



# POLICY BACKGROUND REPORT

**PHASE 1**

**NOVEMBER  
2025**

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# 1 Introduction

On behalf of North Perth, Perth East, Perth South and West Perth, Perth County staff are undertaking Comprehensive Zoning By-law Reviews to establish four new Lower-Tier Municipal (LTM) Zoning By-laws, that will replace each of the existing Zoning By-laws:

- The Municipality of North Perth Zoning By-law No. 6-ZB-1999;
- The Corporation of the Township of Perth East Zoning By-law No. 30-1999;
- The Corporation of the Township of Perth South Zoning By-law No. 4-1999; and,
- The Municipality of West Perth Comprehensive Zoning By-law No. 100-1998.

## 1.1 What is a Zoning By-law?

A Zoning By-law is direct land use control and under Section 34 of the *Planning Act*, it can dictate how land may be used, where buildings and structures can be located, the types of uses permitted and how they may be used and the lot sizes and dimensions, parking requirements, building heights, and setbacks from the street. Zoning By-laws are legally enforceable and contain the specific requirements for construction or new development. A building permit will not be issued unless the development complies with the Zoning By-law.

Within Ontario, land use planning is guided by a system of interrelated policies from various levels of government. The following subsection provides an overview of the hierarchy of planning elements, working from the Provincial level to the local level and from the broad policy documents down to the specific regulatory mechanisms.

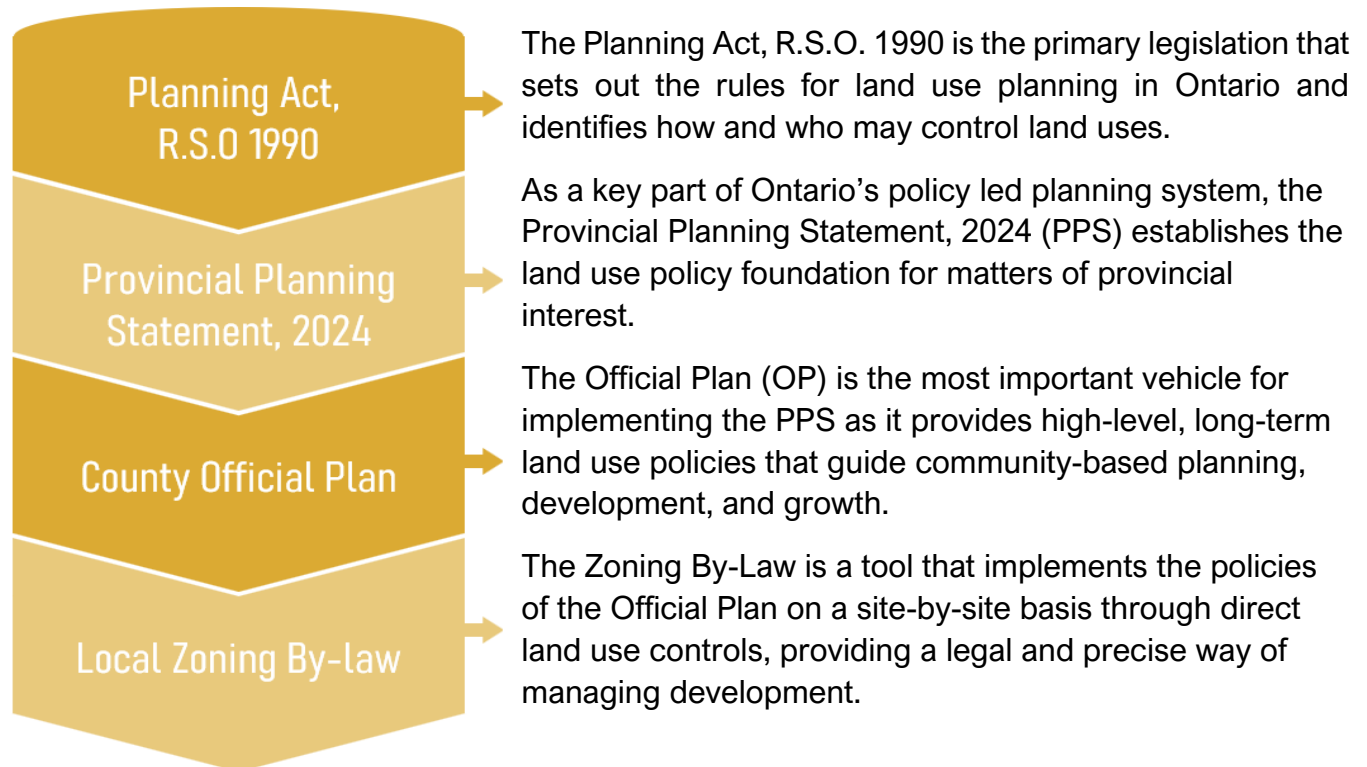


Figure 1: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Ontario

## 2 Why a Zoning By-law Review?

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The Zoning By-laws within Perth County were created in the late 1990's and are no longer consistent with provincial policy nor do they conform to the County's new Official Plan. A comprehensive review of the Lower-Tier Municipal Zoning By-laws is required to ensure that each Zoning By-law:

- Conforms to the County's Official Plan;
- Aligns with Section 34 (1) to 34 (5.1) of the *Planning Act*;
- Regulates the use of land, as permitted through the *Planning Act*, and directs the use of by-laws under the *Municipal Act* for matters not related to land use;
- Is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement; and,
- Is reflective of current zoning trends and best practices.

### 2.1 The Purpose of a Policy Review

The purpose of this report is to undertake a detailed technical review of the overarching guiding planning policies that direct how land shall be used within the Province to understand the key issues and opportunities to be addressed through each Zoning By-law. This report also presents an opportunity to understand how other local plans, strategies, and initiatives relate to land use and how the Zoning By-laws can further these initiatives. The contents of this report will form the basis for the Zoning By-law review, which will include a series of directions and recommendations to guide the preparation of the draft Zoning By-laws.

## 3 Legislative and Planning Policy Review

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This section describes the legislative and policy context under which the Comprehensive Zoning By-laws for the Municipality of North Perth, the Township of Perth East, the Township of Perth South, and the Municipality of West Perth are being prepared. Zoning By-laws are legislated under the Planning Act, and must also be consistent with Provincial policies and conform with Provincial plans, such as the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS). Further, Zoning By-laws must also conform to the policies of the County's Official Plan. Other local studies or policy documents may also include important issues and opportunities that can be addressed through the Zoning By-law and, as such, have also been included within this policy review.

### 3.1 Federal Legislation

Canada's constitution allocates jurisdiction over property rights to Provincial Governments. With the exception of airport lands, the Federal Government has little jurisdiction over planning matters within Perth County. The following provides a brief summary of the limited, relevant federal policy that will need to be considered as part of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review.

### 3.1.1 Federal Zoning Regulations for the Stratford Municipal Airport

Within Canada, land use planning is regulated at the Municipal level, with the exception of land use planning for airports, which is regulated at the Federal Level. Within the County of Perth, there is one (1) airport, the Stratford Municipal Airport, located within the Township of Perth East, which is subject to Federal Zoning Regulations under Section 5.4 of the Federal Aeronautics Act. The federal government, through Transport Canada, implements the Stratford Municipal Airport Zoning Regulations (SOR/95-495), which restricts land use and development near Stratford Municipal Airport to ensure aviation safety. These regulations define specific areas where structures, objects, and natural growth (like trees) are limited in height to avoid interfering with aircraft operations. The regulations apply to all lands within the outlined area within Figure 2 and is inclusive of private property and municipal road allowances.

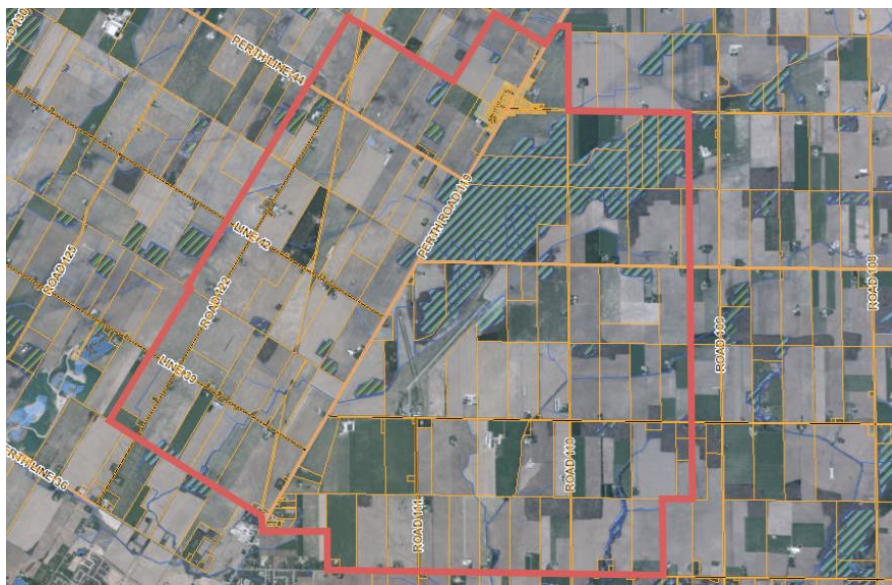


Figure 2: Stratford Municipal Airport Zoning Plan Defined Area

To ensure compliance with the Federal Aeronautics Act, all development and land uses permitted by the local Zoning By-law (i.e. Perth East) for lands within the Stratford Municipal Airport Zoning Regulations area will need to align with the overarching, Federal permissions. Further, the Perth East Zoning By-law

**Recommendations** for the Perth East Zoning By-law include:

- Comparator analysis of other Zoning By-laws should be undertaken to determine the best practices for including federal zoning regulations within local Zoning By-laws. Research should be undertaken on the use of site-specific zoning regulations, general height restriction regulations, and overlays for information purposes; and,
- Height of buildings/structures within the defined area (as shown within Figure 1) will need to be identified as being subject to the federal zoning regulations, both within the Zoning By-law text and within the Zoning By-law maps as an overlay in effort to remove potential impacts to the airports approach surfaces and transitional surfaces.

