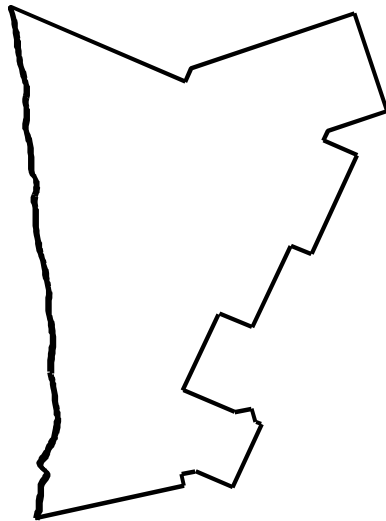




# **HURON COUNTY**

# **OFFICIAL PLAN**





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**The County would like to thank the many residents who participated in this plan's development. You are congratulated for the work you have put into this plan. Please stay involved and help make this plan work.**



COUNTY OF HURON

BY-LAW NO. .... 30 ..... 19 98

A BY-LAW OF THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF HURON TO ADOPT AN OFFICIAL PLAN FOR THE COUNTY OF HURON.

The Council of the County of Huron, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, hereby enacts as follows:

1. An Official Plan for the County of Huron consisting of the attached maps and explanatory text, is hereby adopted.
2. That the Clerk-Administrator is hereby authorized and directed to make application to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the approval of the aforementioned Official Plan for the County of Huron.
3. This By-law shall come into force and take effect on the day of final passing thereof.

Read a first time September 3, 1998  
Read a second time September 3, 1998  
Read a third time October 1, 1998

JOCELYNE A. MURRAY, Clerk-Administrator

JACK COLEMAN, Warden

*Jack Coleman*  
.....  
WARDEN

*J Murray*  
.....  
CLERK-ADMINISTRATOR

**RECEIVED**

**MAR - 4 1999**

File No.: 40-OP-3750  
Municipality: Huron County  
Subject Lands: Entire County of Huron

**Department of Planning**

Date of Decision: January 14, 1999  
Date of Notice: March 1, 1999  
Last Date of Appeal: March 22, 1999

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## **NOTICE OF DECISION**

**With respect to an Official Plan  
Subsection 17(35) of the Planning Act**

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A decision to modify and approve the above-noted Official Plan for the County of Huron as adopted by **By-Law 30-1998** was made on **January 14, 1999 (See attached)**. Due to an error, the Notice of Decision dated January 19, 1999 is being re-issued under Section 17(35) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended by Bill 20. Notice of Decision is hereby given on **March 1, 1999**.

### **Purpose and Effect of the Official Plan**

This Official Plan is intended to replace the existing Official Plan for the County of Huron. This new Plan will function as the upper-tier Plan for the County of Huron. A copy of the decision is attached.

### **When and How to File An Appeal**

Any appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board must be filed with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing no later than 20 days from the date of this notice as shown above as the last date of appeal.

The appeal should be sent to the attention of the Area Planner, at the address shown below and it must,

- (1) set out the specific part of the proposed official plan amendment to which the appeal applies,
- (2) set out the reasons for the request for the appeal, and
- (3) be accompanied by the fee prescribed under the Ontario Municipal Board Act in the amount of \$125.00 payable by certified cheque to the Minister of Finance, Province of Ontario.

### **Who Can File An Appeal**

Only individuals, corporations or public bodies may appeal the decision of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to the Ontario Municipal Board. An appeal may not be filed by an unincorporated association or group. However, an appeal may be filed in the name of an individual who is a member of the association or group.

### **When the Decision is Final**

The decision of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is final if a Notice of Appeal is not received on or before the last date of appeal noted above.

### **Other Related Applications:**

None

### **Getting Additional Information**

Additional information about the application is available for public inspection during regular office hours at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at the address noted below or from the office of the municipality noted above.

### **Mailing Address for Filing a Notice of Appeal**

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Provincial Planning Services Branch  
777 Bay St. 14th Flr  
Toronto ON M5G 2E5

Submit notice of appeal to the attention of David Sit, Area Planner.

Tele: (416) 585-6059  
Fax: (416) 585-4245

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## **Resource Maps:**

**Agricultural Resource Map**

**Extractive Resource Map**

**Natural Environment Resource Map**

**Watershed Resource Map**

**Settlement Patterns Resource Map**

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## COUNTY OF HURON OFFICIAL PLAN

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document is the official plan for the Corporation of the County of Huron. It is a recognition of the rich natural resources, the rural and small town communities and the dynamic individuals of Huron County.

