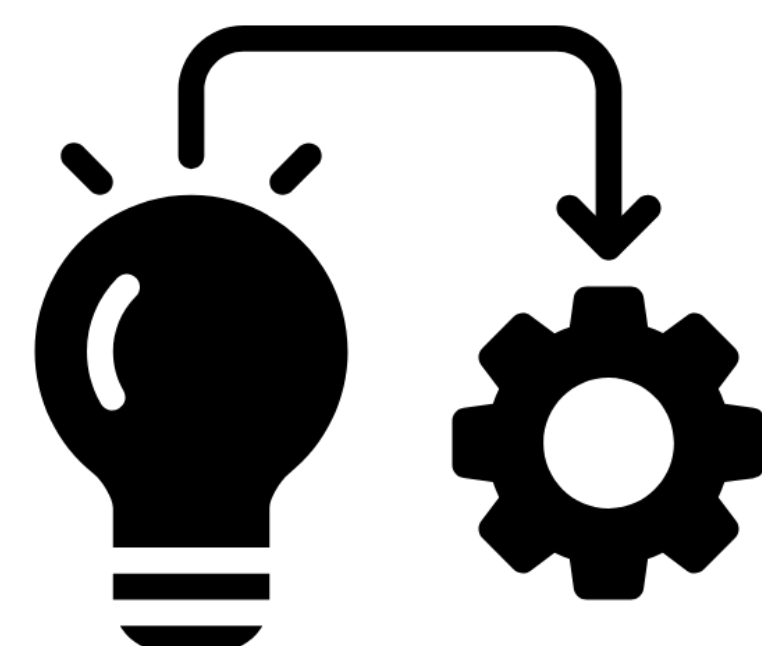
Environmentally
Sensitive Areas, Open
Spaces, and Parks

Overview of General Issues

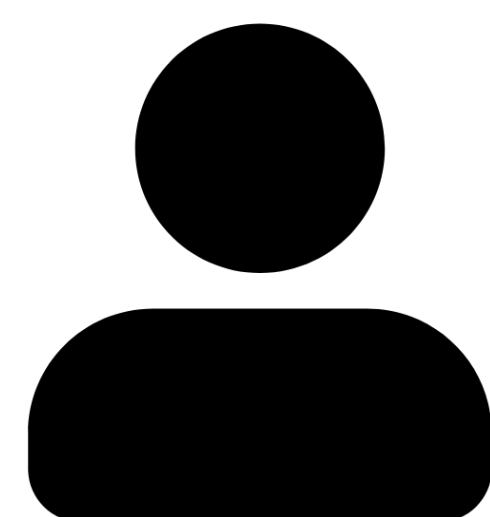
Purpose:

Outline fundamental considerations for the new Zoning By-law, including key principles to guide the Review.

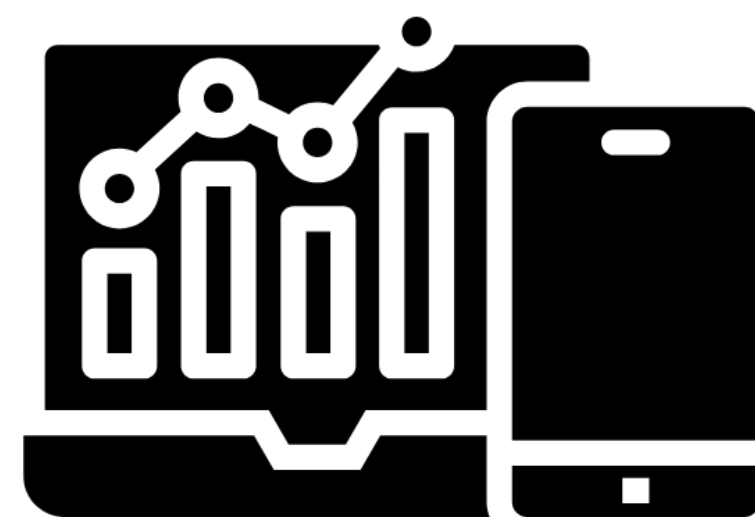
- The existing Zoning By-law 129-90 has grown **complex** over time, with many **outdated** definitions and site-specific **exceptions**.
- Must be updated to conform with the new Official Plan (2026) and Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.
- Recommendation to build the By-law around six guiding principles, including a user-friendly format that uses plain language and is grounded in meaningful consultation.
- Streamline zones, definitions, and sections to reduce complexity and improve clarity.