### 3.1.2 Federal Communication Tower Standards

Canada's Federal Communication Tower Standards, managed through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), lay out the rules for where and how communication antennas and towers can be built. The standards do recognize that local governments—like Perth County and its local municipalities—bring valuable knowledge of their communities and encourages the development of local protocols in addition to the Federal Communication Tower Standards. Local authorities are encouraged to develop their own protocols that reflect planning priorities, cultural or environmental sensitivities, and community preferences, so they can influence decisions even though they do not have the power to approve or reject towers outright.

The federal government regulates tower approvals, but local zoning by-laws in Perth County still play an important role. By tying tower regulations to the zoning framework, Perth County can make sure that federal siting decisions respect local land-use planning and community character as much as possible.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- General provisions within each Zoning By-law to create local regulations for the siting of communication towers within the County; and,
- Providing exemption provisions in each Zoning By-law to recognize antenna height.

It should be noted that the Municipality of North Perth does have local protocols established for telecommunication towers, the details of which can be found in the North Perth specific policy review in Section 4.6 of this report.

## 3.2 Provincial Legislation

The Province issues policy statements under the *Planning Act* that guide land use planning and identify related provincial interests including: housing and employment, farmland protection, natural resources and the environment, sustainable development, public transit and pedestrian-friendly street design. There have been numerous changes to provincial policy in the years following the adoption of the four Zoning By-laws and there are several key pieces of provincial legislation that require review as part of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law review process.

### 3.2.1 The Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13

The *Planning Act* is provincial legislation that lays out ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. It details how land uses may be controlled and who may control them. Section 34 of the *Planning Act* enables municipal councils to pass Zoning By-laws, which must conform to land use control policies outlined in Part V of the *Planning Act*. Under Section 34, councils of local municipalities may pass Zoning By-laws which restrict the use of land, the erection, location and use of buildings and structures, the prohibition of buildings and structures on hazardous, natural features, archaeological or sensitive lands.

Zoning By-laws identify permitted uses and set development standards. They may stipulate loading and parking facilities, minimum setback distances, minimum lot sizes, and height of development. In accordance with Section 24(1), Zoning by-laws must conform to the County's Official Plan, be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and have regard for matters of provincial interest under the *Planning Act*. The Zoning By-law is legally enforceable and implements the objectives of the County's Official Plan, which was adopted by County Council in October 2024 and received Minister approval on September 12, 2025.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Zoning By-laws should be reviewed and compared against Section 34 (1) of the *Planning Act*. Where regulations within each Zoning By-Law contradict Section 34(1), such regulations should be recommended for removal; and,
- When new regulations are recommended to be added to each Zoning By-law, comparison should be made to Section 34 (1), (2), and (3) to ensure recommendations are permitted under the *Planning Act*.

### 3.2.2 Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS), previously referred to as the Provincial Policy Statement, sets out the rules for land use planning in Ontario. The PPS (2024) provides direction for land use across Ontario. It assists the Province to accomplish the goal of meeting the demands of rapid population growth and increasing the quality of life for all Ontario residents. The PPS' primary tool for attaining inclusive and integrated planning principles across the Province is through municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. The PPS guides land use and the development of communities, specifically directing growth and development to settlement areas to protect prime agricultural areas for long-term agriculture use (Policy 2.3.1 & 4.3.1). The PPS also empowers planning authorities to identify appropriate locations and opportunities for redevelopment and directs that planning authorities shall establish minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within settlement areas, based on local conditions. The PPS specifically states that "Zoning [...] should be forward-looking and facilitate opportunities for an appropriate range and mix of housing options for all Ontarians" (Preamble). The PPS supports a complete, cohesive, and long-term approach to zoning and it is through this lens that the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review is being undertaken.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-law include:

- The Zoning By-laws should be forward thinking and facilitate opportunities for a range and mix of housing options. Zones should be limited in number and permissive in uses so as to encourage a range and mix of housing options, as mentioned within the PPS;
- The Zoning By-law should establish development standards, such as permitted uses, minimum side yards, minimum front yards that can accommodate parking requirements, and height standards, to accommodate proposed growth and development within Settlement Areas for the next 20 years;

- Type and scale of uses within Strategic Growth Areas of the County should be more dense than adjacent areas;
- Consideration should be given to regulations that appropriately transition the built form of strategic growth areas to adjacent areas and transition the built form of settlement areas to the agricultural area;
- Consideration for regulations, through setbacks or other tools, that protect employment areas from non-compatible development. Further, setbacks or transitional zones should be used to appropriately transition employment areas to sensitive land uses;
- Uses within employment areas shall be limited to those permitted under Policy 2.8.2.3. Further, prohibited uses within Policy 2.8.2.3 should be included within the zones that implement employment areas; and,
- Uses outside of Settlement Areas should be limited to agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses, as per Policy 4.3.2.1.

### 3.2.3 Publication 853: The Minimum Distance Separation(MDS) Document

The Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document is a land use planning tool developed by the now Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) with the intent of preventing land use conflicts and minimizing nuisance complaints from odour for livestock facilities. Within the MDS Document, there is technical guidance for the application of the MDS I formula, intended for determining setbacks within new development and existing livestock facilities, and MDS II, intended for determining setbacks between new/expanding livestock facilities and other existing or approved development. The MDS Document also includes implementation guidelines which came into effect March 1, 2017. The MDS Document is to be read in conjunction with the *Planning Act, 1990*, the *Building Code Act, 1992*, the *Nutrient Management Act, 2002*, the policies of the PPS and other applicable laws and provincial plans.

Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the MDS Document encompass the basis for MDS provisions that are to be incorporated into municipal land use planning documents. Section 3 provides definitions for italicized terms that appear in the Implementation Guidelines. The Implementation Guidelines are found in Section 4 and outlines that MDS setbacks are required in all designations and zones where livestock facilities and anaerobic digesters are permitted. It further outlines the application of MDS I and MDS II and in relation to Type A (less sensitive) and Type B (more sensitive) land uses and several factors that apply in the MDS calculation. The factor tables are in Section 5 and outline the factors used in MDS calculations: Factor A – odour potential, Factor B – nutrient units, Factor C – expansion factor, Factor D – manure type, Factor E – encroaching land use factor, manure storage types, and MDS I and MDS II setbacks for manure storage(s).

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- To remain compliant with the MDS Document, the Zoning By-laws must include MDS I and MDS II provisions that reflect the implementation guidelines, definitions, and factor tables in order to implement Implementation Guidelines #7, #9, #35 and #38;

- In zones where livestock facilities and anaerobic digesters are permitted uses, the Zoning By-laws shall include provisions that require compliance with MDS I setbacks when seeking a change in land use from agriculture to development. The Zoning By-laws should clarify what is classified as ‘development’ to assist Plans Examiners with application reviews;
- In zones where livestock facilities and anaerobic digesters are permitted uses, the Zoning By-laws shall include provisions which require compliance with MDS I and MDS II setbacks when seeking a Zoning By-law amendment application to change land use from agriculture to another land use;
- It is recommended to include the definitions from Section 3 of the MDS Document in the new Zoning By-law to ensure consistency;
- The Zoning By-law should include specific provisions to indicate the types of agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses required to meet (or which are otherwise exempt from) MDS I and MDS II setbacks (Guideline #35);
- The Zoning By-laws shall not include setbacks or livestock facilities or anaerobic digesters that exceed those calculated through the MDS II formulae;
- Further analysis should be undertaken to determine whether there are agricultural uses and on farm diversified uses that may not need MDS I setback requirements for development or expansion, in alignment with Implementation guideline #35. Consideration could be given to requiring MDS I setbacks only for proposed sensitive uses that could lead to potential conflicts, typically characterized by a higher density of human occupancy or an increase in visitation by the general public; and,
- An inventory of all existing cemeteries shall be undertaken to evaluate MDS impacts and determine whether specific MDS exemption provisions are required within the local Zoning By-laws.

### 3.2.4 Nutrient Management Act

The Nutrient Management Act, 2002 and implementing O. Reg. 267/03 were created to manage materials containing nutrients in ways that will enhance protection of the natural environment and provide a sustainable future for agricultural operations and rural development. The regulations refer to either agricultural source materials (ASMs), which include manure and other on-farm generated materials (such as wash water and runoff), and non-agricultural source materials (NASMs), which include sewage biosolids, wash water from food processors, and pulp and paper mill biosolids. The *Nutrient Management Act* guides the design of manure storages systems, which can be either temporary or permanently sited; though does require that all manure storage must be sited away from waterways and outside of the 1-in-100 year floodplain limit to reduce the risk of environmental impacts.

The *Nutrient Management Act* is used in conjunction with the MDS guidelines and the *Conservation Authorities Act* to minimize potential conflicts and the risk of water contamination. As nutrient management is already regulated under the above mentioned Acts, inclusion of additional regulations within the Zoning By-law would be a duplication of effort.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Remove specific regulations from the Zoning By-laws that regulate manure storage. The inclusion of such regulations gives the perception that such regulations can be amended through a Zoning By-law Amendment Application under the *Planning Act*; and,
- Consider including high-level provisions within the General Provisions Sections of the Zoning By-laws to indicate that nutrient management facilities are subject to the requirements of the *Nutrient Management Act*.

### 3.2.5 Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas

Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas, otherwise referred to as Publication 851, provides further guidance on the agricultural-related policies located within the, now, Provincial Planning Statement. The document is meant to further explain the policies and definitions in the PPS and clarifies PPS policies on agricultural, agricultural-related on-farm diversified uses, the removal of land for new and expanding settlement areas, limited non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas, and the mitigation of impacts from new or expanding non-agricultural uses.

Publication 851 provides specific guidance on where, and how, agricultural uses and on-farm diversified uses should be located in order to be promoted and protected. As the local Zoning By-laws are the implementing regulations for the County Official Plan and the PPS, the local Zoning By-laws should carry forward the policies of Publication 851 regarding the location of such buildings and structures to ensure long-term protection.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Permitted uses listed within the Agricultural zone(s) of the Local Zoning By-laws should include and recognize the agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses included within Publication 851 to ensure all types, sizes, and intensities of normal farm practices are promoted and protected;
- Include provisions that limit the area of all on farm diversified uses to a maximum of 2% up to 1 ha, to align with the guidelines;
- Limit the gross floor area of on-farm diversified use buildings to a lot coverage ratio (of the 2%) to ensure agricultural use remains the primary land use;
- Consider aligning permissions for Housing for Farm Workers with the Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines referenced within Publication 851 to ensure housing for farm workers meets minimum health and living conditions, while still accommodating normal farm practices for living quarters, such as living quarters in horse barns. The specific permissions to consider include:
  - Setback from any building used or intended to be used for sheltering animals (min): 30 m
  - Setbacks between buildings containing dwelling units (min): 10 m

- Recognize and permit uses and facilities that are clearly compatible and appropriate in prime agricultural areas as as-of-right agricultural uses. Examples include value-retaining uses (e.g., storage, grading, drying), home offices in existing buildings, and small produce stands;
- Review regulations related to temporary-type uses (e.g. rodeos, farm shows) that can be accommodated in existing facilities like fairgrounds, parks, and bandshells and do not require on-farm locations in the agricultural area for operation; and,
- Include setback requirements and outdoor storage provisions within the Zoning By-laws for all permitted on-farm diversified uses.

