Town of Fort Erie Official Plan Review

Council Meeting Presentation

May 13, 2024



Presentation Outline

1. Purpose of Today's Meeting
2. Official Plan Review Background
3. Community Consultation and Engagement
4. Background Report
   - Provincial Land Use Policy
   - Niagara Region
   - Town of Fort Erie Official Plan
   - Key Policy Directions
5. Next Steps



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Purpose of the Meeting

1. To have a meaningful discussion with Council and the community
2. Offer an update on the Work Plan
3. Provide an overview of the consultation activities and “What We Heard”
4. Review the Background Report
5. Identify key policy directions and next steps

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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Official Plan Review Work Program



We are here!





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 – Summer 2024

Phase 3

Final Official Plan & Adoption

- Council Adoption
- Approval of the Final Official Plan

Fall 2024 – Winter 2025

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Work Completed to Date

Phase 1: Engagement and Background Research

Background Review Report which includes:

- Key Policy Directions
- Conformity Review/Gaps & Opportunities Analysis
- Vision and Guiding Principles
- Rationalize Population, Employment and Household Growth Forecasts
- Affordable Housing Analysis

Engagement Summary Report

- Provides an overview of consultation activities and “What We Heard” from the community regarding priorities for the updated Official Plan

Phase 1 Consultation Cluster included:

- Online webpage launch
- Special Committee of the Whole Meeting (Section 26 of the Planning Act);
- Public Notification
- Pre-engagement and continued Engagement with Indigenous Peoples;
- A Community Vision Workshop;
- A Community Vision Survey; and,
- Technical Advisory Committee.

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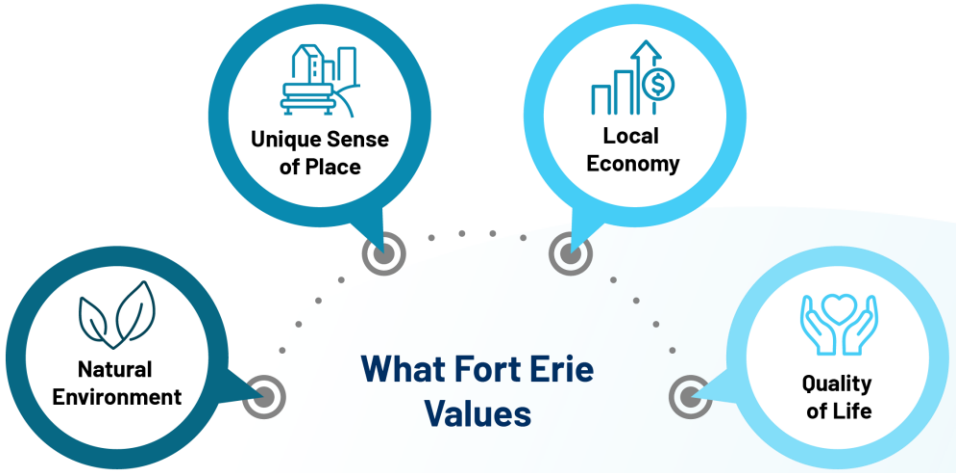
Community Consultation and Engagement

By the Numbers

Vision Survey
13 Responses

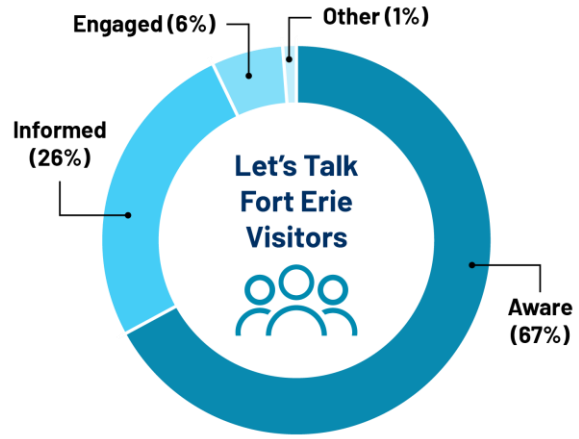
Project Website
989 Total Visitors

Vision Workshop
40+ In Attendance



Project Website:

From the launch of the engagement portal until March 27, 2024, there were 989 visits to the project page and 14 visitors registered to receive project updates.