Huron County is composed of numerous settlement areas, nationally significant agricultural lands, natural environment, and resource areas. The towns, villages, and hamlets serve as centres for industry, commerce, residential, and social activity. Agriculture dominates Huron's landscape and is an important economic base. Interspersed throughout the County are natural areas, including river and stream corridors, woodlands, wetlands, and the lakeshore. Natural resources include productive soils, extractive resources, and ground water.

The Huron County Official Plan applies to all lands within Huron County. It is a statement of the community and provides direction for the activities of individuals and community organizations. It provides guidelines to local municipalities for the development of local official plans.

#### **1.1 Background to the Plan**

Huron County developed its first official plan in 1973. Since that time many changes have affected Huron County. The official plan is being reviewed to ensure that it keeps pace with changing times and community aspirations. The County Official Plan represents a concerted effort by the residents of Huron County to chart their future. Huron County residents have been involved in a number of ways throughout the review - completing community action kits and participating in several focus groups, workshops, public meetings, and discussions within their interest groups. Huron County residents have said what they like and dislike about their community, what they see for the future of their community, and have indicated appropriate actions to achieve their vision for their community.

The issues that concern the community tend to fall into several defined areas. These are: agriculture, community services, the economy, natural environment, extractive resources, and settlement patterns. Although these six areas cover a broad scope and have overlaps, all of the issues raised by the community are covered within one or more of these issue areas.

In developing the plan, the community discussed their general values. These values were grouped into the issue areas. Then discussions were held on the six issue areas. The plan is presented in this format. As each issue area was discussed, one or two of the most important or comprehensive principles were identified and are called community values. Building on the community values for each specific issue area, the community identified directions for the future. Finally, the community identified actions and policies they think will achieve the desired direction and indicates what the community is willing to do.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **1.2 How This Plan Works**

The County Official Plan is a statement of the community and is presented in the words of the community. It is a record and guide. Not only does it provide direction for the activities of individuals and community organizations, the County Official Plan provides guidelines to local municipalities for the development of local official plans. The policies and actions are general policies and are provided as guidelines.

This plan covers many aspects of community development which are not normally found in an Official Plan but this does not imply that they are the sole responsibility of the County. The policies and actions will be pursued through the co-operative efforts of individuals, community groups, community agencies, and local and County government bodies.

Five resource maps are included in this plan - agriculture, extractive resources, natural environment, watershed, and settlement patterns. These maps are provided as reference material and are not interpretations of the policies nor are they land use designations. The detail of the maps and policies will be determined by local communities through the development of local plans. Policy details that were discussed during the review process have been incorporated as background information. A list of background information and resource materials can be found in the appendices.

Local communities will use these general guidelines to review and update their existing plans in order that they conform with the County Official Plan. Existing secondary plans or local official plans will stay in force until a new local plan is passed under the new County of Huron Official Plan. The County will be the approval agency for local plans.

This new County of Huron Official Plan has been reviewed and developed with consideration for provincial policies and is therefore deemed to have regard for provincial policies.

The sections of this plan are placed in alphabetical order; each section is of equal importance. The sections are not to be applied or interpreted mutually exclusive of each other. This plan should be read in its entirety and shall be interpreted such that the purpose and intent of the entire plan are met most fully.

The summaries of the community action kit results, found in the information boxes throughout the plan are for information only and do not form part of the Official Plan.

# **HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN**

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## Of Importance to Huron Residents are:

- Family and Friends
- A Clean Environment
- Good Health Care
- Recreation and Leisure Activities
- Jobs
- Community Safety

*From 700 Community Action Kit  
Participants*

## 2. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in Huron is of national significance. Huron leads all counties and regions in Ontario in total value of production; and it also exceeds the production totals of several provinces. Huron has the advantage of an informed and progressive farm community, a supportive service sector, high capability soils, a diversified agricultural industry, a favourable climate, and limited non-farm intrusion. Agriculture has an economic impact in the County that goes beyond the farm gate and rural areas into Huron's towns and villages. The continued health of agriculture is important not only from an agricultural perspective, but also from a broader community and economic perspective.

### 2.1 Community Values

The community's involvement identified two main values for agriculture.

**Huron's residents are committed to agriculture and keeping it strong.** The community established a direction of encouraging activities in agricultural areas that are supportive of agriculture and limiting those which are not.

