



Resources and Environment Discussion Paper

New Official Plan Project
Municipality of Trent Hills
November 1, 2023



Prepared for Municipality of Trent Hills

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The New Official Plan

The Municipality of Trent Hills is preparing a new Official Plan (OP), the community's primary land use policy document. The current OP was approved in 2001, immediately following the creation of Trent Hills from the amalgamation of the Township of Campbellford/Seymour, the Township of Percy, and the Village of Hastings.

The purpose of an OP is to establish goals, objectives and policies to manage and direct development and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environments. The OP policies create a framework for development and infrastructure activities by private landowners and developers, as well as the public sector.

The OP establishes direction for development in designated areas, such as urban and rural areas, each of which has a unique built form and servicing requirements. The OP policies also apply protections for important natural and cultural resources, such as sensitive environmental features or heritage resources, while also protecting people and property from development hazards such as floodplains.

The provincial *Planning Act* requires all municipalities to adopt an OP. The process to adopt a new OP is prescribed in the *Act*, including contents of the OP, consultation requirements, and approval timelines. The *Planning Act* also permits municipalities to use a range of powers to implement the policies of the OP, such as zoning and land division control.

While each Municipality is empowered to craft the policy direction to reflect community values, the OP is also required to be consistent with the policy direction provided by upper-tier and provincial policy frameworks. Specifically, the Plan must reflect the policy direction mandated in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), as well as the matters of provincial interest listed in the *Planning Act*. These requirements are intended to ensure that priorities for the province as a whole are reflected and appropriately considered in local land use decisions.

Similarly, as a lower-tier municipality within Northumberland County, the Municipality of Trent Hills OP is required to be consistent with the County OP. The Northumberland County OP was approved in 2016 and provides high-level policy direction for all lands and municipalities within the County. Currently, the County is undertaking an update to its OP, with the resulting policy direction required to be similarly reflected in the forthcoming Trent Hills OP. As required in the *Planning Act*, the Trent Hills OP must be approved by Northumberland County Council to take effect.

When the new OP is complete, Trent Hills Council will repeal the current OP and replace it with the new document, in accordance with Section 21 of the *Planning Act*. The Municipality will forward the adopted OP to Northumberland County, which may approve the Plan, approve it with modifications, or refuse it.

The Municipality has engaged Fotenn Planning + Design to assist with the preparation of the new OP, the Discussion Papers, and other activities throughout the planning process.

1.2 The Discussion Paper Series

To inform the preparation of the new OP, a series of Discussion Papers have been produced. The Discussion Papers fulfill several objectives, including:

- / Informing the public on the OP process;
- / Outlining policy areas to be addressed in the new OP;
- / Describing the policy direction from the province and Northumberland County that is required to be incorporated into the Trent Hills OP; and
- / Recommending policy approaches for major policy areas in the new OP.

This discussion paper on Resources and the Environment is one of four Discussion Papers in the series, which also includes:

- / Building Strong Healthy Communities
- / Protecting Public Health and Safety
- / Implementation

The Discussion Papers review several legal documents, policy documents, and resources to assist in informing next steps, goals, and other requirements for the OP update, including:

- / *The Planning Act*
- / *The Conservation Authorities Act*
- / *The Ontario Heritage Act*
- / The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS, 2020)
- / A Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)
- / Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)
- / County of Northumberland Official Plan
 - County of Northumberland Natural Heritage System Official Plan Amendment (Northumberland Next)
 - County of Northumberland Growth Management Official Plan Amendment (Northumberland Next)
 - County of Northumberland Agricultural Mapping Official Plan Amendment (Northumberland Next)
- / Northumberland County Land Needs Analysis
- / Northumberland County Affordable Housing Strategy
- / County of Northumberland Transportation Master Plan
- / Trent Hills Official Plan (existing)
- / Municipality of Trent Hills Strategic Planning Survey Report
- / Municipality of Trent Hills Recreation Master Plan
- / Trent Hills Municipal Cultural Plan
- / Trent Hills Source Protection Plan

The information in these documents provides a policy and regulatory framework, goals and objectives, and overarching themes that will guide the development of the new Trent Hills Official Plan.

2.0 Planning and Policy Framework

2.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* legislates land use and municipal planning proceedings in the Province of Ontario. The *Planning Act* requires that a decision by the council of a municipality shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and conform to the applicable provincial plans that are in effect. Council decisions must also have regard for the matters of provincial interest listed in Section 2 of the *Planning Act*.

2.1.1 Matters of Provincial Interest

Section 2 of the *Planning Act* contains a set of provincial interests, spanning a range of land use planning topics. In contrast with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), these interests are embedded directly in the *Planning Act*, and are expressed with broader and more concise wording. In carrying out its responsibilities under the legislation, the council of a municipality must have regard to these matters of provincial interest:

- / The protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;
- / The protection of the agricultural resources of the Province;
- / The conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base;
- / The conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- / The supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;
- / The adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;
- / The minimization of waste;
- / The orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- / The accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;
- / The adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
- / The adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;
- / The adequate provision of employment opportunities;
- / The protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;
- / The co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies;
- / The resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private interests;
- / The protection of public health and safety;
- / The appropriate location of growth and development;
- / The promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians;

- / The promotion of built form that,
 - is well-designed,
 - encourages a sense of place, and
 - provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant;
- / The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.

2.1.2 Official Plans

The *Planning Act* mandates that municipalities adopt Official Plans, which must contain goals, objectives, and policies for physical development in the municipality. The *Planning Act* also requires that local councils update their Official Plans not less than 10 years from the date a new Official Plan comes into effect. If an Official Plan is not being replaced in its entirety, local councils must ensure they are updated at least every five years.

