

2. NORFOLK COUNTY IN 2026 – A SCENARIO

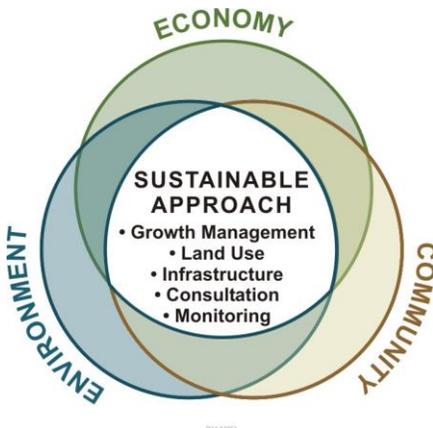
The planning framework and policies of this Plan are based on the goals and objectives included in this Section which were identified and refined based on the ideas and images collected from hundreds of Norfolk residents. This consultation process included the visioning process, which produced *Norfolk County in 2026 – A Scenario*, and the strategic planning process, which produced the Strategic Plan used to organize the goals and objectives of this Plan.

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

The Norfolk County Official Plan is the primary land use planning tool used to manage growth and development within the County to the year 2026. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a policy framework to guide economic, environmental and social decisions that have implications for the use of land. The County Official Plan is also expected to provide a guide to senior levels of government and other public agencies in the preparation of plans having an impact on Norfolk County. Private interests shall also be guided by the land use and development policies of this Plan.

The purpose of the Official Plan is to:

- a) Provide an overall policy framework to guide and manage the maintenance, rehabilitation, growth and development of Norfolk County in order to ensure a sustainable living environment that meets the needs of the community over a 20-year planning horizon. It is recognized, however, that there are certain very long-term planning goals set out in this Plan that may take longer than 20 years to achieve.
- b) Promote the orderly growth and economic development of Norfolk County through the logical, efficient and cost effective distribution of land uses that will safeguard the health, convenience and economic well-being of residents, businesses and visitors.
- c) Reduce uncertainty in the public and private sectors regarding future development by establishing clear development principles and policies, and land use designations.
- d) Provide guidance to Council in determining the appropriate future actions relating to physical change, development and improvement within the County.



- e) Recognize the financial position of the County and promote a satisfactory, long-term balance in assessment and, to the extent possible, ensure the financial sustainability of the County.
- f) Establish goals, objectives and policies to: reconcile existing conditions; maintain the ability of the County to provide appropriate services; and respond to local aspirations in light of variables such as population and economic change.
- g) Define the measures and means of implementing, monitoring, reviewing and updating the policies and schedules of this Plan, including such matters as amendments to this Plan, secondary plans, community improvement plans, the Zoning By-law, plans of subdivision and condominium, consents to sever land, site plan control, infrastructure and servicing.
- h) In conjunction with adjacent municipalities and other authorities, assist in coordinating and integrating planning activities with cross-jurisdictional implications, such as ecosystem, shoreline and watershed planning; natural heritage planning; management of resources; transportation and infrastructure planning; regional economic development; air and water quality monitoring; and waste management.

2.2 THE COUNTY PLANNING VISION

In August of 2003, County Council adopted “*Norfolk County in 2026 – A Scenario*”, which provides a broad vision for the long-term planning and development of Norfolk County. The document is based on a sophisticated and extensive grass-roots visioning and public consultation process. Additionally, input was sought from the Province, public authorities, stakeholders and non-governmental organizations. The vision document highlights that:

“Norfolk County strives to balance a commitment to the land and emerging opportunities for growth and development.”

The broad vision was followed-up with a detailed Strategic Plan document, which was adopted by County Council in January of 2004. The Strategic Plan prepared in support of this Plan, identifies six strategic themes that form the foundation for public planning policy goals and objectives, as defined in this Plan. These six themes are:

- a) A stronger, more diversified economy;
- b) Protecting and improving the natural environment;
- c) Maintaining and enhancing the rural and small town character;
- d) Maintaining a high quality of life;
- e) Upgrading and expanding crucial infrastructure; and
- f) A well governed, well planned and sustainable County.

