



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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To: Mayor and Members of South Huron Committee of the Whole
 From: Celina McIntosh, Planner & Denise Van Amersfoort, Manager of Planning
 Date: October 8, 2024
 RE: **South Huron Official Plan Five Year Review – Second Draft**

This report has been prepared for the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 15, 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- Receive the second draft of the revised Official Plan;
- Direct staff on the mapping changes they wish to see in the settlement areas of Crediton and Greater Grand Bend for the final draft; and
- Recommend that correspondence be sent to Lambton Shores Council to solicit feedback on the draft Official Plan Review as a partner municipality; and
- Recommend that Council direct staff to schedule the statutory Public Meeting for the purpose of obtaining public feedback regarding the proposed Official Plan Amendment for December 2024 or January 2025.

BACKGROUND

Council initiated the Five Year Review of the South Huron Official Plan on March 27, 2024. Table 1 outlines for the Committee the project timeline in terms of milestones achieved to date and what further is required for completion.

Table 1: Official Plan Review Project Timeline

Milestone	Timing
Official Plan Review commenced	February 2024
Section 26 Meeting	Held in March
Community Tables held to consult with the public	Held in April, May and June
Committee of the Whole Meeting to discuss potential amendment(s) for first draft based on public input and staff comments	Held in June
First Draft of Official Plan	Received by Council in August and subsequently provided to the public
Public Open Houses to provide public with opportunity to ask questions regarding first draft	Held in August and September
Committee of the Whole Meeting to discuss second draft	October 15 th , 2024
Statutory Public Meeting	Tentatively December 2024 or January 2025
Adoption of Official Plan Amendment by South Huron	Tentatively January 2025

Approval of Official Plan Amendment by Huron County	Tentatively March 2025
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CONSULTATION AND COMMENTS RECEIVED TO DATE

Three public open house sessions were held following release of the first draft to provide the public with an opportunity to review and ask questions. These sessions were well-attended, with just under 100 participants coming to all three combined. Prioritizing protecting agricultural lands from incompatible development remained a key message received from open house participants. Other observations were made about the changing role of public participation within the planning process that has been observed in recent years. Staff acknowledge that the role of public participation in the planning process has been effectively limited by legislation passed at the provincial level; specifically, those changes limiting the right of appeal for neighbours/residents. While this does not have direct consequences for the Official Plan Review, it is worth noting and acknowledging that this has been felt by South Huron residents.

Numerous written submissions and questions have been received from residents and agencies regarding the first draft. Written submissions, as well as staff comments, are summarized in Table 2 below. Questions received to date have been responded to by staff directly.

Table 2: Summary of Written Submissions

Individual/Agency	Comment(s)	Staff response
Lake Huron & Elgin Area Primary Water Supply Systems	<p>Consider adding text to further recognize significance of the Lake Huron surface water intake for the Lake Huron Water Treatment Plant and importance of protecting drinking water source protection through a multi-barrier approach.</p> <p>Identify Port Blake Park as being situated on lands owned by the Lake Huron Primary Water Supply System.</p> <p>Consider replacing “water and sewage treatment facilities” with “water, wastewater, and stormwater treatment, pumping and storage facilities”</p> <p>Designate Exeter-Hensall Reservoir and Pumping Station as Community Facility</p>	<p>Comments incorporated into second draft. Exeter-Hensall Reservoir and Pumping Station is already designated Community Facility.</p>
K. Bagier	<p>Consider implementing the recommendations of the former Climate Change Advisory Committee into the Official Plan.</p> <p>Consider expanding By-law 28-2013 (County of Huron’s Tree Preservation By-law) to further regulate the destruction of trees in South Huron.</p>	<p>Climate change policies incorporated where appropriate throughout document in first draft.</p>
Three Fires Group on behalf of Chippewas of	<p>Satisfied with initial consultation regarding proposed changes to document; no further recommendations.</p>	

