



# **Huron County Official Plan**

**Consolidated November 24, 2025**

If you require access to information in an alternate format, please contact the Huron County Planning & Development Department at (519) 524-8394 ext. 3 or E-mail [planning@huroncounty.ca](mailto:planning@huroncounty.ca).

**Prepared By: County of Huron  
Planning & Development Department**

## **Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that the land we stand upon today is the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples and is connected to the Dish with One Spoon wampum, under which multiple nations agreed to care for the land and its resources by the Great Lakes in peace.

We also acknowledge the Upper Canada Treaties signed in regards to this land, which include Treaty #29 and Treaty #45 ½.

We recognize First Peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water as well as the historical and ongoing injustices they face in Canada. We accept responsibility as a public institution and as treaty people to renew relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Peoples through reconciliation, community service, and respect.

## County of Huron Official Plan Consolidation

This document is a consolidation of the County of Huron Official Plan and subsequent amendments made thereto. This compilation is for convenience and administrative purposes and does not represent true copies of the amendments it contains. Any legal interpretation of this document should be verified with the Clerk of the County of Huron.

### Contents of this Consolidation as of November 24, 2025

Document	Purpose	County Council Adoption	Ministry Approval came into effect on (or exempt)
Official Plan	A new official plan to replace the 1973 Official Plan as amended.	October 1, 1998 By-law 30-1998	May 11, 1999
Amendment 1	To amend the agricultural policies on Part of Lot 12 and 13, Bayfield Concession, West Ward, Municipality of Central Huron (Folmar Windmill).	Applicants did not proceed. File Closed.	N/A
Amendment 2	To amend the agricultural policies on Part of Lot 4, R.P. 546, Maitland Concession, West Ward, Municipality of Central Huron (Donald Crich).	Ontario Municipal Board file PL081474 adjourned September 3, 2009. Decision pending.	N/A
Amendment 3	Five Year Review	June 2, 2010 By-law 17-2010	Approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on June 3, 2013, except for <i>Sections 2.3.15) and 5.3.12)</i> which were modified and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on April 17, 2015 (File PL120175).

<b>Document</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>County Council Adoption</b>	<b>Ministry Approval came into effect on (or exempt)</b>
Amendment 4	Housekeeping amendments based on updates to the Provincial Planning Statement, 2014.	June 3, 2015 By-law 34-2015	N/A
Amendment 5	Five Year Review	May 5, 2021 By-law 27-2021	October 4, 2021
Amendment 6	Housekeeping amendments based on updates to the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.	September 3, 2025 By-law 58-2025	N/A



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# **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, including Indigenous communities, and provides direction for the activities of individuals and community organizations. It provides guidance to local municipalities for the development of local official plans.

It is recognized by this Plan that climate change, rising energy prices, human health issues related to nutrition and physical inactivity, isolation, aging and mobility, and environmental health concerns such as air and water quality are all issues which require attention.

## **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 development of the original plan and subsequent reviews: completing community action kits, participating in focus groups, workshops, public meetings, and sustainability planning exercises. 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 are grouped 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 and reviewing this 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.

The first five-year review process undertaken for this plan incorporated public comments received at several community workshops held across the County. The review was also informed through the public consultation process of the County's sustainability planning initiative, Take Action for Sustainable Huron, which incorporated a broad community consultation and engagement process. In total, more than 1700 Huron County residents participated and provided comments in the process. A second five-year review process was completed in early 2021.

## **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 guidance to local municipalities for the development of local official plans. The policies and actions are general policies and are provided as guidance. -

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.

Six resource maps are included in this plan - agriculture, extractive resources, natural environment, watershed, settlement patterns and source water protection areas. These maps are provided as reference material and are not interpretations of the policies nor are they land use designations. Any amendments to mapping will be completed at the time of a five year review of this plan. The detail of the maps and policies will be determined by local communities through the development of local Official Plans. Local Official Plans will include land use designation maps that support and implement the policies in this plan. 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 this plan to review and update their existing plans in order that they conform with the County Official Plan and are consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement. Existing local official plans will stay in force until appropriate revisions are passed bringing them into conformity with the County of Huron Official Plan. The County will be the approval authority for local plans.

The County of Huron Official Plan has been reviewed and developed with consideration for provincial policies and is therefore deemed to be consistent with 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.

## **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 a significant positive 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 which respect farm viability and environmental protection.

### **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. Food security and the availability of a variety of local foods have been identified as important. Production of food for local consumption will be encouraged.

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

The farm community will be supported in their continued use of farm management practices that protect and enhance the environment.

#### **Changing Farm Practices**

In recognizing that change is inevitable, the goal of the community is to support changing farm practices that contribute to agricultural diversification, opportunity and security. 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.

## **Urban & Rural Relationships**

The goal of the community is to give agriculture priority over other uses in agricultural areas. Generally, non-agricultural development should be directed to urban areas.

### **2.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- 1) Huron County, outside of settlement areas, is a prime agricultural area as shown on the Agricultural Resource Map. Local Official Plans shall ensure prime agricultural areas are appropriately designated, in accordance with the description of these areas provide for in this policy.
- 2) The continued diversification of Huron's agricultural industry will be encouraged. Local Official Plans will support all types, sizes and intensities of agriculture. This includes normal farm practices as defined in the Farming and Food Production Protection Act.
- 3) The prime agricultural area consists of prime agricultural lands (Class 1-3 soils) and associated non-prime agricultural lands (Class 4-7 soils). The Agricultural Resource Map identifies prime and non-prime agricultural lands. In the prime agricultural areas, farming, agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, and on- farm diversified uses will be promoted, protected and given priority over other land uses. Farm and accessory farm residences will be permitted on existing lots subject to local plan policy.
- 4) Municipalities may only exclude land from the prime agricultural areas for expansions of or identification of settlement areas in accordance with Section 7.3.3.2.
- 5) Non-agricultural uses in the prime agricultural area are not permitted except for:
  - a) extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources, or
  - b) limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated:
    - 1) The land does not comprise a specialty crop area;
    - 2) The proposed use complies with the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae;
    - 3) There is an identified need within the planning horizon for additional land to accommodate the proposed use;
    - 4) Alternative locations have been evaluated and there are no reasonable alternative locations that avoid the prime agricultural area, and if avoidance is not possible, there are no reasonable alternative locations in the prime agricultural area with lower priority agricultural lands.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment may be required to evaluate the impact of any proposed new, or expanding, non-agricultural use on the agricultural system. Impacts are to be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible.

- 6) On-farm diversified uses and agriculture-related uses are recognized for their positive contribution to the farm economy. Local Official Plans will encourage:

- a) on-farm diversified uses that are compatible with and do not hinder neighbouring uses, that are secondary to the farm and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses are encouraged to locate in proximity to the on-farm residence. Local Official Plans may provide further policy guidance based on reference to Provincial Guidelines or through locally customized policies, which achieve the same objective.
  - b) Agriculture-related uses such as farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are compatible with and do not hinder surrounding agricultural operations, are directly related to farm operations in the area, are required in close proximity to farm operations and provide products and/or services directly to farm operations as a primary activity. Local Official Plans may provide further policy guidance based on reference to Provincial Guidelines or through locally customized policies, which achieve the same objective.
  - c) Local Official Plans will establish if Minimum Distance Separation Formulae are to be applied when certain types of new on farm diversified uses or new agriculture-related uses are proposed to be established.
- 7) Non-farm related development will be directed to settlement areas. Local Official Plans may permit on-farm schools and churches for communities relying on horse drawn vehicles as their primary means of transportation, subject to the following criteria:
- a) a severance of an on-farm school or church is not permitted
  - b) within the appropriate service area of the proposed church or school consideration shall be given to the following:
    - 1) Prime agricultural land, (class 1-3 soils) are to be avoided, if possible and if they cannot be avoided, to locate on lower priority agricultural land where possible.
    - 2) The proposed use complies with the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae as a Type A land use; and
    - 3) There is an identified need within the planning horizon for additional land to accommodate the proposed use.
- 8) Lot creation in the prime agricultural area is discouraged and will only be permitted for: agricultural uses; agriculture-related uses provided that the area of the new lot is kept to the minimum size needed to support the use and appropriate servicing; a residence surplus to a farming operation; and, infrastructure or public service utilities which cannot be accommodated through easements or rights-of-ways; subject to the policies of local Plans

The creation of any lot for agricultural purposes must be of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural uses common in the area and sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations. Lot sizes in agricultural areas will be set out in local Plans.

Consents for legal or technical reasons that do not result in the creation of a new lot, such as minor lot boundary adjustments, are permitted subject to the policies of Local Plans.

- 9) Local municipalities may choose to develop policies which permit the severance of an existing residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of the acquisition of an additional farm property.

Local Official Plans shall meet or exceed the following criteria:

- a) The residence must be a minimum of 10 years old or has immediately replaced one of a series of residences which were built a minimum of 10 years ago or replaces a house accidentally destroyed by fire or natural disaster.
- b) The residence is habitable, as determined by the Chief Building Official.
- c) A new residence is prohibited (through zoning) on any remnant parcel of farmland created by a surplus residence severance.
- d) The area of farmland attached to the surplus house is kept to a minimum size needed for residential purposes, taking into consideration water and sewage services and environmental and topographic features.
- e) Minimum Distance Separation Formulae (MDS) requirements are met.
- f) There has been no previous separation of land for residential purposes from the farm property as it existed on June 28, 1973, other than in a settlement area.
- g) The retained lands are a minimum of 19 hectares unless merged with an abutting farm.
- h) Where the residence is within 300 metres of an existing aggregate operation or aggregate deposit, an assessment of potential impacts may be required (See Section 5.3.10).
- i) For the purposes of this section
  - a corporation may be an eligible farming operation provided the same corporation owns at least two farms, each containing a residence, one of which may be severed in accordance with this section; and
  - an unincorporated group of one or more person(s) may be an eligible farming operation provided at least half of the owners, together or individually each own another farm containing a residence, one of which may be severed in accordance with this section; where owners normally reside in the same household, they may be considered as one individual within the group of owners.

- 10) All severances will recognize the protection of farmers' ability to farm.

- 11) All development, including lot creation in agricultural areas and new or expanding livestock facilities, will be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae (MDS) with the exception of:

- a) MDS will apply to surplus residence severances in accordance with Section 2.3.9.e.
- b) MDS will not apply to On-Farm Diversified Uses.
- c) It is recognized that Huron County contains a large number of low visitation cemeteries. Local Municipal Official Plans may identify a cemetery as being low visitation. Minimum Distance Separation Formulae for siting new or expanding livestock facilities and new or expanding manure storages (MDS II)

shall apply as a Type A Land Use for low visitation cemeteries.

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.