Achieving *Norfolk County in 2026 – A Scenario* and the Strategic Plan will require a careful balance amongst progressive economic development objectives,

the imperative to conserve and enhance natural heritage, the need to ensure strength in agriculture, and the maintenance of healthy and vibrant communities. Based on the principles of sustainability, the following goals and objectives will help to achieve the strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan prepared in support of this Plan.

2.3 STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The six strategic goals and associated objectives set out in this Section of the Plan form the basis for the detailed policies that follow and reflect the six themes identified in the Strategic Plan.

2.3.1 Strong & Diversified Economy

2.3.1.1 Goal

Create a planning framework that promotes a flexible and adaptable economic environment that encourages investment and a broad range of employment opportunities, supports the growth of tourism in the County, protects the vitality and growth of the agricultural industry, and revitalizes Downtown Areas while recognizing retail trends and community needs.

2.3.1.2 Objectives

- a) Guide the maintenance and growth of economic activity in the County through the development of proactive and flexible land use policies for areas of economic activity.
- b) Promote the development of new businesses and economic activities that are not currently available in the County to help maximize employment opportunities through land use policies that permit and encourage the development of such uses.
- c) Promote employment opportunities that utilize local economic and natural resources.
- d) Support business and industrial employment diversification through flexible land use policies and small business development.
- e) Foster tourism potential along the lakeshore and in other areas of the County through the protection and enhancement of the County's unique characteristics.
- f) Ensure that lakeshore resources are managed and, where appropriate, developed to promote tourism development and economic growth.
- g) Recognize and preserve the rural context and agricultural heritage as a significant factor contributing to the County's economy.
- h) Ensure the continued economic strength of agriculture and the viability of farm operations by protecting agricultural activities and the agricultural land base from the intrusion of incompatible uses.

- i) Recognize aggregate, mineral and petroleum resource potential and establish a framework for the long-term use of these resources.
- j) Provide for emerging retail trends that meet the needs of the County through the establishment of a strong and adaptable commercial structure that is focused on the Downtown Areas of the County.
- k) Focus higher order commercial uses, such as department stores and food stores, in the Downtown Areas and along key transportation corridors in the Urban Areas.
- l) Encourage the improvement and revitalization of the Downtown Areas as healthy and vibrant areas for mixed commercial, residential, cultural, social, tourism and entertainment uses, while recognizing and conserving their built and cultural heritage.

2.3.2 Protecting & Enhancing the Natural Environment

2.3.2.1 Goal

Protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment through a planning framework that conserves and enhances the diversity and connectivity of the natural forms, features and functions of Norfolk's natural heritage, surface water and ground water resources, and that minimizes and mitigates impacts on air quality.

2.3.2.2 Objectives

- a) Establish the policy framework that supports the preparation of a Natural Heritage System Strategy for the County.
- b) Identify, protect and enhance the natural forms, features and functions within the County, including groundwater functions, where possible and appropriate.
- c) Protect Provincially Significant Wetlands, and significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species by not permitting development or site alteration within such areas, and by carefully evaluating the potential impacts of development on adjacent land.
- d) Ensure that development proceeds in a manner that recognizes and respects land with inherent environmental hazards such as flood susceptibility, erosion, steep slopes, or any other physical condition that could endanger human life or property.
- e) Ensure that, through redevelopment, existing and potential sources of pollution including contaminated soil are corrected and brought into compliance with acceptable standards as established by the Ministry of the Environment.

2.3.3 Maintaining & Enhancing the Rural & Small Town Character

2.3.3.1 Goal

Protect the unique character of Norfolk’s cultural landscapes, Urban Areas, Hamlet Areas and Agricultural Area through heritage conservation, community design and redevelopment policies that promote community health, safety and broad aesthetic appeal.

2.3.3.2 Objectives

- a) Preserve and enhance the historical and cultural heritage of the County.
- b) Encourage the beautification, improvement and/or redevelopment of the County.
- c) Revitalize and reuse underutilized land in the County.
- d) Protect key cultural and built heritage elements in the County through the appropriate use of available planning tools.
- e) Revitalize the Downtown Areas as mixed commercial, residential, cultural, social, tourism and entertainment destinations, while recognizing and conserving their built and cultural heritage.
- f) Develop land use patterns in the Urban Areas that are compact and efficient.
- g) Maintain and enhance the rural character of Norfolk’s many Hamlet Areas through appropriate infill development.