**Huron's residents wish to see regulation limited to that which is necessary to protect and enhance the community.** The community noted that global competitiveness means that Huron's farmers need to retain flexibility to respond to changing economics and management practices. This can be achieved through support for agriculture with limited and appropriate regulations.

### 2.2 Community Directions

Extensive public consultation identified a number of key directions for agriculture.

#### **Vision of Agriculture**

In developing a vision of agriculture, the goal of the community is to protect agriculture, the farmers' ability to farm, prime agricultural land and the quality of life for future generations. A healthy agricultural and rural economy in Huron County is dependent upon activities and businesses which support agriculture.

#### **Agriculture and the Environment**

The goal of the community is to support the farm community in their continued use of sound managerial practices that protect and enhance the environment.

#### **Changing Farm Practices**

In recognizing that change is necessary, the goal of the community is to support changing farm practices that contribute to agricultural development. To achieve this the following are supported: flexibility for farmers to pursue alternative forms of agriculture; fair and equitable standards for the establishment of large and intensive livestock operations; on-farm business activities that are compatible with neighbouring uses; and monitoring of future revisions to the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, as amended.

#### **Urban & Rural Relationships**

The goal of the community is to give agriculture priority over other uses in agricultural areas. Development should be directed to urban areas, unless it complements and does not restrict agriculture - examples are farm related commercial and industrial development. Non-farm related development may also be directed to non-prime agricultural areas.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **2.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- i) Prime agricultural areas defined as Classes 1-3 as shown on the Agricultural Resource Map will be retained for agriculture. In prime agricultural areas, farming, agricultural uses, on-farm businesses, agricultural commercial and industrial uses, and normal farm practices as defined in the Farming and Food Production Protection Act as amended will be promoted, protected and given priority over other land uses in agricultural areas. Farm and accessory farm residences will be permitted on existing lots subject to local plan policy. Local municipalities may choose to develop policy in their local plans for non-prime agricultural areas defined as Classes 4-6 as shown on the Agricultural Resource Map. These policies in addition to allowing for agriculture and on-farm businesses may also allow for limited residential, recreational, institutional, commercial or industrial development. This development shall not restrict existing farming operations and shall respect the natural environment goals of this plan.
- ii) Extractive resource uses may be permitted in agricultural areas subject to the Extractive Resources section of this plan.
- iii) The continued diversification of Huron's agricultural industry will be encouraged. Local plans will support all forms of agriculture.
- iv) Stewardship initiated by local landowners in support of the wise management of the agricultural resource and contributes to the protection, restoration and management of natural areas and the health and integrity of the environment is encouraged. Farming activity shall respect "normal farm practices" and provincial laws. Proper nutrient management, including the appropriate storage, application and use of the manure resource is encouraged and local municipalities, in partnership with the County, will work to develop approaches to ensure that this happens. A working group will be formed by the County to develop options for addressing manure management and its environmental effects. It is acknowledged that the working group will develop recommendations for inclusion in local implementing by-laws and the results may also be useful for the review of this official plan and local municipal plans.
- v) On-farm business activities that are compatible with neighbouring uses and secondary to the farm will be encouraged in recognition of their positive contribution to the farm economy.
- vi) Non-farm related development will be directed to urban and non-prime agricultural areas, if such areas are identified in the local official plans.
- vii) Severances in prime agricultural areas will be allowed for agricultural purposes, commercial and industrial uses directly related to agriculture, institutional uses required to service the immediate rural community, minerals, aggregates, and petroleum resources development and minor lot adjustments subject to local plan policy. Local municipalities may choose to develop policy in their local plans to permit severances on non-prime lands and to permit the severance of surplus residences in prime and non-prime agricultural areas. Lot sizes in agricultural areas will respect the need for long term agricultural flexibility and be set out in local plans.
- viii) All severances will recognize the protection of the farmers' ability to farm.
- ix) In the interest of protecting the quality of ground and surface waters in Huron County, local municipalities have adopted by-laws to require the completion of nutrient management plans for new and expanded intensive livestock operations. Local municipalities will incorporate appropriate policies in their local official plans to ensure that these by-laws are kept current, meet or exceed provincial criteria and the nutrient management plan is appropriately reviewed prior to issuance of a building

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

permit. The County will work with the local municipalities to help achieve these objectives. Existing intensive livestock farms are also encouraged to complete a nutrient management plan.