Vision Survey:

A Vision Survey was launched online from the engagement portal on February 1, 2024, through March 4, 2024.

- 13 participants completed the survey.
- Participants from all 6 Wards participated in the survey.



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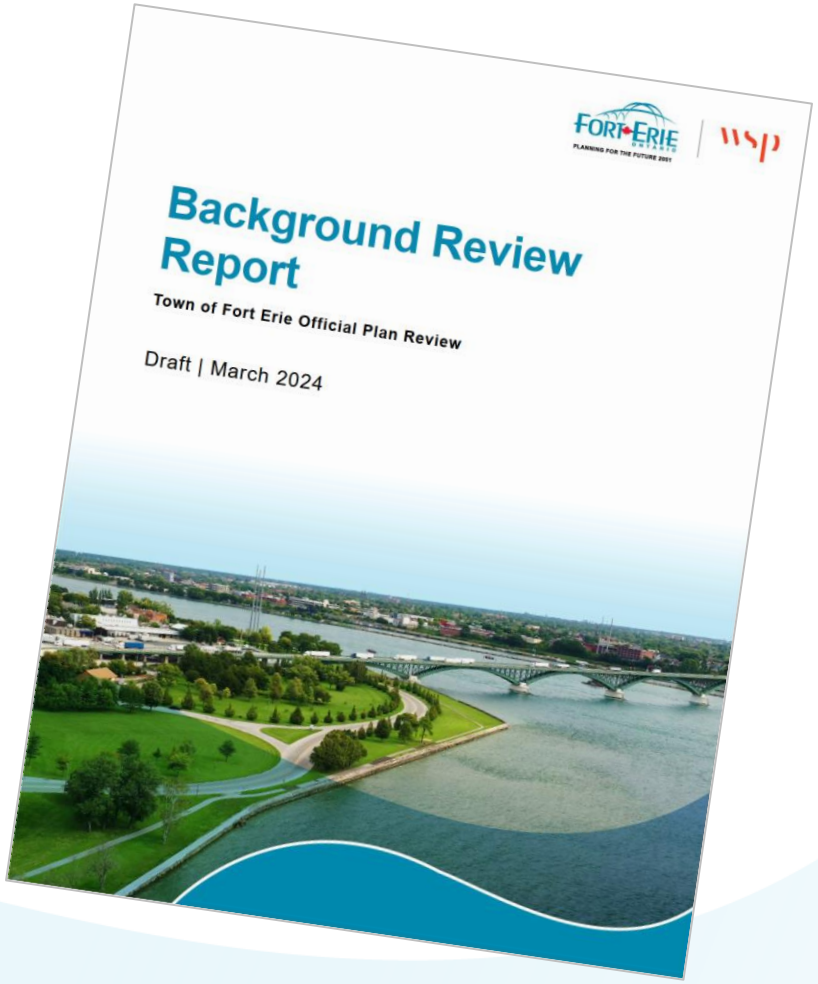
Community Consultation and Engagement

What We Heard

Housing and Growth Management	Heritage	Employment	Natural Heritage	Agricultural and Rural Areas	Transportation
Manage future growth to balance development with the protection of the natural environment and cultural resources Support a range of housing options, including housing types and tenure.	Recognize, conserve, and protect the Town's unique cultural heritage assets, while providing additional economic opportunity.	Attract more diverse employers and improve the viability of existing office, retail, and employment use.	Preserve, protect, and enhance the natural environment and open space systems	Support the agricultural sector by prioritizing the protection of viable agricultural lands and recognizing additional economic opportunities.	Promote transportation options, including transit, that leverage existing infrastructure and resources to enhance mobility, safety and accessibility for all residents.