- 12) Lot creation in the prime agricultural area may be permitted for infrastructure uses where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or a right-of-way. Lot creation for renewable energy systems is not permitted.
- 13) Stewardship by local landowners is encouraged to support the wise management of the agricultural and water resources and contribute to the protection, restoration and management of natural areas and the health and integrity of the environment. Farming activity shall abide by “normal farm practices” and respect provincial laws. Proper nutrient management, including the appropriate storage, application and use of the manure resource is required to comply with the Nutrient Management Act. The Natural Environment policies of the Official Plan are not intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.
- 14) In the interest of protecting, improving and restoring the quality and quantity of water, uses within the agricultural area will be required to comply with Municipal and Provincial plans. Municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws, as directed by the Clean Water Act, will identify areas of vulnerable surface and groundwater, sensitive surface water features and sensitive groundwater features, and their hydrologic functions. Land uses with a potential to impact water quality or quantity may be restricted or prohibited in these areas. New and expanding livestock facilities will comply with Nutrient Management legislation.

In accordance with the Natural Environment policies of this plan, landowners have an important role in protecting the quality and quantity of water through good stewardship and the adoption of best management practices.

- 15) Extractive resource uses may be permitted in agricultural areas subject to the Extractive Resources and Natural Environment sections of this plan.
- 16) Renewable energy systems such as wind, solar and biomass facilities may be permitted on agricultural lands. Commercial-scale energy projects are directed outside of the prime agricultural area where possible. Where the prime agricultural area cannot be avoided, the impacts to the agricultural system must be addressed through an agricultural impact assessment and minimized.

The following considerations shall guide the County and local municipalities when reviewing and commenting on proposals for renewable energy facilities in agricultural areas:

- Effects on the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community, and the health, safety and well-being of persons;
- The proximity of facilities to Settlement Areas;
- The suitability of the road network to accommodate construction and ongoing maintenance and emergency access;
- The loss of prime agricultural lands and adverse impacts on agricultural operations;



- Adverse impacts on natural features and functions;
- Adverse impacts on wildlife, including bats and migratory birds;
- Adverse impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage resources;
- The proximity and cumulative effect of existing or planned renewable energy facilities; and
- Buffering and appropriate separation distances from energy generation facilities and transmission systems.

Local municipalities may include policies in their Official Plan outlining local considerations for renewable energy facilities.

- 17) In the prime agricultural area, ground-mounted solar facilities shall only be permitted as an on-farm diversified use. However, ground-mounted solar facilities may be permitted on small residential lots in the prime agricultural area as an accessory use to the primary residential use, subject to the requirements in the Local Plans and/or Zoning By-laws.
- 18) Where residential uses are permitted in the prime agricultural area, up to two (2) Additional Residential Units are permitted subject to policies in Local Official Plans. Local Official Plans shall meet or exceed the following criteria:
  - a) Compliance with Minimum Distance Separation Formulae;
  - b) Additional Residential Units are to be attached to and/or located in close proximity to the existing dwelling;
  - c) Are compatible with and would not hinder surrounding agricultural operations;
  - d) Minimum land taken out of agricultural production;
  - e) Address any public health and safety concerns;
  - f) Appropriate servicing is available; and
  - g) A consent for lot creation will not be permitted for Additional Residential Units other than where they are included on the same parcel as a surplus farm residence.

In addition to Additional Residential Units, commercial scale agricultural operations which require housing to accommodate farm labour are permitted subject to policies in local Official Plans.

- 19) An Agricultural Systems approach, which includes the agricultural land base, and the infrastructure, services and assets important to the agri-food sector, is required.

### **3. Community Services**

This section of the Plan is unique in that it recognizes the importance of community services to the quality of life in Huron County as a healthy rural community. Community services are wide ranging and include but are not limited to waste management, transportation, health care & mental health care, education, child care, recreation, culture, heritage, social housing, 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 community 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 children.

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, accessibility, safety, security and renewable energy. The Healthy Rural Lens provides a framework that incorporates these directions to guide policy and program development that is relevant to the needs of our rural community.

##### **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

##### **Transportation**

Active Transportation including walking and cycling, and their corresponding trails, lanes and paths, are encouraged. The provision of trails and paths and other active transportation infrastructure will be a priority to increase safety and promote a healthy, active community. The community has identified electric vehicle charging stations as important infrastructure to have available across the County.

The community strives to maintain and develop the Municipal, County and Provincial road networks and to promote high quality, efficient, safe, and integrated road, rail, air and marine facilities, transportation infrastructure systems and corridors through co-ordination and partnerships.

The community also recognizes the need for the safe movement of residents relying on horse drawn transportation as their primary mode of travel.

### **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.

### **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 counseling services, and technological services and resources; maintain and improve library services; and promote life-long learning and educational opportunities for all ages and abilities. The importance of schools to local communities is acknowledged and the presence of schools in communities, and especially in settlement areas, is encouraged to continue.

### **Recreation**

The community desires to provide recreational opportunities for all age groups and abilities, through a range of built, social and natural settings including trails, parks, community centres, playing fields and arenas.

### **Heritage and Culture**

The County of Huron has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. This includes archaeological sites including marine archaeological sites; areas of Indigenous cultural interests; buildings and structural remains of historical and architectural value; rural, village and urban districts; and landscapes of historical, natural and scenic interest. The Huron County Cultural Plan provides a framework and priorities for cultural development. Respect for heritage is a community priority as reflected by the designated heritage districts and designated properties throughout the County. Heritage reflects a legacy of the expressions and aspirations of past generations and is valued for its historical significance and economic opportunity.

### **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, vehicle collisions and vandalism.

### **Accessibility**

The community recognizes that accessibility benefits everyone and will therefore continue to ensure that all citizens can equally access all services and programs. The County, in cooperation with the community, will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that everyone can experience and take part in all that the County has to offer, in accordance with provincial legislation.

### **Renewable and Alternative Energy**

The community recognizes the importance of local renewable and alternative energy sources, and maximizing energy conservation. Renewable energy production provides economic and environmental benefits to Huron County and its residents, and along with other efforts, helps to address climate change.

## **Childcare**

The community recognizes the importance of local, accessible and affordable childcare.

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

The community has established the following:

- 1) 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.
- 2) The County will, if needed or requested, be available to assist the community to facilitate and co-ordinate the implementation of community service actions.
- 3) The provision of community services will be a shared responsibility between the community, agencies, businesses, and various levels of government.
- 4) The community shall conserve and manage its significant built heritage resources, heritage conservation districts, areas of Indigenous cultural interests, natural heritage and cultural heritage landscapes. All new development and infrastructure permitted by the land-use policies of this Plan shall conserve cultural heritage resources and shall incorporate these resources into new development plans. Where appropriate, all new development and infrastructure will be planned in a manner which preserves and enhances the context in which cultural heritage resources are situated. An inventory of protected heritage properties will be compiled and reflected in local Official Plans and the Huron County Cultural Plan. When necessary, conservation plans and/or heritage impact assessments will be undertaken by qualified persons and recommend, measures to mitigate any negative impacts affecting identified significant heritage resources.

For the purpose of cultural heritage resources, adjacent lands are considered to be lands abutting to, or in proximity to, the cultural heritage resources.

- 5) 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. The County, in cooperation with local municipalities, will explore new technologies and waste diversion options. Local Official Plans will: identify open and closed landfill sites (closed sites may be delisted in accordance with provincial criteria); and regulate development adjacent to landfill sites in accordance with provincial criteria (e.g., MOE Guideline D-4).
- 6) Where development is permitted, archaeological assessments conducted by archaeologists licensed under the Ontario Heritage Act will be required in areas of archaeological potential including marine archaeological resources. There may be a need for archaeological preservation in situ or rescue excavation of significant archaeological resources as a result of development proposals.

In considering applications for waterfront development Council shall ensure that cultural heritage resources both on shore and in the water are not adversely affected. When necessary, Council will require satisfactory measures to mitigate any negative impacts on significant cultural heritage resources.

Early and meaningful consultation with Indigenous Nations is required when

completing an archaeological assessment. If the County or one of the constituent municipalities initiates the preparation of an Archaeological Management Plan, Indigenous communities shall be notified and invited to participate in the process.

The County shall engage meaningfully with Indigenous communities when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources, natural environment and water resources, and other areas of interest.

- 7) Infrastructure, public buildings and services should be located to support effective and efficient delivery. Co-location of multiple uses/services, where feasible, will promote cost effectiveness and facilitate integration.
- 8) The County will plan for a safe, energy efficient transportation system. Connectivity amongst road, rail, air, and marine transport systems will be encouraged. The County also supports the development of an electric vehicle charging network across Huron County and the surrounding areas. Lanes, trails, roads and paths used for walking and cycling will be integrated into the transportation systems.

The preservation and reuse of abandoned corridors and the development of new infrastructure for cycling and walking trails is encouraged. Recreational trails will respect agricultural and environmental land uses and these trails should be designed with input from neighbouring landowners.

The Huron County Cycling Strategy recommends actions to enhance cycling use, safety and enjoyment in Huron County for the benefit of residents' health, quality of life, and economic development.

- 9) Transportation land use considerations will be integrated at all stages of the planning process, including connectivity among transportation systems and promotion of alternative, safe, energy efficient transportation modes. Land use patterns will be promoted which support active transportation and minimize the length and number of trips and reduce dependence on the automobile.
- 10) Local municipalities will plan to protect community service uses from incompatible uses and development.
- 11) The County, in partnership with local municipalities and with the direction of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee, shall complete an Accessibility Plan annually in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Local municipalities will develop appropriate accessibility policies and regulations in Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, and Site Plan and Design Guidelines, in accordance with legislation.

- 12) Community service facilities and programs will be provided in a manner that considers both the needs of present and future populations, including an aging population.
- 13) The County of Huron has many renewable and alternative energy systems within its jurisdiction. Examples of renewable energy systems include wind, water, biomass, solar, compressed air storage and geothermal. The proximity to the Lake Huron wind regime, availability of biomass resources and potential for solar

development offer many opportunities for local energy production.

Alternative energy systems and renewable energy systems shall be permitted throughout the County as per Section 2.3.16. Opportunities for the development of district energy should be provided, where feasible, to accommodate current and projected energy needs.

- 14) Provincial Highways - There are four provincial highways located within the County (Highway 4, Highway 8, Highway 9, and Highway 21) which are under the control and jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). Development which falls within MTO's permit control areas under the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act is subject to the requirements of MTO.
- 15) Local Municipalities are encouraged to develop and/or revise existing Community Improvement Plans to support investment in projects to benefit the community such as downtown revitalization, accessibility and affordable housing.

## **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 including: resource based activities such as agriculture, mining, and forestry; industrial activities such as manufacturing and processing; and service activities such as retail, 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.

The Official Plan is a living document, addressing the varied challenges faced by Huron County residents and businesses of the day. This section identifies the current state of the economy and the significant challenges preventing further economic development and growth.

Four industries represent the pillars of the Huron County economy: agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and creative industries. Huron County is a provincial and national leader in agricultural production, diversity and innovation. Manufacturing is an important and adaptive economic engine and has a close affiliation with the natural resource and food/feed processing sectors. The tourism industry has solidified Huron County as Ontario's West Coast and represents a growing segment of the economy. Creative industries encompass a wide diversity of creative establishments and occupations, including cultural and knowledge-based jobs ranging from the performing arts to business and financial services. Service, trade and retail businesses and occupations are integrated and supported within all four pillars of the Huron County economy. These four pillars create employment and enhance quality of life for residents.

The current economic climate is characterized by an acute shortage of labour. Employers both large and small struggle to find and retain people to fill both skilled and unskilled jobs. This shortage of labour is the most significant barrier to the economic prosperity of the region.