The legislation provides municipalities with tools and powers to improve and maintain appropriate land use planning, as guided by its Official Plan. Implementation tools include Community Improvement Plans (CIPs), zoning by-laws, land division mechanisms such as consents and plans of subdivision, and site plan control. As these tools must explicitly be enabled in an Official Plan, some existing processes and by-laws (such as zoning by-law, site plan control by-law, and parkland dedication by-law) may change following the approval of a new Official Plan.

2.2 Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) establishes policy direction to protect matters of provincial interest in Ontario, as enabled by Section 3 of the Planning Act. The most recent version of the PPS came into effect on May 1, 2020. All municipal planning decisions, including the contents of Official Plans, must be consistent with the policy framework established by the PPS.

The intent of the PPS is to provide for appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. Specifically, the policies focus growth and development within urban and rural settlement areas, while supporting the viability of rural areas. The policies of the PPS may be complemented by provincial plans or by locally-generated policies, such as Official Plans.

The PPS contains four sections, which also serve as the organizing structure for the Discussion Paper series:

- / Section 1: Building Strong Healthy Communities;
- / Section 2: Wise Use and Management of Resources;
- / Section 3: Protecting Public Health and Safety; and
- / Section 4: Implementation and Interpretation.

Each section is explored in detail across the Discussion Paper series according to the theme of each Paper.

2.2.1 Wise Use and Management of Resources

The PPS generally classifies resources as physical or cultural values worthy of protection for future use. Protection of these resources bring economic, environmental and social benefits to their surrounding communities and the Province as a whole. The categories of resources are described in the following subsections:

2.2.1.1 Natural Heritage

The PPS requires that natural features and areas be protected for the long-term. Diversity and connectivity of these features should be maintained, restored, or improved where possible, with linkages recognized between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features, and ground water features.

In Ecoregions 6E and 7E, including in Trent Hills, natural heritage systems must be identified, recognizing that their size and form will vary between urban and rural areas. Within these areas, development and site alteration shall not be permitted in significant wetlands. Similarly, development and site alteration are not permitted in significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, unless no negative impacts will result on the natural features or their ecological functions. Development and site alteration in fish habitat or in habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.

Development and site alteration shall similarly be prohibited on adjacent lands to natural heritage features and areas, unless no negative impacts on the features or their natural functions can be demonstrated.

2.2.1.2 Water

Planning authorities are required to protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water. The PPS lists a range of measures to achieve these objectives, including, among others:

- / Planning at a watershed scale;
- / Evaluating and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate;
- / Identifying water resource systems, including ground water features, hydrologic functions, natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features that secure the hydrological integrity of the watershed;
- / Maintaining linkages and related functions among ground water features, hydrologic functions, natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features;
- / Implementing necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to protect municipal drinking water supplies, vulnerable areas, and other natural water features;
- / Ensuring stormwater management practices minimize stormwater volumes and contaminant loads, and maintain or increase the extent of vegetative and pervious surfaces.

Development and site alteration shall be restricted in or near sensitive surface water features and sensitive ground water features. Mitigative measures may be required.

2.2.1.3 Agriculture

The PPS requires that prime agricultural areas be protected for long-term use for agriculture. Such areas may only be excluded from a prime agricultural area for settlement area expansions through a municipal comprehensive review process.

Prime agricultural areas are:

Areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the prime agricultural areas, in this order of priority.

Planning authorities are encouraged to use an agricultural system approach, which is comprised of a group of interconnected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. An agricultural system consists of an agricultural land base and an agri-food network, including infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.

Within prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities include:

- / **Agricultural uses**, defined as the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.
- / **Agriculture-related uses**, defined as those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity.
- / **On-farm diversified uses**, defined as uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products. Ground-mounted solar facilities are permitted in prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, only as on-farm diversified uses.

Policies stipulate that new land uses in prime agricultural areas, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, shall comply with the minimum distance separation (MDS) formulae to ensure compatibility. Non-agricultural uses permitted in prime agricultural areas are limited to extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources. Non-residential uses may be permitted, subject to prescribed criteria.

Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is generally discouraged, except for agricultural or agriculture-related uses or for a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation.

2.2.1.4 Mineral Resources

The PPS requires that mineral resources be protected for long-term use. Official Plan policies must identify and protect these resources from development and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use, or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact.

Known mineral deposits, as well as significant areas of mineral potential, shall be identified and protected. Development and activities in these resources or on adjacent lands which would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resources shall only be permitted in prescribed circumstances.

Policies also require rehabilitation to accommodate subsequent land uses after extraction and other related activities have ceased.

2.2.1.5 Mineral Aggregate Resources

Mineral aggregate resources include gravel, sand, clay, earth, shale, stone, limestone, dolostone, sandstone, marble, granite, rock or other material prescribed under the *Aggregate Resources Act*. Similar to mineral resources, the PPS requires that mineral aggregate resources shall be protected for long-term use.

Mineral aggregate resources, including deposits, shall be protected from development and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact. Notwithstanding this direction, development may be permitted if:

- a) The resource use would not be feasible; or
- b) The proposed land use or development serves a greater long-term public interest; and
- c) Issues of public health, public safety and environmental impact are addressed.

Progressive and final rehabilitation shall be required to accommodate subsequent land uses, promote land use compatibility, to recognize the interim nature of extraction, and to mitigate negative impacts to the extent possible. In general, complete rehabilitation back to an agricultural condition is required where extraction occurs in prime agricultural areas, subject to additional criteria.

