



Huron County OFFICIAL PLAN

Consolidated: September 24, 2015

**County of Huron
Planning and Development Department**

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 September 24, 2015

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).
Amendment 4	Housekeeping amendments based on updates to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014.	June 3, 2015 By-law 34-2015	N/A

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Agriculture	6
Community Services	11
Economy	16
Extractive Resources.....	19
Natural Environment.....	23
Settlement Patterns.....	28
Implementation	37
Conclusion	39
 Table 1: Settlement Area Type Classification for Growth Allocation ...	40
Table 2: Population Projections (2006 – 2031)	41
Table 3: Employment Projections (2006 – 2031)	41
Table 4: Household Projections (2006 – 2031)	42

Attached Maps

Agricultural Resources Map
Mineral Aggregate Resources Map
Natural Environment Resources Map
Settlement Areas Map
Watershed Resources Map

1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

It is recognized by this Plan that climate change, rising energy prices, human health issues related to obesity and inactivity, 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 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.

1.2 How this Plan Works

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

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

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

Local communities will use these general guidelines to review and update their existing plans in order that they conform with the County Official Plan. Existing 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. Development should be directed to urban areas, unless it is an agricultural related use.

(Minister's Modification 1)

2.3 Community Policies and Actions

The community has established the following:

- 1) Huron County is a prime agricultural area as shown on the Agricultural Resource Map.
- 2) The continued diversification of Huron's agricultural industry will be encouraged. Local Official Plans will support all types, sizes and intensities of agriculture.
- 3) Prime agricultural areas consist 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 prime agricultural areas, farming, agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, on-farm diversified uses, and normal farm practices as defined in the Farming and Food Production Protection Act 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. *(Amended by OPA 4 – Formerly Minister's Modification 2)*
- 4) Municipalities may only exclude land from prime agricultural areas for *(Minister's Modification 3)*:
 - a) Expansion of a settlement area boundary through a supportive comprehensive review *and subject to the policies in Section 7 of this Plan; (Minister's Modification 4)*
 - b) Creation of a new settlement area through a supportive comprehensive review *and subject to the policies in Section 7 of this Plan; (Minister's Modification 5)*
 - c) Extraction of aggregate resources as an interim use, provided progressive and final rehabilitation is undertaken where feasible, subject to policies in Section 5 of this Plan; and
 - d) Limited non-residential uses, provided:
 - 1) There is a demonstrated need for the proposed use;
 - 2) Reasonable alternative locations are not available which avoid prime agricultural areas;

- 3) Reasonable alternative locations are not available in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands; and
 - 4) The land does not comprise a specialty crop area.
- 5) 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 related to agriculture that are compatible with and do not hinder neighbouring uses, are secondary to the farm and are limited in area.
 - b) 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. *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- 6) 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*, but shall not permit the severance of land for these uses. *(Minister's Modification 6)*
- 7) *Lot creation in prime agricultural areas 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; minor lot adjustments; and, infrastructure or public service utilities which cannot be accommodated through easements or rights-of-ways; subject to the policies of local Plans. (Amended by OPA 4 - formerly Minister's Modification 7)*

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.

- 8) Local municipalities may choose to develop policies which permit the severance of existing residences 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 15 years old or has immediately replaced one of a series of habitable residences which were built a minimum of 15 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, and is intended to be used as a primary residence.
- 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 (MDS) formula requirements are met to the surplus house if barn(s) exist on the retained farmlands. MDS does not apply to existing barns on separately titled lots. (*Amended by OPA 4*)
 - 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 a majority 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.
- 9) All severances will recognize the protection of farmers' ability to farm.
- 10) All development, including lot creation in agricultural areas and new or expanding livestock facilities, will be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae. MDS will apply to surplus residence severances in accordance with Section 2.3.8.e. 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. (*Amended by OPA 4*)
- 11) Lot creation in prime agricultural areas 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.
- 12) 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.
- 13) 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.

- 14) Extractive resource uses may be permitted in agricultural areas subject to the Extractive Resources and Natural Environment sections of this plan.
- 15) The County recognizes that, under the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, the Official Plan does not affect renewable energy facilities. Renewable energy systems such as wind, solar and biomass facilities may be permitted by the province in agricultural areas, in accordance with provincial legislation and regulations. 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, and
 - The proximity and cumulative effect of existing or planned renewable energy facilities.

Local municipalities may include policies in their Official Plan outlining local considerations for renewable energy facilities. *(Section 2.3 15) was modified and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on April 17, 2015, File PL 120175)*

- 16) Commercial scale, ground mounted solar energy generation systems are prohibited on prime agricultural lands, in accordance with provincial legislation.

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

3.1 Community Values

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

Huron's residents value the variety and quality of community services offered in the County; and recognize the importance of 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.

Overall Direction

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

Transportation

The community 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. Other modes of transportation including walking and cycling, and their corresponding trails, lanes and paths, are encouraged. 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 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; 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.