Background Report

1. Establishes a strategy to guide preparation of an updated Official Plan
2. Takes into consideration the land use planning framework applicable to the Town, including:
    a) Provincial land use planning legislation and policies
    b) Niagara Region OP and Master Plans
    c) Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
    d) Assessment of the Town's Housing Needs and the growth targets allocated by the Region
    e) Identifies specific current policies that must be amended to achieve conformity with relevant Provincial and Regional legislation and policies
3. Provides direction on preparing a contemporary land use planning document that focuses on administration and interpretation



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Provincial Land Use Policy

Provincial direction since 2019 has largely focused on removing policy barriers and accelerating the construction of new homes. The Fort Erie Official Plan will align with Provincial direction, including:

Bill 108 – More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019

- Revised the *Planning Act* framework around height and density bonusing (Section 37); introduced Community Benefits Charges.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)

- Replaced the Growth Plan (2017); lowered the intensification target and lowered the density targets for new developments in designated greenfield areas. Simplified the process and requirements for minor settlement area boundary expansions.

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

- Added policies to protect industrial uses from encroachment; strengthened requirements for engagement with Indigenous communities.

Bill 109 – More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022

- Reduced timelines for municipalities to render decisions on planning applications; introduced refunding regime for application fees.

Bill 23 – More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

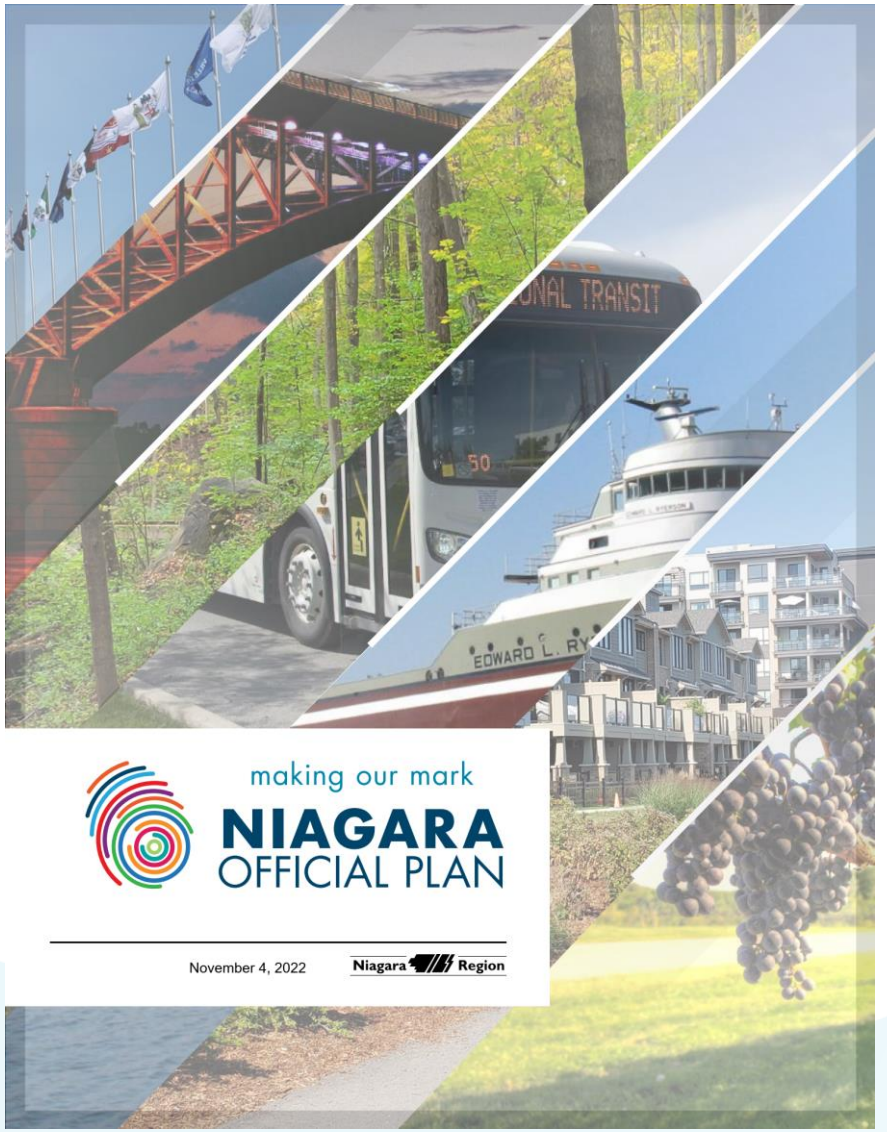
- Introduced changes to development charges framework; revised the *Conservation Authorities Act* to scope the mandate of CAs.