### 3.2.6 D-4 Guidelines

The Guideline D-4 is a guideline used to protect the health, safety, convenience and welfare of residents by placing restrictions and controls on land use on or near operating and non-operating landfills and dumps. It applies to all landfills/dumps regardless of ownership and is also considered for the establishment of new landfill or dump location. The guideline is specifically to be used when reviewing land use proposals, including official plans and amendments, and plans of subdivision/condominium.

While D-4 Guidelines are not directly implemented through Zoning, there are regulations that can be placed within the local Zoning By-laws to consider the direct application of land use compatibility between landfills and sensitive uses.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Restricting existing landfill uses to Industrial Zones to ensure appropriate land use compatibility;
- Prohibiting the following uses and related structures from being located within an Industrial Zone where landfills are permitted:
  - Cemeteries
  - Residential Uses
  - Agricultural Operations which involve pasturing livestock and/or animal husbandry
- Requiring new landfills to have site-specific zoning that spells out the various requirements that were determined through the studies that were undertaken to establish the landfill, including setbacks to prohibited land uses and the landfill fill area.

### D-6 Guidelines

The D-6 Guidelines from the Province of Ontario are meant to assist communities manage what types of land uses are appropriate near different types of industry. These guidelines suggest how much space should be kept between industrial areas and sensitive uses like homes, daycares, or schools, and the places where people live or gather, depending on the scale and type of activity.

The D-6 Guidelines also help identify when more detailed studies may be required to ensure new development doesn't create compatibility issues related to noise, odour, or traffic safety. For communities within Perth County, where both agriculture and industry are key parts of the economy, the D-6 Guidelines are a helpful tool for planning in a way that keeps growth compatible and minimizes conflict. The D-6 Guidelines should be utilized as the baseline to shape the zoning provisions that apply to land use decisions across towns and rural areas in Perth County.

D-6 Guidelines are particularly important for Perth County's settlement areas where different land uses are located in close proximity, and where the Zoning By-law needs to balance land for jobs, housing, and farmland protection.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Clearly identify areas where industrial activity may impact sensitive land uses and utilize setbacks, buffers, and transitional zones to alleviate impacts;
- The use of an "industrial" zone hierarchy within the local Zoning By-laws should be guided by the Class I, Class II, and Class III industrial uses and minimum distance separation standards for industrial uses;
- Zoning provisions can also include buffers (trees, fences) or setbacks to reduce impacts where less-compatible uses meet; and,
- In areas where heavy industry is proposed or currently exists, nearby residential development should be restricted.

### 3.2.7 Conservation Authorities Act

The *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA) concerns the management of renewable natural resources and protection of people through prevention based on watershed management. It is the legislation that governs conservation authorities in Ontario and is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. In addition to local planning approvals, under the CAA Section 28, permits are required for development of lands in and adjacent to floodplains, wetlands, and watercourses in order to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and mitigate any potential hazard impacts.

Developing outside of hazard areas regulated by Conservation Authorities is integral to the management of flood risks and reducing the loss of lives and property. Lot coverage, landscaped area, and permeable surfaces are all significant factors that impact the level of flood risk on development; all of which can be regulated through the Zoning By-laws. Flood mapping from local conservation authorities can also be used to identify hazard zones within the County, which dictate where development can safely occur.

Since the adoption of the current local Zoning By-laws, amendments have been made to the *Conservation Authorities Act* through O.Reg. 41/24 to reduce regulation powers of conservation authorities. A review to align the local zones and Zoning By-law definitions with these changes should occur.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Zoning By-laws must identify hazardous lands and direct development to areas outside of lands adjacent to rivers, streams, and small inland lake systems impacted by flooding or erosion hazards;
- Where hazard zones (e.g. Flood and Fill Constraint Areas) directly reflect regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act, updates will be required to align the zone boundaries with the recent CAA amendments;
- Zoning regulations that help to reduce the impervious surface ratio of a lot or site can be adopted to aid in decreasing the volume of storm water runoff into watercourses; and,
- Also known as performance zoning, the local Zoning By-laws can specify the intensity of land use that is acceptable, through permitted uses or floor space index requirements, or set targets for particular zones to achieve a better impervious surface ratio, through landscaped open space and lot coverage requirements. Options to improve infiltration and decrease storm water runoff into watercourses include pervious surfaces like green roofs, rain gardens and bioswales. All of these options can be considered as part of the required landscaped open space requirement(s) found within the local Zoning By-laws.

### 3.2.8 Clean Water Act

The *Clean Water Act* is a piece of Ontario legislation, passed in 2006, designed to protect municipal drinking water sources. It was enacted to ensure communities can protect their drinking water supplies through collaborative, science-based, watershed-based Source Protection Plans. Policies in Source Protection Plans apply specifically to activities in vulnerable Wellhead Protection Areas and include a variety of approaches to manage and prevent risks to municipal drinking water. These approaches include identification of vulnerable areas, education and outreach, the development of risk management plans, land use planning, and monitoring. The policies are designed to ensure sufficient supplies and keep contaminants out of rivers, lakes and groundwater aquifers that are sources of municipal drinking water. Under the Clean Water Act, the following Source Protection Plans apply to lands within Perth County:

- Grand River Source Protection Plan;
- Maitland Valley Source Protection Plan;
- Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Plan; and,
- The Source Protection Plan for the Thames-Sydenham and Region.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Consider including a Section in the General Provisions that directs the *Clean Water Act* to be used to identify vulnerable areas and restrict land uses in vulnerable areas. Thoughtful inclusion should be considered so as to not duplicate existing processes or policies under the *Clean Water Act*.

### 3.2.9 Drainage Act

The *Drainage Act* provides a legally established procedure for the establishment of communal drains to manage surface and subsurface water in Ontario. In Perth County, drains generally exist in the form of agricultural tile drainage to remove excess sub-surface water from fields. To ensure communal drains continue to assist the County’s agricultural areas in the removal of excess water from their fields and to reduce erosion impacts on new development, the local Zoning By-laws can implement setback requirements for development.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Establish that setbacks for buildings and structures from drains and watercourses is to be guided by the *Drainage Act*.

### 3.2.10 Building Code

The *2024 Building Code* is the latest version of the province’s regulations for how buildings are constructed, altered, or used. It officially came into effect on January 1, 2025, and replaces the 2012 version. The Code sets out the minimum requirements for construction related to safety, fire protection, accessibility, energy efficiency, and environmental performance. It draws heavily from the *2020 National Building Code* but includes Ontario-specific rules—like those for on-site sewage systems and large farm buildings—that reflect the province’s unique needs. For places like Perth County, where rural, agricultural, and urban land uses all exist side by side, the new Code is especially relevant. It ensures that buildings—from new homes in serviced urban areas to barns and workshops on farmland—are constructed to a consistent, safe standard. The new Code also provides more room for innovation, allowing for alternative solutions and designs, so long as they meet performance expectations. With climate concerns and housing pressures growing, this version of the Code aims to strike a balance between practicality and progress.

While the Building Code and local Zoning By-laws regulate different aspects of development, they work closely together in the land use planning process. The Zoning By-laws regulate the external elements of development, specifying what can be built and where, while the Building Code guides the internal workings of development, specifying how a building must be constructed. In Perth County, a development must be permitted as a permitted use under the Zoning By-law and meet Code standards for elements such as safety, fire separation, and accessibility before construction can begin. It’s also common for changes to zoning—such as allowing more intensive residential development—to trigger additional building requirements under the Code. For instance, a triplex will need more complex fire and structural systems than a single detached home. The two systems aren’t interchangeable, but they are interdependent and together, they ensure development is both legally permitted and physically safe. Municipal staff and applicants must consider both the Building Code and Zoning By-law from the start of the planning process and alignment of the Zoning By-laws with the Building Code will further assist applicants through the local development process.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Zoning By-laws should reflect the types of buildings and development patterns the Code is designed to accommodate—such as more compact, energy-efficient housing in serviced areas;
- Zoning should allow flexibility for newer forms of housing, including additional dwelling units, small-scale infill, lodging houses, and modern farm structures, all of which are addressed in the updated Code;
- The Zoning By-laws should align with the Building Code, however, should not go above and beyond the requirements of the Building Code nor should the Zoning By-laws attempt to regulate internal areas of a development, as this is not permitted under the Planning Act;
- Consider updating certain definitions and use permissions within the Zoning By-laws to match Building Code terminology, especially for alternative housing models or mixed-use buildings.

### 3.2.11 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or AODA, is a provincial law aimed at making Ontario more inclusive. It covers a range of areas like public spaces, buildings, customer service, information, and transportation. One of its goals is to make sure that public buildings and outdoor spaces like parks, sidewalks, and community centres are designed to be barrier-free so that people of all abilities can access and use amenities comfortably. Whether it's through ramps, wide doorways, or accessible parking spaces, the AODA sets clear standards for development to help ensure full participation in community life.

Though much of the AODA is centred around building design, there are certain regulations related to the accessibility of a property, specifically accessible parking, that can be regulated through Zoning By-laws. Updating the local Zoning By-laws to reflect accessibility for persons with disabilities helps ensure that as new developments are approved, they are designed with all residents in mind from the beginning.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Include clear provisions around accessible parking within the Zoning By-laws, ensuring that people who use mobility devices can move safely between buildings, sidewalks, and parking areas; and,
- In commercial or downtown zones, provisions could support mixed-use development that brings housing, shops, and services closer together, which makes neighbourhoods more accessible for people who face transportation challenges.

### 3.2.11.1 O.Reg. 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards

Ontario Regulation 191/11 is known as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and is the regulation that assists in the implementation of the AODA. It is a set of provincial rules designed to improve accessibility across Ontario that focuses on making everyday life more inclusive for people with disabilities and ensuring everyone can move around freely and safely, regardless of physical ability.