The majority of the County's Urban Settlements are well served by fibre-optic telecommunication lines providing broadband internet service. However, many rural areas do not have access to either wired or wireless broadband internet. As agriculture continues to embrace information technology, this lack of access constitutes a barrier to the competitiveness of Huron County's agriculture industry.

### **4.1 Community Values**

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

The residents of Huron value job opportunities, job security, 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.

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

Residents have expressed concerns about a shortage of housing options, especially housing that is affordable to young workers and newcomers to Huron County.

Residents are interested in the potential of new and innovative housing options that could be promoted to address the housing shortage.

## **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 and encourages economic activity, diversification, flexibility and balance among the four pillars of the economy.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Housing**

The lack of "Attainable Housing" is identified as a barrier to attracting workers to the region. "Attainable Housing" is defined as non-subsidized market housing that an individual making the Living Wage (2024 rate: \$23.05/hour) can afford.

## **4.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- 1) The maintenance, enhancement and coordination of physical infrastructure such as water, sewer, road, rail, port, marina, air, electric vehicle charging stations and communication services such as internet and wireless technologies are critical for the economy's growth.
- 2) Investment in business retention and expansion programs is encouraged to support the integrity and well-being of downtowns and local businesses; this includes enhancement of heritage features, preservation of unique rural, small town character, and provision of a wide range of services and experiences.
- 3) Investment in an adequate supply of serviced and designated lands appropriate for industrial, commercial and residential development and redevelopment is encouraged and necessary for continued growth and development.

To promote economic development and ensure competitiveness, local Official Plans and supporting documents will:

- a) Ensure an appropriate mix and range of employment opportunities including industrial, commercial, and institutional;
- b) Maintain a range and choice of suitable sites for employment, commercial and residential uses;
- c) Ensure the necessary infrastructure is available to support current and projected land use needs; and
- d) Encourage compact, mixed-use development that incorporates compatible



- employment uses to support liveable and resilient communities; and
- e) Protect and preserve employment areas for current and future uses.
- 4) Entrepreneurial activity and business development will be supported and encouraged through programs of Huron County Economic Development, Community Futures Huron, and other municipal, provincial and federal agencies and departments.
  - 5) Education and training programs will be supported for the purpose of workforce development and job creation, including programs designed to encourage retention of youth.
  - 6) Economic activity will have regard for public health, efficient energy practices, and the health and integrity of the environment.
  - 7) Economic development strategies and partnerships will be maintained and developed to enhance and support all sectors of the Huron economy including: agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and creative industries.
  - 8) Investment in economic development programs and resources will be designed and implemented in co-operation with local municipalities to ensure effective and efficient delivery.
  - 9) Planning and delivery of economic development programs and services will be developed and reviewed with the goals of: protecting environmental and community health; supporting and building upon existing sectors; diversifying the economy; retaining youth; fostering job creation; and conforming to the policies of this plan.
  - 10) Economic activity will have regard for efficient energy practices, climate change adaptation, new technologies, public health and sustainability of the community and natural systems.
  - 11) Economic activity regarding the growing, production, processing and marketing of local foods, including a winery secondary to an agricultural use, will be encouraged and supported, in accordance with the agricultural policies of this plan.
  - 12) The County of Huron and Local Municipalities will facilitate the conditions for economic investment by identifying strategic sites for investment, monitoring the availability and suitability of employment sites, including market-ready sites, and seeking to address barriers to investment.
  - 13) All new residential developments should have consideration for the need for housing options for all income types and household sizes to support attainable housing for the workforce throughout the County. A mix of housing tenures and forms is recognized for its benefits to the workforce.
  - 14) All new major facilities and sensitive land uses will be planned and sited to ensure employment uses are protected from encroachment of sensitive land uses. Provincial guidelines will be used to determine compatible uses around industrial areas.

## **5. Extractive Resources**

Extractive resources in Huron County include mineral aggregate deposits (sand and gravel), minerals (salt), natural gas and petroleum resources and commercial water taking. Since these resources are non-renewable, proper conservation and wise management are essential.

It is desirable to make extractive resources available as close to the markets as possible. The County undertook an Aggregate Strategy in 2005 which identified large areas of significant quality and quantity of sand and gravel; this Strategy was updated in 2025. Some of the key goals and objectives from the County's Aggregate Strategy include: Making as much of the mineral aggregate resource available as close as possible to the market; Recognizing existing mineral aggregate operations and protecting them from activities that would preclude or hinder their continued use or expansion; Ensure that new or expanding mineral aggregate operations are sited in locations that will have minimal social, economic, and environmental impacts; and minimize conflicts between incompatible land uses. The Strategy also recommended to designate in local Official Plans primary and secondary deposits with zero constraints. In local Official Plans, the Mineral Aggregate Designation indicates that aggregate deposits are likely to be available; it does not presume that all conditions are appropriate to allow extraction or processing of the resource to proceed.

Extraction of mineral aggregate resources is considered an interim use, and progressive and final rehabilitation will be required to return the lands to a previous use or natural environment. Rehabilitated lands will be designated for the same use as existed prior to extraction.

In discussions on the future of the sand and gravel resource, the public indicated that development of this resource should be permitted while recognizing the importance of agriculture and the natural environment. Progressive rehabilitation while extraction is ongoing and final rehabilitation of the site when extraction is completed is required.

While there has not been a demand for commercial water taking in Huron County, it is considered an extractive land use when bulked or bottled for human consumption.

### **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, petroleum, and mineral (including salt) resources 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 mineral aggregate deposits, and those areas identified for petroleum resources.

### **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 mineral, mineral aggregate and petroleum resources of significant size and quality for their use. New operations should be established as appropriate. Existing licensed mineral aggregate operations and associated operations should be allowed to continue their use and expand where appropriate. Mineral aggregate operations will be progressively and completely rehabilitated where appropriate.

### **Compatibility**

The goal is to allow extractive resource areas, including mineral, mineral aggregate and petroleum resources 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.

## **5.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- 1) Applications for new or expanding mineral aggregate operations shall demonstrate how provincial requirements for air quality, including dust, will be maintained.
- 2) Existing licensed mineral aggregate operations will be permitted to continue extraction and expand where appropriate. New mineral aggregate operations will be established in such a way as to minimize conflict and maximize compatibility with adjacent uses. Extraction will be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social and environmental impacts. Mineral aggregate resource conservation shall be undertaken, including the use of accessory aggregate recycling facilities within operations, in accordance with the requirements of the Aggregate Resources Act. When considering the establishment of a new operation or the expansion of existing operations, satisfactory measures will be required to mitigate any negative impacts on cultural heritage resources.
- 3) Mineral, mineral aggregate and petroleum resources will be protected for long term use. Mineral aggregate deposits of significant size and quality have been identified in the Huron County Aggregate Strategy.
- 4) Local official plans will protect areas for aggregate extraction with reference to the 'Mineral Aggregate Extractive Resources' map. Local official plans will include policies and mapping that regulate the establishment of new mineral aggregate operations, and expansions of existing operations and mineral mining operations. Policies and mapping will be consistent with the County's Aggregate Strategy and petroleum resource operations. Petroleum, gas and other extractive wells and operations are located in rural areas throughout the County. These wells will be protected from incompatible development.  
  
Wells and petroleum resource operations or other extractive operations will be referenced within local official plans and protected from incompatible development by discouraging development within 75 metres of petroleum resource production operations and wells.
- 5) Wayside pits and portable asphalt plants for public authority contracts will be

permitted in prime and non-prime agricultural lands, except in areas of environmental sensitivity or settlement areas.

- 6) Extraction of mineral aggregate resources is considered an interim use, and progressive and final rehabilitation will be required.

Where there is a concentration of mineral aggregate operations, comprehensive rehabilitation planning is encouraged. Local municipalities may recommend that comprehensive rehabilitation be required through the municipal consultation process under the Aggregate Resources Act.

- 7) In agricultural areas, on prime agricultural land, rehabilitation will be carried out so that substantially the same areas and the same average soil quality for agriculture are restored. Complete agricultural rehabilitation is not required on prime agricultural lands if a substantial quantity of aggregate lies below the water table warranting extraction, other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable, and agricultural land rehabilitation in remaining areas is maximized. Consideration of other alternatives shall include resources in areas of Canada Land Inventory Class 4 to 7 soils, resources on lands identified as designated growth areas, and resources on prime agricultural lands where rehabilitation is feasible. Where no other alternatives are found, prime agricultural lands shall be protected in this order of priority: specialty crop, Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2, and 3.
- 8) Any development permitted on or adjacent to a rehabilitated mineral aggregate operation, mineral and petroleum resource or operation will identify and mitigate issues of public health, safety and environmental impact.
- 9) New and existing mineral aggregate operations and future or ongoing extraction of minerals and petroleum resources/ operations are permitted in the prime agricultural area, provided that the site is rehabilitated in accordance with Provincial policies. Where there is a concentration of mineral aggregate operations comprehensive rehabilitation planning is encouraged. Local municipalities may recommend that comprehensive rehabilitation be required through the municipal consultation process under the Aggregate Resources Act.
- 10) Extraction is directed outside of areas designated Natural Environment. Where extraction is proposed in or adjacent to natural environment, the required environmental impact studies shall be completed in accordance with provincial and local policies.
- 11) Incompatible uses and development shall be directed away from known significant mineral aggregate deposits, minerals and petroleum resources and operations.
- Development and activities adjacent to or in areas of significant mineral aggregate resources, minerals and petroleum resources which would adversely affect the availability of these resources, shall only be permitted if:
- a) resource use is not feasible; or
  - b) the proposed land use serves a greater long term public interest;
  - c) issues of public health, safety and environmental impact are mitigated, and

- d) the use does not adversely affect the availability of aggregate or petroleum resources in adjacent areas.

Non-agricultural development and lot creation within 300 metres of an existing aggregate operation or aggregate deposit may require an assessment of potential impacts.

Areas where petroleum/gas wells are located should be avoided when siting buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that development can occur safely. A well license must be obtained from the MNR before any attempt is made to enter or plug a well.

- 12) All extraction and processing operations should be located and operated in such a manner as to minimize the impact on the natural, social and built environments. Surface and ground water resources shall be protected from adverse impacts of extraction.

New or expanding mineral aggregate operations in the prime agricultural area shall require an Agricultural Impact Assessment; impacts on the agricultural system are to be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized or mitigated.

- 13) Commercial scale water taking for human consumption is considered a land use and may be permitted in extractive and agricultural areas, subject to the Section 2 Agriculture and Section 5 Extractive Resources policies of this plan. All water taking, including commercial scale water taking for human consumption, is governed by s.34 of the Ontario Water Resources Act. Local municipalities may establish policies in their official plan pertaining to commercial scale water taking for human consumption. Policies that local municipalities establish in their official plans pertaining to commercial scale water taking for human consumption shall refer to the requirements of the Ontario Water Resources Act.

## **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 a watershed 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 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.

Growing environmental concerns are at the forefront of public opinion in Huron County, in Canada and around the World. Climate change and issues related to air and water quality are examples of concerns that affect environmental health and require attention.