2.2.1.6 Wayside Pits and Quarries, Portable Asphalt Plants and Portable Concrete Plants

The PPS requires that the following uses be permitted, except areas of existing development or particular environmental sensitivities, when being used on public authority contracts:

- / **Wayside pits and quarries**, defined as a temporary pit or quarry opened and used by or for a public authority solely for the purpose of a particular project or contract of road construction and not located on the road right-of-way;
- / **Portable asphalt plants**, defined as a facility:
 - With equipment designed to heat and dry aggregate and to mix aggregate with bituminous asphalt to produce asphalt paving material, and includes stockpiling and storage of bulk materials used in the process; and
 - Which is not of permanent construction, but which is to be dismantled at the completion of the construction project;
- / **Portable concrete plants**, defined as a building or structure:
 - With equipment designed to mix cementing materials, aggregate, water and admixtures to produce concrete, and includes stockpiling and storage of bulk materials used in the process; and
 - Which is not of permanent construction, but which is designed to be dismantled at the completion of the construction project.

2.2.1.7 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

The PPS requires that significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved. These areas refer to resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest. Processes and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands adjacent to these resources, unless an evaluation has determined that the heritage attributes of the resource will be conserved.

Similarly, development and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential, unless significant archaeological resources have been conserved.

2.3 New Draft Provincial Planning Statement (2023)

The Ontario Government is currently preparing a draft Provincial Planning Statement in support of its Housing Supply Action Plan, which establishes a target of 1.5 million new homes to be constructed by 2031. Unique to this PPS review is the proposal to incorporate elements from the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and revoke both the Growth Plan and the current PPS. The proposed policy direction for the new document, renamed the Provincial Planning Statement, is currently open for comment, with final adoption anticipated for Fall 2023.

The proposed Provincial Planning Statement generally continues the same direction for the Wise Management and Use of Resources policies, with minor wording changes. The following are specific changes proposed:

- / A new policy encourages municipalities to undertake watershed planning to inform planning for sewage and water services and stormwater management, and the protection, improvement or restoration of the quality and quantity of water.
- / While the new PPS continues to mandate protection of prime agricultural lands, municipalities need not employ provincial guidance for the evaluation of prime agricultural lands.
- / A new policy explicitly recognizes a principal dwelling associated with an agricultural operation as a permitted agricultural use in most cases.
- / Permits up to two additional residential units in prime agricultural areas, subject to criteria, which generally cannot be severed on a separate land parcel.
- / Permits the creation of three lots on prime agricultural lands (*the removal of this policy is contemplated).
- / Modest changes are proposed to the criteria for rehabilitation requirements following extraction of mineral aggregate resources on prime agricultural lands.
- / The definition of the term “significant” has been removed from built heritage and cultural heritage contexts.
- / A new policy encourages planning authorities to develop proactive strategies for identifying properties for evaluation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

2.4 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is a provincial plan adopted under the *Places to Grow Act* that seeks to manage population growth, the protection of resources, and the direction of infrastructural changes and updates throughout the “Greater Golden Horseshoe” area of the Province of Ontario. Northumberland County, including the Municipality of Trent Hills, is located within the defined planning area, and is therefore subject to the policies of the Growth Plan. All decisions related to land use planning in the Municipality must conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

While the Growth Plan currently remains in effect, it is proposed to be repealed and replaced with the policies of the new Provincial Planning Statement.

Section 4 of the Growth Plan contains policies for hydrologic and natural heritage features and areas, agricultural lands, cultural heritage resources, and other renewable and non-renewable resources. The policies generally reflect the policy direction in the PPS.

2.4.1 Natural Heritage System

The Plan references a Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan, which resides outside of the Plan. Municipalities must incorporate the mapping as an overlay in Official Plans, along with corresponding policies to maintain, restore, or

enhance the diversity and connectivity of the system and the long-term ecological or hydrologic functions of the features and areas.

Any new development or site alteration within these areas must demonstrate connectivity and maintenance or enhancement along the system of features within 240 metres of each other. Additionally, development will generally be limited to 25 percent of the total developable area, and impervious surfaces will not exceed 10 percent of the total developable area. In general, at least 30 percent of the total developable area will remain or be returned to natural self-sustaining vegetation.

The Natural Heritage System policies apply after mapping has been incorporated into Official Plans, including upper-tier municipal Official Plans. The mapping may be refined by upper-tier municipalities at the time of initial implementation, and at the time of municipal comprehensive reviews thereafter.

Despite the details of the provincial mapping municipalities must continue to protect any other natural heritage features and areas in a manner consistent with the PPS, including within settlement areas.

2.4.2 Key Hydrologic Features, Key Hydrologic Areas, and Key Natural Heritage Features

The Growth Plan defines key hydrologic features and key natural heritage features as:

- / Key hydrologic areas include significant groundwater recharge areas, highly vulnerable aquifers, and significant surface water contribution areas that are necessary for the ecological and hydrologic integrity of a watershed.
- / Key hydrologic features include permanent streams, intermittent streams, inland lakes and the littoral zones, seepage areas and springs and wetlands.
- / Key natural heritage features include habitat of endangered species and threatened species, fish habitat, wetlands, life science areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs), significant valleylands, significant woodlands, significant wildlife habitat (including habitat of special concern species), sand barrens, savannahs, tallgrass prairies, and alvars.