Recent amendments to O.Reg. 191/11 now include standards surrounding the design of public spaces standards and accessibility standards for the built environment. Amendments include modifications to definitions, the application of regulations to certain areas, and the AODA requirements for designated public sector (and other) organizations. Regulations exist for recreational trails, paths and boardwalks, outdoor public eating areas and play spaces, and accessible parking. Aligning the Zoning By-law provisions with accessibility standards helps to achieve complete communities that allow for people of all ages and abilities to fully participate in society.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Include definitions and minimum widths for Type A and Type B parking spaces within the Zoning By-laws, which are the two types of parking spaces defined for the use by persons with disabilities;
- Exclude off-street parking facilities from providing accessible parking spaces, in alignment with O.Reg. 191/11, if the off-street parking facility is exclusively used for the parking of: buses; delivery vehicles; law enforcement vehicles; medical transportation vehicles; or, impounded vehicles; and,
- Align parking standards with the accessible parking standards included within Section 80.36 of O.Reg. 191/11 to ensure a minimum number of accessible parking spaces are included in commercial or residential developments. These standards include:
  - 1 Type A accessible parking space where there are 12 parking spaces or fewer.
  - Accessible parking spaces are provided at a rate of 4 % of the total number of parking spaces, where there are between 13 and 100 parking spaces in accordance with the following ratio, rounding up to the nearest whole number:
  - Where an even number of parking spaces are provided, an equal number of Type A and Type B parking space must be provided.
  - Where an odd number of parking spaces are provided, the number of parking spaces must be divided equally between Type A and Type B parking spaces but the additional, odd-numbered parking space may be a Type B parking space.
  - 1 accessible parking space, plus additional accessible parking spaces provided at a rate of 3% of the total number of parking spaces, where there are between 101 and 200 parking spaces provided, calculated in accordance with the above ratios rounding up to the nearest whole number.

- 2 accessible parking spaces, plus additional accessible parking spaces provided at a rate of 2% of the total number of parking spaces, where there are between 201 and 1,000 parking spaces provided, calculated in accordance with the above ratios rounding up to the nearest whole number.
- 11 accessible parking spaces, plus additional accessible parking spaces provided at a rate of 3% of the total number of parking spaces, where there are more than 1,000 parking spaces provided, calculated in accordance with the above ratios rounding up to the nearest whole number.

### 3.2.12 Enabling Opportunity: Ontario’s Rural Economic Development Strategy

Enabling Opportunities: Ontario’s Rural Economic Development Strategy was developed through a series of consultations with municipal leaders, economic development professionals, key rural stakeholders, and Indigenous partners. Areas of focus incorporated into the strategy include rural economic development and community capacity building, continued investment in housing, community infrastructure, broadband and cellular infrastructure, strengthened protection from cyber threats and responsible use of emerging technologies, rural tourism support, small business and new investment growth, and increasing awareness of rural employment opportunities and the provision of skills training and workforce development. The Strategy is comprised of three pillars: safe and strong rural communities, business development and attraction, and growing the rural workforce.

While the Economic Strategy is a visionary document and is not applicable law for zoning, the Zoning By-laws can support the pillars of the Economic Strategy where appropriate to support economic growth and resilience in Perth County.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Supporting greater housing options and increase housing capacity for rural communities by intensification in settlement areas through additional dwelling units; and,
- Attracting investment, business, customers and families to rural downtowns through mixed-use zoning in core neighbourhoods that support a variety of commercial and residential options.

### 3.2.13 Recent Legislative Changes

There have been numerous changes to provincial legislation since the creation of the existing Zoning By-laws. While some of the provincial legislation changes directly impact the regulations and provisions included within Zoning By-laws, others impact the implementation of Zoning By-law through tools like appeal rights.

Only legislative changes from December 2023 onward that impact the content of the Zoning By-laws and require consideration through the Comprehensive Review are included on the following pages.

### 3.2.13.1 Bill 134, Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023

The *Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023* (Bill 134) received royal assent on December 4, 2023. In an attempt to align with the draft proposed definitions included within the 2023 version of the Provincial Planning Statement, the definitions of affordable residential units were amended in the *Development Charges Act, 1997*:

- Affordable Residential Unit, rented means the rent is no greater than the lesser of:
  - the income-based affordable rent set out in the Affordable Residential Units bulletin, and
  - the average market rent identified for the residential unit set out in the Affordable Residential Unit.
- Affordable Residential Unit, ownership means the price is no greater than the lesser of:
  - 30% of a household's gross annual income for a household at the 60th percentile of the income distribution for all households in the local municipality; and,
  - 90% of the average purchase price of a unit of the same type in the local municipality.

A new definition for attainable residential unit was also added. It is important to note that while the definitions for affordable and attainable were revised in the *Development Charges Act*, the definitions were not modified within and differ from that of the *Provincial Planning Statement 2024*. Further, no definition of attainable exists outside of the definition provided within the *Development Charges Act*.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Utilizing the *Development Charges Act* definitions of affordable and attainable only for Development Charge exemptions and maintain the *Provincial Planning Statement 2024* definitions within the Zoning By-law; and,
- Ensuring the Zoning By-laws do not regulate affordable or attainable housing as permitted/prohibited uses but rather regulate building form, as permitted under Section 34(1) of the Planning Act.

### 3.2.13.2 Bill 150, Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023

The *Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023* (Bill 150) received royal assent on December 6, 2023. This bill reversed provincial decisions of Official Plans affecting 12 municipalities and more notably amended Section 47 of the *Planning Act* to limit the ability to sue the province for the enactment of Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZO's). MZO's are similar to local Zoning By-laws in that they permit or prohibit the use of land along with regulating the location, use, height, size and spacing of buildings and structures. If there is a conflict between a municipal Zoning By-law and an MZO, the MZO shall prevail.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Review local MZO's approved by the Province since the adoption of the local Zoning By-laws to ensure alignment and inclusion of the MZO within the local Zoning By-laws.

### 3.2.13.3 Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025

Bill 17 received royal assent on June 5, 2025 and amends numerous acts, including the Planning Act. The objective of Bill 17 is to simplify and streamline development, while reducing barriers, including development fees, with the intent of building more homes faster in Ontario to address the current housing crisis. Bill 17 amends the *Planning Act* by restricting what studies/reports can be required as part of a complete application and permitting variations to Zoning By-laws as-of-right if a proposal is within a prescribed percentage (e.g. 10% of the required setback). The regulations that will dictate what studies can be required and what the prescribed variation percentage are still to be released, at which point the fulsome impact of Bill 17 on the local Zoning By-laws will be understood.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- If/when new reduced setback provisions with the local Zoning By-laws are proposed, a review Bill 17 permissions should be undertaken to confirm that the setback would not create adverse impacts if the as-of-right setback variation is applied. An example being a reduction in a side yard setback that, if varied through Bill 17, may limit the ability for a site to provide adequate space for grading, drainage and access to the building for maintenance purposes.

## 3.3 Conservation Authority Policy

### 3.3.1 GRCA Administration Policies for Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits

The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) is the Conservation Authority that regulates development within hazard lands for North Perth and Perth East. GRCA's Policies for the Administration of Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits under Ontario Regulations 41/24 empowers the GRCA to make regulations in compliance with O.Reg. 41/24 regarding the interference of, construction within and alteration to waterways. This policy also allows the GRCA to prevent or restrict development in areas where the control of flooding, erosion, beaches, pollution, or the conservation of land may be affected. To prevent the creation of new hazards or exacerbate current ones, permission is required through a GRCA permit to develop within regulated hazard lands.

As the Settlement Areas of Milverton, Nithburg, Newton, Lisbon, Amulree, Millbank, Poole, Carthage, and Hesson are located within GRCA's regulatory areas, these areas are subject to GRCA policies and such policies will need to be carried forward into the Perth East Zoning By-laws to ensure compliance.

Of the GRCA regulatory policies, the policies related to floodplains and environmental hazards are most relevant to the application within the local Zoning By-laws. The GRCA regulates floodplains through either a One-Zone or Two-Zone approach. The One Zone Policy Area treats the entire regulatory floodplain as a floodway hazard, with certain exceptions existing in current urban areas. The Two Zone approach is used where a separate study has been undertaken to determine areas of the floodplain where development of non-sensitive uses may be permitted, subject to preventative and adaptive development methods. The Two Zone approach divides the floodplain into 2 sections, the floodway, which is the undevelopable area of the floodplain, and the flood fringe, which is where development or redevelopment is permitted. Where a Two Zone approach exists, suitable policy and regulation must be incorporated into the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Perth East Zoning By-laws should be updated to identify areas at risk identified by the GRCA, such as wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive lands, using specific hazard zones and/or floodplain overlays; and,
- Definitions within the North Perth and Perth East Zoning By-laws should be updated to include definitions and restrictions that match GRCA terminology and relevant provincial legislation.

### 3.3.2 UTRCA Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, and Permits

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) covers 3,430 square kilometers in southwestern Ontario with jurisdiction of the upper watershed of the Thames River. Working collaboratively with municipalities, UTRCA reviews and regulates development in or near natural hazards under *the Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 41/24.

These policies apply directly to Perth South, Perth East, and West Perth. Almost the entirety of Perth South is under the UTRCA’s jurisdiction, as are large portions of Perth East and West Perth. UTRCA’s jurisdiction applies within the hamlets of Avonton, Bornholm, Brunner, Rannoch, Russeldale, Kirkton, Wartburg and the small towns of Monkton, Sebringville, Shakespeare, Kirkton and the town of Mitchell.

Prohibited activities are outlined in O. Reg. 41/24 which allow the UTRCA to prevent or restrict development in regulated areas where development may negatively affect natural features or pose hazards to humans. The regulation of activities with the authority’s area of jurisdiction include hazardous lands, wetlands, and river or stream valleys.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Perth South, Perth East, and West Perth Zoning By-laws should be updated to identify areas at risk identified by the UTRCA, such as wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive lands, using specific hazard zones and/or floodplain overlays.

### 3.3.3 MVCA Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, and Permits Policies for Administration

The Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) is responsible for overseeing land use in areas that are at risk from natural hazards like flooding and erosion. In Perth County, MVCA has authority in the settlement areas of Listowel, Atwood, Milverton, and Monkton. The MVCA has delegated authority under Ontario's *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations to ensure building or land alteration in these sensitive zones is done safely and responsibly. Essentially, before development in sensitive areas can go ahead, MVCA confirms the work won't compound existing problems or create new risks to people, property, or the environment.