The County contains a diversity of natural heritage features and areas including: wetlands, shoreline areas, woodlands, valley lands and wildlife habitats. These features, where mapping is available, are shown on the Natural Environment Resources Map.

### **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, the quality of Lake Huron for drinking water and recreation, the quality of groundwater for private and municipal water supplies, a diversity of native plants, wildlife and the beauty of natural landscapes. The community indicated their willingness to protect and enhance the environment in order to improve where they live.

Huron residents recognize that their quality of life is dependent on a healthy ecosystem at the watershed scale. A watershed is the entire drainage basin of a particular watercourse and includes the air, ground and surface water, soil, plants, animals, and humans. A healthy watershed requires that the integrity and function of the environment be maintained or restored. The stewardship of all aspects of a healthy watershed is a shared responsibility of the entire community.

### **6.2 Community Directions**

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

#### **Watersheds**

The goal of the community is to ensure that planning for the natural environment considers all components of a watershed. A watershed based approach is recommended.

#### **Community**

The community is committed to the protection and enhancement of natural landscapes,

the sustainable use of natural and biological resources, and strategies and actions which increase forest cover, improve forest health and improve water quality.

The pursuit of a healthy environment must 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 and recognizing that the sustainability of our economic future is dependent upon environmental sustainability.

## **6.3 Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

- 1) Natural heritage areas and features, and natural heritage systems, as identified in the Provincial Planning Statement, will be protected for the long term. The protection and enhancement of natural heritage areas and features, and natural heritage systems will occur through the decisions of residents, property owners, businesses, the community, local municipalities, the County and conservation authorities.  
  
Local municipalities will include policies in accordance with the PPS, within their official plans which protect natural heritage features and areas of provincial, regional and local significance. Policies shall address the impact of development on natural features and ecological functions, including on adjacent lands.
- 2) The County, in consultation with stakeholders, the public and the Province, has developed a Natural Environment Update for Huron County. The Natural Environment Update builds on existing information relating to the identification and evaluation of natural heritage features. This is one piece of background information for updates to local Official Plans, recognizing that a more detailed review and further public consultation will occur at the local level.
- 3) The County and all local municipalities will participate, assist in coordinating, and may contribute financially in watershed and sub-watershed management studies in co-operation with provincial ministries, conservation authorities, adjacent municipalities in abutting counties, stakeholders and the community.
- 4) The County, in collaboration with the Province, local municipalities and Conservation Authorities, will protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of surface water and ground water and will minimize adverse environmental impacts, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts.

The County supports the Conservation Authorities preparing Watershed Report Cards evaluating progress on forest health and water quality targets as well as strategies which protect and enhance natural features.

- 5) Watersheds will be used as the ecologically meaningful scale of planning and can be used as the foundation for considering cumulative impacts of development.
- 6) Ecosystems are recognized as the integration of the natural heritage features and natural heritage systems together with ground and surface water features. The integrity and function of the ecosystem will be protected, restored and enhanced. The long-term ecological and hydrological functions, including water quality and quantity, will be protected and restored through watershed management (see

Watershed Resource Map). The landscape and its features will be maintained and enhanced for maximum biodiversity, beauty and its inherent value.

- 7) Development applications will be required to undertake a site assessment to determine if natural heritage features are present and to evaluate their significance.

Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:

- a) Provincially significant wetlands and provincially significant coastal wetlands.
  - b) Significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, and coastal wetlands or on lands adjacent to the foregoing features, unless the ecological functions of the feature and of the adjacent lands have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural heritage feature or area, or on their ecological functions.
  - c) Fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
  - d) Areas where potentially significant natural heritage features or areas exist and have not been evaluated, until an evaluation is completed at the time of a development application to determine the significance of the feature and applicable policies.
- 8) Where development is proposed within or adjacent to natural features the impacts of the development are required to be reviewed.

Municipalities will consult with the Huron County Biologist to determine if an Environmental Impact Study is required; and where wetlands are concerned, consult with the local Conservation Authority to determine if other technical studies are required. Where an Environmental Impact Study is required, it will be submitted as part of a complete application to ensure that environmental impacts are considered when assessing the suitability of development.

Local Official Plans will include policies which specify the Environmental Impact Study requirements. At a minimum, Environmental Impact Studies will include the identification of the scope of a development proposal; identification of the natural features, natural hazards, hydrologic functions and ecological functions; determination if habitat for threatened or endangered species is present; detail the accepted methods of evaluating potential impacts; specify the qualifications of personnel required to carry out these evaluations; and specify the mitigation efforts required for the development. These policies will include development controls that may allow for development or site alteration on adjacent lands providing it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts to the natural feature or its ecological functions. Adjacent lands are considered to be the lands within 30 metres of all natural features or areas.

- 9) The preservation of native plant and wildlife species is important to maintaining biodiversity and a healthy environment. The protection, expansion and enhancement of natural corridors, connections and linkages between natural features shall be maintained, promoted and improved.
- 10) Source protection water areas, drinking water supplies and the health of



watercourses will be protected and improved as critical resources for the long-term wellbeing of residents and the environment.

- 11) Through voluntary actions of property owners and in partnership with Conservation Authorities, forest cover will be increased in appropriate locations, where possible. Huron County will continue to provide outreach services and financial resources for stewardship activities including tree planting.
- 12) 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, and on-farm best management practices are encouraged. Outreach and extension services will continue to assist property owners in promoting a healthy environment.
- 13) The efficient and sustainable use of water resources, including for water conservation and sustaining water quality and protection of sourcewater will be promoted in collaboration with the Province, local Conservation Authorities and local Municipalities.

Where development is proposed on private communal sewage services or individual on-site sewage services, hydrogeological nitrate studies are required to demonstrate no negative impacts on public health and the environment.

- 14) The County will seek input from multi-interest holder advisory groups on environmental issues and will work closely with agencies, property owners, local municipalities and the community to address issues raised.
- 15) Agriculture practices that sustain a productive land base and environmental health, and do not compromise or adversely affect the functioning of the ecosystem will be encouraged and promoted. Nothing in this Plan is intended to limit the ability of existing agricultural uses to continue within natural heritage features and areas.
- 16) Development shall be directed away from areas which pose a threat to public health and safety or property. Development shall not create new or aggravate existing hazards. Policies in local Official Plans will ensure that people and property are protected from natural and human made hazards.
  - a) Natural hazards include existing hazards such as flooding hazards, erosion hazards, dynamic beach hazards, and potential hazards such as unstable soils, steep slopes, hazardous sites and hazardous lands.
  - b) Human made hazards include land affected by mine hazards, oil, gas, and salt hazards or former mineral mining operations, mineral aggregate operations or petroleum resource operations.
  - c) Local official plans shall designate hazardous lands and sites in accordance with this policy.
- 17) Sustainable forest management practices will be promoted and supported through forest management plans for County-owned forests, and through the Forest Conservation By-law for privately owned forests. Forestry initiatives will maintain long-term forest health, soil quality, a diversity of wildlife habitats and forest types, water quality and ecological communities, while allowing for

selective harvesting and compatible recreational activities.

## **7. Settlement Patterns**

When the original County of Huron Official Plan was adopted in 1973 the County's population was 51,000. In 2021, the population had increased to 61,365. Population projections undertaken in 2024 estimate a population of approximately 90,000 by 2051. Similar to the Province as a whole, due to smaller families and an aging population ("baby boomers" comprise a large proportion of Huron's population), a growing population will be increasingly reliant on migration to the County.

After many years of modest growth, Huron County experienced more significant growth between 2016-2021 and growth planning to accommodate projected population and housing is encouraged, particularly within settlement areas offering a full range of services.

The need for housing that is both affordable and attainable for all citizens of Huron County has become of critical concern. Lack of affordable and attainable housing can result in housing instability, increased homelessness, food insecurity and reduced quality of life. When the people living and working in the County are unable to find appropriate housing within their means, there are impacts for the community as a whole including outmigration of people, less spending at local businesses and difficulty for employers to find labour.

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 and housing will continue to be a critical issue, combined with the efficient and effective use of urban lands. 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 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.

The community values having a variety of residential forms including freehold, leasehold and rental housing available to meet the needs of a variety of income levels, ages, abilities and household sizes.

## **7.2 Community Directions**

Public consultation identified a number of key directions for settlements.

### **Strong, Prosperous and Complete Communities**

The goal of the community is to support strong, prosperous and complete communities. The achievement of complete communities will be supported by an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options, employment, public service facilities and other institutional uses (including schools, child care facilities, long term care, places of worship and cemeteries), recreation, parks and open spaces, and other uses to meet long term needs. This Plan provides an adequate land base and allows for continued growth within existing urban areas on full services which encourage the provision of employment and housing opportunities while preventing fringe or sprawl development. The goal of the community is to broadly allow residential uses within settlement areas except where it is incompatible with designated employment lands.

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

### **Protect and Enhance Lake Huron and Lakeshore**

Lake Huron and its shoreline are important because of the recreational, residential, ecological and tourism services they provide. The goal of the community is to protect, enhance and restore the quality of the lake and shoreline and public access to Lake Huron. Development can place considerable stress on the lakeshore environment. This stress requires that future development consider existing development and demonstrate environmental sensitivity. All existing and proposed development is encouraged to minimize negative impacts and improve the natural condition of Lake Huron and its shoreline through stewardship and community partnerships.

### **Environmentally Sensitive 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 the environment.

### **Livable, Vibrant, Healthy Communities**

The goal of the community is to promote and support high quality urban design, downtowns, pedestrian and cyclist-oriented transportation, a healthy, active population, a variety of ages, income levels, and diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Energy Efficient Building and Neighbourhood Design**

The goal of the community is to engage in and implement leading energy efficiency practices for building and neighbourhood design, construction, and function.

### **Community Policies and Actions**

The community has established the following:

Settlement Areas are built up areas where development is concentrated. Settlement Areas in Huron consist of existing Towns, Villages, Hamlets, and Lakeshore Residential areas. The policies for Towns, Villages and Hamlets are divided into Primary Settlement

Areas, Secondary Settlement Areas and Tertiary Settlement Areas (see Table 1 in Appendix).

### **Primary Settlement Areas**

Primary Settlement Areas are Huron's largest urban centres, and have full, municipal water and sewer services. These areas are intended to be the primary location for growth and development in the County and offer a full range of amenities and employment options. The County's five major towns (P1 in Appendix Table 1) are fully serviced by municipal water and sewer and provide a broad range of employment opportunities and community services and may contain strategic growth areas. The remaining fully serviced communities (P2 in Appendix Table 1) will accommodate a smaller proportion of growth than the five major towns.

### **Secondary Settlement Areas**

Secondary Settlement Areas include villages and hamlets with partial municipal services (water or sewer), which generally have significant populations but are less densely populated than Primary Settlement Areas. These areas are intended to accommodate a limited amount of residential growth, new community facilities and employment uses on full municipal water and sewage services or private communal water and sewage services. Infilling or rounding out of existing development may occur provided that the development is within the reserve sewage system capacity and reserve water system capacity; and site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services.

### **Tertiary Settlement Areas**

Tertiary Settlement Areas are villages and hamlets which are serviced by individual or private communal on-site services. Development in these areas will be small-scale and limited to infilling and rounding out. These communities are intended to provide fewer opportunities for growth, a limited variety of services, and employment opportunities that are in keeping with the rural setting and character of the community.