Kettle and Stony Point First Nation		
Numerous Greater Grand Bend residents	<p>Not in support of further intensification within the existing settlement area boundaries in Greater Grand Bend. Concern with lack of public service facilities (recreation, access to shoreline, community facilities, etc) in the area. Concerns relating to traffic congestion.</p> <p>*Written thanks for accommodating the seasonal residents with the timing of the Open House was provided from a representative of Oakwood Park.</p>	<p>No changes as it pertains to policies pertaining to existing development. Intensification only permitted on lands on full water and sewer services.</p>
B. Weber	Support provided for continued strong Natural Environment policies west of Highway 21 in Greater Grand Bend.	
Zelinka Priamo Ltd. on behalf of Medway Homes	Formal request for 70477 Mollard Line to be brought into the Greater Grand Bend Settlement Area	Lands are proposed to be brought into settlement area as per first draft.
L. Mader	<p>Support provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning for complete communities within settlement area boundaries; - Design elements which mitigate the impacts of climate change; and - Connectivity between natural environment spaces and features. 	
Baker Planning Group on behalf of M. Stephan	In objection to the proposed removal of the property legally described as Plan 210 PT BLK B and Stephen CON 6 PT LOT 12 from the Crediton settlement area boundary.	Amended proposal presented to Council as part of second draft.
Ministry of Transportation	Generally not supportive of specific Highway Commercial designation along Highway 21. Seeking broader language that is less prescriptive to ensure that proposals can be evaluated from a traffic perspective on a case by case basis.	Shift in second draft to designating vacant lands along Highway 21 as 'Urban' as opposed to specifying land use, with further policy language provided.
Watson & Associates on behalf of Avon Maitland District School Board	<p>Stephen Central Public School has capacity for growth, while Exeter Elementary is projected to exceed capacity in next five years. South Huron District High School has sufficient space to accommodate future growth in its student population.</p> <p>Supportive of directing residential growth to serviced settlement areas and of planning which allows for active transportation networks between home(s) and school.</p>	

2024 PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

Following receipt of the first draft of the revised Official Plan by Council, the province of Ontario announced that the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) will come into effect October 20th, 2024. This will replace the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement. Accordingly, the second draft of the Official Plan must respond to the various policy changes contained within the new PPS. The key changes to highlight to the Committee include:

Planning for People and Homes

- (Policy 2.1.1) Provides planning authorities to base population and employment growth forecasts on Ontario Population Projects published by the ministry of Finance and may modify these projections as appropriate. South Huron is well positioned to respond to this direction through incorporation of the 2024 Huron County Population and Housing Projections which has already been incorporated into the draft Official Plan to model the municipality's growth scenario.
- (Policy 2.1.3) Requires that sufficient land be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet the projected needs for a time horizon of at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years. Planning for infrastructure, public service facilities, strategic growth areas, and employment areas may extend beyond this time horizon. The second draft responds to this direction through ensuring sufficient land base is available for housing in South Huron and ensuring that these lands are used efficiently through minimum density requirements. The second draft responds to planning for efficient infrastructure beyond the 30 year horizon through the proposed expansion of the Greater Grand Bend settlement area on the east side of Highway 21 based on the Environmental Assessment completed by South Huron to support sanitary services expanding in this direction.

Housing

- (Policy 2.2.1b) Requires planning authorities to permit and facilitate all housing options including additional needs housing and all types of residential intensification, including the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional sites for residential development. While the first draft of the Official Plan creates opportunities for mixed uses within Exeter's historic core, additional streamlining for conversion of churches to residential uses and permitting additional needs housing in Community Facility designations has been provided.
- (Policy 2.2.1c) Requires planning authorities to promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure, and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation. This has been well-established through the utilization of the Water and Wasterwater Master Plan as a guide to direct where settlement area modifications shall occur in the revised Official Plan.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