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, 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 heritage resources will be compiled and reflected in local Official Plans and the Huron County Cultural Plan. Local municipalities will register properties of cultural heritage value or interest. When necessary, heritage impact assessments will be undertaken, as well as measures to mitigate any negative impacts affecting identified significant heritage resources. (Minister's Modification 9)*
- 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. There may be a need for archaeological preservation in situ or rescue excavation of significant archaeological resources as a result of development proposals.*

The appropriate First Nation shall be provided notification in regard to the identification of burial sites and significant archaeological resources relating to the activities of their ancestors. If the County or one of the constituent municipalities initiates the preparation of an Archaeological Management Plan, the appropriate First Nations shall be notified and invited to participate in the process. (Minister's Modification 10)

- 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. Lanes, trails, roads and paths used for walking and cycling will be integrated into the transportation systems.

The preservation and reuse of abandoned corridors 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.

- 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. *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- 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 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 the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- 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 sources within its jurisdiction. Examples of renewable energy systems include wind, water, biomass, solar 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 in accordance with provincial legislation.

- 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. (Minister's Modification 8)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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 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 uses;
 - c) Ensure the necessary infrastructure is available to support current and projected 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. (*Amended by OPA 4*)
- 4) Entrepreneurial activity and business development will be supported and encouraged through programs of Huron County Economic Development Services, Huron Small Business Enterprise Centre, the Huron Business Development Corporation 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, 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. (*Minister's Modification 11*)

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. *The County supports the recommendations, goals and objectives of the Aggregate Strategy. 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; Recognising 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 and one constraint, and to permit extraction in other deposits/resource areas subject to an amendment and appropriate studies.*

Extraction of mineral aggregate resources is considered an interim use, and progressive and final rehabilitation will be required. Rehabilitated lands will be designated for the same use as existed prior to extraction. (Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister's Modification 12)

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. *(Minister's Modification 13)*

There is a desire to minimize compatibility concerns. Incompatible uses should be directed away from areas identified as important sand and gravel 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 sand and gravel deposits of significant size and quality for their use. New pits should be established as appropriate. Existing licensed sand and gravel pits and associated operations should be allowed to continue their use and expand where appropriate. Sand and gravel pits will be progressively and completely rehabilitated where appropriate.

Compatibility

The goal is to allow *extractive resource areas, including mineral aggregate operations and petroleum operations* 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. (*Minister's Modification 14*)

5.3 Community Policies and Actions

The community has established the following:

- 1) 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. *New mineral aggregate operations, and wayside pits and quarries used for public authority contracts, will require an archaeological assessment if the subject property is located in an area of archaeological potential or near a known archaeological site. (Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister's Modification 15)*
- 2) Mineral aggregate resources (minerals 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.
- 3) *Local Official plans will protect areas for aggregate extraction with reference to the 'Mineral Aggregate Extractive Resources' map and consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. Local official plans will include policies and mapping that regulate the establishment of new and expansion of existing mineral aggregate 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. (Minister's Modification 16)

- 4) Wayside pits and portable asphalt plants for public authority contracts will be permitted in prime and non-prime agricultural areas, except in areas of environmental sensitivity or settlement areas.
- 5) *Extraction of mineral aggregate resources is considered an interim use, and progressive and final rehabilitation will be required. Rehabilitated lands will be designated for the same use as existed prior to extraction. (Minister's Modification 17)*
- 6) 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, 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. (Minister's Modification 18)*
- 7) 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. *(Minister's Modification 19)*
- 8) *New and existing mineral aggregate operations and future or ongoing extraction of minerals and petroleum resources/ operations are permitted in prime agricultural areas, 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. (Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister's Modification 20)*
- 9) Where extraction is proposed in or adjacent to *natural heritage features and areas*, the required environmental impact studies shall be completed in accordance with provincial and local policies. *(Minister's Modification 21)*

- 10) Development may only occur adjacent to or in areas of significant mineral aggregate resources, minerals and petroleum resources 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. (Minister's Modification 22)*

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. (Minister's Modification 23)

- 11) Incompatible uses and development shall be directed away from known significant mineral aggregate deposits, minerals and petroleum resources *and operations. (Minister's Modification 24)*

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.

Impacts from any new or expanding mineral aggregate operation on surrounding agricultural operations and lands shall be mitigated to the extent feasible. (Minister's Modification 25)

- 12) Commercial scale water taking for human consumption is considered a land use and may be permitted in extractive and agricultural areas, subject to Section 2.3(4)(d). Local municipalities may establish policies in their Official Plan pertaining to commercial scale water taking for human consumption. *(Section 5.3 12) was modified and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on April 17, 2015, File PL 120175)*

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 biodiversity. 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. (Minister’s Modification 27)

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, 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 Policy Statement (see Natural Environment Resource Map), 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. Local Official Plans will refer to the Natural Environment Resources Map and will also include mapping to identify these features. Policies shall address the impact of development on natural features and ecological functions, including on adjacent lands. (Minister's Modification 28)
- 2) *The County, in consultation with stakeholders, the public and the Province, will develop a Natural Heritage Plan. The Natural Heritage Plan will build on existing information relating to the identification and evaluation of natural heritage features, areas of local, regional and provincial significance, and hazard lands and will identify opportunities for linkages, restoration and enhancement as part of a natural heritage system. The Natural Heritage Plan may result in amendments to the County and/or local Official Plans, in order to reflect the recommendations of the Natural Heritage Plan. (Minister's Modification 29)*
- 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. *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- 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 the significance of a natural heritage feature or area that has 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. (Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister’s Modification 30)*