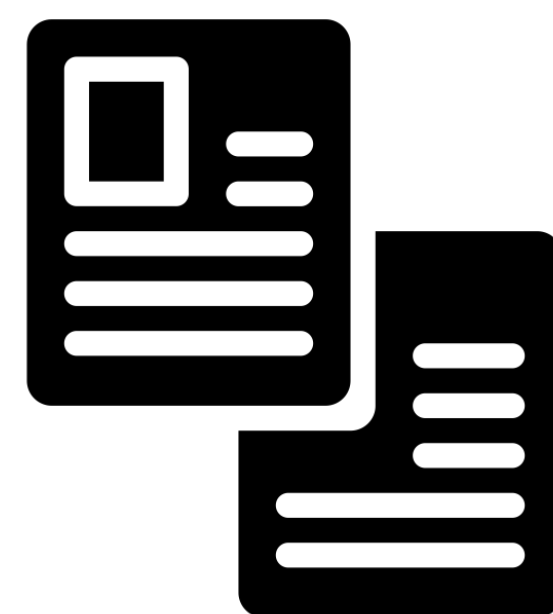
Implementing the
New Official Plan



A User-Friendly
Zoning By-law



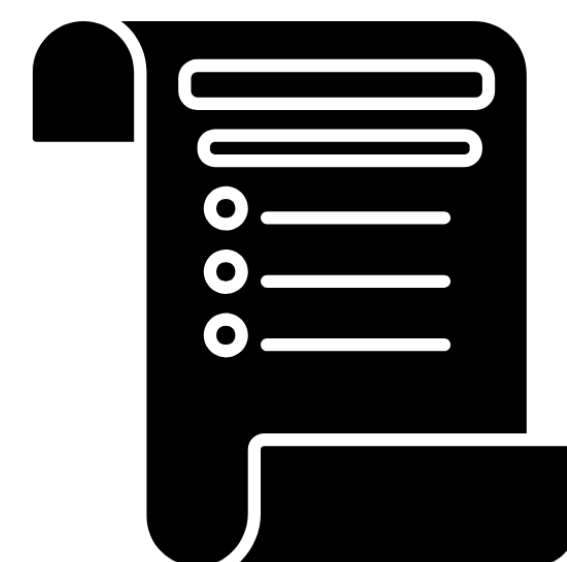
Contemporary
Zoning
Regulations



Harmonization
with CPPS and
UDG



Meaningful and
Transparent
Consultation



A New Zoning By-
law

Overview of Residential Uses

Purpose:

Review the Town's existing 'Residential' zoning and establish recommended directions for how these uses should be structured, permitted, and regulated through the new Zoning By-law.