Of the MVCA regulatory policies, the policies related to floodplains and environmental hazards are most relevant to the application within the local Zoning By-laws. The MVCA regulates floodplains through either a One-Zone or Two-Zone approach. The One Zone Policy Area treats the entire regulatory floodplain as a floodway hazard, with certain exceptions existing in current urban areas. The Two Zone approach is used where a separate study has been undertaken to determine areas of the floodplain where development of non-sensitive uses may be permitted, subject to preventative and adaptive development methods. The Two Zone approach divides the floodplain into 2 sections, the floodway, which is the undevelopable area of the floodplain, and the flood fringe, which is where development or redevelopment is permitted, subject to permitting approval from the conservation authority. Where a Two Zone approach exists, suitable policy must be incorporated into the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Perth East Zoning By-law, West Perth Zoning By-law, and North Perth Zoning By-law should be updated to identify areas at risk identified by the MVCA, such as wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive lands, using specific hazard zones and/or floodplain overlays;
- Where a floodplain study has been undertaken by the MVCA to implement a Two-Zone Floodplain approach, such as in the Town of Listowel in North Perth, an update to the Zoning By-law Floodplain zone should be considered to align with the Two-Zone floodplain mapping. Where a Two-Zone floodplain exists, the Zoning By-law should only apply a Flood Plain Zone to the floodway and utilize other tools to identify the flood fringe. Regulation of Two-Zone floodplains within the Zoning By-law should be distinctly different than those areas where only a One-Zone Policy exists and comparator assessment of adjacent municipalities should be undertaken to determine the best approach; and,
- Definitions within the North Perth and Perth East Zoning By-laws should be updated to include definitions and restrictions that match MVCA terminology and relevant provincial legislation.

### 3.3.4 ABCA Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, and Permits Policies for Administration

The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) was the first conservation authority formed in Ontario in 1946 to deal with serious local flooding, soil erosion, habitat loss, water supply and quality. It expanded to include the Bayfield River drainage basin and Lake Huron shoreline watersheds in 1972 and now includes 12 member municipalities and a jurisdiction that spans 2,440 square kilometers. It includes a small portion of lands in Perth South and a significant portion of lands in West Perth. ABCA policies do not affect any settlement areas in Perth South, but apply to properties in Staffa and Dublin in West Perth.

Prohibited activities are outlined in O. Reg. 41/24 which allow the ABCA to prevent or restrict development in regulated areas where development may negatively affect natural features or pose hazards to humans. The regulation of activities with the authority's are of jurisdiction include hazardous lands, wetlands, and river or stream valleys. The ABCA has stormwater management and technical guidelines and an updated Source Protection Plan. Where ABCA has guidelines that directly apply to land use planning, suitable policy and regulation must be incorporated into the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- The Perth South and West Perth Zoning By-laws should be updated to identify areas at risk identified by the UTRCA, such as wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive lands, using specific hazard zones and/or floodplain overlays.

## 3.4 County Policy

### 3.4.1 Perth County Official Plan, 2024

The Official Plan for Perth County is a comprehensive planning document that outlines how the County intends to grow and evolve over the next 25 years. It promotes a unified vision for all rural and urban communities within the County.

The Plan was developed with significant input from local residents, planning consultants, and government partners, and reflects updated provincial planning requirements and current local needs. It lays out conditions for where development should happen, how to protect farmland and the natural environment, and how to build complete, livable communities. One of the key aims is to balance rural character with growth, by focusing new development in existing urban areas that already have municipal services like water and sewer. The Plan also identifies strategic growth areas, encourages a mix of housing types, and addresses long-term goals for infrastructure, the economy, and sustainability. The Zoning By-law translates land use designations and goals in the Plan into specific rules, known as provisions, that are specific for what can and can't be carried out on individual properties. For example, if an area is designated for agricultural use in the Official Plan, the Zoning By-law will ensure only appropriate agricultural uses are allowed, and that incompatible land uses like large-scale commercial or residential development are either limited or prohibited.

The Zoning By-law is an important planning tool used to implement the Official Plan, a more detailed comparator analysis will take place in Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law project to directly compare the land use designations within the Official Plan to the existing Zones within the four local Zoning By-laws to determine where detailed modifications are required.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Review the North Perth, West Perth, Perth East, and Perth South Zoning By-law Maps/Schedules to account for newly defined Strategic Growth Areas and settlement boundaries in communities like Listowel, Milverton, Mitchell, Atwood, and Shakespeare;
- In areas where development is encouraged - serviced urban centres - zoning can be used to support compact, efficient growth by allowing a mix of housing and light commercial uses, especially near infrastructure;
- Zoning provisions should also make room for a broader mix of housing options—such as townhouses, triplexes, and secondary suites—in order to meet intensification goals and help address housing affordability. Cohousing, group housing, and cluster housing forms should also be considered and specific provisions provided to guide these housing types to appropriate locations within the County;
- Review the definitions for housing forms and types within the Zoning By-laws to ensure that Additional Residential Units being located within various housing types are not included as a unit within the permitted housing type and are instead secondary or accessory to the overarching housing form;
- In key locations like downtown cores and along major corridors, zoning should enable a blend of residential and commercial uses to support vibrant, walkable areas;
- The addition of zoning provisions for home-based businesses, on farm diversified uses, and modular housing will align with the Official Plan and are supportive to community needs;
- Zoning for areas outside of Settlement Areas should continue to protect prime farmland by limiting non-agricultural development and by establishing minimum lot sizes that support viable farm operations;
- Environmentally sensitive and hazard-prone lands—like wetlands and floodplains—should also be clearly marked and regulated through zoning;
- The Official Plan proposes an alternative land use typology outside of Settlement Areas than what was included in the 1999 Official Plan and applied through the local Zoning By-laws. The Natural Heritage Overlay found outside of Settlement Areas within the County Official Plan will need to be appropriately illustrated in the Zoning By-law through either a Zone to implement the policies of the Official Plan; and,
- Any zoning updates should be written in plain, accessible language so property owners and developers can easily understand how the rules apply to the land.

### 3.4.2 Perth County Housing Needs Assessment

The Perth County Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken by Watson & Associated in August 2023 to help inform the development of housing policies that are aligned to accommodate current and future residential demand. The housing needs assessment used macro-economic conditions and demographic trends to identify the type of housing supply required across the County to support the anticipated strong population and employment growth over the next decade. With provincial policy and guidance increasingly focused on expanding housing supply and market choice, the housing needs assessment helps identify a long-term strategy to increase housing needs on a county-level.

Within the County, 86% of the housing base consists of low-density housing and there is a limited share of rental units. The lack of housing variety, coupled with the increase in housing prices and rental rates above the average household income, has contributed to an overall structural deficit in housing supply that does not meet the needs of the current population. Perth County requires approximately 3,515 units of new housing supply, 925 of which need to be affordable, to meet the existing and future growth needs over the next decade. Of the total 3,515 units required to address the County's current and forecast 10-year housing needs, 75% (2,365 units) are needed in North Perth, 14% (450 units) in West Perth, 9% (315 units) in Perth East, and 3% (95 units) in South Perth. Of the 925 affordable units need in the County, 680 (74%) are needed in North Perth, 105 (11%) in West Perth, 100 (11%) in Perth East and 40 (4%) in Perth South.

To achieve the housing mix of housing development activity needed to meet the existing and future housing needs, the housing needs assessment encourages focusing on regulatory incentives, financial incentives, and a quantum of designated developable land supply. There is also specific mention of encouraging flexibility in development permissions (i.e. building height, density, parking requirements), focusing on higher density development, and promoting a range of infill/intensification opportunities, including medium-density and high density development, to enable a higher rate of residential development activity that is reflective of the community housing needs.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Increasing the range of housing types permitted within residential zones;
- Where higher-density uses are permitted, regulations should be added to require a minimum area per unit for multi-residential uses. The minimum area per unit will assist to ensure land is being used efficiently and can accommodate different housing types;
- Simplifying and consolidating the number of residential zones;
- Adding permissions for additional dwelling units in all low-density zones to increase the availability of “gentle density” units; and,
- Aligning development permissions, such as building height and parking requirements, with current trends and best practices across similar Ontario communities to enable more variety in the County's housing mix.

### 3.4.3 County Strategic Plan

Perth County refreshed its County-wide Strategic Plan in 2023 and the plan extends through to 2026. The Perth County Strategic Plan is a guiding document providing an overall direction for County governance. The Strategic Plan is broken down into Key Themes, several of which relate directly to the Zoning By-law review, including: rapid growth and the importance of regional planning; protecting the environment; housing availability and affordability; agriculture sector support and the preservation of prime agricultural lands; and, transit needs and sustainability. These themes relate to the Zoning By-law and carry through to overarching goals in the Strategic Plan related to growth and economic development priorities and community development and planning priorities. The priorities to be considered include:

- Priority 1 is for Perth County to develop appropriate policies and regulations to preserve and enhance agricultural land and encourage farm gate sales, secondary occupations, and processing of agricultural products within Perth County;
- Priority 2, the County will work with member municipalities to support responsible residential growth to stimulate the development of attainable housing options while ensuring the preservation of farmland; and,
- Priority 3 the County will support the development of diverse and flexible transportation options.

All of these priorities in the growth and economic goal can be supported through the diversification of permitted uses and support for higher-density development within the local Zoning By-laws.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Incorporate provisions within the Agricultural Zones to permit farm stands, on-farm diversified uses, and home occupations as permitted uses to further support the conservation of farmland, local food production, and agri-tourism; and,
- Reducing the number of residential zones and increasing the variety of housing options permitted within each residential zone.

### 3.4.4 Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Housing and Homelessness Plan

The Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Housing and Homelessness Plan was released in 2014, and updated in 2020, in accordance with the Housing Services Act, 2011. Undertaken by the City of Stratford, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for the greater Perth County area, the HPP outlined a framework for delivering housing and homelessness services locally, while the 2020 update looked to identify current and future housing needs, set objectives and targets for housing needs and propose actions and a strategy. The assessment of housing need and demand for the greater Perth County area identified that there is an increase in the proportion of low-income households compared to provincial median, however, the availability of rental units has decreased, leading to an increase in the number of applications for rent-geared-to-income housing.