- Removal of the requirement for a comprehensive review at the time of a settlement area boundary expansion. Rather, Policy 2.3.2.1 now directs that in identifying a new settlement area or allowing a new settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities "shall consider" a list of factors (many of which were previously addressed in comprehensive reviews), such as: need, capacity in existing/planned infrastructure and public service facilities, avoiding prime agricultural lands, compliance with minimum distance separation, avoiding impacts on the agricultural system, and whether expansion provides for phased progression of urban development. While less rigorous, this direction continues to underscore the importance

of planning for growth in a coordinated fashion and specifically aligning settlement area boundary expansions with sufficient infrastructure capacity and avoiding impacts on agriculture. “Public service facilities” as defined now includes schools, hospitals, community recreation facilities, and childcare. This will require increased coordination between the County and various partners such as healthcare alliances, school board(s), childcare providers, local municipalities, etc. when it comes to considering potential settlement area boundary expansions.

Employment

- The 2024 PPS defines employment areas “those areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office and ancillary facilities.” Institutional and commercial uses, including retail and offices not associated with primary employment uses above, are excluded from being considered employment lands.
- (Policy 2.8.1.1(e)) Planning authorities are now required to promote economic development by addressing land use compatibility adjacent to employment areas by providing an adequate transition to sensitive land uses.
- Policy 2.8.2.5 significantly modifies the 2020 PPS policies related to the removal of lands from employment areas. 2024 PPS permits planning authorities to remove lands from employment areas at any time (rather than through a Municipal Comprehensive Review), only where it has been demonstrated that the land is not required for employment area uses over the long term and that the proposed use would not negatively impact the viability of the employment area.

Sewage, Water and Stormwater

- (Policy 3.6.1(a)) Planning for sewage and water shall accommodate forecasted growth in a timely manner that promotes the efficient use and optimization of existing municipal sewage services and municipal water services, as well as existing private communal sewage services and private communal water services.
- Policy 3.6.1(b) makes reference to ensuring that services are provided in a manner that protects the quantity and quality of water and aligns with comprehensive municipal planning for these services where applicable.
- Policy 3.6.1(d) requires the integration of servicing and land use considerations at all stages of the planning process, including consideration of opportunities to allocate and reallocate, if necessary, the unused system capacity of municipal water services and municipal sewage services to support the efficient use of these services to meet current and projected needs for an increased housing supply.
- Policy 3.6.2 adds a reference to include both centralized servicing systems and decentralized servicing systems to the policy for municipal sewage and water services. Policy 3.6.4 contains provisions that would allow individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services in certain circumstances, and requires planning authorities to assess the long-term impacts of individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services at the time of the official plan review or update.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES FOLLOWING FIRST DRAFT

The following is a list of text changes contained within the second draft:

- Provision of a land acknowledgement with commitment to meaningful engagement with indigenous communities in accordance with provincial guidance and local practices.

- Providing direction for commercial-scale energy projects to be outside of prime agricultural lands where possible. Where not possible, impacts to the agricultural system must be addressed.
- Permitting ground-mounted solar facilities as an on-farm diversified use, or accessory to the primary residential uses on AG4 properties.
- Permitting farm-scale energy infrastructure (i.e. non-commercial scale wind turbines, anaerobic digestors for agricultural source materials) as agriculture related uses.
- Providing direction for waterbodies resulting from aggregate extraction and identifying as same. Recognizing these waterbodies as vulnerable surface and groundwater features. Restricting development and site alteration until demonstrating that related hydrologic functions will be protected, improved or restored. Encouraging best practices with respect to water quality.
- Clarifying that Port Blake Park is part of the Lake Huron Elgin Area Water Supply complex.
- Acknowledging in public participation policies that consensus concerning planning applications is a desirable goal, though not possible in every instance.
- Advising applicants to consult early with local Indigenous communities when undertaking an archaeological assessment as part of a complete planning applications. Confirming that assessment standards of local communities shall apply.
- Promoting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate.

MAPPING DIRECTION

Staff will review all Settlement Area mapping changes with Committee; in general, proposed changes have been well received. Public feedback was received with respect to CREDITON and Greater Grand Bend; staff are seeking specific direction from the Committee as it pertains to mapping changes in these settlement areas to move towards a final draft of the revised Official Plan.