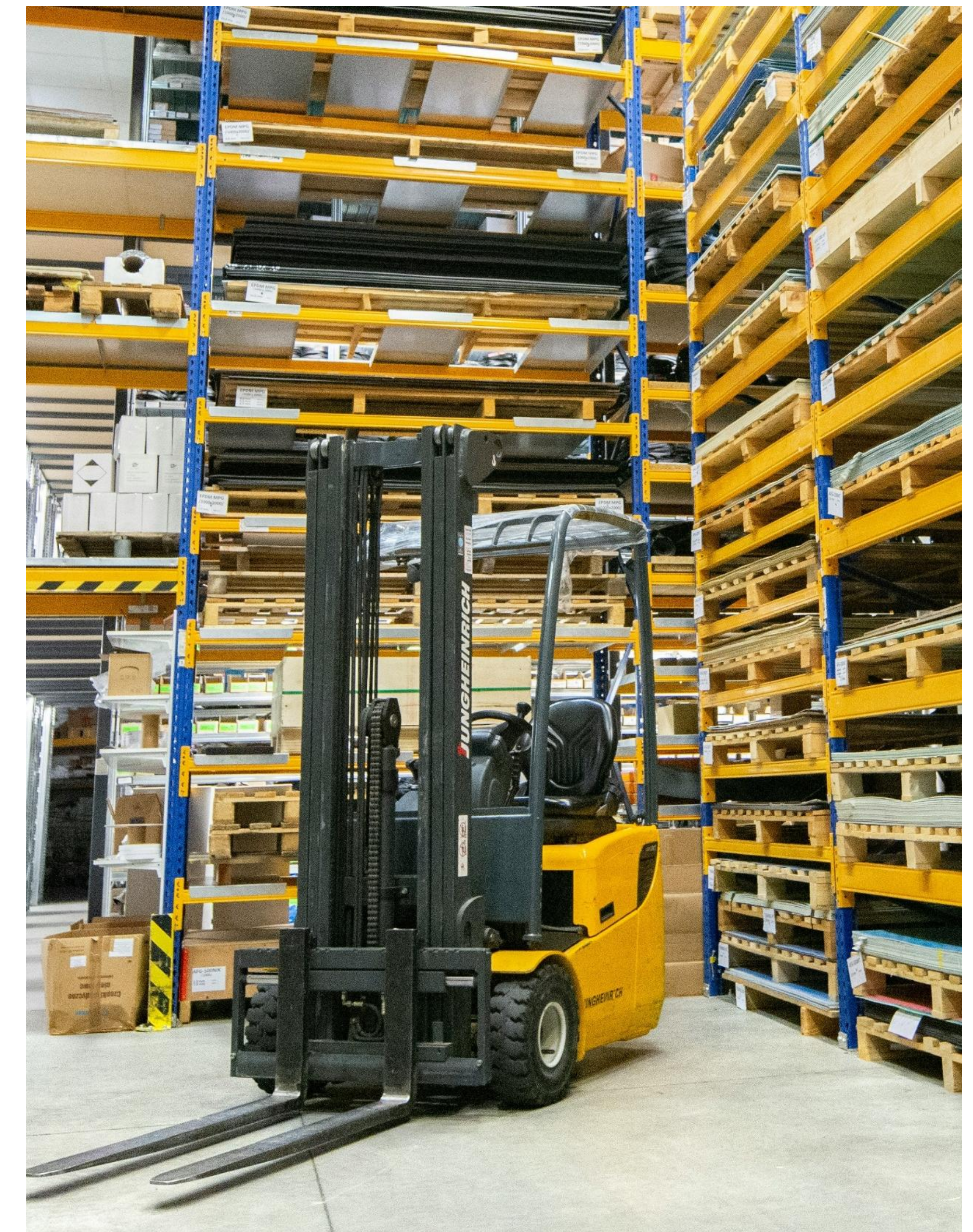
- By-law 129-90 has **more than 10 Residential zones**.
- Fewer zones would make the By-law simpler to use and administer.
- Update it to support a range of context-appropriate housing options.
- Several Provincial policies must be considered, including:
 - Up to 3 residential units on serviced lots;
 - Automatic variances of up to 10% from setback requirements;
 - Possible new minimum lot size requirements.

Overview of Employment & Commercial Uses

Purpose:

Review the Town's existing 'Employment' and 'Commercial' zoning and establish recommended directions for how these uses should be structured, permitted, and regulated through the new Zoning By-law.

- Existing Zoning By-law 129-90 includes **16 separate commercial zones** and **5 employment-related zones**.
- Many overlapping rules and outdated categories.
- Provincial policy now requires more restrictive regulation of employment lands and may necessitate a new Business Park zone.
- Recommendation to consolidate the existing 16 commercial zones and use more modern definitions of uses to avoid confusion and unnecessary rezoning.
- Will need to update development standards to reflect contemporary uses (e.g., required setbacks in rear yards).



Overview of Rural and Agricultural Zoning

Purpose:

Review the Town's existing 'Agriculture' and 'Rural' zoning and establish recommended directions for how these uses should be structured, permitted, and regulated through the new Zoning By-law.