The Housing and Homelessness Plan identifies a need for 228 new units of affordable housing and 61 new units of supportive housing for the County. To achieve this need, the Housing and Homelessness Plan identifies five strategic priority areas of focus, with “Creating Attainable Housing Options” and “Sustaining Community Housing” being two strategic priorities areas that can be implemented through the Zoning By-law Review. While there are no recommendations contained within the Housing and Homelessness Plan that specifically require inclusion within the Zoning By-laws for implementation, increasing permitted uses and reducing minimum lot requirements can assist in increasing the range of housing options that are available for current and future residents.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Increasing the range of housing types permitted within residential zones;
- Simplifying and consolidating the number of residential zones;
- Ensuring consistency in Zoning permissions across serviced Settlement Areas within each local Zoning By-law to ensure equitable access to attainable housing opportunities where existing infrastructure and public services are located;
- Adding permissions for additional dwelling units in residential zones to increase the availability of “gentle density” units; and,
- Aligning lot-related regulations with current trends and best practices to permit a wider-variety of housing options.

The City of Stratford is currently undertaking a review of the Housing and Homelessness Plan to provide guidance for the next 10 years. It will be important for the County to stay up to date on the project process so that actions and strategies resulting from the Housing and Homelessness Plan update can be incorporated into the local Zoning By-laws, where appropriate and possible.

**3.4.5 Perth County Economic Development, Tourism, and Transportation Strategy**

The Perth County Economic, Tourism, and Transportation Strategy establishes 40 actions to support business growth and economic development. The actions are predicated on five priority areas including affordable housing, tourism brand development, workforce planning, mobility and investment attraction. While there are no recommendations contained within the Strategy that specifically require inclusion within the Zoning By-laws for implementation, certain provisions within the Zoning By-laws can be added to support growth and economic development within the identified priority areas. The Business Retention Expansion and Attraction priority includes action under employment lands to ensure a ten-year supply of available and “shovel-ready” employment lands. Further, the strategy outlines pursuing investments in emerging sectors such as Agri-Food and the EV Supply Chain. Transportation and tourism were also included as an economic priority, with the need for reliable, affordable and sustainable mobility solutions to improve connections for residents and employers and to support the implementation of key directions found in the Perth County Cycle Tourism Strategy.

Under the affordable housing priority, action items include to promote the development of additional residential units, support and implement data and information platforms that accelerate affordable housing construction throughout Perth County, advocate for innovative housing solutions and new forms of low-cost, sustainable housing.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Three units are supported as of right under the Provincial Planning Statement and the County Official Plan. To go above and beyond provincial legislation, each local municipality could allow for over three units as-of-right on a parcel of land through provisions in the new Zoning By-law; and,
- Permitted uses should be reviewed to consider permissions and regulations for emerging sectors, such as Agri-food.

### 3.4.6 Perth County Cycle Tourism Strategy

The Perth County Cycle Tourism Strategy, created in 2022, recognizes the opportunity that cycle tourism could bring to Perth County if efforts are made to improve the cycling experience in Perth Country. The goal of the Cycle Tourism Strategy is “To grow this market to benefit local communities and maximize associated economic opportunities”. In 2019, 1.6 million trips in Ontario involved cycling and 68% of all cycling visits in Ontario were overnight visits.

Cycle tourism can generate significant economic impacts for the destination region, since cyclists tend to stay overnight and have higher than average spending levels. Under the Cycle Tourism Strategy, one of the key directions is to enhance the physical infrastructure identified as part of Perth County’s Cycle Tourism Product. This includes identifying and closing gaps in infrastructure and supporting efforts to resolve infrastructure issues with appropriate entities. While there are no recommendations contained within the Strategy that specifically require inclusion within the Zoning By-laws for implementation, certain provisions can be added to other regulatory documents, such as local Site Plan Control Guidelines, to support the inclusion of bicycle parking in new developments within higher-priority tourism areas.

### 3.4.7 Creating a Healthy Environment: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan for Perth County, North Perth, Perth East, Perth South, West Perth, Stratford and St. Marys was created in 2021 and is titled “Creating a Healthy Environment: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan” (GGRP). The GGRP is a community plan developed over two years through community input and identifies a vision, goals, actions and strategies to increase adaptability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the community. Working towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the vision of the Plan is to ambitiously reduce local greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a more resilient and healthy future for our communities.

There are several goals and actions which speak directly to buildings and land use, agriculture, natural environment, and transportation. Building and land use actions includes sustainable neighbourhoods that are connected, include mixed uses, discourage urban sprawl, have reduced hardscapes and promote transit and active transportation options. Increasing local resiliency to sustain long-term food security, enhancing agricultural best management practices, increasing the capacity for energy production/exploration, and supporting local biogas implementation support actions within the agriculture sphere. Protecting local woodlots and managing runoff through low impact development support the natural environment goals of the Plan, while improving the walkability of neighbourhoods, the installation of electric charging stations, and promotion and support for the use of public transportation support the transportation goals of the Plan. While there are no action items within the Plan that specifically require inclusion within the Zoning By-laws for implementation, certain provisions within the Zoning By-laws can be added to increase the overall adaptability of Perth County.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-laws include:

- Review hardscaping limits included within the lot coverage provisions of the Zoning By-laws to reduce hardscapes and water run off;
- Permit green alternatives such as, rain gardens, and green rooftops to be eligible for inclusion as required “landscaped area”; and,
- Review the Zoning By-laws to ensure electric vehicle (EV) parking spaces and related infrastructure are permitted in urban areas;

## 3.5 North Perth Local Policy

### 3.5.1 North Perth Servicing Master Plan

The North Perth Servicing Master Plan is still underway and the notice of study completion and final report is expected in Q2 2025. The Servicing Master Plan follows the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process and was initiated in July 2021. The servicing master plan will identify and evaluate water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure within the existing urban settlements of Listowel and Atwood in order to develop a comprehensive servicing strategy to accommodate future projects and growth targets.

Once the North Perth Servicing Master Plan is completed, related recommendations, such as where growth should be directed based on servicing capacity, can be incorporated into the North Perth Zoning By-law.

### 3.5.2 North Perth Affordable Housing CIP & Design Guidelines

The North Perth Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan is a document that includes tools and strategies for improving the built, economic, and social environment of a designated area. Under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* through a CIP, municipalities are able to engage financial incentives for land owners to facilitate private investment that will have community benefits. The CIP must be in alignment with provincial policy and local plans and policies.

There are several financial incentive programs offered through the North Perth CIP which support downtown rehabilitation/redevelopment and an overall increase in housing development within downtown/core areas. While there are no action items within the Plan that specifically call out inclusion within the Zoning By-laws for implementation, certain provisions within the Zoning By-laws can be added to support the overall goal of increasing the development of a mix of housing along the Housing Continuum within North Perth.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Continue to support mixed-use zones and additional/ancillary dwelling units to be located above commercial uses within downtown areas and arterial corridors; and,
- Consider the reduction of minimum lot sizes to accommodate a mix of housing options along the Housing Continuum within North Perth.

### 3.5.3 North Perth Strategic Plan 2023-2026

The Municipality of North Perth’s Corporate Strategic Plan 2023-2026 was developed in collaboration with community, staff, agencies, partners, and council as a response to significant community growth from the urban exodus spurred on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The North Perth Strategic Plan provides the municipality with mechanisms to support a thriving North Perth given its renewed focus on growth and future strategic priorities. The Plan is divided into 4 broad goals, further elaborated by singular priorities, with several priorities related to the new Zoning By-law, specifically:

- Priority 3.1 which includes “develop solutions to... attainable housing shortages” and priority 3.2 includes to “actively work to preserve and sustain productive agricultural lands”, “promote development of on-farm diversification and farm gate sales” and to encourage transition of these activities to commercial and industrial properties as they succeed and grow.
- Goal 4 focuses on community planning and development and prioritizes sustainable and responsible development, a focus on diverse housing options and improving housing density, active transportation goals in conjunction with the Transportation Master Plan, and the application of a climate lens to municipal decision making.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Sustain agricultural lands and agricultural land productivity by permitting on-farm diversified uses and farm gate uses within the Agriculture Zone;
- Consider reducing minimum lot sizes and diversifying types of permitted residential uses in each Residential Zone to accommodate and promote a mix of housing options;
- Consider going beyond the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 permissions of 3 dwelling units as-of-right per lot to 4 dwelling units as-of-right per lot in urban areas with full municipal servicing; and,
- Permissions for increased density in urban areas where multi-modal transportation options are available.

### 3.5.4 North Perth Development Standards

In North Perth, the Development Standards Policy sets the groundwork for how new subdivisions and developments are physically built, providing a roadmap that guides how everything from sidewalks and curbs to stormwater systems and road widths should be designed and constructed. Originally established under By-law 33-2016, this document ensures that growth happens in a way that is organized, functional, and aligned with the municipality’s long-term goals. For North Perth, it helps ensure that as land is developed, the infrastructure being put in place is both consistent and able to serve future residents and businesses reliably. These standards act as the connective tissue between planning vision and on-the-ground reality, making sure development isn’t just allowed—but sustainable.

The Development Standards complement the Zoning By-law by setting the physical and design requirements that go hand-in-hand with zoning permissions. Without aligning zoning and servicing, development might be technically permitted but practically unfeasible.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Inclusion of maximum driveway widths within the Zoning By-law to compliment the curbs and driveway depression standards set out in the North Perth Development Standards; and,
- Sight triangle requirements should be added into the required provisions of the Zoning By-law to ensure consistency with the North Perth Development Standards.

### 3.5.5 North Perth Transportation Master Plan

The North Perth Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is a strategic planning document that serves to improve the transportation system in North Perth, particularly the road and active transportation networks. The transportation vision is to create a “system that provides safe and efficient movement of people and goods and supports diverse transportation options, connecting the community and promoting healthy living to 2041 and beyond”. The goals of the TMP include safe mobility that promotes cycling and walking, a system that contributes to liveability and quality of life, a system that supports local business, and connects people with services and recreational opportunities. The document provides road strategy details that complement the active transportation and shared mobility strategy.

The TMP was prepared using a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment from which opportunities and alternative planning strategies were generated. Comprehensive public, Indigenous, agency, and stakeholder engagement was undertaken to develop the TMP.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Review and update parking standards within the Zoning By-law as per recommendation 4.21 and in alignment with the Listowel Downtown Core Area Parking Study.