### **Lakeshore Residential Areas**

Lakeshore Residential Areas are Settlement Areas which permit a mix of seasonal and permanent residential development. Limited growth is permitted in these areas, however, unlike other settlement areas, lakeshore residential areas are not intended to contain a full range of uses. Development will be limited to residential uses and will occur based on the availability of appropriate services.

### **Recreational Areas**

Recreational Areas permit recreational activities such as trailer parks, campgrounds, visitor accommodations and golf courses as shown in local Official Plans. These areas rely on recreational activity as the basis for development, and do not contain a full range of uses, do not permit continuous year-round accommodation, and are not Settlement Areas.

#### **7.2.1 Growth Allocation**

- 1) Settlement Areas will continue to be the focus of development activity in Huron County. Primary and Secondary Settlement Areas will provide increased opportunities for growth through intensification, redevelopment, and expansion where appropriate and in conformity with the Expansion of Settlement Areas

section of this Plan. Forecasted population growth at a municipal level is shown in Table 2 as an Appendix to this Plan.

- 2) Population growth will be directed according to settlement area type, based on the following targets:

Settlement Area Type		Allocated Growth	
Primary Settlement Area	PI	75%	65%
	PII	25%	
Secondary Settlement Area		15%	
Tertiary Settlement Area		12%	
Lakeshore Residential Area		8%	

See Table 1 in Appendix for greater detail.

- 3) As part of a comprehensive review or at the time of a 5 Year Review of an Official Plan, local municipalities may re-allocate settlement area designations consistent with the targets in Section 7.3.1.2 and in response to changing housing market demands.
- 4) Growth in Huron County is often incremental; this can present challenges in ensuring that changes will meet the needs of current and future residents and that growth will be sustainable, from social, environmental and economic perspectives. Changes to settlement area boundaries, secondary planning and other large developments shall provide justification from a growth planning lens with the use of the County's Best Management Practices Guide.

## 7.2.2 Housing and Intensification

- 1) Market pressures and changing demographics are altering the form of housing types and the density of residential development. To accommodate these changes, to achieve complete communities and to address issues related to accessibility, mental health, housing attainability and low income, communities will:
- Encourage mixed use development;
  - Contain an increase in overall density;
  - Provide adaptable forms of housing;
  - Promote infill development at a higher density than the surrounding neighbourhood.
  - Require new development in fully serviced greenfield areas to be at a higher density than the existing residential neighbourhoods of the settlement area,
    - For example, including higher density uses, designing buildings for additional residential units, or establishing reduced lot area, frontage, and setback requirements than those in established neighbourhoods;
  - Promote all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including additional needs housing.

- g) Consider Community Improvement Plans as a tool to promote the provision of affordable housing.
- 2) To respond to aging population, the need for more affordable housing and the need to address climate change, measures, such as additional dwelling unit policies, will be contained in local Plans to encourage more compact housing forms and densities that are affordable to low and moderate income households, to accommodate an aging population and to create more compact, walkable, bikeable and accessible neighbourhoods.
- 3) Large scale residential development and redevelopment will be required to locate where social, health and other services are available.
- 4) Housing is generally considered affordable if households do not pay more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing. The following targets are established to promote and monitor housing affordability in accordance with provincial criteria:
  - a) 30% of total residential development in the County will be affordable for low and moderate income households.
  - b) 30% of total residential development within Primary Settlement Areas will be medium and high density.
  - c) Primary Settlement Areas will be the preferred location for affordable housing due to the availability of services, employment opportunities, and recognized community need.

Additional information regarding housing affordability is found within the County Housing and Homelessness Plan.

- 5) In Towns, Villages and Hamlets, the efficient use of land and services is encouraged through increased intensification. Intensification includes redevelopment, infilling, and expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

The following targets are established to promote and monitor housing intensification:

  - a) 20% of total residential development in Primary Settlement Areas will be accommodated through intensification.
  - b) 10% of total residential development in Secondary Settlement Areas will be accommodated through intensification.
  - c) Tertiary Settlement Area and Lakeshore Residential Area densities and intensification opportunities will be based on the provision of adequate servicing.
- 6) The County has developed Residential Intensification Guidelines that demonstrates how municipalities may encourage increased density in settlement areas while balancing design considerations with attainability and affordability.

Local municipalities may provide further guidance to aid compatible intensification.
- 7) At the time of local Official Plan and Zoning By-Law review, municipalities are encouraged to consider pre-zoning fully serviced, future development land for high density residential development.

- 8) Local Official Plans will include policies to permit a range of housing options appropriate for the market needs and servicing availability in their community. A range of options could include single-detached, semi-detached, row houses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi-residential buildings and uses such as, but not limited to life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, affordable housing, housing for people with special needs, and housing related to employment, institutional or educational use.

### **7.2.3 Expansion of Settlement Areas**

- 1) The towns, villages and numerous hamlets (as generally shown on the Settlement Patterns Resource map and as shown in Local Official Plans) will continue to provide opportunities for new residential, community facility, commercial and industrial development; redevelopment and the rehabilitation of brownfield sites.
- 2) In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, the following shall be considered:
  - a) The need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range of mix of land uses;
  - b) If there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
  - c) Whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;
  - d) The evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;
  - e) Whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the Minimum Distance Separation formulae;
  - f) Whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and
  - g) The new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development

Planning authorities may identify a new settlement area only where it has been demonstrated that the infrastructure and public service facilities to support development are planned or available.

### **7.2.4 Servicing**

- 1) Development in all Settlement Areas will occur in an environmentally sustainable manner, will have access to an appropriate range of municipal services, and not place pressure on rural communities to provide additional services.
- 2) Growth and development will be directed primarily to Settlement Areas with full municipal services.
- 3) Existing infrastructure and public service facilities will be optimized and opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered wherever feasible before



new infrastructure is installed or expanded. Infrastructure will proceed in accordance with municipal infrastructure planning consistent with this Plan ensuring it is financially viable over its life cycle and is available to meet current and projected needs.

- 4) Local Municipalities are encouraged to consider municipally initiated studies to facilitate development in priority areas.
- 5) Phasing of development in Settlement Areas shall be determined by the availability and location of services, sufficient sewage treatment (including land application of treated septage) and water system capacity, and is subject to the policies of local Official Plans. New development shall not be permitted until it is demonstrated that the septage expected to be generated can be properly treated as per the requirements of the Province.
- 6) Development in fully or partially serviced Settlement Areas should be contiguous and will be connected to municipal water and/or sewer services. Development is not permitted adjacent to any existing Settlement Areas unless a Settlement Area boundary expansion is approved under policy 7.3.3.2 of this Plan.
- 7) Where full municipal services are not available or cannot be provided, a servicing options strategy is required to identify and assess all reasonable servicing options and recommend the preferred servicing approach in accordance with Provincial Guidelines.

Where a servicing options strategy recommends individual on-site sewage and water services it shall be demonstrated that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impacts.

- 8) All new development will address stormwater management in a manner that recognizes heavy rainfall events are expected to increase in frequency and intensity as a result of climate change. Stormwater solutions must be appropriate for the existing municipal stormwater infrastructure, recognizing that demands will likely increase. Low impact development, green infrastructure and on-site retention and infiltration of stormwater are encouraged.
- 9) Where new development or redevelopment is proposed in proximity to existing infrastructure such as rail corridors, public trails or unopened road allowances, which are underutilized or abandoned, consideration shall be given to alternative public uses of these assets to encourage and support active transportation and walkability.

#### **7.2.5 Lakeshore Residential Area**

- 1) The Lakeshore Residential Area includes a mixture of seasonal and year-round residential communities that are valued because of the proximity to Lake Huron, the quality of existing development, and the quality recreational experience. Development in this area must respect these attributes, demonstrate environmental sensitivity, and develop subject to the provision of adequate services in accordance with local Official Plans.
- 2) Development in Lakeshore Residential Areas will be limited to residential uses.
- 3) Lakeshore Residential Area development adjacent to existing fully or partially serviced Settlement Areas will be contiguous and connected to municipal water

and/or sewer services.

- 4) Expansion of the Lakeshore Residential Area shall only be considered subject to a supportive comprehensive review in accordance with policy 7.3.3.2, and in accordance with the Agricultural (Section 2), Natural Environment (Section 6), and Servicing (Section 7.3.4) policies of this Plan. All appropriate cultural heritage policies within the official plan should apply.
- 5) Public access to the Lake Huron shoreline will be preserved and will be required for new developments.

### **7.2.6 Industrial and Commercial**

- 1) The towns, villages and hamlets provide the greatest opportunity for new industrial and commercial employment. New development will locate in these areas, particularly those with full municipal water and sewer services.
- 2) Employment Areas include only industrial lands and will be protected for industrial purposes. Employment areas will be planned for and protected in settlement areas by:
  - a) planning for employment area uses over a long-term that require those locations including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing and goods movement, and associated retail and office uses and ancillary facilities;
  - b) prohibiting residential uses, commercial uses, public service facilities and other institutional uses;
  - c) prohibiting retail and office uses that are not associated with the primary employment use;
  - d) prohibiting other sensitive land uses that are not ancillary to uses permitted in the employment area; and
  - e) including an appropriate transition to adjacent non-employment areas to ensure land use compatibility and economic viability.

Planning authorities may remove lands from employment areas only where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) there is an identified need for the removal and the land is not required for employment area uses over the long term;
- b) the proposed uses would not negatively impact the overall viability of the employment area by:
  1. avoiding or where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating potential impacts to existing or planned employment area uses;
  2. maintaining access to major goods movement facilities and corridors;
- c) existing or planning infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses; and
- d) the municipality has sufficient employment lands to accommodate projected employment growth to the horizon of the approved official plan.

- 3) Facilities such as airports, transportation corridors, waste facilities, and industries will be designed, buffered and/or separated from sensitive land uses such as residential areas, and education, community and health facilities to prevent or mitigate adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term viability of major facilities. Residential uses may be permitted by local official plans in commercial designations in the form of mixed-use or high-density residential uses.
- 4) Notwithstanding Section 7.3.6.2., and until the time of an official plan update or review in accordance with 7.3.6.2., lands within existing Employment Areas may be converted to a designation that permits non-employment uses provided the employment area has not been identified as provincially significant or regionally significant and subject to the following:
  - a) there is an identified need for the conversion and the land is not required for employment purposes over the long term.
  - b) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area;
  - c) existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses; and
  - d) where lands have been used for employment area uses, require the completion of studies to determine whether there is any soil and/or groundwater contamination that would require remediation prior to allowing the development of a more sensitive land use.

### **7.2.7 Heritage and Design**

- 1) Natural and cultural heritage resources will be identified, protected and promoted as demonstrated through Sections 3.3.4 and 6.3 of this Plan.
- 2) Development and redevelopment will complement small town scale, character and historic streetscapes, including preserving and enhancing terminating views.
- 3) Development and redevelopment will be designed to preserve and enhance connectivity through a well-connected street pattern, for example, a modified grid pattern enhanced by pedestrian and active transportation links, such as sidewalks multi-use pathways, bike lanes and trails.
- 4) Development and redevelopment in proximity to Lake Huron or other locally significant waterbodies and watercourses will be encouraged to improve and preserve views and public access to these areas.