- 8) *An Environmental Impact Study will be required to evaluate the impacts of development within or adjacent to natural heritage features and areas. Local Official Plans shall include policies to require environmental impact studies where development is proposed in or adjacent to natural features.*

Municipalities will consult with the local Conservation Authority to determine if an Environmental Impact Study is 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 heritage feature or its ecological functions. Adjacent lands are considered to be the lands within 120m of a natural heritage feature or area. (Minister's Modification 31)

- 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 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) Forest cover will be increased in appropriate locations, where possible.
- 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.
- 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 services, hydrogeologic studies are required to demonstrate no negative impacts on public health and the environment.

- 14) The County will seek input from multi-stakeholder advisory groups on environmental issues and will work closely with agencies, 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. (*Amended by OPA 4*)
- 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. Nearly forty years later the population has increased to approximately 60,000. The population of Huron County will continue to grow slowly. Population projections undertaken for this plan estimate a population of approximately 68,500 by 2031. Due to smaller families and an aging population ("baby boomers" comprise a large proportion of the population), a growing population will be partly dependent on immigration into the County.

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

In the agricultural industry there has been important growth in the size and intensity of farming operations. At the same time, there has been a desire of many to live within the County's rural area. This desire for a rural lifestyle has also had an impact on the lakeshore where there has been considerable development of seasonal and permanent residences and conversion of existing cottages for year round occupancy. This development, along with a better understanding of the relationship between water quality and rural development patterns points to the need for responsive environmental standards. The availability of proper and affordable servicing 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 two attributes that they most value about Huron County.

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

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

7.2 Community Directions

Public consultation identified a number of key directions for settlements.

Strong and Prosperous Communities

The goal of the community is to support strong, prosperous communities. 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.

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 high quality urban design, downtowns, pedestrian and cyclist oriented transportation, a healthy, active population, a variety of ages, and diverse ethnicities.

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.

7.3 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. 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. Limited 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. (Minister's Modification 32)*

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, do not contain a full range of uses, do not permit continuous year-round accommodation, and are not Settlement Areas.

7.3.1 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.

7.3.2 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, and to address issues related to accessibility, mental health and low income, communities will:
 - a) Encourage mixed use development;
 - b) Contain an increase in overall density; and
 - c) Provide adaptable forms of housing.
- 2) Measures, such as second 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 (Note: Housing is generally considered affordable if households do not pay more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing). *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- 3) Large scale residential development and redevelopment will be required to locate where social, health and other services are available.
- 4) 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.
- 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) Intensification will respect and be compatible with existing neighbourhood characteristics and heritage areas.

7.3.3 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) Any consideration for the expansion of existing Settlement Areas or the establishment of a new Settlement Area will require a supportive comprehensive review. The comprehensive review must:
 - a) Justify the need for expansion, including demonstrating that sufficient opportunities for growth are not available through intensification, redevelopment and designated growth areas; (*Minister's Modification 33*)
 - b) Demonstrate that the proposed expansion is in the most suitable location and does not comprise specialty crop areas, and there are no reasonable alternatives *which avoid prime agricultural lands*; and impacts from new or expanding settlement areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the settlement area are mitigated to the extent feasible *including compliance with the Provincial Minimum Distance Separation Formulae*; (*Minister's Modification 34*)
 - c) Describe the planned or available infrastructure and public service facilities suitable for the proposed development which protect public health and safety, including the results of a Class EA where necessary;

- d) Demonstrate that the impacts of development on the natural environment will be minimized; and
- e) Provide other studies as required to support the proposed development as required by the County and local municipality.

In undertaking a comprehensive review the level of detail of the assessment should correspond with the complexity and scale of the settlement boundary or development proposal. *(Amended by OPA 4)*

7.3.4 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. *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- 4) 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. (Minister's Modification 35)*
- 5) Development in fully or partially serviced Settlement Areas will be contiguous and 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. *(Minister's Modification 36)*
- 6) 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. (Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister's Modification 37)*

A servicing options strategy will, at a minimum:

- a) consider the location, the amount and type of servicing needs for the proposed use, while recognizing the surrounding uses in the area, when determining the appropriate level of service to be used.*
- b) determine whether the servicing arrangement would be subject to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, or would be best served by undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.*

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. *(Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister’s Modification 39)*

7.3.5 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*), Cultural Heritage (*Section 3.3.4*), and Servicing (*Section 7.3.4*) policies of this Plan. *(Minister’s Modification 38)*
- 5) Public access to the Lake Huron shoreline will be preserved and will be required for new developments.

7.3.6 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. Consideration for the conversion of industrial land to non-industrial land uses will require a supportive Comprehensive Review to determine if the conversion is necessary, and demonstrate that the land is not required for employment purposes over the long term. Commercial lands are not included in employment areas for the purpose of a Comprehensive Review.