### 3.5.6 North Perth Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is North Perth’s first comprehensive long-range plan for parks and recreation services that serves as a strategy to guide community needs over the next 10 years. The Plan includes an inventory of public facilities, parks, trails and cultural assets and an evaluation of future needs and development based on current assets and usage, demographics and population projections, infrastructure and service gaps, and budgets. Parkland dedication policies are also found within the new Perth County Official Plan to assist in the development of parks and recreation infrastructure within North Perth.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Zoning should refer to the parkland classifications laid out in the Plan to help guide decisions about what types of parks go where, and what features they should include. Consideration can be given toward creating multiple “parks and recreation” zones to promote neighbourhood uses in smaller parks and community uses, like sports fields, in larger parks;
- To make it clear that infrastructure, such as stormwater ponds, differ in open space value than active park spaces, separate zones can be considered and created to recognize open spaces that are separate from municipal parks; and,
- Creating bicycle parking requirements for recreational uses to support the development of additional bicycle infrastructure.

### 3.5.7 North Perth Community Risk Assessment

Under Ontario Regulation 378/18, every municipality must complete and review a community risk assessment and use that assessment to inform decisions regarding the provision of fire protection services. A comprehensive analysis of the geographic, building stock, critical infrastructure, demographic, hazard, public safety response, community services, economic, and past loss and event history profiles are required under the regulation. Risks within the community are assigned a level which assists in determining the risk treatment options in emergency situations.

The North Perth Community Risk Assessment is relevant to the Zoning By-law Review as it addresses additional residential units to ensure the safety of residents. The North Perth Development & Protective Services Department has developed a process for property owners when building or adding an ARU to their property that ensures the ARU is compliant with the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Fire Code. Further, the Community Risk Assessment identifies inaccessible areas for fire protection services and recommends development occur away from these areas.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Prohibit new development on properties with singular road access from roads where there is no winter maintenance. A holding zone can be considered for these properties until year-round fire protection services is available.

### 3.5.8 Listowel Downtown Core Area Parking Study

The Listowel Downtown Core Area Parking Study is an initiative undertaken out of the North Perth Community Improvement Plan. The Study is focused on the downtown areas of Listowel to confirm current demands and identify deficiencies. It includes an inventory of all parking facilities (both private and public lots and stalls) in the downtown core, parking accumulation and duration counts, policy comparisons with other similar municipalities, and direct interview surveys.

The key objective of the Parking Study was to determine current parking demands and alternatives to better support local development and enhance the visitor and patron experience. Parking standards are regulated in the Zoning By-law and minimum requirements are set out in the Municipality of North Perth Zoning By-law No. 6-ZB-1999. Existing parking requirements in the Zoning By-law were compared to other similarly sized municipalities, the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) peak parking generation data, and parking requirements identified by the American Planning Association (APA). It was determined that on the whole, North Perth Parking Requirements are consistent with similar municipalities and the guidance from the APA and ITE. The Study included suggestions to be considered in the North Perth Zoning By-law update to either increase, decrease or base parking on gross floor area or use/capacity.

**Recommendations** for the North Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Include at minimum 1 accessible parking space in lots with less than 20 parking stalls (currently no provisions), 2 accessible spaces for lots between 21 – 50 stalls, and 3 accessible parking spaces for lots between 51 – 200 stalls, with 1 additional accessible space per 100 stalls;
- Utilize the comparator findings of Table E.1 within the Parking Study to update parking standards within the Zoning By-law;
- Consider provisions for bike parking facilities to encourage passive transportation. Provisions should require bike parking facilities for higher-density residential development and mixed-use areas to provide suitable bicycle parking where cyclists stop, with racks that maximize convenience for short-term stops (i.e. store or bank entrances) and storage facilities that maximize security for long-term stops (i.e. homes, schools or places of work);
- Review gross floor area as it relates to parking requirements for office uses and industrial establishments; and,
- Consider increasing the parking requirements per unit for boarding and lodging houses.

As North Perth is the only Municipality out of the four lower-tier municipalities within Perth County that has undertaken a Parking Study with the inclusion of updated parking standards, the parking standards and rates of the other three municipalities should consider the comparator findings of the Parking Study and align standards with those of the North Perth Zoning By-law.

### 3.5.9 North Perth Wireless Telecommunication Tower Protocol

In keeping with the ISED Federal Standards, North Perth established its own local protocol to guide the establishment of new wireless telecommunication tower sites. The Protocol provides guidance in considering proposals to locate telecommunications facilities, directing such towers away from sensitive uses to minimize the impact of such infrastructure on the community. Based on the permissions of the *Planning Act*, there are no policies within the Protocol that require inclusion within the Zoning By-law.

## 3.6 West Perth Local Policy

### 3.6.1 West Perth Municipal Development and Servicing Guidelines

The West Perth Municipal Development and Servicing Guidelines, finalized in 2024, is a technical manual used to direct how new development – including roads, sidewalks, and infrastructure - are designed and built within the Municipality of West Perth. The document is used by developers, consultants, and municipal staff to ensure that new subdivisions, site plans, and other projects are designed to work well with existing infrastructure and meet the municipality's long-term needs.

While the Zoning By-law sets out what kind of uses are allowed on a property and controls lot sizes and building height, the Servicing Guidelines deal with the technical side of how those developments get built, particularly when it comes to infrastructure. A project in West Perth can't move forward unless it meets both zoning and servicing requirements. By working together, these tools help make sure that development not only fits the community's vision but is also practical and safe to build.

**Recommendations** for the West Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Where lands have been brought into a settlement area but servicing capacity is not yet available, holding zones should be used and tied to infrastructure upgrades and servicing capacity.

### 3.6.2 West Perth Affordable Housing CIP & Design Guidelines

The West Perth Affordable and Attainable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a municipal tool created to help encourage the development of more affordable housing options within the Municipality of West Perth. The plan was developed in response to growing concerns around housing availability and affordability, and it outlines a series of financial incentives, including grants and fee rebates, that the municipality can offer to support qualifying projects. It also lays out a clear set of design expectations for new housing developments, focusing on things like good building design, accessibility, and how new projects fit into the surrounding neighbourhood. The CIP focuses its efforts on Mitchell, where full municipal services are available, but also allows for investment in smaller communities like Dublin and Staffa. While the Plan is specific to West Perth, its approach to affordable housing is very much in line with broader goals across Perth County.

While the Zoning By-law and the CIP deal with different aspects of development, they work hand-in-hand. The Zoning By-law lays out the rules for what can be built on a property—things like land use, setbacks, and building height. The CIP, on the other hand, uses the Zoning rules to its advantage and helps make certain kinds of development—like adding secondary units or building small-scale apartment buildings—more financially feasible through incentives. Zoning makes something possible, and the CIP helps make it happen. In other words, zoning regulates the “what and where,” while the CIP supports the “how.”

**Recommendations** for the West Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Allow more flexibility in the types of residential uses permitted within West Perth, including additional residential units, backyard homes, or small multi-unit buildings—especially in areas where municipal infrastructure already exists; and,
- Update parking standards and minimum lot sizes to make it easier to develop smaller or more affordable units, particularly in Mitchell and other designated improvement areas.

### 3.6.3 West Perth Site Plan Design Guidelines

The West Perth Site Plan Design Guidelines is a document that provides developers, municipal and agency staff an overview of the procedures, expectations, requirements, and timelines for site plan review, as permitted by Section 41 of the *Planning Act*. Under the West Perth Site Plan Control By-law, certain types of development require the review and approval of a site plan prior to issuing a building permit.

Site plan control is legislated through a separate section of the *Planning Act* from Zoning but both work in conjunction with one another through planning applications. Site plan control does not regulate matters that are covered under the Zoning By-law, but rather allows a municipality to ensure the proposed development integrates responsibly with municipal services and existing uses.

**Recommendations** for the West Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Maintaining planting strip requirements within the Zoning By-law, in alignment with the “Planting Strip” requirements of the Site Plan Design Guidelines.

### 3.6.4 West Perth Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

The West Perth Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 was developed to guide the Municipality of West Perth in setting goals, making decisions, and planning for long-term success. It was built through community engagement and reflects local values and priorities. The plan identifies five main areas of focus:

- Growth and economic development;
- Service effectiveness;
- Community development;
- Volunteerism and participation; and,
- Corporate sustainability.

The vision emphasizes balanced rural-urban growth, agricultural preservation, and creating a welcoming, inclusive community. It also highlights the need for a diverse housing supply, stronger local businesses, and investments in community infrastructure and services. Although time-bound to a four-year window, the Plan outlines long-term directions that remain relevant across Perth County—particularly its emphasis on thoughtful growth, support for local industries, youth retention, and maintaining a high quality of life.

The Strategic Plan doesn't create zoning provisions, but it plays an important role in shaping how Zoning By-laws evolve. For instance, the Plan calls for more diverse housing options and increased residential density—goals that can only be realized if the Zoning By-law allows for a broader mix of building types like townhomes, second units, and apartments. Similarly, the Plan's push for commercial and industrial expansion means the Zoning By-law must support growth in employment areas with appropriate land use permissions and infrastructure planning. The Plan's call to protect farmland and preserve small-town character can also be implemented within the Zoning By-law by identifying where development should not occur. In short, the Zoning By-law becomes the legal tool that brings the Strategic Plan's ideas into action by controlling how land is used and developed across West Perth.

**Recommendations** for the West Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Reviewing existing residential Zoning provisions to allow for a range of residential types in both urban and village areas, particularly to support affordability and aging in place;
- Apply mixed-use zoning in core areas like downtown Mitchell to help attract both residents and businesses, aligning with the Plan's economic development goals;
- Consider allowing small-scale agricultural enterprises, agricultural-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses as-of-right in the Agriculture Zone; and,
- Applying holding provisions or a "Future Development" Zone to areas where servicing capacity is required to support future development.