### **7.2.8 Accessibility**

- 1) All development and redevelopment will be accessible and prevent land use barriers which restrict persons with disabilities from full participation in society in accordance with provincial legislation.
- 2) In cooperation with the County, local municipalities will prepare and implement Accessibility Guidelines to promote universal access where appropriate for all forms of development.

### **7.2.9 Clean Air, Water, Soil**

- 1) Development design will incorporate active transportation (e.g. walking and cycling) and will consider energy efficiency and air quality with respect to building design and transportation. Active transportation will be encouraged by supporting increased density in proximity to downtowns in primary settlement areas, and through improved connections for active transportation.
- 2) Community energy planning is encouraged and may be pursued by local municipalities to assess future energy needs and options.
- 3) Development and redevelopment will be encouraged to consider energy efficient construction techniques and incorporate energy efficient design principles and materials (e.g. LEED, Passivhaus (Passive House), and EnergyStar).
- 4) Prior to new development or redevelopment, contaminated sites will be restored and remediated to remove or address any adverse effects.
- 5) All development will protect surface water and ground water, and will incorporate water pollution control and water conservation measures. Drinking water source protection plans for each source protection area will identify and protect drinking water from land use activities that pose a threat to municipal drinking water supplies.

Water quality will be protected, improved and restored with priority given to vulnerable areas as identified by and in accordance with the policies contained in the most recent versions of the following Source Protection Plans:

- Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Plan (Effective April 1, 2015)
- Maitland Valley Source Protection Plan (Effective April 1, 2015)
- Saugeen Valley Source Protection Plan (Effective July 1, 2016)
- Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Plan (Effective December 31, 2015)

Local official plans will implement the applicable source water protection policies. Reference must be made to the applicable Source Protection Plan(s) for specific policies including definitions.

The Source Water Protection Resources map identifies the vulnerable areas: Wellhead Protection Areas, Intake Protection Zones, and Highly Vulnerable Aquifers. This map will be updated based on the information provided by the Source Protection Authorities following the procedures for official plan amendments established in the Planning Act. In the interim, planning decisions will be based on the most up to date information available.

- 6) The County will support and encourage necessary measures and activities to reduce pollution and improve the quality of the water in Lake Huron.
- 7) Local climate change impacts are expected to include higher average temperatures, increased precipitation, increased intensity of rainfall, more extreme fluctuations in lake and river levels, increased lake effect snow events, more frequent and severe ice storms, and more frequent and severe wind gust events.

To address these impacts:

- a) the County will support measures and activities to address climate change as outlined in the Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan;
- b) local Official Plans will include goals, objectives, & actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and provide for adaptation to changing climate, including increased resiliency; and
- c) all development will consider the impacts of a changing climate and related mitigation and adaptation measures.

## 8. Implementation

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:

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) In keeping with the community-based approach of this plan, any proposed amendments to this plan will follow, at a minimum, the prescribed process for obtaining the views of the public in respect to the proposed amendments as set out in the Planning Act.
- 4) Applicants are encouraged to consult with stakeholders and neighbouring property owners in advance of submitting their application.
- 5) When considering municipally initiated amendments to local official plans and Zoning By-laws, local municipalities should consider public consultation methods that go above and beyond the minimum requirements of the Planning Act.
- 6) The County acknowledges its role in the Province's duty to consult with Indigenous communities on planning matters. The County will strive to build co-operative relationships through early and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities to facilitate knowledge-sharing in land use planning processes and inform decision-making.
  - The County and private developers shall engage early with Indigenous communities and meaningfully coordinate on land use planning matters, including but limited to, the identification and preservation of archaeological sites and built heritage resources, the protection of burial sites, cultural heritage landscapes and the natural environment.
  - The County commits to co-development of mutually acceptable processes and protocols that facilitate notification and ongoing engagement of Indigenous communities in land use and related planning processes of the County. Guidelines may be prepared to further clarify expectations for Indigenous consultation and engagement.
- 7) Local municipalities will support the community's goals with the development of local Official Plans and by-laws that implement many of the suggested policies and actions. Local municipalities will update their Official Plans using a community based approach and consider cross jurisdictional issues. When dealing with planning matters within local municipalities, across lower tier municipal boundaries,

and with other levels of government, agencies and boards, a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach will be used.

- 8) For the determination of a complete application, the following additional information may be required to be submitted as part of a planning application, including peer review(s). Studies are listed in thematic areas for organizational purposes and does not limit the designations in which a study can be required. Local Official Plans may specify additional studies and information for the determination of a complete application.

### **Natural Environment / Natural Hazard**

- a flood plain and erosion hazard study if in a natural hazard area or an erosion control area as identified by the Conservation Authority,
- an Environmental Impact Study if within or adjacent to a natural environment area
- A study demonstrating the identification and assessment of impacts on threatened and endangered species, where there is potential suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species known to occur within the County of Huron, or where the Ministry of Natural Resources has identified habitat for threatened or endangered species as per the Endangered Species Act 2007.

### **Urban Lands**

- a Comprehensive Review if land is being newly designated for urban development or if converting employment lands to non-employment uses
- a heritage impact study if within or adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District or a Protected Heritage Property
- a retail market study (or other economic / downtown impact study) if in a commercial area, or proposing to be within a commercial area
- A residential market justification study

### **Servicing**

- a servicing proposal to demonstrate the proposed connection to existing municipal services
- a servicing options study for development proposed with private water or private sewage facilities
- a hydrologic / ground water impact study for development proposed on private sewage services in accordance with the County's Term of Reference.
- a stormwater management plan (conceptual)

### **Archaeology, Heritage and Design**

- a heritage impact assessment and/or a conservation plan whenever known or potential built heritage resources (individual or part of heritage conservation district) and cultural heritage landscapes are located
- Archaeological Assessment in areas of high archaeological potential
- Marine Archaeological Assessment in areas of marine archaeological potential
- Design review in accordance with applicable County design guidelines, for example, the Residential Intensification Guideline or the Urban Design Guideline for Traditional Downtowns

### **Other**

- a traffic impact study

- an air quality, noise or vibration study when required by Provincial guidelines
- an Environmental Site Assessment when required by Provincial legislation
- Minimum Distance Separation Formulae requirements from existing livestock barns for proposed residential, recreational or other non-farm development
- Minimum Distance Separation Formulae requirements from existing residential (farm and non-farm), recreational or other non-farm uses for proposed livestock barns
- a contaminant migration study and impact mitigation study for development within 500 metres of an open or closed landfill
- an aggregate impact study for non-farm development occurring within 300 metres of an aggregate operation or known aggregate deposit
- an impact study for an aggregate operation proposed within 300 m of a settlement area or existing non-farm development
- under the Clean Water Act, a Section 59 Restricted Land Use Permit issued by the Risk Management Official if the property falls within a Wellhead Protection Area C (Five-year Time-of-Travel to the municipal well)
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Public Consultation Strategy
- A residential market justification study

This is the 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 Official Plans. Local communities will use these policies to review and update their existing plans in order that they conform with the County Official Plan. Existing 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 authority for all local Official Plans.

## **9. 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 several ways in the development and refinement of this plan including: completing community action kits and participating in a number of focus groups, workshops, public meetings, and sustainability exercises and discussions. 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. This level and quality of public participation has resulted in an approach and format that is somewhat different from the traditional approach. Reflecting on the changes and challenges affecting our communities today and the desire for increased citizen empowerment, this Plan is appropriate.



## Appendix

**Table 1: Settlement Area Type Classification for Growth Allocation**

<b>Primary Settlement Areas</b> <i>(full services existing or required)</i> <i>*Areas abutting P1 Settlement Areas are also required to be on full services unless otherwise stated</i>		<b>Secondary Settlement Areas</b> <i>(partial services)</i>	<b>Tertiary Settlement Areas</b> <i>(private services)</i>			<b>Lakeshore Residential and Residential Park Settlement Areas</b>
<b>PI</b>	<b>PII</b>					
Clinton Exeter Goderich Seaforth Wingham	Bayfield North of Bayfield Blyth Brussels Centralia Crediton Greater Grand Bend Hensall Huron Park Hutton Heights South of Lucknow Vanastra Zurich	Belgrave Benmillar Brucefield Dashwood Dungannon Saltford St. Joseph Varna	Amberley Auburn Belfast Belmore Blake Bluevale Corbett Cranbrook Dublin Elimville Ethel Fordwich Gorrie Graham Survey	Greenway Harpurhey Henfryn Holmesville Hutton Heights Junctionville Kinburn Kingsbridge Kintail Kippen Kirton Lakelet Lochalsh Londesborough Lowertown	Molesworth Mount Carmel Nile Port Albert Shipka St. Augustine St. Columban St. Helens Walton Whitechurch Winthrop Woodham Wroxeter	Lakeshore Residential (Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh)  Residential Park (Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh)  Lakeshore Residential (Central Huron)  Lakeshore Residential (Bluewater)  Lakeshore Residential (South Huron)

*Note: Table 1 is subject to change and amendments to Table 1 do not require an Official Plan Amendment. Place names are in accordance with local Official Plans.*

**Table 2: Population Projections (2021 – 2051)**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2036</b>	<b>2041</b>	<b>2046</b>	<b>2051</b>
Ashfield-Colborne- Wawanosh	6,141	7,387	7,816	8,268	8,678	8,994	9,210
Bluewater	7,870	8,333	8,777	9,581	10,359	11,014	11,530
Central Huron	8,140	8,615	8,792	9,382	9,969	10,475	10,890
Goderich	8,226	8,863	10,187	10,789	11,427	12,008	12,510
Howick	4,222	4,288	4,440	4,753	5,054	5,305	5,500
Huron East	9,928	10,254	10,538	11,387	12,222	12,930	13,500
Morris-Turnberry	3,747	3,858	3,927	4,077	4,231	4,370	4,480
North Huron	5,273	5,526	5,736	5,994	6,279	6,551	6,790
South Huron	10,476	11,255	12,911	13,659	14,439	15,141	15,740
County of Huron	64,050	68,381	73,125	77,896	82,669	86,801	90,160

*Note: Table 2 is subject to change and amendments to Table 2 do not require an Official Plan Amendment*

*Note: Table 2 includes net Census undercount estimated at 4.4% and assumes the medium growth scenario of 1.1% annual growth. Population undercount has been rounded and may not add up exactly.*

*Source: County of Huron Population & Housing Projections, 2024, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.*

**Table 3: Employment Projections (2016 - 2041)**

	<b>2016 Participation Rate</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2036</b>	<b>2041</b>
Ashfield Colborne Wawanosh	0.627	3400	3434	3474	3503	3503	3486
Bluewater	0.653	4660	4707	4762	4801	4801	4778
Central Huron	0.629	4765	4814	4870	4910	4910	4886
Goderich	0.567	4325	4369	4420	4457	4457	4435
Howick	0.718	2781	2809	2842	2865	2865	2851
Huron East	0.688	6287	6351	6425	6478	6478	6446
Morris-Turnberry	0.735	2570	2596	2626	2648	2648	2635
North Huron	0.645	3181	3213	3251	3278	3278	3262
South Huron	0.622	6280	6344	6418	6471	6471	6439
County of Huron	0.644	38189	38576	39026	39348	39348	39155