Bill 97 – Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023

- Amended the Planning Act to allow more flexibility when planning employment lands, while strengthening protection for uses that are unable to locate elsewhere (e.g., heavy industrial uses).

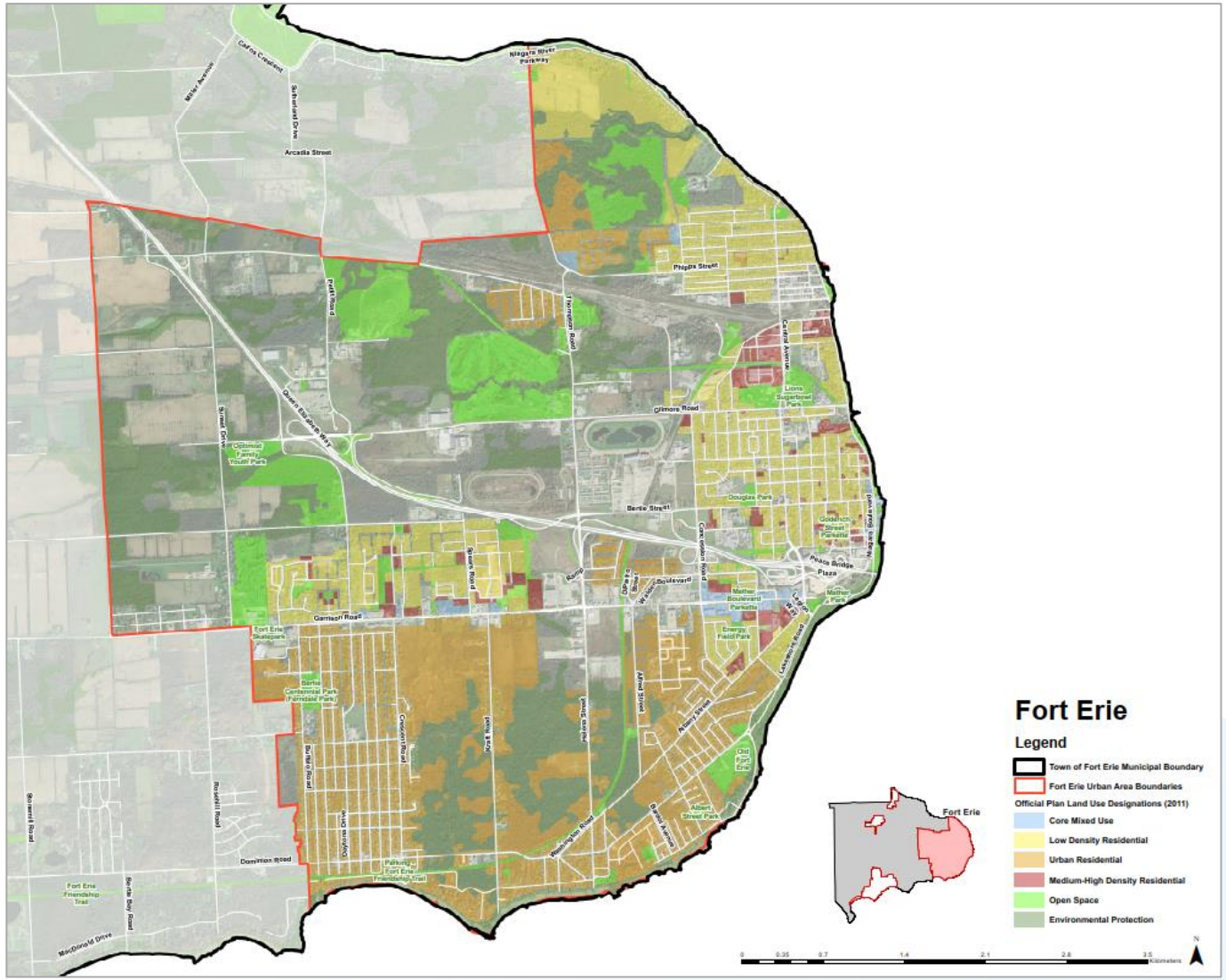
Niagara Region

- Niagara Region adopted a new Official Plan in June 2022
  - The Plan was approved with modifications by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in November 2022
  - Bill 150 and Bill 162 rolled back the Minister's modifications to the Region's Official Plan, including a rollback of one settlement area boundary expansion in Fort Erie
- The Niagara Region OP forecasts that Fort Erie will grow to 48,050 residents by 2051
  - This represents an increase of 15,230 residents from the 2021 population of 32,820
  - The Town is anticipated to require 7,360 new housing units to accommodate population growth in this period
  - 50% of the planned residential development must be accommodated in Fort Erie's existing built-up areas
- The Niagara Region OP forecasts that Fort Erie will grow to 18,430 jobs by 2051
  - The Region has added 165 hectares of employment lands in Fort Erie to accommodate this growth



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Town of Fort Erie Official Plan



- The Town's Official Plan must conform with direction from Niagara Region
  - Most of the population and employment growth must be accommodated in the urban settlement areas (Fort Erie, Crystal Beach, Stevensville, Douglastown).
  - Land use designations must be updated to align with Niagara's settlement area boundary expansions.
- The Town's Official Plan will add more detail regarding the types of growth and housing that can occur in different areas
  - Land-use schedules can be reviewed to designate more lands as mixed-use areas.
  - Policies governing 'urban-residential' and 'low-density residential' can be modified to permit more density and a variety of housing options.