- x) All development in agricultural areas will be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae. All development in agricultural areas will be compatible with neighbouring rural uses, be of a scale compatible with the rural character, and have adequate services available.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## 3. COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Huron Residents like their community for its:

- Friendly People
- Clean Environment
- Quality Community Services
- Small Town / Rural Atmosphere
- Recreation and Leisure Activities
- Safety and Security

*From 700 Community Action Kit  
Participants*

This section of the Plan is unique in that it recognizes the importance of community services to the quality of life in Huron County. Community services are wide ranging and include but are not limited to waste management, transportation, health care, education, child care, recreation, culture, heritage, safety and security. Community services are delivered through the community, agencies, and various levels of government. The need for community services by individuals varies with age, ability, skills, background, and interests. The strategies and actions identified by the residents of Huron County provide direction for meeting these diverse needs.

### 3.1 Community Values

The community's involvement identified two main values for community services.

**Huron's residents value the variety and quality of community services offered in the County; and recognize the importance of partnerships and co-operation.** They also recognize the need to retain and improve the level and accessibility of community services for people of all abilities and age groups, including the children of the community.

**Huron's residents value their involvement in the planning and delivery of services.** Residents see more of the responsibility for services in the hands of the community in the future. Residents are encouraged to get involved in order to maintain the level of service in their communities.

### 3.2 Community Directions

Public consultation identified a number of key directions for transportation, education, health care, recreation, culture, heritage, safety and security.

#### Overall Direction

The goal of the community is to ensure that the provision of community services involves partnerships, consultation, co-ordination and co-operation amongst the community, agencies, businesses, and various levels of government. An emphasis should be placed on communication technology, education, and information sharing to increase accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of community services. The provision of child care services is also an essential component of community services.

#### Transportation

The community wishes to maintain and develop the Municipal, County, and Provincial road networks and to promote efficient and accessible bus, car, rail, air, and marine facilities and transportation and infrastructure systems and corridors through co-ordination and partnerships.

#### Health Care

The goal of the community is to provide a high standard of health care with an emphasis on co-ordination and preventative care.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **Education**

For education the community goals are to: provide a balance of basic life skills and academics; improve the quality of, and access to distance education, co-operative education, apprenticeships, guidance counselling services, and technological services and resources; maintain library services; and promote life long learning and educational opportunities for all ages and abilities.

## **Recreation, Culture, and Heritage**

For recreation, culture, and heritage the community wishes to provide opportunities for all age groups and abilities. Recreation includes culture, education, tourism, athletics, and leisure activities. Residents are encouraged to be actively involved in organizing recreational and cultural activities in their community.

The community has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, which includes sites of archaeological value; buildings and structural remains of historical, architectural and contextual value, and rural, village and urban districts or landscapes of historic and scenic interest.

## **Safety and Security**

The goal of the community is to maintain the current level of service through integration and partnerships. Communities must take on part of the responsibility for safety and promote education to help decrease the number of violent acts and accidents.

### **3.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- i) The public participation in the development of this official plan has been very effective and should be continued. A compilation of the suggested actions related to the ongoing provision of community services is contained in the background information found in the appendices. This list will be updated on a regular basis and made available to assist with the planning and delivery of community services.
- ii) The County will, if needed or requested, be available to assist the community to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of community service actions.
- iii) The provision of community services will be a shared responsibility between the community, agencies, businesses, and various levels of government.
- iv) The County will forward the community service values and directions to the appropriate groups and agencies.
- v) The community will have regard for the conservation and wise management of its significant built heritage resources, natural heritage and cultural heritage landscapes. An inventory of heritage resources in the County is encouraged.
- vi) The Huron County waste management plan provides for a waste management system which includes recycling, diversion, collection, and disposal to accommodate present and future requirements.
- vii) Where development is permitted, archaeological assessments and preservation will be required in areas of archaeological potential.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **Huron Residents feel their community needs improvement in:**

- Various Services
- Culture and Recreation
- Job Opportunities
- Environmental Issues
- Variety of Shopping
- Tax Control
- Economic Development

*From 700 Community Action Kit  
Participants*

## **4. ECONOMY**

Economic activity is an integral part of the community's health and well-being. Huron's residents benefit from employment in a broad range of economic sectors — resource based activities such as agriculture, mining, and forestry; industrial activities such as manufacturing and processing; and service activities such as retailing, health care, education and tourism. All of these sectors provide jobs and build wealth which contribute to viable communities and a quality of life that is valued by local residents.