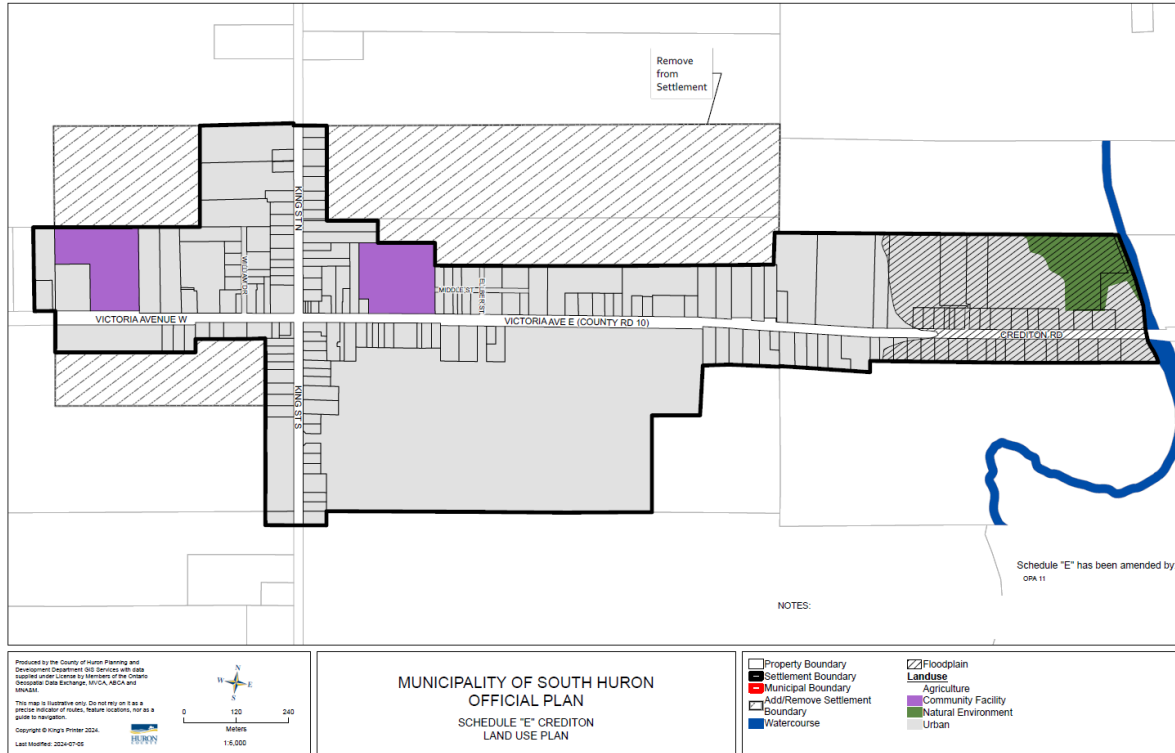
CREDITON

Staff have met with the landowner who submitted an objection regarding the proposed removal of the lands legally described as Stephen CON 6 PT LOT 12 and Plan 210 PT BLK B from the CREDITON settlement area. At this time, staff are presenting the Committee with a number of potential options on how to proceed forward with these lands.