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Key Policy Directions

The Background Report provided detailed policy recommendations and identified 7 key focus areas for the Official Plan:

1. Growth Management

- Accommodate 15,320 more residents by 2051, with most growth directed to within the Urban Area Boundary

2. Housing

- Plan for additional housing opportunities across the housing continuum (e.g., type, tenure, etc.)

3. Employment

- Accommodate 18,430 more jobs by 2051 and designate an additional 165 hectares of employment lands

4. Heritage

- Recognize Fort Erie's unique cultural heritage resources

5. Transportation

- Emphasize a 'complete streets' approach to transportation planning and promote multi-modal transportation options

6. Natural Heritage

- Align policy and mapping with the Region's identified Natural Heritage System and implementing policies

7. Agriculture

- Protect agricultural lands while promoting additional economic opportunity

Additional Key Considerations

1. **Preparation of the updated Official Plan will also be informed through community consultation.**
    1. The updated Official Plan will need to meet the current and future needs of the community, including residents and businesses.
    2. Ongoing dialogue and consultation with the community throughout the Work Plan.
    3. These opportunities will be used to understand the interests, perspectives, and priorities of the community regarding how the Town plans to manage growth and change.
2. **The updated Official Plan will be more user-friendly, accessible, easy to understand, and interpret.**
    1. It is anticipated that the updated Official Plan will be a modernized document that is re-organized, formatted, and designed to be user-friendly and tailored toward a range of audiences.
    2. There is opportunity to incorporate the use of document design elements and the use of clear and concise language to aid with interpretation and administration.

