

1 . I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Norfolk County Official Plan (the Plan) provides the essential tool to enhance future growth, development and change in the County and to create the community envisioned by Norfolk's residents. This Plan responds to the uncertain nature of the future through clear and resilient principles and policies. It ensures that the planning framework and tools are in place to make certain that Norfolk County remains a healthy and successful community with a strong economy, a diverse natural environment, and a great place to live.

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

Norfolk County (the County) was established on January 1, 2001, and consists of the western portion of the restructured Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk. The creation of Norfolk County brought together the Townships of Norfolk and Delhi, the Town of Simcoe, and the westerly portion of the City of Nanticoke. Norfolk County forms part of the southern coast of Ontario on Lake Erie, and generally abuts Haldimand County to the east, Brant and Oxford Counties to the north and Elgin County to the west.

In mid-June 2002, Norfolk County began a process to prepare a new Official Plan. The new Official Plan not only consolidates and replaces the five official plans in effect at the time of the amalgamation of the County, but also incorporates the results of a comprehensive visioning and strategic planning exercise to address a number of recent issues and new challenges facing the County. The Plan guides Council in the consideration of their responsibilities, and provides direction and certainty to the citizens and businesses of Norfolk County.

1.2 BASIS FOR THE OFFICIAL PLAN

The basis for the Official Plan is outlined as follows:

- a) This Plan is premised on sustainability principles, which rose out of the visioning and strategic planning sessions that initiated the process. The principles of sustainability applied to this Plan ensure an interconnected and balanced approach to public policy, focussing on efforts to ensure continued economic vitality, maintain healthy communities and enhance the County's natural heritage.

- b) This Plan is based on background information and analysis relating to growth management including transportation, housing, community facilities and servicing; land use; agriculture; economic development; commercial and industrial activities; built heritage and the natural environment. This information was developed and presented in background reports including the County's vision document entitled *Norfolk County in 2026 – A Scenario*, as well as the Strategic Plan prepared in support of the Official Plan, the Issues and Options Report, the Conversion of Seasonal to Permanent Residences - Options and Analysis Report, the Population and Employment Projections Report, the Directions Report, and the Growth Strategy.
- c) This Plan is based on the results of a comprehensive visioning, strategic planning and public consultation program involving Norfolk County residents early in the process, and providing residents and other stakeholders with the opportunity to review and comment on the background reports and draft versions of this Plan. Public consultation was undertaken during each phase of the development of the Plan and included such consultation techniques as calls for submissions, numerous local community forums, County-wide community forums and conferences, community information sessions and formal public meetings.
- d) This Plan is based on a 20-year planning period to the year 2026. However, in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*, the County will review the Plan at a minimum of 5-year intervals to determine if amendments are required.
- e) As the basis for development and growth policies, County Council has endorsed a 20-year population target of approximately 74,300 (2026), which is based on the reference population projection presented in the Growth Strategy and the Population and Employment Projections Report. This population target is designed to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances and conditions. A more conservative approach has been used to assess the financial implications of expected population changes in order to make certain that the County's financial policies are appropriate and ensure financial sustainability.
- f) Land that is designated for development, but currently vacant in the existing Urban Areas, represents a logical location for new development within the County and is adequate to meet the anticipated demand for future development. Demand for additional land designated for urban development may be evaluated at the time of a review of this Plan.
- g) This Plan encourages orderly development, redevelopment, infill and intensification and discourages the undue extension of municipal services and expansion of urban boundaries.
- h) This Plan promotes the maintenance, improvement and conservation of the built heritage of the Downtown Areas and main streets of Simcoe, Port Dover, Delhi, Waterford and Port Rowan as the predominant social, cultural and community focuses of the County. This Plan

further promotes these areas as unique mixed commercial, office, residential areas that act as commercial, cultural, recreational and entertainment focal points in the County.