Three economic drivers are the foundation of the Huron County economy. As a leader in agriculture, farming activity is dominant in Huron County. Manufacturing continues to be an important and adapting economic engine. Tourism and service industries are growing economic activities based on the County's natural resources.

### **4.1 Community Values**

The community's involvement identified two main values for the economy.

**The residents of Huron value job opportunities, job diversity, and desirable careers for young people.** Residents value the attributes of small towns and rural communities such as friendly people, a clean environment, and convenient access to goods and services. These community values must be supported by jobs.

**The community values the importance of fostering entrepreneurship, developing partnerships and promoting growth from within by building on its present strengths.** Residents see the economic future of the County in the hands of the community.

### **4.2 Community Directions**

Extensive public consultation identified a number of key directions for economic policy.

#### **Support**

The goal of the community is to maintain and nurture a business climate that supports economic activity.

#### **Quality of Life**

The goal of the community is to pursue economic activity that maintains or enhances the quality of life and is compatible with the community and the environment. Huron's residents recognize and appreciate their quality of life and have a commitment to maintain it. Preventing health hazards and eliminating them once identified will help maintain the quality of life and strengthen economic activity.

#### **Jobs**

The goal of the community is to encourage and support all sectors of the Huron County economy for the retention and creation of jobs for all age groups and abilities.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **4.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- i) The maintenance and enhancement of physical infrastructure such as road, rail, port, marina, air and communication services are important for the economy and are encouraged.
- ii) Economic opportunities will be encouraged through the following actions: locally initiated action teams to seek out or respond to opportunities or inquiries; by fostering community pride with activities such as co-ordinated efforts, themes, attractions, and events; and appropriate rules and regulations.
- iii) Opportunities for economic diversity will be enhanced by preserving the County's unique rural and small town atmosphere, including heritage features and a wide range of goods and services in the towns and villages. The well-being of downtowns and mainstreets will be preserved by appropriate regulation of fringe development.
- iv) All sectors of the Huron economy will be encouraged and supported. Agriculture, tourism, small business, and the retirement industry hold the greatest potential for growth and will be supported. Adding value to farm products and diversifying farm businesses will be encouraged. Agri-tourism and eco-tourism hold significant potential and will be supported. At the same time, manufacturing and service sectors will be supported to meet their needs and to encourage growth. The retail sector will be supported for its employment, for providing access to goods and services, and for its contribution to the economic health of a community. An adequate supply of serviced land appropriate for these economic activities will be encouraged.
- v) Entrepreneurial activity will be supported and encouraged. More jobs, training and education opportunities will be supported to help keep young people here.
- vi) Economic activity will have regard for public health and the health and integrity of the environment.
- vii) Huron's economic sectors benefit each other and contribute positive spin offs in the community. For example, the tourism industry including visitors and cottagers benefits other economic sectors in Huron County through the purchase of the County's agricultural, manufacturing, and service industry products, employment of youth, enhancing retail sector opportunities, and improving the quality of life for the enjoyment of county residents and visitors alike. Along with county residents, visitors, cottagers and retirees support an array of attractions, events, facilities and recreation that improve the quality of life.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## Huron Residents are willing to:

- Become More Involved
- Improve the Environment
- Volunteer More
- Improve Outlook
- Support their Community
- Work with Young People

*From 700 Community Action Kit Participants*

## 5. EXTRACTIVE RESOURCES

Sand and gravel is an important resource in Huron County with a large number of gravel pits currently operating within the County. Since this resource is non-renewable, proper conservation and management is essential. Other extracted resources in the County include salt and petroleum.

It is recognized that large areas of good quality sand and gravel exist; especially in the northwestern portion of the County. It is anticipated that demand for this resource will continue at or near present volumes for the foreseeable future.

In discussions on the future of the sand and gravel resource, the participants indicated that the proper development of this resource should be permitted while recognizing the importance of agriculture and the natural environment.

Therefore, only those quality deposits which can be developed with minimal impact on agricultural land and the natural environment should be protected.

### 5.1 Community Values

In discussing sand and gravel resources, the public recognized the importance of this resource. As a result of the community's discussions, the following key values have been identified:

**There is a strong commitment to protect sand and gravel deposits for future use.** This finite resource should be available to meet ongoing demand.