Additional Key Considerations (cont'd)

3. Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)

- Land use planning tool available to municipalities in Ontario under the Planning Act
- Combines zoning, minor variances, and site plan control into one process
- Represents an alternative to the standard land use planning process
- Key advantages include:
  - Streamlined development application, review and approvals process
  - Broadens the scope of review involved with planning applications
  - Support local objectives such as increased housing options, facilitating growth in desirable locations, promoting high quality sustainable design and environmental protection (including hazard lands)
- Provides some flexibility for approval, depending on the nature of the application
- Requires enabling policies in the Official Plan (designation of CPPS areas) as well as an implementing CPPS by-law

Next Steps

1. The Background Report and policy recommendations will be finalized to incorporate feedback from:
    1. Council; and
    2. Technical Advisory Committee.
2. Draft Official Plan policies to be developed and circulated during Summer 2024
3. Engagement during the summer will include targeted stakeholder meetings and ‘Planners in Public Spaces’ (PIPS)
4. Draft Official Plan adoption in Fall 2024 / Winter 2025
5. Ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities



Thank you!

Questions?

Visit **letstalk.forterie.ca/official-plan-review-and-update** to register for project updates!

SCAN ME

Support Slides

Official Plan Review Engagement Strategy

Phase 1 Consultation Cluster

- Online webpage launch
- Indigenous community outreach
- Agency and Ministry meetings
- Visioning workshop and survey

Phase 2 Consultation Cluster

- Webpage updates
- Indigenous community outreach
- Public Open House

Phase 3 Consultation Cluster

- Webpage updates
- Indigenous community outreach
- Statutory Public Open House

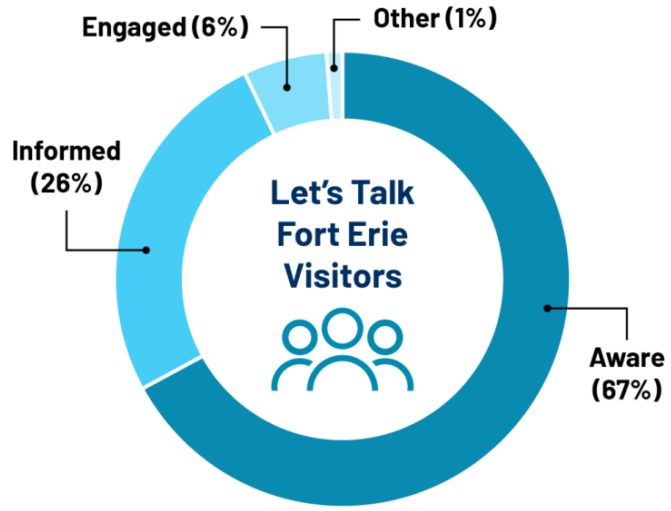
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Community Consultation and Engagement Overview

Project Website:

- From the launch of the engagement portal until March 27, 2024, there were 989 visits to the project page and 14 visitors registered to receive project updates.



Visioning Workshop:

- The Visioning Workshop was held as in-person as a drop-in style that was open to the community to introduce the project, identify the project's purpose, and collaborate in developing a Vision for Fort Erie to 2051.
- The workshop was held on February 27, 2024, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Over 40 participants attended the session.

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Community Consultation and Engagement Overview

Vision Survey:

- A Vision Survey was launched online from the engagement portal on February 1, 2024, through March 4, 2024.
- 13 participants contributed to the survey.
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- Survey respondents ranked the key themes in order of importance, with the natural environment, employment and housing being the most important.

1	Natural Environment
2	Employment
2	Housing
3	Heritage and Culture
4	Agriculture and Rural
5	Transportation