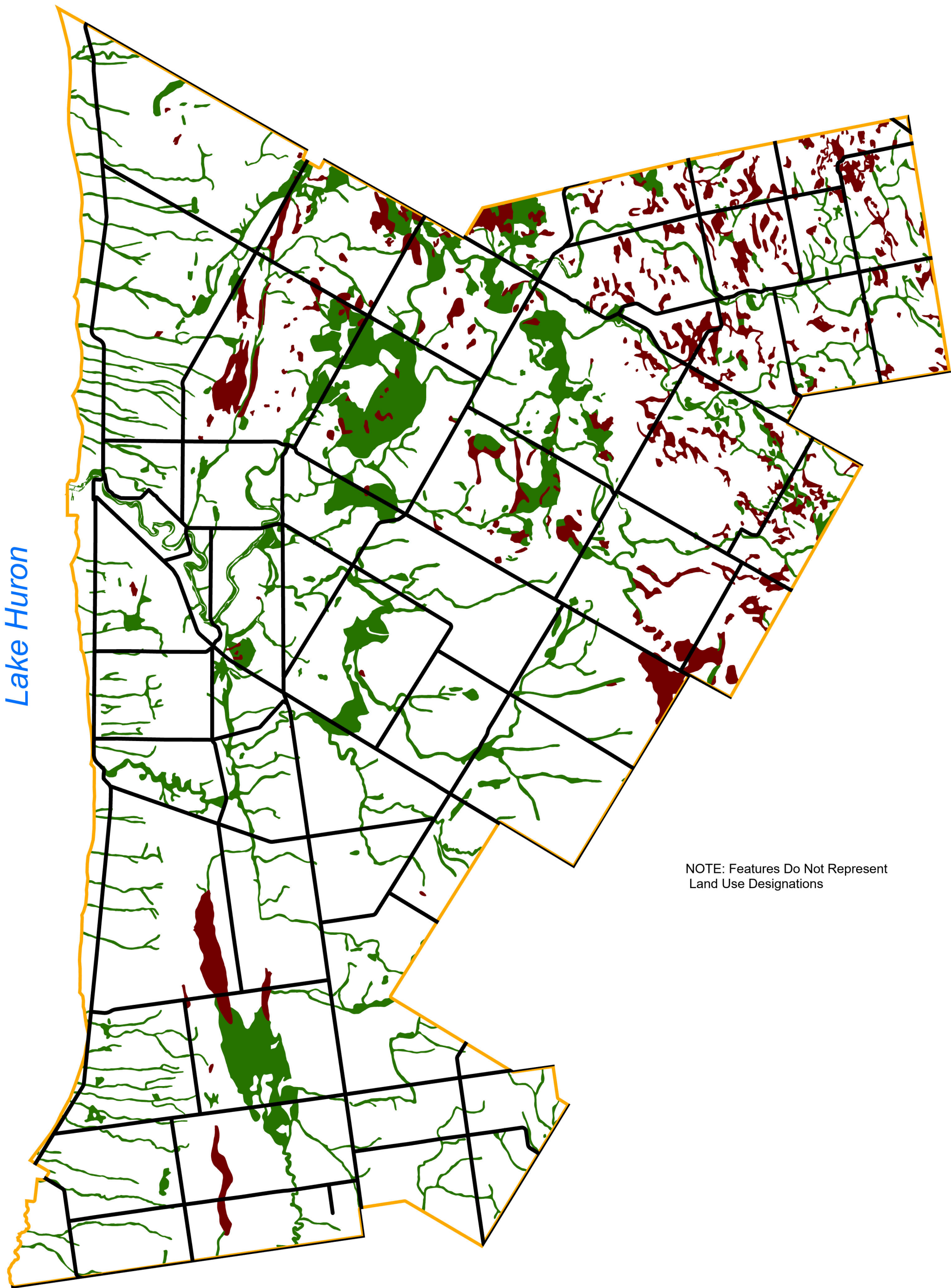
*Note: Table 3 is subject to change and amendments to Table 3 do not require an Official Plan Amendment.*

**Table 4: Household Projections (2021-2051)**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2036</b>	<b>2041</b>	<b>2046</b>	<b>2051</b>
Ashfield Colborne Wawanosh	2,355	2,725	2,870	3,018	3,148	3,245	3,310
Bluewater	3,305	3,475	3,658	3,957	4,246	4,490	4,690
Central Huron	3,270	3,471	3,569	3,804	4,035	4,233	4,400
Goderich	3,665	3,983	4,578	4,852	5,137	5,394	5,630
Howick	1,345	1,386	1,451	1,567	1,677	1,768	1,850
Huron East	3,705	3,883	4,023	4,350	4,670	4,941	5,170
Morris-Turnberry	1,195	1,261	1,299	1,367	1,434	1,492	1,540
North Huron	2,155	2,305	2,414	2,544	2,681	2,807	2,920
South Huron	4,340	4,678	5,242	5,568	5,902	6,199	6,460
County of Huron	25,335	27,167	29,104	31,027	32,930	34,569	35,970

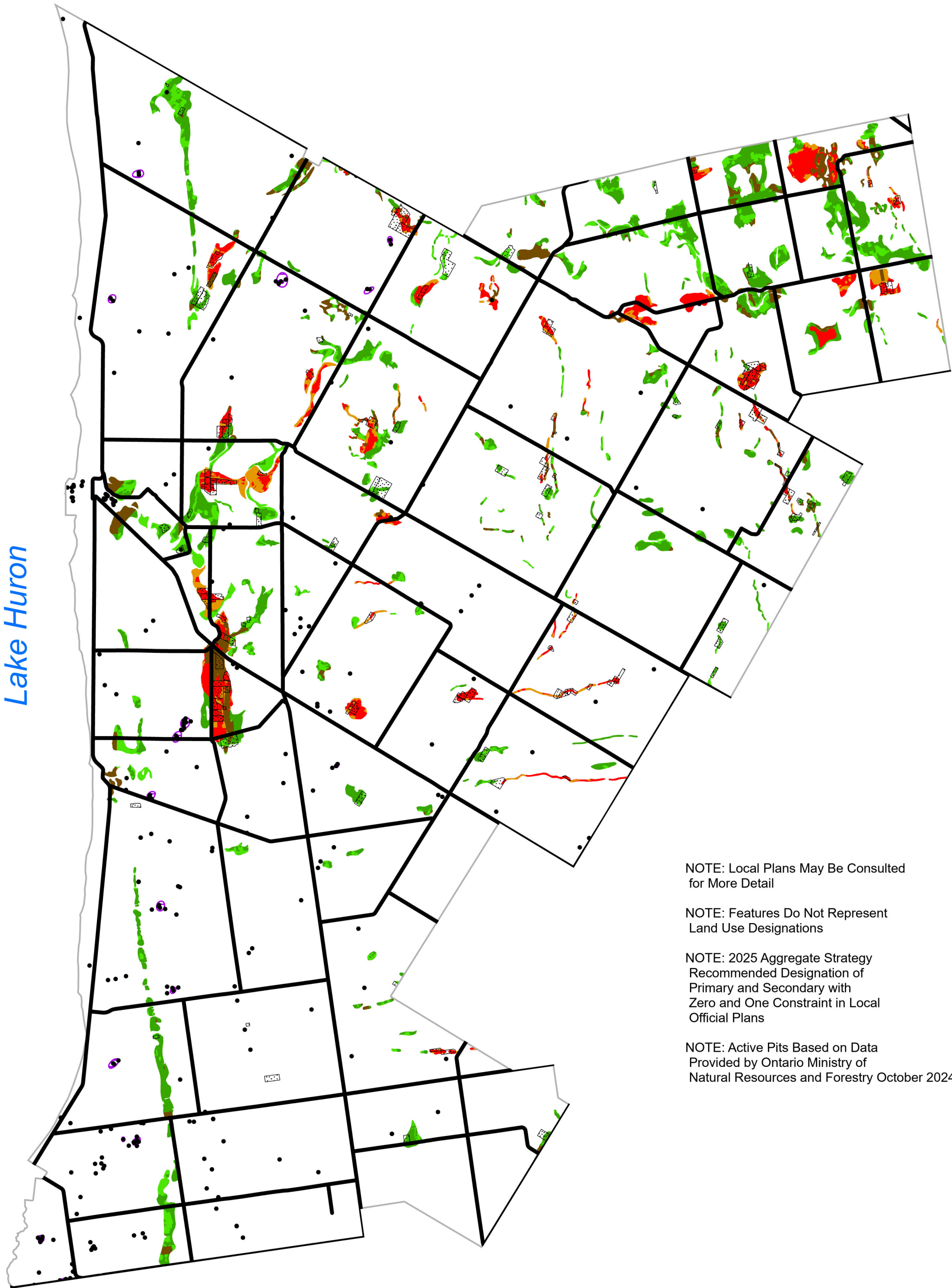
*Note: Table 4 is subject to change and amendments to Table 4 do not require an Official Plan Amendment*

HURON COUNTY  
OFFICIAL PLAN  
Agricultural Resources Map





HURON COUNTY  
OFFICIAL PLAN  
Extractive Resources Map



NOTE: Local Plans May Be Consulted for More Detail

NOTE: Features Do Not Represent Land Use Designations

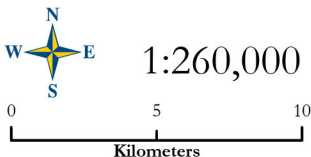
NOTE: 2025 Aggregate Strategy Recommended Designation of Primary and Secondary with Zero and One Constraint in Local Official Plans

NOTE: Active Pits Based on Data Provided by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry October 2024