Outside of settlement areas, development or site alteration is not permitted in these areas, except for prescribed uses and activities. For development on adjacent lands within 120 metres of these areas, an evaluation must identify a vegetation protection zone and any other mitigative measures, unless otherwise specified.

2.4.3 Public Open Space

Municipalities are encouraged to develop a system of publicly-accessible parkland, open space, and trails, including in shoreline areas, for public access and recreation. Additionally, municipalities are encouraged to establish an open space system within settlement areas, which may include opportunities for urban agriculture, rooftop gardens, communal courtyards, and public parks.

2.4.4 Agricultural System

The Province requires designation of prime agricultural areas in accordance with mapping prepared by the Province. Mapping is to be established in the Official Plans of upper-tier and single-tier municipalities. The policies mandate the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base, as well as encouraging the retention of existing lots of record for agricultural uses.

Official Plan policies must include policies that require mitigation of impact from non-agricultural uses, in instances where such uses interface directly with prime agricultural lands. Additionally, integrated planning for growth

management, including goods movement and transportation planning, will consider opportunities to support and enhance the agricultural system.

Municipalities are also encouraged to implement strategies that support access to healthy, local and affordable food, urban and near-urban agriculture, food system planning and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food, and agri-product businesses while protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts. Strategies should also include consideration of supporting infrastructure, services and assets.

2.4.5 Cultural Heritage Resources

The Growth Plan requires that cultural heritage resources be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas. Municipalities are expected to work with stakeholders, as well as First Nations and Métis communities to develop and implement Official Plan policies for the identification, wise use, and management of cultural heritage resources.

2.4.6 Mineral Aggregate Resources

Municipal Official Plans must contain policies to conserve mineral aggregate resources. However, new mineral aggregate extraction operations are not permitted in significant wetlands, habitat of endangered and threatened species, and mature significant woodlands. Mineral aggregate resource extraction may occur outside of these features in the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan, or in prime agricultural areas, subject to established criteria and rehabilitation requirements.

2.4.7 A Culture of Conservation

The Growth Plan also contains policies requiring municipalities to develop and implement official plan policies and other strategies in support of:

- / Water conservation;
- / Energy conservation for existing buildings and planned developments;
- / Air quality improvement and protection; and
- / Integrated waste management.

Additionally, the policies state that municipalities should develop excess soil reuse strategies as part of planning for growth and development. Municipal Official Plans must incorporate best practices for the management of excess soil generated and fill received during development or site alteration.

2.5 Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) is a provincial plan which is intended to preserve the Oak Ridges Moraine land formation that spans the central and eastern parts of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Along with the Niagara Escarpment and other areas, the Moraine comprises part of the Greenbelt, a protected area of sensitive ecological lands and agricultural areas across southern Ontario. The eastern portion of the 190,000-hectare Oak Ridges Moraine extends into the boundaries of the Municipality of Trent Hills.

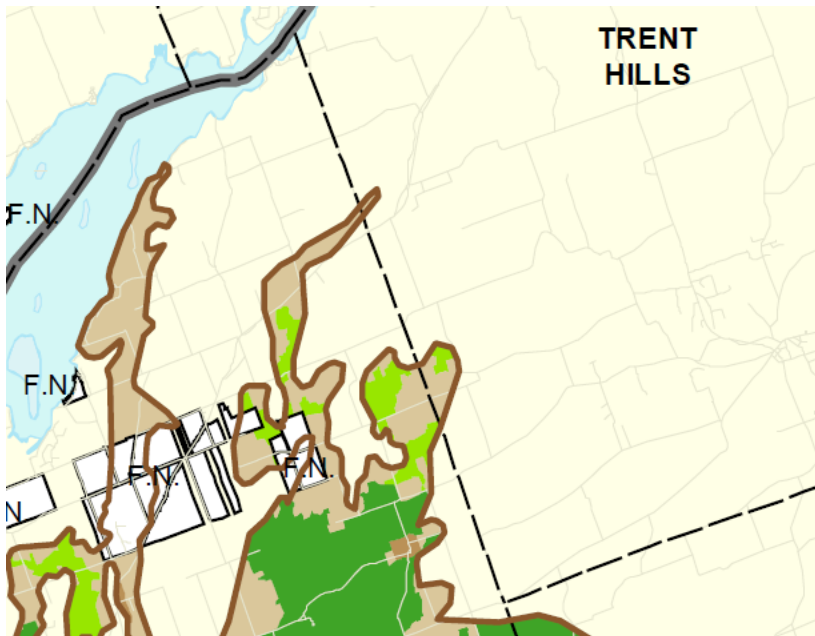


Figure 1: Extract from Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Land Use Designation Map

The Moraine contains several features that warrant protection from urban development, including:

- / Clean and abundant water resources;
- / Healthy and diverse plant and animal habitat;
- / An attractive and distinct landscape;
- / Prime agricultural areas; and
- / Sand and gravel resources close to market.

The Conservation Plan divides the Moraine into four land use designations, including:

- / Natural Core Areas, which protect those lands with the greatest concentrations of key natural heritage features which are critical to maintaining the integrity of the Moraine as a whole;
- / Natural Linkage Areas, which protect critical natural and open space linkages between the Natural Core Areas and along rivers and streams;
- / Countryside Areas, which provide an agricultural and rural transition and buffer between the Natural Core Areas and Natural Linkage Areas and the urbanized Settlement Areas; and
- / Settlement areas, which consist of a range of existing communities.

The portion of the Moraine inside the Trent Hills boundaries is limited, consisting only of Countryside Areas and Natural Linkage Areas. Each designation establishes a set of permitted uses, along with additional policies for land use.