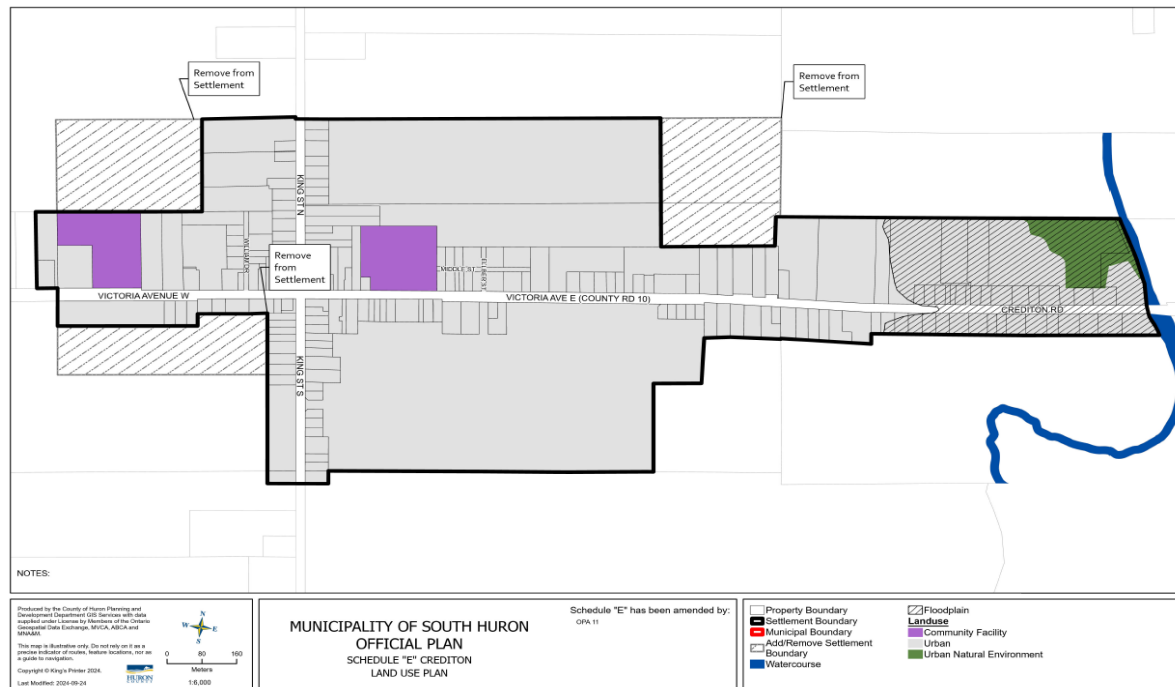
Staff's position is that the size of the CREDITON Settlement Area needs to be reduced to align with growth projections and the existing servicing design. There have been approximately 15 new units established in CREDITON since 2010 (an average of 1 unit per year). The settlement area presently has approximately 200 acres of future development lands which far exceeds the PPS direction to designate for growth within but not beyond a 30 year planning horizon; this is considered a legacy issue and is not entirely uncommon. During the 2014 Review of the South Huron Official Plan, significant reductions to the secondary and tertiary settlement areas occurred, effectively 'right-sizing' these spaces for future growth. The same exercise is now being applied to Huron Park, CREDITON and Centralia; Huron Park and Centralia have reasonable opportunities for future growth, infilling and rounding out while CREDITON has an excess. It is important to be transparent with respect to anticipated future growth, which lands are and are not included within existing servicing designs, as this information can influence investment decisions.

In an effort to respond to concerns regarding complete de-designation of the lands at the north-east, staff are willing to explore options for a reduced de-designation but would note, the servicing constraints will need to be conveyed to ensure that any future landowner is aware. The de-designation options were designed based on a concept plan submitted by the owner with consideration of future road connections (as Eilbler Street is undersized), economic viability (e.g. double-sided development) and the location of servicing infrastructure (namely, the Crediton Pumping Station).