2.3.4 Maintaining a High Quality of Life

2.3.4.1 Goal

Reinforce Norfolk’s strong sense of community through the provision of public services, the development of safe and attractive communities and the celebration of Norfolk’s unique cultural and natural heritage, by involving residents in making decisions on planning matters and by promoting a healthy community through active lifestyles.

2.3.4.2 Objectives

- a) Provide for a variety of housing forms, tenures and levels of affordability through development, redevelopment, intensification and infilling projects.
- b) Support the maintenance and development of public service resources, such as education facilities, community-based care facilities and programs, and leisure and recreation opportunities in the County.

- c) Ensure that new development is designed in a manner that provides a safe, aesthetically appropriate, and stimulating environment.
- d) Protect and improve the built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes, and encourage the protection of historical buildings, all of which contribute to Norfolk's unique character.
- e) Protect and conserve those natural landscape features that contribute to the County's unique character.
- f) Identify and conserve artefacts of historic, architectural and archaeological interest.
- g) Provide for the development of a multi-purpose trail system through a linked open space system, respecting the needs and privacy of private landowners and the agricultural community.
- h) Provide for a wide variety of recreation opportunities, including active, passive, indoor, outdoor and targeted leisure activities.
- i) Improve accessibility to the lakeshore area and increase the number of access points to the waterfront.

2.3.5 Upgrading & Expanding Infrastructure

2.3.5.1 Goal

Ensure that Norfolk maintains, improves and expands its infrastructure including all modes of transportation, water and sewage infrastructure, stormwater management, waste management, telecommunications and other public utilities in order to better serve existing and future County residents, businesses and visitors.

2.3.5.2 Objectives

- a) Provide adequate and efficient water supply and distribution, sanitary sewage collection and treatment, stormwater management and waste management systems.
- b) Ensure the provision of appropriate privately owned water and sewage systems.
- c) Ensure that public and environmental health and safety are priorities.
- d) Ensure appropriate access to, from, and within the County by all modes of transportation.
- e) Give priority to road and servicing improvements that improve the potential for employment-related growth and development.
- f) Provide employment land with access to strategic transportation corridors and other transportation facilities.

- g) Maintain and expand the multi-purpose trail system for cycling and walking to encourage transportation options beyond motorized vehicles.
- h) Provide for the development of broadband and telecommunications infrastructure to serve County residents and businesses.

2.3.6 A Well Governed, Well Planned & Sustainable County

2.3.6.1 Goal

Support an open and responsive municipal government that actively builds public and private sector partnerships in the pursuit of the responsible and efficient use of land, resources, and services, while ensuring community and financial sustainability.

2.3.6.2 Objectives

- a) Offer an open and responsive County which provides clear opportunities for public input into the land use planning process.
- b) Communicate and collaborate with other jurisdictions in the planning and development of infrastructure and services, and to support other initiatives such as environmental and air quality projects and programs.
- c) Communicate and cooperate with private sector interests to review development initiatives, and where deemed appropriate, to support those projects that will benefit the County.
- d) Ensure the responsible use of land by encouraging the redevelopment, intensification and infilling of underutilized land prior to the expansion of Urban Areas onto rural or agricultural land.
- e) Direct new urban development to Urban Areas and Hamlet Areas, ensuring a compact form, and an appropriate mix of land uses and densities, resulting in the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and public services and facilities.
- f) Reduce conflicts between existing and proposed land uses by reducing the instances of conflicting land uses and through buffering, setbacks, landscaping and other measures, as appropriate.
- g) Ensure that all new development in Urban Areas occurs on full municipal services, except in areas specifically provided for in this Plan, to ensure the maintenance of healthy communities and the natural environment.
- h) Ensure that all new development will be a long-term financial benefit to the County.
- i) Utilize the provisions of the *Development Charges Act* to reduce growth related capital costs borne by the existing residents of the County.

- j) Encourage the development of a broad, balanced tax base.