Lot creation is generally restricted in Countryside Areas, except for defined circumstances which are generally established through upper-tier Official Plan policies following a comprehensive growth management study.

Policies in Part III of the ORMCP are intended to protect ecological and hydrological integrity. Policy 20 requires that every application for development or site alteration identify planning, design and construction practices that ensure that

no buildings or other site alterations impede any hydrological functions or the movement of plants and animals among key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features of Natural Core Areas and Natural Linkage Areas. Only prescribed land uses are permitted within the minimum influence areas listed for each key feature. Policy 23 contains specific direction for the objectives and contents for a natural heritage evaluation.

The ORMCP also requires that upper-tier municipalities prepare a watershed plan, as well as a water budget and water conservation plan for watersheds whose streams originate within the municipality's area of jurisdiction. The Plan also contains policies protecting wellhead protection areas and areas of high aquifer vulnerability, including prohibitions on prescribed land uses within those areas.

Policy 30 contains policies to ensure the protection of Landform Conservation Areas. Applications for development or site alterations within these areas are required to submit materials demonstrating that disturbance to the landform feature will be minimized.

Protections for the Moraine also include a general prohibition on mineral aggregate extraction, subject to conditions. Rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations is required in accordance with the policies. Additional policies are included for recreational developments, trails, and small-scale commercial, industrial and institutional uses.

Policies for stormwater management and other infrastructure are also included in the ORMCP to ensure the protection of surface and ground water.

2.6 Conservation Authorities

2.6.1 Role of the Conservation Authority

The Conservation Authorities Act provides legal permissions for the organization of Conservation Authorities in the Province of Ontario. Conservation Authorities are responsible for the management of watershed areas and work towards the conservation, restoration, and management of water resources throughout the province.

Conservation Authorities play an important role in land use and development, as development activity and water-based resources each affect one another. In development review, Conservation Authorities are responsible for ensuring that land use developments do not negatively impact flooding or erosion circumstances, nor would watershed activities create hazards for users of a given land use or development. The Conservation Authorities are also responsible for ensuring that development activities do not negatively influence the safety of drinking water resources in their respective regulated areas.

2.6.2 Regulated Area

In the Municipality of Trent Hills, there are three (3) Conservation Authorities that each work within their own regulated areas:

- / The Lower Trent Conservation Authority (LTC) regulates most of the lands in the Municipality, where the Trent River system watershed spans and empties towards Lake Ontario;
- / The Crowe Valley Conservation Authority (CVCA) regulates part of the northeastern lands in the Municipality, in the area around the Crowe River; and
- / The Otonabee Conservation Authority regulates part of Hastings, north of the Trent River.

There are a few small areas in the Municipality that are unregulated by any Conservation Authority.

All development in areas that are within a regulated area of a Conservation Authority are subject to review by the respective Conservation Authority. Development in those areas that are not regulated by a Conservation Authority may be required to be reviewed by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

2.7 Northumberland Official Plan

Northumberland County is composed of seven member municipalities, including the Municipality of Trent Hills, the Municipality of Port Hope, the Municipality of Brighton, the Township of Hamilton, the Township of Cramahe, the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand, and the Town of Cobourg. The Northumberland County Council is made up of each of the mayors of these member municipalities.

The Northumberland Official Plan is the primary land use planning document adopted under the *Planning Act* for the County. The Plan was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on November 23, 2016. The Official Plans of all lower-tier municipalities within the County must conform with the policies of the County Official Plan.

2.7.1 Agriculture

Section C3 of the Official Plan contains policies for the Agricultural Area land designation, which is intended to protect prime agricultural areas. The list of permitted uses includes, among others: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses. Mineral aggregate operations are also permitted in this designation, subject to the approval of a local Official Plan Amendment.

Agriculture-related uses are defined in the Plan, with a policy requiring compatibility with surrounding agricultural operations. The Plan directs that local Official Plans must be updated to include policies for agriculture-related uses.

Similarly, section C3.6 includes a definition and policies for on-farm diversified uses. The Plan provides examples of on-farm diversified uses, including:

Home occupations; home industries; agri-tourism; bed and breakfast establishments; farm vacation homes; estate wineries; farm wineries; seasonal home-grown produce stands; and temporary agricultural demonstration events.

Policy C3.6.3 describes characteristics of on-farm diversified uses, including factors to be considered by municipalities when determining whether a proposed on-farm diversified use is appropriate. The factors include:

- / The amount of land devoted to the on-farm diversified use in comparison to the amount of land devoted to the principal use;
- / The size of the building housing the on-farm diversified use in relation to the sizes of building(s) accommodating the principal use;
- / The nature of the on-farm diversified use itself and whether the use is operated by the owner of the property;
- / The number of people employed by the on-farm diversified use;
- / The extent to which retail sales occur as a component of the on-farm diversified use; and,
- / The amount of traffic generated by the on-farm diversified use in relation to the principal use on the property.

Local municipalities are encouraged to permit on-farm diversified uses in their Official Plans and implementing zoning by-laws, as appropriate.

Development of agri-tourism uses are also encouraged, subject to the policies of local Official Plans. The County Plan lists examples of agri-tourism uses, including farm tours, petting zoos, hay rides and sleigh rides, processing demonstrations, pick-your-own produce establishments, small-scale theme playgrounds for children and small-scale educational establishments that focus on farming instruction.

Reflecting policies in the PPS, the County Plan also permits a limited scope of non-residential uses in agricultural areas, subject to criteria.