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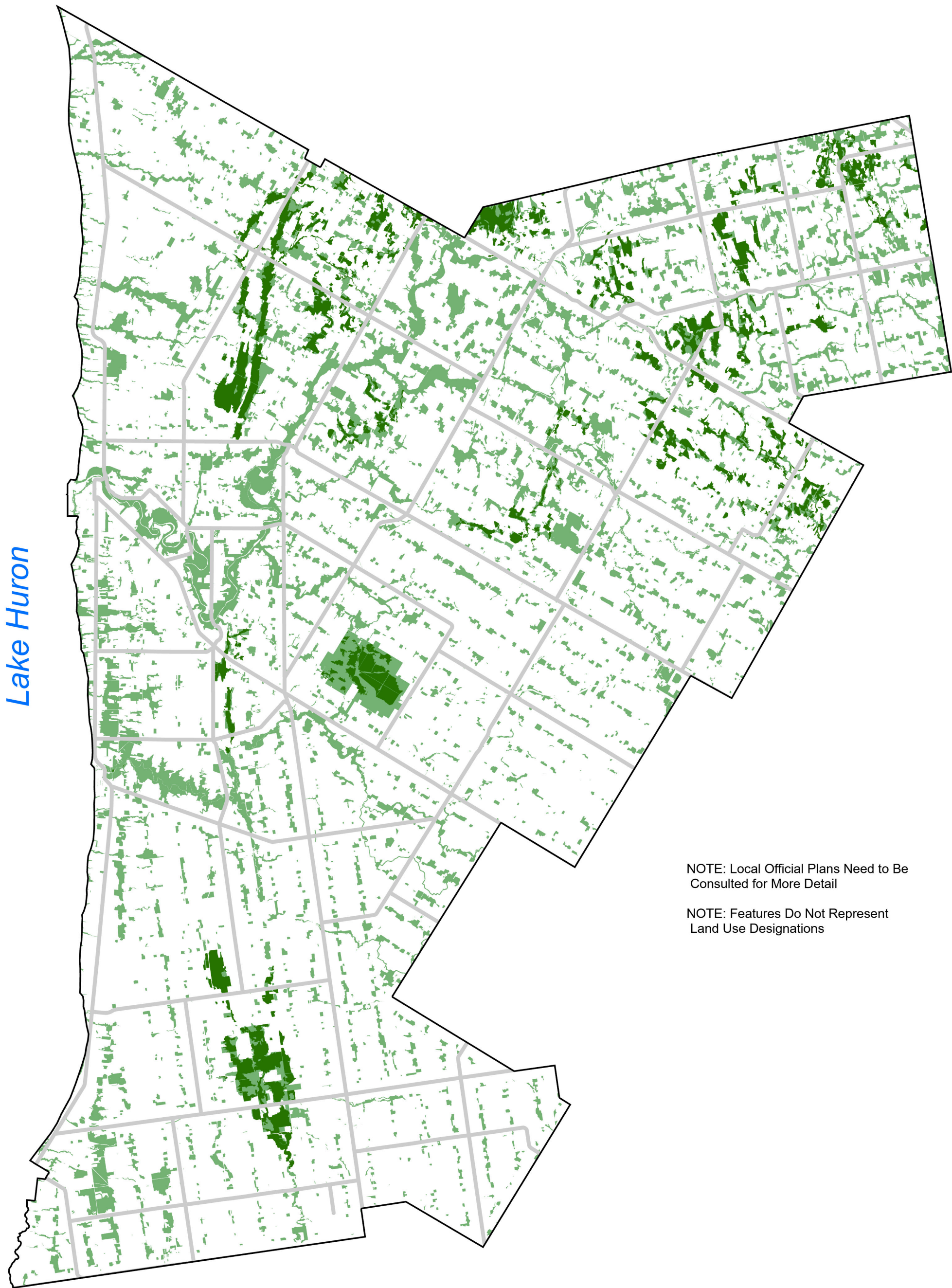


- Provincial Highways or County Roads
- County Boundary
- Active Pits
- Petroleum Wells (Active and Inactive)
- Petroleum Pool

- Potential Aggregate Resources**
- Primary - No Constraints
  - Primary - With Constraints
  - Secondary - No Constraints
  - Secondary - With Constraints
  - Sterile



HURON COUNTY  
OFFICIAL PLAN  
Natural Environment Resource Map

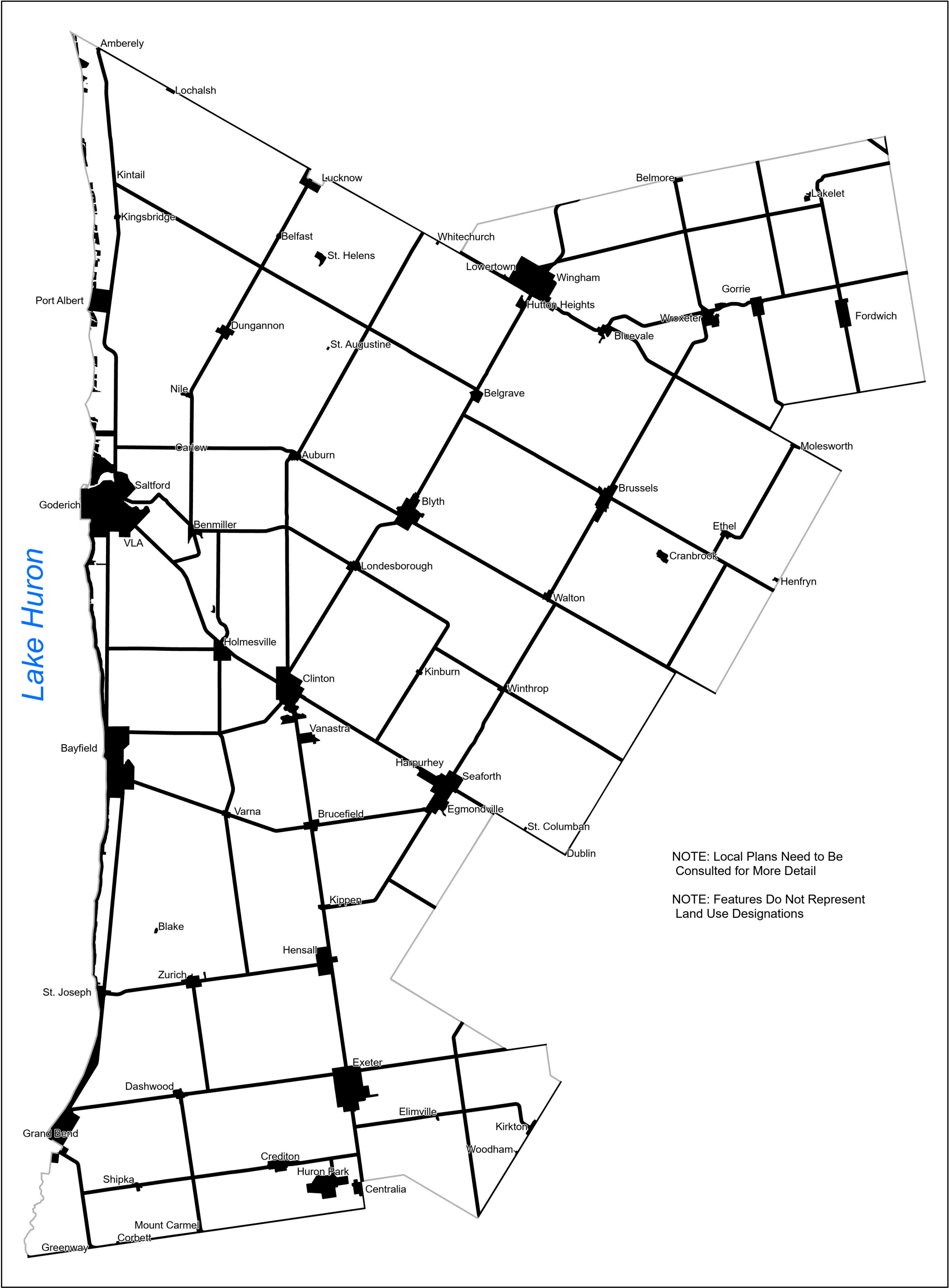


NOTE: Local Official Plans Need to Be Consulted for More Detail

NOTE: Features Do Not Represent Land Use Designations

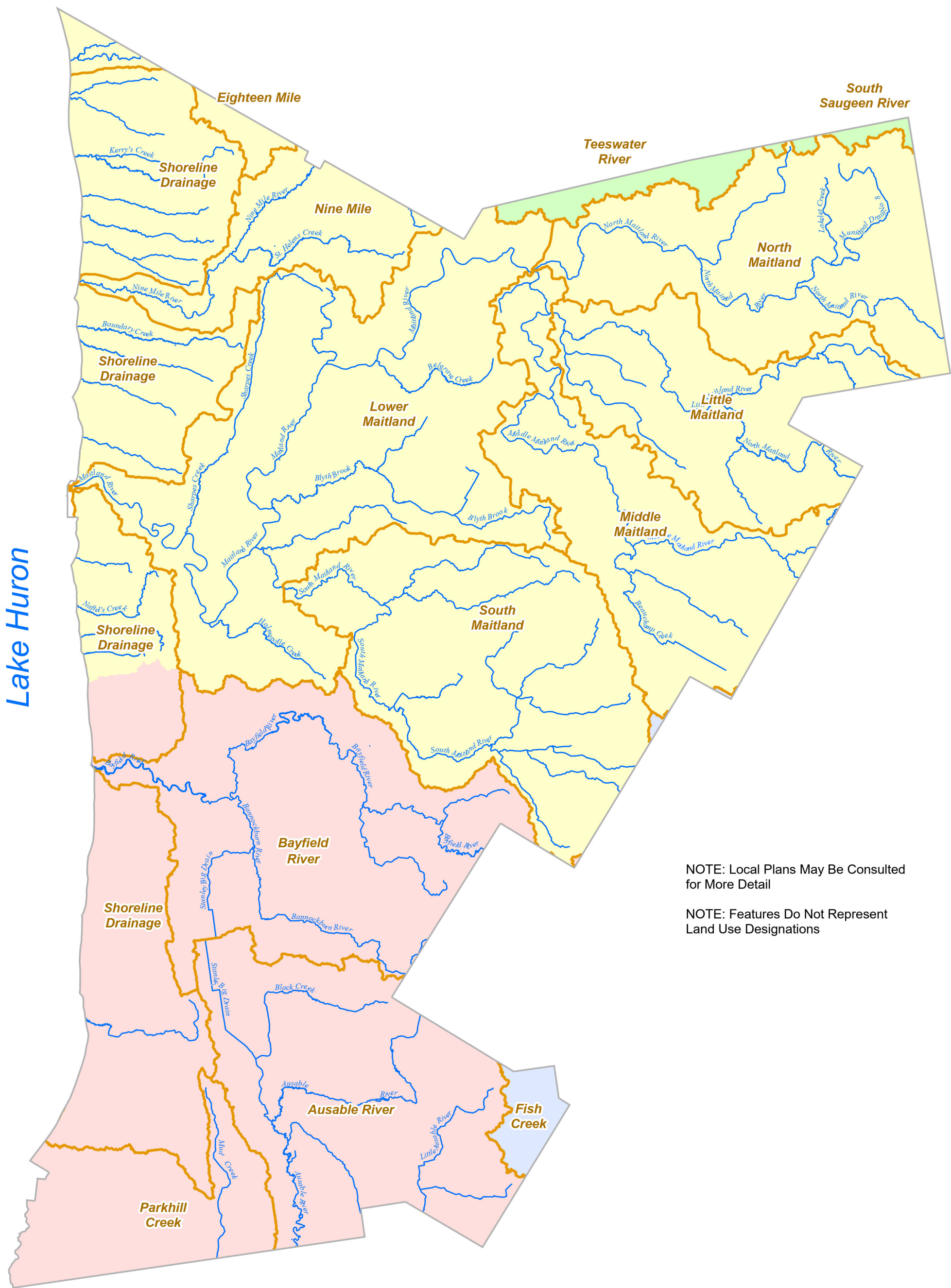


# HURON COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN Settlement Areas Map





HURON COUNTY  
OFFICIAL PLAN  
Watershed Resources Map



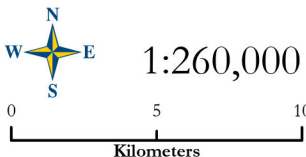
NOTE: Local Plans May Be Consulted for More Detail

NOTE: Features Do Not Represent Land Use Designations



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Last Modified: 3/19/2025



- County Boundary
- Watershed Boundaries
- Major Watercourses
- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
- Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
- Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

HURON COUNTY  
OFFICIAL PLAN  
Source Water Protection Areas Map