A Comprehensive Review for the conversion of Employment Areas to non-employment uses must provide:

- a) Justification of the need for conversion of employment lands, including demonstration that sufficient opportunities are not available through redevelopment, intensification, and designated growth areas in the local market area;
 - b) Demonstration that the proposed use is in the most suitable location and there are no reasonable alternative locations;
 - c) Description of the planned or available infrastructure and public service facilities suitable for the proposed development;
 - d) Demonstration that the impacts of development on the natural environment will be minimized;
 - e) Demonstration that the conversion is compatible with neighbouring uses and will not adversely affect the function of the employment area;
 - h) Consideration of cross-jurisdictional issues;
 - i) Other studies as required to support the proposed development as required by the County and local municipality.
- 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. *(Amended by OPA 4)*

7.3.7 HERITAGE

- 1) Natural, built and cultural heritage resources will be identified, protected and promoted *as demonstrated through Sections 3.3.4 and 6.3 of this Plan. (Amended by OPA 4 – formerly Minister’s Modification 40)*
- 2) Development and redevelopment will complement small town scale, character and historic streetscapes.

7.3.8 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.

7.3.9 CLEAN AIR, WATER, SOIL

- 1) Development design will incorporate a variety of alternative modes of transportation (e.g. walking and cycling) and will consider energy efficiency and air quality with respect to building design and 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 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.
- 6) The County will support and encourage necessary measures and activities to reduce pollution and improve the quality of the water in Lake Huron.

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:

- The day-to-day decisions and actions of thousands of individuals is the primary means by which the goals and actions identified within this plan will be achieved. This is consistent with the community based approach used in developing this plan. The plan reflects the concerted efforts of Huron residents to chart their future and identify numerous actions to achieve these goals.
- Huron County is fortunate to have many active community groups who played an important role in the development of this plan. They have provided input, direction and suggested actions to the various issues. It is anticipated that existing and new community groups will serve as advisory groups to assist with the implementation of this plan. This plan supports the continued efforts of the community and advisory groups to work for the betterment of Huron County.
- The County acknowledges its role in the Province's duty to consult with Aboriginal communities on planning matters. *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- 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. *(Amended by OPA 4)*
- For the determination of a complete application, the following additional information may be required to be submitted as part of a planning application. 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. (Minister's Modification 41)*

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

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
- a stormwater management plan (conceptual)

Other

- a traffic impact study
- an air, noise or vibration study when required by Provincial guidelines
- an Environmental Site Assessment when required by Provincial legislation
- Minimum Distance Separation requirements from existing livestock barns for proposed residential, recreational or other non-farm development
- Minimum Distance Separation 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.

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 general guidelines 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

Primary Settlement Areas <i>(full services existing or required)</i>		Secondary Settlement Areas <i>(partial services)</i>	Tertiary Settlement Areas <i>(private services)</i>			Lakeshore Residential Settlement Areas
PI	PII					
Clinton South of Clinton Exeter Goderich East of Goderich South of Goderich Seaforth South of Seaforth- Bridges Wingham North of Wingham East of Wingham	Bayfield North of Bayfield Blyth Brussels Centralia Huron Park Crediton Hensall Vanastra Zurich North of Grand Bend South of Lucknow	Belgrave Benmiller Brucefield Dashwood Egmondville Dungannon Saltford St. Joseph	Amberley Auburn Belfast Belmore Blake Bluevale Corbet Cranbrook Dublin Elimville Ethel Fordwich Gorrie Graham Survey	Greenway Harpurhey Henfryn Holmesville Hutton Heights Junctionville Kinburn Kingsbridge Kippen Kirton Lakelet Lochalsh Londesborough Lowertown	Molesworth Mount Carmel Nile Port Albert Shipka St. Columban St. Helens Varna Walton Whitechurch Winthrop Woodham Wroxeter	Lakeshore Residential (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 (2006 – 2031)

Municipality	1996	2001	2006	Proportion of Huron County Population 2006	Projection Period					Projected Population Increase	Increase as a Proportion of Huron County	% Population Increase 2006 - 2031
					2011	2016	2021	2026	2031			
Goderich	7553	7604	7563	12.7%	7917	8108	8325	8554	8733	1170	12.7%	15.5%
Morris-Turnberry	3504	3499	3403	5.8%	3562	3648	3746	3849	3929	526	5.7%	15.5%
ACW	5477	5411	5409	9.1%	5662	5799	5954	6118	6246	837	9.1%	15.5%
North Huron	5099	4984	5015	8.4%	5250	5376	5520	5672	5791	776	8.5%	15.5%
Howick	3685	3779	3882	6.3%	4064	4162	4273	4391	4482	600	6.5%	15.5%
Huron East	9937	9680	9310	16.1%	9745	9981	10248	10530	10750	1440	15.7%	15.5%
Central Huron	7862	7860	7641	13.0%	7998	8192	8411	8642	8823	1182	12.9%	15.5%
Bluewater	6874	6919	7120	11.7%	7453	7633	7837	8053	8221	1101	12.0%	15.5%
South Huron	10229	10019	9982	16.9%	10449	10701	10987	11290	11526	1544	16.8%	15.5%
Huron County	60220	59701	59325	100%	62100	63600	65300	67100	68500	9175	100%	15.5%