**There is a desire to minimize compatibility concerns.** Incompatible uses should be directed away from areas identified as important sand and gravel deposits.

### 5.2 Community Directions

Extensive public consultation identified a number of key directions for extractive resource policy.

#### Protection

The goal is to identify and protect sand and gravel deposits of significant size and quality for their use. New pits should be established as appropriate. Existing licensed sand and gravel pits and associated operations should be allowed to continue their use and expand where appropriate. Sand and gravel pits should be encouraged to be completely rehabilitated to their former use.

#### Compatibility

The goal is to allow sand and gravel pits to develop in a manner that minimizes conflict and ensures compatibility with adjacent uses. The County should not duplicate work done by the Province by restating or contradicting the standards and regulations contained in the Aggregate Resources Act. Municipal government should co-operate closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources on extractive resource issues.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **5.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- i) Existing licensed sand and gravel pits and associated operations will be allowed to continue their use and expand where appropriate (as generally shown on Extractive Resource Map) and as set out in local plans.
- ii) Sand and gravel deposits of significant size and quality will be identified and protected for their use. New pits will be established subject to compliance with local plan regulations and may require an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed pit.
- iii) Sand and gravel pits will develop so as to minimize conflict and maximize compatibility with adjacent uses.
- iv) Sand and gravel pits in prime agricultural areas will be completely rehabilitated to their former use or to agriculture. Sand and gravel pits in non-prime agricultural areas will be encouraged to be rehabilitated to their former use or to natural environment. Complete agricultural rehabilitation is not required on prime agricultural lands if a substantial quantity of aggregate lies below the water table.
- v) Wayside pits and portable asphalt plants for public authority contracts will be permitted in prime and non-prime agricultural areas, except in areas of environmental sensitivity or settlement areas.
- vi) The completion of potential sand and gravel resource inventory mapping for the entire County is a priority.
- vii) The extraction of minerals and petroleum resources shall be permitted subject to compliance with local plan regulations. The extraction of minerals and petroleum resources shall be permitted in agricultural areas subject to the site being rehabilitated to its former use.
- viii) Any development permitted on or adjacent to a former sand, gravel, mineral or petroleum extractive operation, shall first address and mitigate any known or suspected hazards to the proposed development.
- ix) Incompatible uses will be directed away from areas identified as important sand and gravel deposits.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## Huron Residents want to give more attention to:

- Economic Development
- Effective Local Government
- Young People
- Environment
- Education

*From 700 Community Action Kit  
Participants*

## 6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Concern for the natural environment has been an important part of planning in Huron County for many years. However, there is an increasing need to recognize the complexity of issues and to consider the integration of all aspects of the natural environment. The concept of an ecosystem based approach is now seen as necessary to shape the health of the environment and foster bio-diversity. This approach draws attention to inter-relationships between natural systems, cumulative effects and human health.

In addition, traditional approaches to planning lead to regulation, which is an attempt to lessen undesirable impacts of development. While occasionally effective, regulation misses the positive opportunities associated with citizen interest and action. A community based approach to addressing ecosystem issues is needed to bring about positive change. The notion of “Think Globally, Act Locally” provides motivation.

### 6.1 Community Values

The community’s involvement identified the following values for the natural environment.

**The community values a healthy environment including the quality of the water and air,** and the diversity and visual beauty of the landscape. The community indicated their willingness to clean up the environment in order to improve where they live.

**Huron residents recognize that their quality of life is dependent on a healthy ecosystem.** An ecosystem is inclusive including the air, water, soil, plants, animals, and humans. A healthy ecosystem requires that the integrity and function of the environment be maintained or restored. The stewardship of all aspects of a healthy ecosystem is a shared responsibility of all of the community.

### 6.2 Community Directions

Extensive public consultation identified a number of key directions for natural environment policy.

#### **Ecosystem**

The goal of the community is to ensure that planning for the natural environment considers all components of an ecosystem. An ecosystem based approach is recommended.

#### **Community**

The pursuit of a healthy ecosystem should be community based and pro-active.