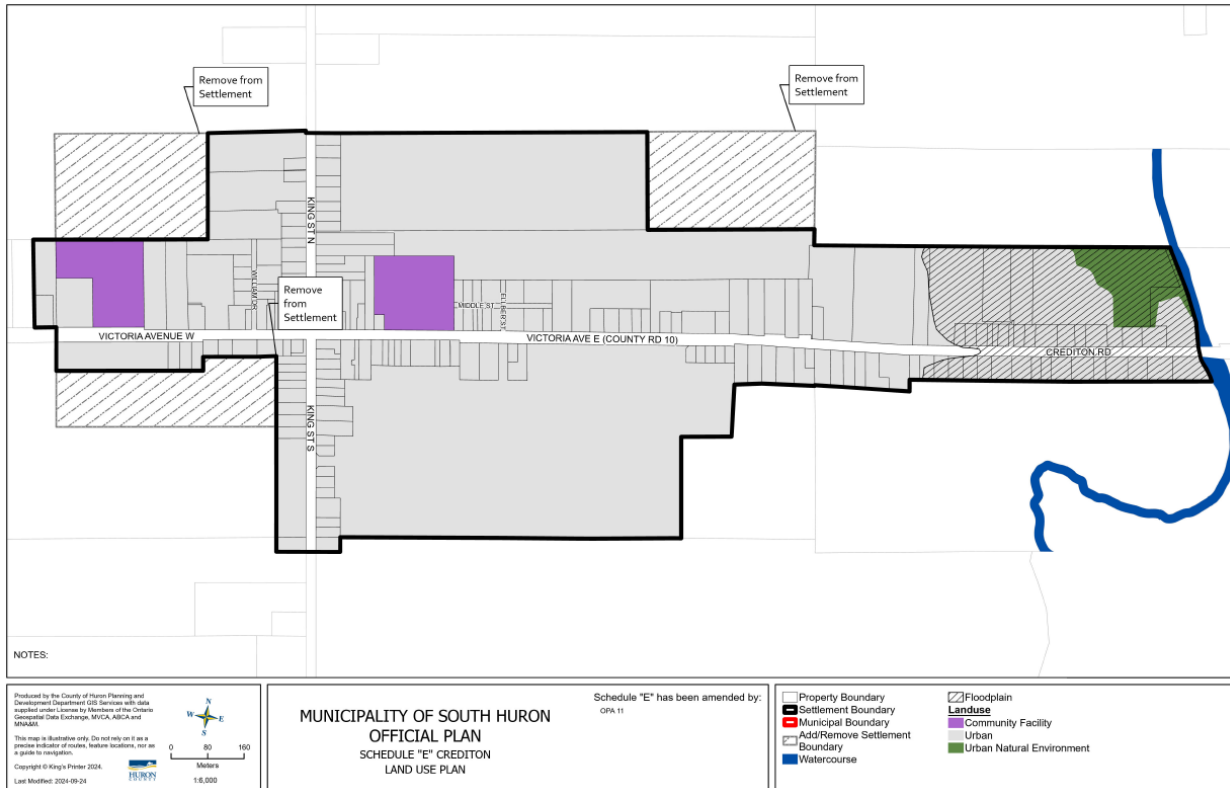
Option A: Proceed as originally proposed (remove entire properties from settlement area)



Option B: Remove east portions of properties from settlement area (approximately 30 acres)



Option C: Remove east portion of north property from settlement area (approximately 17 acres)



Greater Grand Bend Settlement Area

Additional consultation has taken place with landowners, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Lambton Shores staff and South Huron staff as it pertains to the proposed settlement area boundary adjustments for Greater Grand Bend. At this time staff are recommending reducing the lands proposed to be designated 'Residential' at 70335 Mollard Line to the north third of the property based on comments received by neighbouring landowners and the landowner. This will continue to allow for cross-border servicing opportunities between South Huron and Lambton Shores as intended in the first draft.