2.7.2 Natural Resources

The Plan includes policies for the Environmental Protection Area designation, as shown on Schedule A of the Plan. The designation is intended to identify and protect Provincially significant wetlands and Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest. Development and site alteration is not permitted in proximity to these area unless no negative impacts can be demonstrated.

Section D of the Plan contains policies for Resource Areas and Constraint Areas. The policies reflect the PPS direction that development and site alteration shall be prohibited or restricted within key natural features. Table K also specifies influence areas on adjacent lands in which development and site alteration may only proceed if no negative impact on the natural feature is demonstrated. Policy D1.7 contains direction specifying development types for which an assessment for the presence of significant wildlife habitat is required.

The Plan also includes policies for protection of water resources, including surface water and ground water resources. Policies are intended to protect the integrity of the water resources through restrictions on land use in proximity to the resources and the requirement for adequate stormwater management. The Plan also requires municipalities to have regard for Source Protection Plans when making land use planning decisions.

The County Plan also contains policies intended to implement the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, which are reflective of provincial direction. It clarifies that nothing in the Plan prevents a local municipality from being more restrictive in either their official plans or zoning by-laws, except as limited by the ORMCP.

2.7.3 Cultural Heritage Resources

Section D3 of the County Official Plan contains policies for cultural heritage resources, including built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources, and marine archaeological resources. The policies generally serve to protect these resources through the conservation of the resource and the prohibition of incompatible development.

The Implementation policies also encourage local municipalities to establish Municipal Heritage Committees under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as well as utilizing Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) to conserve cultural heritage resources.

In addition to policies intended to protect archaeological resources, policies also highlight the importance of involving local First Nations in policy development and implementation, including notification requirements. Similar policies apply to marine archaeological resources along waterfront areas.

Section D3.10 contains policies specific to the Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada. Local plans are required to appropriately designate the Trent Severn Waterway. Additionally, the County recommends that local Official Plans be amended to reflect the recommendations of the Trent-Severn Waterway Management Plan to foster the protection of the Historic Site.

2.7.4 Mineral Aggregate Resources

Section D5 of the County Official Plan contains policies for mineral aggregate resources. While known deposits and extraction operations are shown on Schedule B of the Official Plan, other deposits may be possible.

Reflecting PPS direction, the Plan policies are intended to protect these resources, establishing restrictions on land uses in areas of mineral aggregate potential and on adjacent lands. Special policies are established for extraction activities within prime agricultural areas.

The Plan also establishes criteria for amendment applications to establish new extraction operations. The evaluation criteria include:

- / The impact of the operation on nearby communities, features, and resources;
- / The effect of additional truck traffic on existing haul routes;
- / The suitability of any new haul route;
- / The impact of noise, odour, dust and vibration;
- / Proposed mitigation measures; and
- / How the site will be progressively rehabilitated to accommodate subsequent land uses.

2.8 Northumberland Next Official Plan Update

Official plans of upper-tier municipalities must be updated in accordance with the *Planning Act*. Northumberland County is currently undertaking an update to the County Official Plan, the public engagement process for which has been entitled “Northumberland Next.”

Multiple amendments to the County Official Plan are anticipated as part of this official plan update:

- / The Natural Heritage System amendment is complete and is currently awaiting approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing;
- / Public consultation is underway to inform the amendments to the Growth Management and Agricultural mapping components of the Official Plan; and
- / Subsequent amendments are planned for Water Resource mapping and Affordable Housing policies.

On October 26, 2023, County Council carried Resolution 2023-10-18-687, which requests that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing defer approval of the adopted Natural Heritage System amendment until after the new Provincial Planning Statement comes into effect and following County Council’s adoption of revised policies to support the new Provincial Planning Statement. While the policies are anticipated to be revised under the new Provincial policy framework, the mapping is anticipated to remain unchanged.

The new Trent Hills Official Plan must incorporate the amendments to the Northumberland County Official Plan, including updates to Schedules to reflect the mapped Natural Heritage System and Agricultural lands.

2.8.1 Natural Heritage

The Official Plan Amendment supporting natural heritage was endorsed by County Council in 2021 and subsequently forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. The Natural Heritage System Plan updates the County Official Plan by:

- / Establishing a new Natural Heritage Area designation that will apply to properties with natural heritage features;
- / Identifying natural heritage features and areas, as well as supporting features and areas that would be subject to development prohibitions and/or restrictions;
- / Introducing new policies affecting development and site alteration in and adjacent to the Natural Heritage System; and
- / Updating the requirements for environmental studies.

The updated policies will be incorporated into the Official Plan, pending approval by the Province. Several proposed updates will influence policy formulation in the Trent Hills Official Plan, including:

- / Policies to address cumulative impacts;
- / Permissions for minor expansions of existing development inside significant woodlands;
- / Addition of the Trent-Severn Waterway to existing shoreline policies, including requiring the identification of areas zoned for development within the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan;
- / Harmonization of policies for permitted land uses both inside and outside the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan;
- / New policies to approach transition of development applications within the Natural Heritage System; and
- / Introduction of policies for identification of new woodlands.

2.8.2 Agricultural

The County is currently preparing an update to agricultural land mapping, reviewing the Province's Agricultural Land Base mapping that was prepared in accordance with the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) process. The mapping process will continue until submission to the Province.