- i) This Plan supports minor infilling within the Hamlet Areas, subject to servicing and environmental appropriateness in order to maintain and enhance these rural communities as support centres for rural and agricultural activities.
- j) This Plan promotes and protects the agricultural character and economy of the County by providing for the continued viability of agricultural areas, the agricultural industry, and agricultural communities. This will be accomplished in part through the minimization of land use conflicts and the prevention of non-agricultural urban uses outside of the Urban Areas. Furthermore, the Plan seeks to minimize the expansion of urban uses onto prime agricultural land.
- k) This Plan provides the basis for the development of secondary plans to address growth and development issues unique to specific areas of the County, such as the lakeshore area and the Urban Areas.
- l) Land subject to environmental hazards and/or physical limitations such as poor drainage, organic soils, flood susceptibility, erosion, and steep slopes are protected in order to preserve and conserve the interconnected features of the natural environment and to avoid the potential for loss of life and economic investment.
- m) This Plan is based on ensuring the protection, enhancement, diversification and connectivity of Norfolk's Natural Heritage Features, natural heritage functions, and species habitat, as well as the protection of water quality and quantity.
- n) This Plan protects Norfolk's cultural heritage through policies designed to maintain and enhance the County's built heritage resources, scenic landscapes and rural and small-town character.
- o) The policies of this Plan have been developed within the context of the Provincial Policy Statement, and relevant Provincial legislation.

1.3 ORGANIZATION & APPROACH

This Plan functions as both a broad growth management and local land use policy plan, dealing with a wide range of environments including Urban Areas, Hamlet Areas, Agricultural Areas, Resort Areas, the Lake Erie shoreline and natural resources, and heritage features.

This Plan has several interrelated components, which must be read together in order to determine those components and policies that have an impact on any land within Norfolk County.

The Plan promotes sustainable development, by recognizing the interconnected nature of healthy communities, economic vitality and a protected natural environment, and the relationship of these matters to growth management and

land use planning. The goals, objectives, and policies of the Plan, while divided into distinct sections, represent a balanced approach to planning, designed to promote the vital link between community, economy and environment.

The Plan provides a policy framework to manage the growth and development of the County to ensure a sustainable living environment that meets the needs of the community over a 20-year planning timeframe. It is recognized, in the policies of this Plan, however, that some planning activities require a much longer view than the 20-year horizon permitted by Provincial policy. The Plan promotes the logical, efficient and cost effective distribution of land uses and services to safeguard the health, convenience and economic well-being of residents, businesses and visitors.

All sections and schedules of the Part I – The Primary Plan and Part II – the Secondary Plans constitute the Official Plan for Norfolk County. Part I - The Primary Plan is organized into ten sections:

- Section 1:** *Introduction*, is for information purposes. It contains context to the Plan and provides the bases upon which it was prepared. Section 1 is not considered an operative part of the Plan because it does not provide policy guidance or direction.
- Section 2:** *Norfolk County in 2026 – A Scenario*, describes the purpose and long-term goals and objectives for the County, based on the strategic directions from the County’s vision document *Norfolk County in 2026 – A Scenario*. The goals and objectives provide the framework within which the policies of the Plan have been prepared. The goals and objectives should be read to understand the intent behind the policies.
- Section 3:** *Managing Growth*, provides detailed policies related to the community structure, settlement area structure, planned function of the community components of the County, and growth management.
- Section 4:** *Managing Land Use*, provides the land use designations and related detailed policies.
- Section 5:** *Ensuring Economic Vitality*, provides policies related to economic development, including tourism, agriculture, natural resources and employment/industrial policies.
- Section 6:** *Sustainable Natural Heritage*, provides policies on watershed management, water resource policies, natural heritage and air quality.
- Section 7:** *Maintaining Healthy Communities*, provides detailed policies related to public services, community design, recreation, cultural heritage and housing.
- Section 8:** *Networks and Infrastructure*, provides policies regarding networks, corridors and facilities that can be generally described as physical infrastructure. This Section discusses the water and

sanitary sewage systems, the transportation networks, as well as other networks, corridors and facilities that help define the County's physical structure.

Section 9: *Implementation and Monitoring*, describes the mechanisms and processes to implement the policies in Sections 3 through 8.

Section 10: *Schedules*, contains the schedules that are described in the policies and enhance an understanding of the Plan as follows:

Schedule "A" – Community Structure

Schedule "B" – Land Use

Schedule "C" – Natural Heritage & Resources

Schedule "D" – Water Resources

Schedule "E" – Transportation

Appendix "A": *Natural Areas*, contains the names of the Natural Areas, corresponding to the numbered areas on Schedule "C" to the Plan. Appendix "A" is for information purposes and is not an operative part of the Plan because it does not provide policy guidance or direction.

Norfolk County may prepare Secondary Plans to provide more detailed growth and development policies for specific areas within the County. These Secondary Plans will form part of the Official Plan and will be contained in Part II – The Secondary Plans