Table 3: Employment Projections (2006 – 2031)

Municipality	2001	2006	Employment Change 1996 - 2006	2006 Activity Rate	Projection Period					Projected Employment Increase	Increase as a Proportion of Huron County	% Employment Increase 2006 - 2031
					2011	2016	2021	2026	2031			
Goderich	3835	3705	-3.4%	49.0%	3878	3972	4078	4191	4278	573	11.7%	15.5%
Morris-Turnberry	1945	1910	-1.8%	56.1%	1999	2048	2102	2160	2205	295	6.0%	15.5%
ACW	2770	2835	2.3%	52.4%	2968	3039	3121	3207	3273	438	8.9%	15.5%
North Huron	2715	2840	4.6%	56.6%	2973	3045	3126	3212	3279	439	8.9%	15.5%
Howick	1900	2040	7.4%	52.6%	2135	2187	2245	2307	2355	315	6.4%	15.5%
Huron East	5180	5185	0.1%	55.7%	5428	5559	5707	5865	5987	802	16.3%	15.5%
Central Huron	4195	4210	0.4%	55.1%	4407	4513	4634	4762	4861	651	13.2%	15.5%
Bluewater	3645	3860	5.9%	54.2%	4041	4138	4249	4366	4457	597	12.1%	15.5%
South Huron	5270	5180	-1.7%	51.9%	5422	5553	5702	5859	5981	801	16.3%	15.5%
Huron County	31445	31775	1.0%	53.6%	33261	34065	34975	35939	36689	4914	100%	15.5%

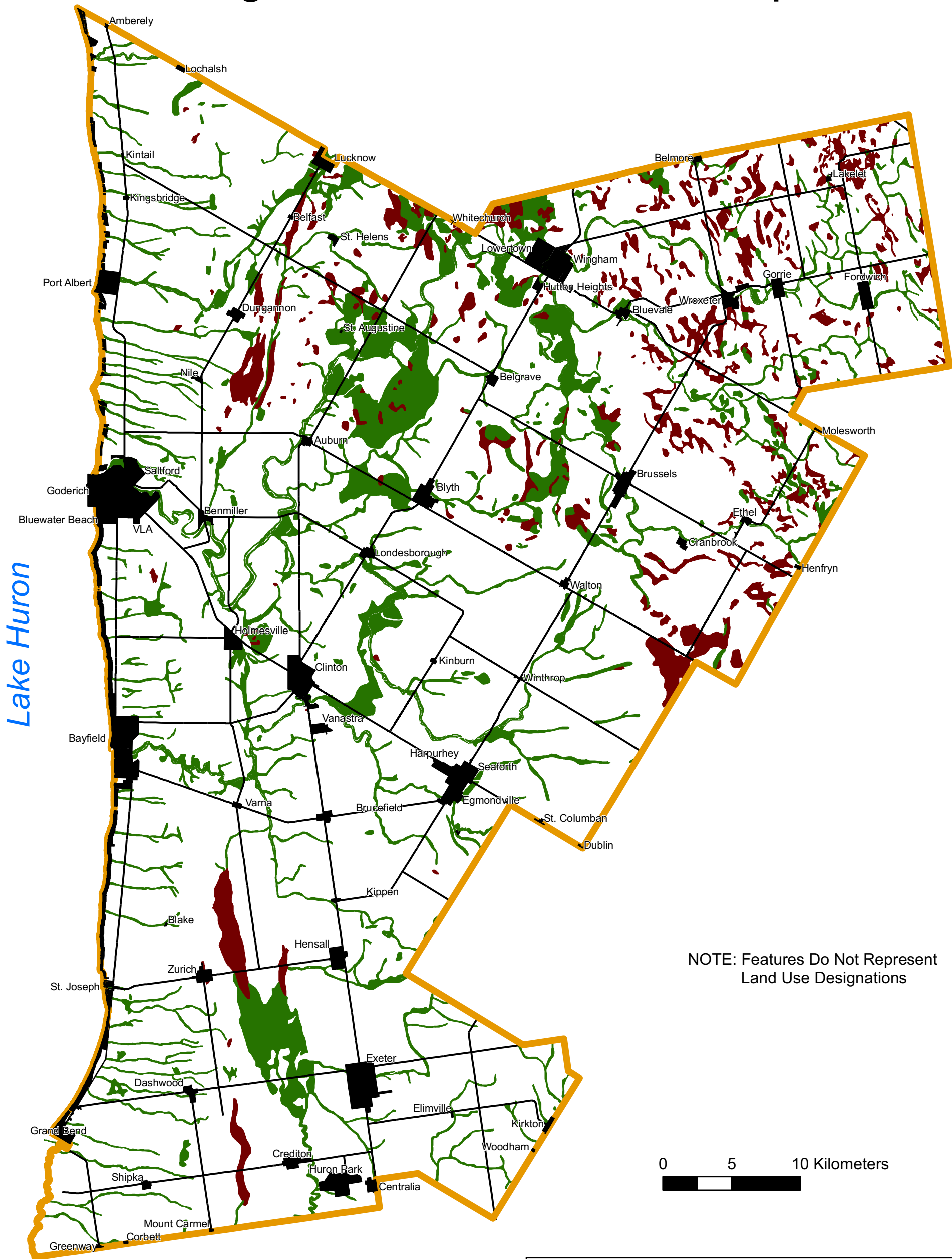
* Employment figures were provided by Statistics Canada and include experienced labour force 15 years and over for each respective municipality.