### 3.6.5 West Perth Recreation, Parks, and Trails Master Plan

The Recreation, Parks, and Trails Master Plan for West Perth is a forward-looking document that lays out a vision for how the municipality can improve and expand its recreational spaces over time. It looks at everything from neighbourhood parks and regional trails to playgrounds and open spaces, with the goal of ensuring these amenities meet the needs of residents now and into the future. One of the key features of the Plan is its parkland classification system, which helps define what different kinds of parks should include, how large they should be, and where they should ideally be located. It also sets service level targets, like aiming for a certain amount of parkland per capita, and stresses the importance of making recreational spaces safe, accessible, and inclusive. The Master Plan serves as a guide for future decision-making regarding investments in parks and trails and the Zoning Bylaw plays an important role in supporting the kinds of recreational goals outlined in the Master Plan, helping translate many of the Plan's priorities into practical, enforceable rules.

**Recommendations** for the West Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Zoning should refer to the parkland classifications laid out in the Plan to help guide decisions about what types of parks go where, and what features they should include. Consideration can be given toward created multiple “parks and recreation” zones to promote neighbourhood uses in smaller parks and community uses, like sports fields, in larger parks; and,
- To make it clear that infrastructure, such as stormwater ponds, differ in open space value than active park spaces, separate zones can be considered and created to recognize open spaces that are separate from municipal parks.

### 3.6.6 West Perth Community Risk Assessment

Under Ontario Regulation 378/18, every municipality must complete and review a community risk assessment and use that assessment to inform decisions regarding the provision of fire protection services. With an increase in population, and population density, expected within West Perth over the next 20 years, a comprehensive analysis of the geographic layout of the Municipality, as well as an inventory of building stock and critical infrastructure, is required to understand risks within the community and make informed decisions on how protective services can be provided.

Of the four levels of treatment risk identified within the Community Risk Assessment, risk avoidance and risk mitigation are two levels that can be addressed within the Zoning By-law, where appropriate. Further, the Community Risk Assessment provides a summary of occupancy classification for all properties within West Perth. As the Community Risk Assessment is more current than the West Perth Zoning By-law, the occupancy classification could be used to better understand the exact use of properties within the Municipality, leading to a more accurate zone being placed on a property, and ensuring that conflicting uses are mitigated through zoning regulations, such as setbacks.

**Recommendations** for the West Perth Zoning By-law include:

- Review the Community Risk Assessment occupancy classification and, where appropriate, modify the Zone of properties to be in line with the existing use;
- Review setbacks within the Zoning By-law against the width required by fire-fighting servicing to access buildings in emergency situations.

## 3.7 Perth South Local Policy

### 3.7.1 Perth South Strategic Plan

The Perth South Strategic Plan 2024-2028 was adopted in May 2024 and serves as the Township’s roadmap for the future and assists in guiding decisions that will impact the well-being of the Perth South community and its residents. The Plan’s vision is that Perth South is where ideas and families flourish and the mission is to listen, plan, and act. It is predicated on values of responsiveness, service oriented, collaboration, and fiscal responsibility.

The strategic priorities of the Plan are expansive but include some priorities that can be supported by the Zoning By-law, such as sustainable growth, quality of life, physical infrastructure and service excellence. The goals and actions of the plan prioritizes responsible development, diverse housing options, and environmental stewardship; which are then supported by actions to encourage increasing density in settlement areas, encourage non-agricultural land to be used for residential, commercial and industrial use, and to preserve farmland and respect farm operations. Under the quality of life goal, community engagement can be actioned by conducting regular surveys of residents to ascertain their preferences. Physical infrastructure goals include innovation and investment in sustainable infrastructure. Service excellence goals include good governance and the review and update of all by-laws and policies. While there are no goals or action items within the Plan that specifically call out inclusion within the Zoning By-laws for implementation, certain provisions within the Zoning By-laws can be added to support sustainable economic expansion and community advancement within Perth South.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-law include:

- Protect farmland by permitting agricultural uses that allow for farm operations to diversify and limit non-agricultural uses to existing settlement areas.

### 3.8 Perth East Local Policy

#### 3.8.1 Perth East Recreation Master Plan

The Perth East Recreation Master Plan, created in 2017, is the Township’s first in-depth look at how to manage and improve parks and recreation services for the future. It lays out a set of priorities and strategies for making sure public spaces and facilities meet the needs of a growing and changing community. A big part of the plan focuses on how to classify different types of parks—ranging from small neighbourhood parks to larger community-level spaces—and what each of them should offer. This system helps guide decisions about how much land to set aside for parks, what kind of activities to include, and where future parks should go. It’s not just about adding more green space—it’s about making sure parks are well-placed, accessible, and built to serve people of all ages and abilities. The Master Plan serves as a guide for future decision-making regarding investments in parks and trails and the Zoning Bylaw can help ensure that land set aside for parks matches the size and type outlined in the Master Plan. It also helps to guide zoning decisions around access, buffering between adjacent uses, and requirements for off-street parking or trail linkages.

**Recommendations** for the Perth East Zoning By-law include:

- Zoning should refer to the parkland classifications laid out in the Plan to help guide decisions about what types of parks go where, and what features they should include. Consideration can be given toward creating multiple “parks and recreation” zones to promote neighbourhood uses in smaller parks and community uses, like sports fields, in larger parks; and,

- To make it clear that infrastructure, such as stormwater ponds, differ in open space value than active park spaces, separate zones can be considered and created to recognize open spaces that are separate from municipal parks.

### 3.8.2 Perth East Strategic Plan

The Perth East Strategic Plan, developed for the 2019–2022 period, lays out the community goals for how the Township should grow and improve over time. It was built through public input and focuses on supporting agriculture, encouraging business growth, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. A key theme throughout the plan is finding a sustainable way to balance growth by protecting farmland while creating space for new businesses and housing. It recognizes the importance of on-farm businesses and encourages their development, while also identifying the need to help those businesses grow into properly zoned commercial or industrial spaces when they reach a certain scale. The Plan also highlights the challenge of limited commercial land and aging buildings in Milverton, which creates obstacles for entrepreneurs and small businesses. The Plan also identifies a lack of housing diversity. Since the majority of homes in Perth East are single-detached, the Plan suggests there’s a need for more varied options to support a growing and changing population.

The Strategic Plan doesn’t set zoning rules, but it gives a clear picture of what the community values and where policy needs to shift. Zoning is the tool that can help realize the values of the community through permitted uses and tailored regulations.

**Recommendations** for the Perth East Zoning By-law include:

- Clarify and expand the permissions for on-farm diversified uses;
- Identify areas of growth within settlement areas that require proper infrastructure servicing and place these areas in holding zones until servicing is available;
- Updating zoning permissions in core areas of settlement areas, like Milverton, to allow for more modern, accessible, and mixed-use spaces that suit small businesses; and,
- Create residential zoning permissions that are flexible enough to allow for a greater range of housing options; allowing the Township to meet future demand and offer choices for different income levels and stages of life.

### 3.8.3 Township of Perth East Water and Wastewater Master Plan

The Township of Perth East Water and Wastewater Master Plan was written in 2018 and identifies the water and wastewater infrastructure needs for Milverton and Shakespeare up to the year 2038. Milverton is fully serviced through groundwater wells, a pumping station, and a communal sanitary sewage system, while Shakespeare is fully serviced by sanitary, but, only a portion of Shakespeare is serviced by a Municipal groundwater well. While the Water and Wastewater Master Plan doesn’t directly provide recommendations for consideration through the Zoning By-law project, the Plan does indicate where servicing infrastructure is located and available, which can guide where growth is directed within the Zoning By-law. The plan also identifies current deficiencies in the water and wastewater system for the Township.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-law include:

- Due to the reliance on groundwater wells, activities that pose a significant drinking water threat should be limited through the use of overlays or site-specific zoning in areas adjacent to wellheads;
- Setbacks should be used within the Zoning By-law to mitigate nuisances (e.g. smell) between the existing wastewater treatment plants and sensitive land uses;
- The Plan identifies Milverton Sewage System as exceeding capacity and requiring expansion to allow for growth. A holding zone should be considered for newly added lands to the Milverton Settlement Area to ensure appropriate servicing capacity if available before development and build-out of the lands occur; and,
- The plan identifies reasonable reserve in water capacity for Shakespeare, however, not enough capacity for the unserved part of the community as it currently stands, which does not include anticipated growth lands. A holding zone should be considered for newly added lands to the Shakespeare Settlement Area to ensure appropriate servicing capacity if available before development and build-out of the lands occur.

### 3.8.4 Perth East Community Risk Assessment

The Township of Perth East Community Risk Assessment is the identification of fire and life safety risks in the community. It assesses the probability of those risks occurring, how to address them and the impact should they occur. The Assessment provides the fire department to ensure their levels of service, programs and activities for public fire safety education, Fire Code inspections and enforcement and emergency response mitigate risks and meet community needs.

Ontario Regulation 378/18: Community Risk Assessments requires the completion of a comprehensive community risk assessment to inform fire protection service levels and identify, analyze, evaluate, and prioritize risk every five years. Under the O. Reg. there must be geographic, building stock, critical infrastructure, demographic, hazard, public safety response, community services, economic, and past loss and event history profiles completed. Within these profiles, levels of risk are assigned; to avoid, mitigate, accept, or transfer the risk. Fire departments must review their community risk assessment at least once every 12 months to confirm it accurately reflects the community and fire emergency risks.

Of the four levels of treatment risk identified within the Community Risk Assessment, risk avoidance and risk mitigation are two levels that can be addressed within the Zoning By-law, where appropriate. The Community Risk Assessment also provides a summary of occupancy classification for all properties within Perth East, which could be used to better understand the exact use of properties within the Township, leading to a more accurate zone being placed on a property.

**Recommendations** for the Zoning By-law include:

- Review the Community Risk Assessment occupancy classification and, where appropriate, modify the Zone of properties to be in line with the existing use; and,
- Review setbacks within the Zoning By-law against the width required by fire-fighting servicing to access buildings in emergency situations.

## 4 Conclusion

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This Policy Analysis Report has been prepared based on a preliminary background review of guiding policy documents and through initial consultations with local staff and the project Steering Committee. This Discussion Paper will form the basis for the Phase 2 Discussion Papers, which will delve deeper into the consistency of the local Zoning By-laws with the overarching County Official Plan and provide recommendations for how key Zoning topics and issues will be addressed.

While this Policy Analysis Report is a consolidation of all relevant policy for all of the local Zoning By-laws, the Phase 2 Discussion Papers will be broken out into separate Discussion Papers, based on land use type, to provide the opportunity for targeted analysis to be undertaken. To assist in the division of analysis between Discussion Papers in Phase 2, the preliminary recommendations provided within this Report should be broken down by land use type for consideration.