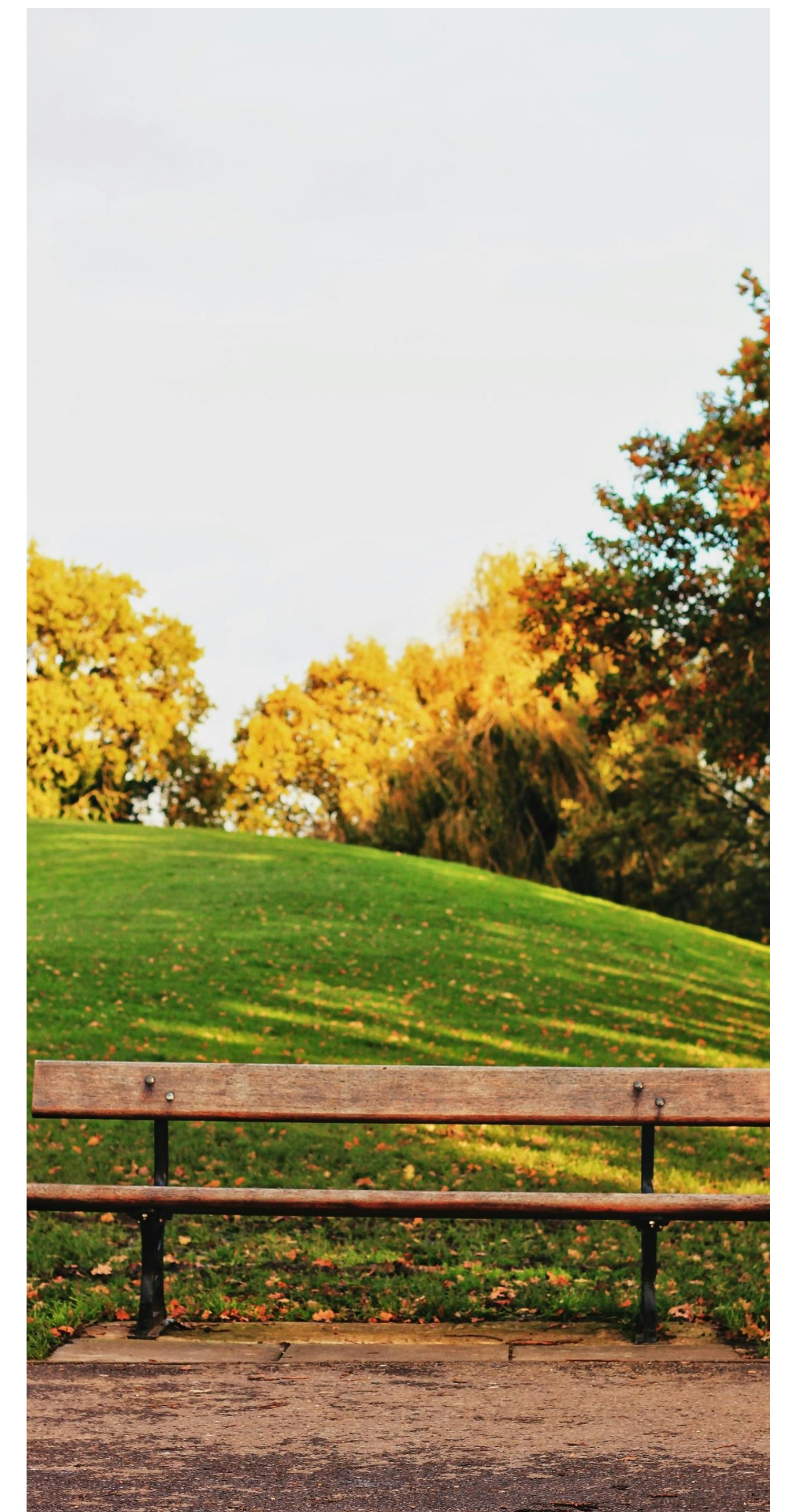
- Existing Zoning By-law 129-90 includes **1 Agriculture zone and 2 Rural zones** – Rural Residential and Waterfront Rural Residential).
- Current terminology for permitted uses does not fully align with Provincial direction (e.g., permissions for agriculture-related uses) and requires updating to better support the rural economy.
- Recommendations to carry forward Rural and Agricultural Zones, update mapping to match the new Official Plan, and merge the Rural Residential and Waterfront Rural Residential zones.
- Potential need for a new rural commercial zone for existing and future businesses in the rural area.