Table 4: Household Projections (2006 – 2031)

Municipality	2001	2006	Average Persons Per Household	Projection Period					Projected Household Increase	Increase as a Proportion of Huron County	% Household Increase 2006 - 2031
				2011	2016	2021	2026	2031			
Goderich	3306	3288	2.3	3442	3525	3619	3719	3797	509	14.4%	15.5%
Morris-Turnberry	1250	1215	2.8	1272	1303	1338	1375	1403	188	5.3%	15.5%
ACW	2004	2003	2.7	2097	2148	2205	2266	2313	310	8.8%	15.5%
North Huron	1994	2006	2.5	2100	2151	2208	2269	2316	310	8.8%	15.5%
Howick	1181	1213	3.2	1270	1301	1335	1372	1401	188	5.3%	15.5%
Huron East	3585	3448	2.7	3609	3697	3795	3900	3981	533	15.1%	15.5%
Central Huron	3023	2939	2.6	3076	3151	3235	3324	3393	454	12.9%	15.5%
Bluewater	2563	2637	2.7	2760	2827	2903	2983	3045	408	11.6%	15.5%
South Huron	4008	3993	2.5	4180	4281	4395	4516	4610	617	17.5%	15.5%
Huron County	22962	22817	2.6	23885	24462	25115	25808	26346	3529	100%	15.5%

Huron County Official Plan

Agricultural Resources Map



NOTE: Features Do Not Represent
Land Use Designations

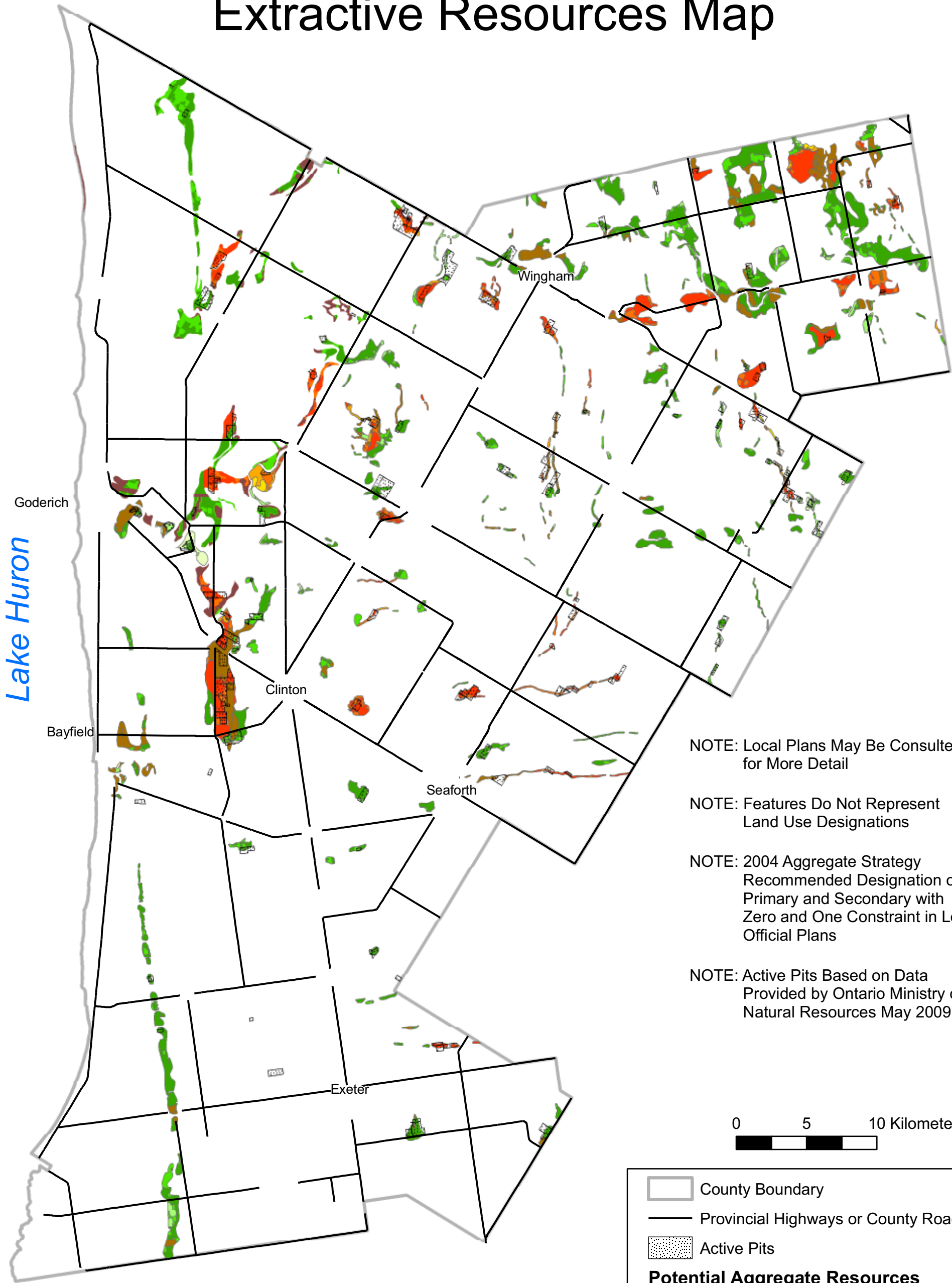
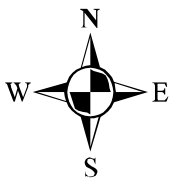
0 5 10 Kilometers