#### **Economy**

The goal of the community is to protect and enhance the health of the environment while pursuing economic opportunity.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## **6.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- i) The integrity and function of the ecosystem will be protected, restored and enhanced. Local official plans shall be amended, where appropriate, following completion of watershed management plans and local plan policies will ensure that relevant findings of the watershed management plans are implemented. Water quality and quantity will be protected through watershed management (see Watershed Resource Map). The landscape will be maintained for maximum biodiversity, beauty, effect and its inherent value. Connections and linkages between natural features shall be maintained, promoted and improved.
- ii) The County of Huron and all local municipalities will participate, assist in co-ordinating, and may contribute financially in watershed and subwatershed management studies in co-operation with provincial ministries, conservation authorities, adjacent municipalities in abutting counties, stakeholders and the community.
- iii) The stewardship of all aspects of a healthy ecosystem including lakeshore, urban, natural, and agriculture areas will be a shared responsibility of all of the community. Education will be promoted for actions and decisions that support a healthy environment. Pollution prevention through education programs, such as proper maintenance and use of septic systems and wells, is encouraged.
- iv) A county-wide citizens' Environmental Advisory Group with sectoral representation will be established to promote and monitor a healthy state of the environment. The County will assist in the preparation of a "state of the environment" report, with regular updates to provide information and the basis for action by community groups.
- v) The protection of natural areas will occur through the decisions of property owners, the community, and local plans. A county-wide identification and evaluation of the natural environment including areas of local and provincial significance will build upon the present inventory (see Natural Environment Resource map). All natural heritage features and areas of provincial significance as identified in the Provincial Policy Statement, will be protected. Local municipalities will be encouraged to include policies in their local plans which protect natural areas or natural heritage features of local significance. Policies shall include considerations for the impact of development on the function of the ecosystem.
- vi) Agriculture practices that sustain a productive land base and environmental health, and do not compromise the functioning of the ecosystem will be encouraged and promoted. A working group will be formed by the County to develop options for addressing manure management and its environmental effects.
- vii) Local plan policies will ensure that development respects areas of natural hazards. Natural hazards include existing hazards such as flooding, erosion, unstable slopes, dynamic beaches; and potential hazards such as unstable soils and hazardous sites.

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

**In 10 - 15 Years,  
Huron Residents want  
their community to:**

- Have More Jobs
- Grow but keep its small/  
rural atmosphere
- Have a Healthy  
Environment
- Have More Businesses and  
Stores
- Be Safe and Secure

*From 700 Community Action Kit  
Participants*

## **7. SETTLEMENT PATTERNS**

When the original County of Huron Official Plan was adopted in 1973 the County's population was 51,202. Nearly twenty-five years later the population has increased to 59,172. While these figures indicate a sustained level of growth, this growth is quite moderate in comparison to many other areas of the province and indicates that there is no need to designate major areas for new urban development. Population projections undertaken in developing this Plan support the assumption that Huron's existing urban centres contain an ample supply of land to accommodate future growth for the next twenty years. Although Huron's communities have remained relatively stable, with a clear distinction amongst towns, villages, hamlets, recreational areas and the rural countryside, there have been a number of important changes.

In the agricultural industry there has been important growth in the size and intensity of farming operations. At the same time, there has been a desire of many to live within the County's rural area. This desire for a rural lifestyle has also had an impact on the lakeshore where there has been considerable development of seasonal and permanent residences and conversion of existing cottages for year round occupancy. This development, along with a better understanding of the relationship between water quality and rural development patterns points to the need for responsive environmental standards. The availability of proper and affordable servicing will continue to be a critical issue. Finally, many of our towns, villages and hamlets have, because of competition with larger urban centres, a changing role in the provision of commercial and industrial activity.

### **7.1 Community Values**

The public identified two attributes that they most value about Huron County.

**The community values friendly and safe neighbourhoods** where family and friends live and work in a caring community with a rural lifestyle.

**The community values a rural environment** that has clean air, fresh water, and ample open space. At the centre of these two issues - neighbourhoods and a rural environment - is the pattern and form of settlements in the County. The continued health of these settlements - the rural countryside with its many farms, the towns, villages and hamlets, and the extensive development along the lakeshore, is an issue of County-wide significance.

### **7.2 Community Directions**

Public consultation identified a number of key directions for settlements.

#### **Strong, Healthy Urban Communities**

The goal of the community is to support strong, healthy urban communities. This Plan provides an adequate land base and allows for continued growth within existing urban areas on full services to encourage the provision of employment and housing opportunities while preventing fringe or sprawl development.

#### **Agriculture and a Strong Agricultural Industry**

The goal of the community is to support agriculture and a strong agricultural industry. Agriculture makes a fundamental contribution to the economy of Huron County and the long-term ability of farmers

# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

to remain competitive must be protected. Agriculture should be supported, rural non-farm development limited and the wise stewardship of resources encouraged.