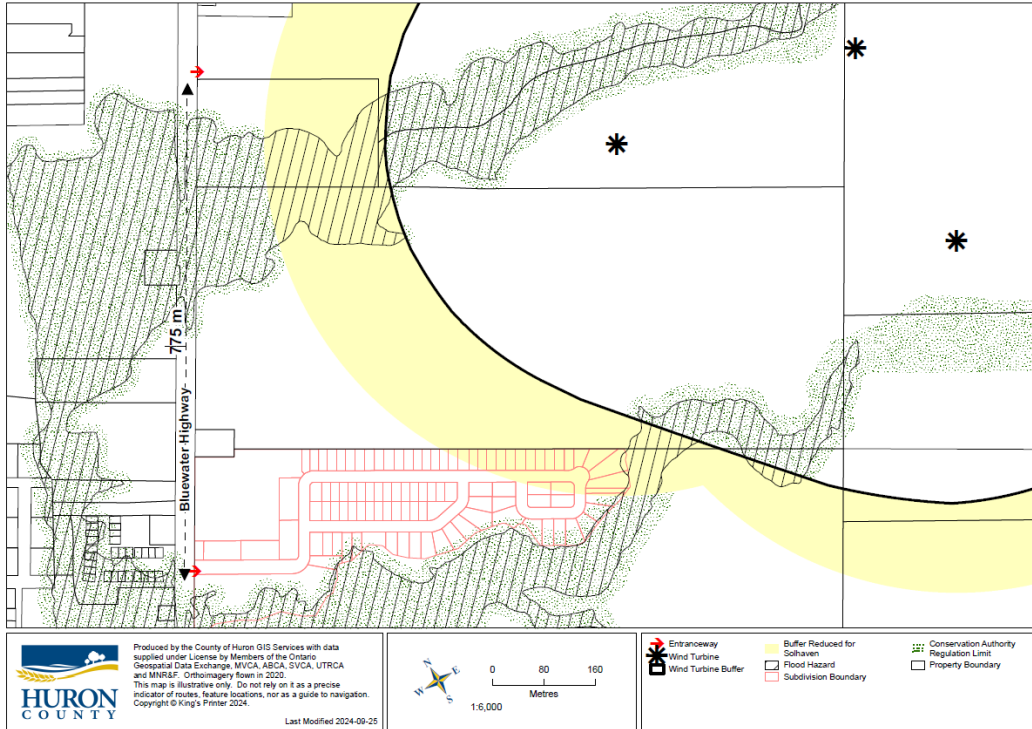
It is recommended that the area north of Sol Haven be expanded as an 'Urban Growth Area' but not be designated for a specific land use (ie. Residential, Highway Commercial). This is in response to comments from the Ministry of Transportation in that the spacing between entrances is required to be a minimum of 800 metres but that the Ministry is unable to be supportive of specific land use designations until a proposed use with a supportive Traffic Impact Study is available. This means that at the time of development, an Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment would be required.

Figure 1: Outline of Proposed Urban Growth Area (in red)