- Prime Agricultural Area
- Prime Agricultural Lands (Class 1 - 3)
- Non - Prime Agricultural Lands (Class 4 - 6)
- Organic
- Provincial Highways or County Roads



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Huron County Official Plan Mineral Aggregate Extractive Resources Map



NOTE: Local Plans May Be Consulted for More Detail

NOTE: Features Do Not Represent Land Use Designations

NOTE: 2004 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 May 2009



- County Boundary
- Provincial Highways or County Roads
- Active Pits

Potential Aggregate Resources

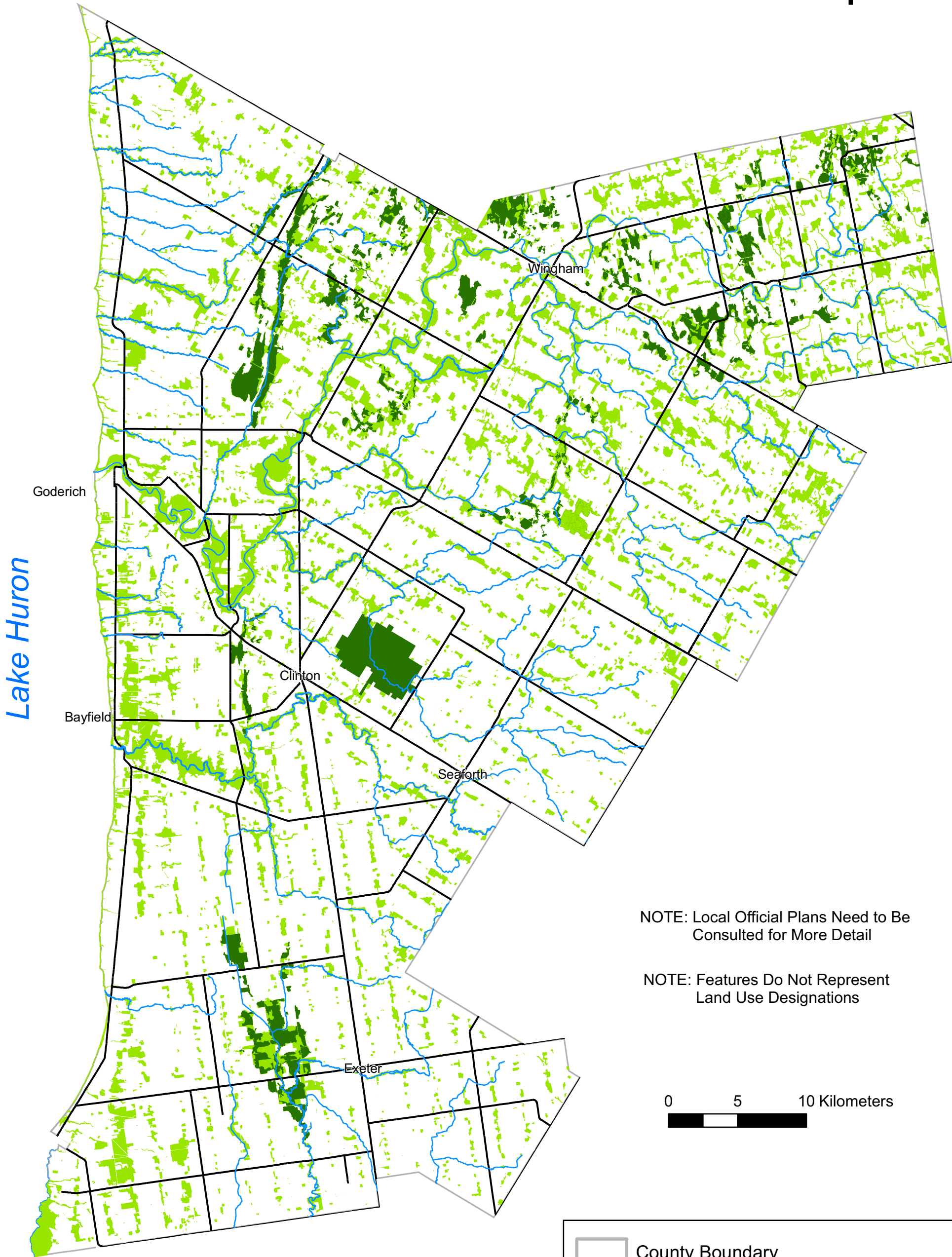
- Primary - No Constraints
- Primary - 1 Constraint
- Secondary - No Constraints
- Secondary - 1 Constraint
- Other Potential Resources