While agricultural mapping in municipal Official Plans is required to reflect the corresponding mapping in the Growth Plan, Provincial policies permit municipalities to refine the details of the mapping, with approval by the Province. Refinements are being proposed by Northumberland County as part of the process, with preliminary support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

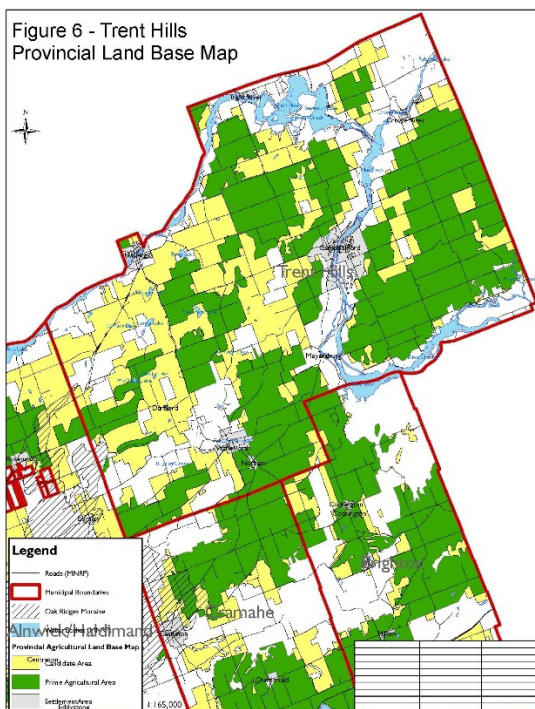


Figure 2: Proposed Agricultural Mapping for Trent Hills (Northumberland Next)

2.9 Trent Source Protection Plan

The Trent Source Protection Plan is a policy document intended to address significant drinking water threats around the Trent River system, representing 53 municipal drinking water systems that supply water to over 200,000 people. The Plan was developed by a multi-stakeholder committee in consultation with local community members, and was approved in 2014.

The Plan addresses various threats to drinking water quality and quantity, and includes policy tools including the *Clean Water Act*, regulatory instruments such as Environmental Compliance Approvals, and land use planning legislation such as the *Planning Act* that can be utilized in the active protection of drinking water sources. The policies seek to protect “vulnerable areas,” including wellhead protection areas for groundwater sources and intake protection zones for surface water sources.

The Plan includes maps that illustrate the lands where policies apply to potential contaminant-generating land uses/activities, including sewage systems, agricultural activity, road salting, the use of fertilizers and pesticides, snow storage, and waste disposal.

The Source Protection Plan applies several implementation approaches to achieve its objectives. Specifically, the land use planning approach includes updates to municipal Official Plans, including the creation of policies to address sewage servicing and the prohibition of certain land uses within vulnerable areas. Additionally, development applications within vulnerable areas will now need to be accompanied by a notice from the Risk Management Official before being deemed complete.

2.10 Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan (2022)

The Trent-Severn Waterway is a renowned inland canal and water management system, built and operated over a period exceeding 175 years. Of the 386 kilometres of the waterway connecting Lake Ontario with Georgian Bay, a portion runs through Trent Hills, representing a major heritage feature in the community.

The Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan is intended to communicate the strategic direction for the long-term vision for the waterway as a vibrant and sustainable recreational destination. Three Key Strategies are established to achieve the vision:

- / Key Strategy 1: Establish the Trent-Severn Waterway as a premier Canadian recreational destination;
- / Key Strategy 2: Conserve, present and interpret the Trent-Severn Waterway’s rich and evolving history, engineering technology and natural environment; and
- / Key Strategy 3: Effectively administer an evolving waterway in the 21st century.

2.11 Trent Hills Official Plan

The Municipality of Trent Hills Official Plan (2001) provides a guiding policy framework for governing land use within the municipality. The Official Plan is meant to specify visions and goals over the course of a defined planning horizon, which are informed by public engagement and staff expertise, and ultimately are voted on by Council. As the Municipality of Trent Hills Official Plan is a lower-tier municipality official plan, it must conform with the goals, visions, and principles of the upper-tier municipality’s official plan, and provincial policy.

Policies that are commonly included in a municipality’s official plan are those that guide compatible land use (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, etc.), housing, the natural heritage system and natural hazards,

economic development, cultural heritage resources, and process and implementation. The current Official Plan includes policies regarding each of these topics.

Since its adoption in 2001, Trent Hills has undertaken several major amendments to the Official Plan, generally to align its policies with Provincial or County directives. Amendments include:

- / Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 2, which introduced policies to ensure conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan;
- / OPA 3, which introduced policies that allow for the creation of a Community Improvement Plan;
- / OPA 5, which introduced new policies and direction in response to the Northumberland County Growth Management Strategy in 2008;
- / OPA 6, which introduced site-specific policies for the Nappan Island plan of subdivision;
- / OPA 9, which introduced site-specific policies for the Whitehorse plan of subdivision; and
- / OPA 10, which introduced policies for cannabis production.

In 2022, the Municipality of Trent Hills initiated a process to prepare a new Official Plan. The current project is intended to realize that initiative.

3.0 Existing Conditions

3.1 Greenlands System

The Greenlands System designation in the Trent Hills Official Plan represents a composite of natural heritage features and areas, including areas of provincial and local interest. The Greenlands System comprises wetlands, habitats, natural hazards, ANSIs, stream and valley lands, lakes, and public lands. The designation surrounds most of the Trent River, and seeks to protect water quality and the vitality of natural resources for economic and tourism purposes.

As part of this designation, Provincially Significant ANSIs are identified in areas northeast of Campbellford, and southeast of Warkworth. Limited Significant Wildlife Habitat is also included on the land use schedule, which is identified in the southwest border of the municipality.