Overview of Natural Environment, Open Space, and Parks

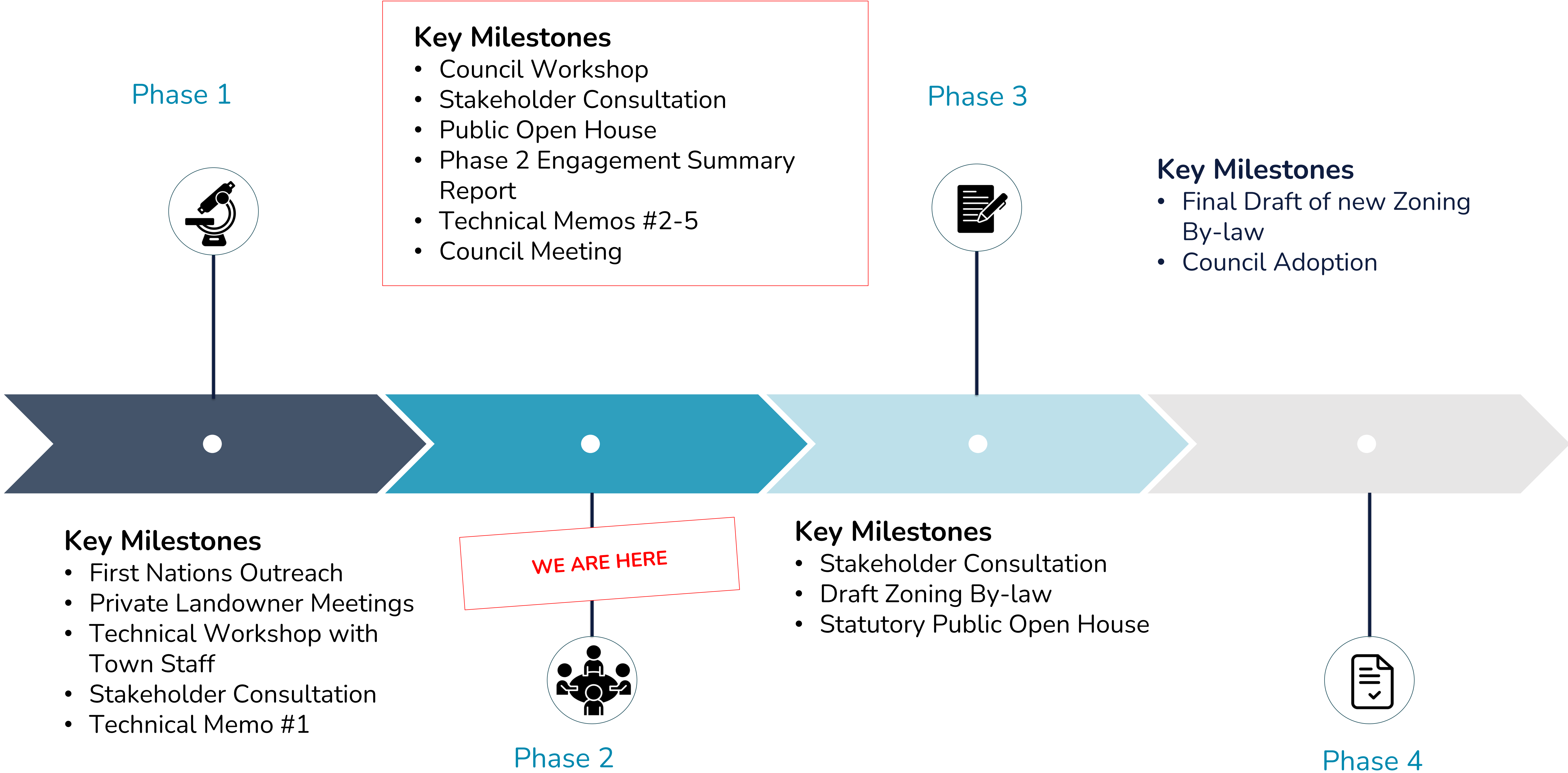
Purpose:

Review the Town's existing 'Natural Environment', 'Open Space', and 'Parks' zoning and establish recommendations for how these uses should be structured, permitted, and regulated through the new Zoning By-law.

- By-law 129-90 has **4 Natural Environment** and **2 Open Space** zones.
- **Natural Environment System** is mapped in the new Official Plan, which the By-law must align with.
- Some natural features aren't fully mapped and may need site-specific study when development is proposed.
- Update environmental zones by feature type, including a stricter 'no touch' zone for significant woodlands and wetlands.
- Establish Open Space zones that would be permit active and passive recreational uses and establish a new zone for infrastructure and utilities.



Project Timeline



Next Steps

Following today’s public open house, the project team will:

- 1. **Summarize input** received from today’s public open house
- 2. Develop the **First Draft Zoning By-law** based on background research, best practices, and input from staff, Council, the public, and other interested parties
- 3. Release the **First Draft Zoning By-law** for further consultation at a **Public Open House**
- 4. It is anticipated that the Final Zoning By-law will be presented to Council for adoption in early- to mid-2027

Project Updates

- ✓ You are invited to stay informed by signing up for email updates on upcoming public meetings and the release of future reports
- ✓ Project updates and future project deliverables can be accessed at the project website (scan QR code)

letstalk.forterie.ca/
zoning-by-law-review



Contact Information

For more information and updates on the Zoning By-law Review, please contact:

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