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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

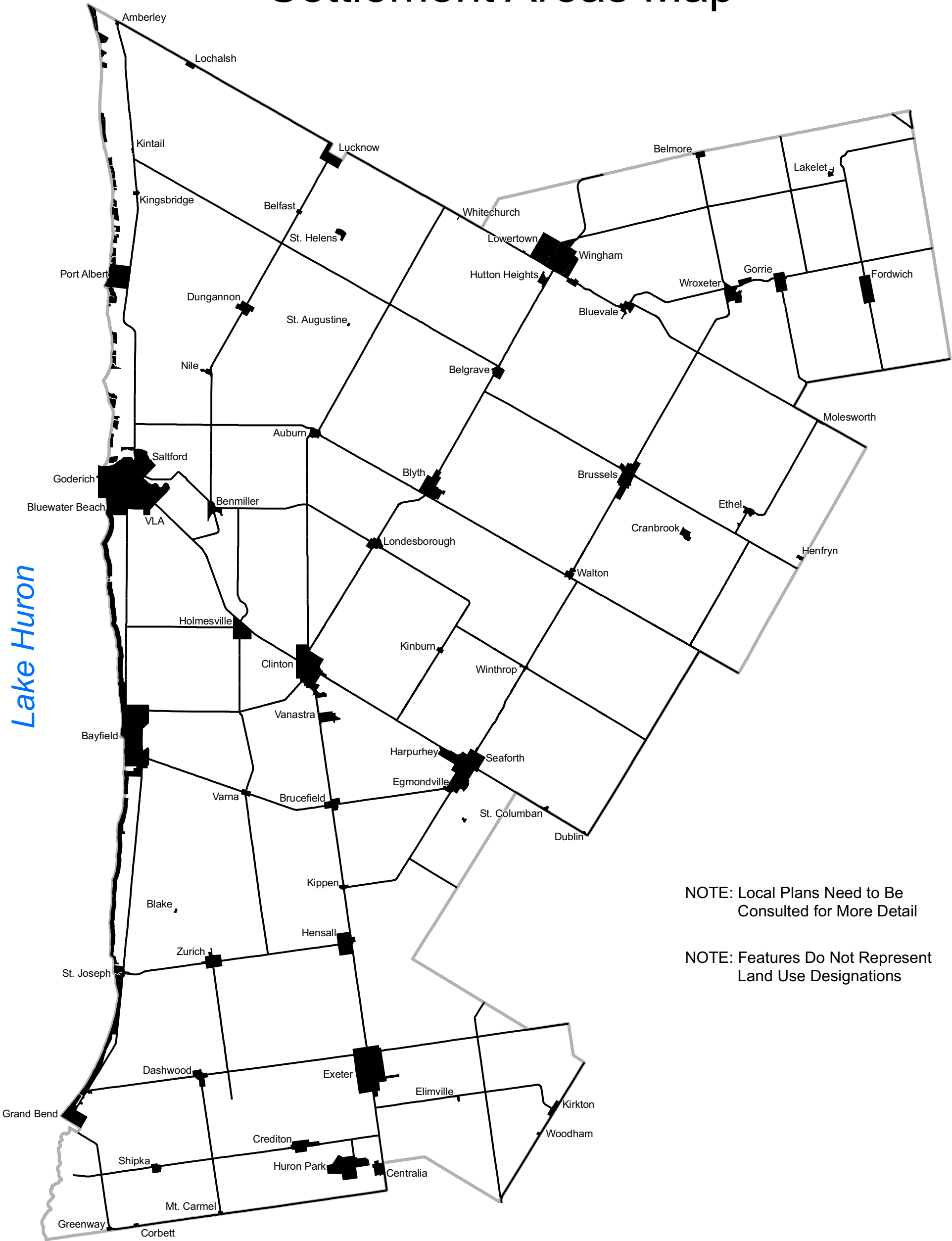
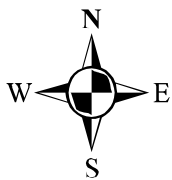


- County Boundary
- Natural Environment - Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Natural Environment - All Other Features
- Major Watercourses
- Provincial Highways or County Roads



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Huron County Official Plan Settlement Areas Map



NOTE: Local Plans Need to Be
Consulted for More Detail

NOTE: Features Do Not Represent
Land Use Designations



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- Provincial Highways or County Roads
- Settlement Areas
- County Boundary

Huron County Official Plan Watershed Resources Map