## **Protect and Enhance Lakeshore**

The lakeshore is important because of the recreational, residential and tourism services it offers. The goal is to protect, enhance and restore the quality of the lakeshore. Previous development has placed considerable stress on the lakeshore environment. This requires that future development be responsive to the needs of existing development and the environment.

## **Environmentally Sustainable Development**

The goal of the community is to ensure that all development and the servicing of rural and urban areas is based on principles of environmental sustainability and the protection of a healthy environment.

## **7.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- i) The towns, villages and numerous hamlets (as generally shown on the Settlement Patterns Resource map) will continue to provide opportunities for new residential, commercial and industrial development. Expansion of these urban areas will be based on a review of the policies of the local plan which shall include the availability of public water and sewer and a demonstrated need for the urban use and the prevention of fringe or sprawl development patterns. In urban areas without full services, development will focus on lots large enough to support private or communal services.
- ii) The patterns of rural development are changing both with respect to agriculture and rural development. There is a focus on the enhancement of the agricultural community in rural areas. Those uses that directly support agriculture are encouraged to locate in agricultural areas, but should attempt to minimize their impact on the agricultural land base. Non-farm development will be generally directed to urban areas. Non-farm uses where allowed in agricultural areas must establish their need to locate in the rural area, be limited in nature, develop at rural densities and avoid prime agricultural areas.
- iii) The Huron lakeshore is an established seasonal residential community that is valued because of its proximity to Lake Huron, the quality of existing development, and the quality recreational experience. Development in this area must respect these attributes and develop subject to the provision of adequate services and demonstrate environmental sustainability.
- iv) Development in all areas will occur in an environmentally sustainable sound manner, will have access to a range of municipal services common to the area and not put pressure on rural communities to provide additional services. Most future urban development will occur on full services and locate within urban settlement areas. Rural development will occur at rural densities that are in harmony with the surrounding community and area.
- v) Contaminated sites will be restored to remove any adverse effects prior to any activity on the site associated with the proposed use.
- vi) Major facilities such as airports, transportation corridors, waste facilities, industries and aggregate activities will be designed and buffered to prevent adverse effects on sensitive land uses such as residential areas, and education and health facilities.

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## **8.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN**

The values, directions and policies have been developed by groups and individuals with an interest in the future of the County of Huron. It is anticipated that the implementation of this plan will occur through various means:

- The day-to-day decisions and actions of thousands of individuals is the primary means by which the goals and actions identified within this plan will be achieved. This is consistent with the community based approach used in developing this plan. The plan reflects the concerted efforts of Huron residents to chart their future and identify numerous actions to achieve these goals.
- Huron County is fortunate to have many active community groups who played an important role in the development of this plan. They have provided input, direction and suggested actions to the various issues. It is anticipated that existing and new community groups will serve as advisory groups to assist with the implementation of this plan. This plan supports the continued efforts of the community and advisory groups to work for the betterment of Huron County.
- Local municipalities can support the community's goals with the development of local plans and by-laws that implement many of the suggested policies and actions. Local municipalities will update their local plans using a community based approach.
- This plan is the new Official Plan for the County of Huron. It will guide County policy and actions and will help to build partnerships with local municipalities and the community in the development of local plans. Local communities will use these general guidelines to review and update their existing plans in order that they conform with the County Official Plan. Existing secondary plans or local official plans will stay in force until a new local plan is passed under the new County of Huron Official Plan. The County will be the approval agency for local plans.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

The County Official Plan represents a concerted effort by the residents of Huron County to chart their future. Huron County residents have been involved in a number of ways throughout the review - completing community action kits and participating in a number of focus groups, workshops, public meetings, and discussions within their interest groups. Huron County residents have said what they like and dislike about their community, what they see for the future of their community, and have indicated appropriate actions to achieve their vision for their community.

This is not a static document or statement but it will be revisited, monitored and evaluated on a periodic basis to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs and aspirations of the residents of Huron County. The participation of the community has been very important to the development of this official plan. Because of the level and quality of the participation and the approach taken in the review process, this official plan is very different from the norm or plans of the past. Reflecting on the changes affecting our communities today and the desire for increased citizen empowerment, it is appropriate. Continue to participate and be involved.

## NEW COUNTY PLAN PROCESS