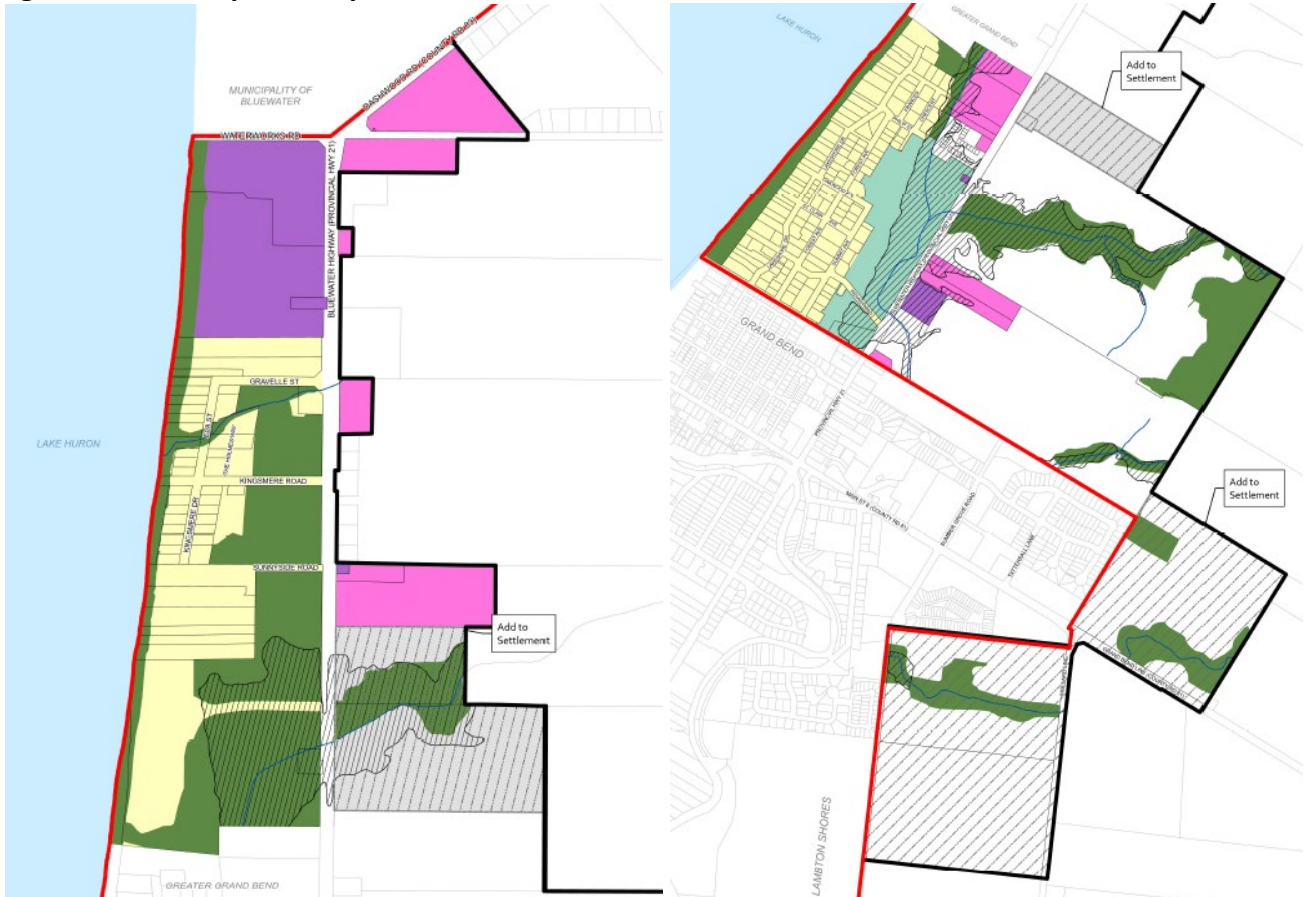


The benefit to this 'Urban Growth Area' designation is that it will align with infrastructure planning investments (ie. the Environmental Assessment to allow for the extension of the Grand Bend sanitary sewer to the north) and will prohibit further encroachment of commercial scale wind turbines on the Greater Grand Bend Settlement Area. The Port Blake Planning Area was not recognized during the establishment of the current wind turbines which has had a negative impact on future growth potential of the area (at least in the short term). In addition to the impacts of the wind turbines, there is also a significant natural hazard in the area to be designated Urban so the overall acreage for development is reduced (see Figure 2). The proposed Urban Growth Area extends to the south edge of the Home Hardware property (which is already within the Settlement Area as a result of historic, scattered development along Highway 21).

Figure 2: Factors Affecting Growth Potential



Figures 3 & 4: Proposed expansion for the Greater Grand Bend Settlement Area



NEXT STEPS

Following direction received at the Committee of the Whole meeting, staff will finalize the mapping and continue with minor edits for the final draft of the document. Any major changes in the final draft will be noted for Council at the time of the public meeting. Staff recommend that direction be provided to schedule the public meeting to ensure that the project remains on track for completion in early 2025.

To summarize, it is recommended that the Committee:

- Receive the second draft of the revised Official Plan;
- Direct staff on mapping changes for the settlement areas of Crediton and Greater Grand Bend;
- Direct staff to send correspondence to the Municipality of Lambton Shores to solicit input; and
- Recommend that Council direct staff to schedule the statutory Public Meeting for the purpose of obtaining public feedback regarding the proposed Official Plan Amendment for December 2024 or January 2025.

Sincerely,

'Original signed by'

Celina McIntosh, Planner

'Original signed by'

Denise Van Amersfoort, Manager of Planning