The Trent River system is central to the identity of Trent Hills, and is crucial to its ecological well-being. Some of the lands surrounding the Trent River and its various tributaries are identified as Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs). The area surrounding the Trent near the hamlet of Trent River is also identified as a PSW and a Habitat for Endangered and/or Threatened Species.

3.2 Major Waterbodies

The Trent River is central to the identity of Trent Hills, and traverses nearly 60 kilometres through the municipality. Many tributary streams drain into the river, including Crowe River, Trout Creek, Percy Creek, Burnley (Mill) Creek, Salt Creek, Squire Creek, and Killoran Creek.

The Trent River also connects to Rice Lake, which begins at the border of Trent Hills and Alnwick-Haldimand. The river spans multiple municipal and county jurisdictions, including Trent Hills, Brighton, and Asphodel-Norwood (Peterborough County). The river is also within the jurisdiction of both the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority and the Lower Trent Conservation Authority. Numerous wooded areas surround the river, providing wildlife habitat, slope stability, and natural stormwater management.

The Trent River also serves as a recreational and tourism resource for boaters and visitors. Additionally, the Trent-Severn Waterway represents a key heritage resource in the community, forming part of the Historic Canal System.

3.3 Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Features

The easternmost boundary of the Oak Ridges Moraine is located along the western boundary of the Municipality, west of Dartford. This area of the Municipality includes lands designated as Category 1 and Category 2 Landform Conservation Areas, Significant Woodlands, Provincially Significant Wetland, High Aquifer Vulnerability, and Low Aquifer Vulnerability.

3.4 Existing Agriculture

There is a long history of agricultural activity in the Municipality, comprising an integral element of the community's identity. Agriculture also represents a source of employment in the Municipality, with existing operations at a range of scales.

There are large pockets of existing prime agricultural lands in Trent Hills, particularly:

- / Northeast and southeast of Campbellford;
- / East of Warkworth and surrounding Norham;
- / Southeast of Hastings; and
- / Southwest of Trent River.

Prime agricultural lands are mapped by Northumberland County, which are currently being revised through the Northumberland Next initiative.

Through the new Official Plan, the Municipality will also be seeking to establish clear and explicit policies to guide development and lot creation on agricultural lands, including policies for value-added permitted uses such as agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses.

The revised policies will generally be guided by the *Food and the Official Plan* publication prepared by Northumberland County, which provides a review of food policy, opportunities to enhance support for local food system, and best practices for agriculture in small and mid-size rural communities.

The new policies are intended to respond to recent development trends in the Municipality, which includes the expansion of several agricultural operations and facilities, along with a greater interest in agriculture-supportive uses.

3.5 Mineral Aggregate Resources

Areas of mineral aggregate resource potential have been identified throughout the Municipality, spanning the southwest surrounding Warkworth, the northeast between Hastings and Campbellford, and with more limited lands located northeast of Campbellford.

While Schedule 5 of the current Official Plan does not differentiate between Primary and Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resources, Schedule B of the Northumberland County Official Plan differentiates between the levels of viability/preferred order of protection. Moreover, the Northumberland Plan identifies existing Mineral Aggregate Operations throughout the County, including in Trent Hills. Most existing operations are located in the triangular area of aggregate resource lands between Warkworth, Hastings, and Campbellford, and are mostly located in the Primary Mineral Aggregate Resource areas.

3.6 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

In Ontario, heritage planning, preservation, restoration, and demolition is guided by the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Heritage and archaeological activities are governed provincially by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* provides permissions for municipalities to create heritage committees or heritage advisory committees that inform Councils and/or make decisions on heritage-related developments, such as on the issuing of heritage permits, awarding grants to assist property owners with heritage property maintenance, and listing of heritage properties. In Trent Hills, there is a Heritage Advisory Committee that is responsible for guiding conservation and protection of heritage properties in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

There are two avenues in which heritage properties can be recognized and/or protected. The first is to designate a heritage property under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The second is to recognize its cultural significance through its listing on a Municipal Cultural Properties register. Designations awarded under the *Ontario Heritage Act* provide more stringent protection than the municipal register.

Additionally, Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows municipalities to designate clusters or neighbourhoods of cultural heritage values through Heritage Conservation Districts. In contrast with property-specific designations under Part IV of the Act, Heritage Conservation Districts are intended to recognize unique combinations of buildings, structures, open spaces, and other features with an identifiable heritage value. Inside the Districts, demolition, alteration, or development must be approved by Council, following an evaluation of the proposal against the policies of a Heritage District Plan.

The Heritage Advisory Committee works in conjunction with municipal staff, members of the public, and interested organizations such as the Campbellford and Seymour Heritage Society, and the Hastings Historical Society, which provide local insight and knowledge to the heritage context and help to conserve the historical identity of the Municipality.

There are some prominent examples of heritage and historical resources in the Municipality. The Percy Portage is an ancient carrying place that traverses across lands which are now located in the Municipality. Remnants of settler-area resources remain in the Municipality as well, such as portions of the Grand Trunk Railway, the Trans Canada Trail, and a variety of significant institutional buildings in Campbellford, including the former Campbellford fire hall that was built in 1889, the public library built in 1912, and the post office built in 1936. The post office is currently being repurposed into a cultural centre, fostering lasting institutional and cultural impact.

The Village of Hastings similarly has a long history, with activities and buildings oriented on the Trent River. While a fire destroyed the downtown core of buildings in 1882, one building survived and still stands at 2 Front Street East. The Saintonge Block, as the building is known, is located at the southeast intersection of Bridge Street North, and currently accommodates commercial tenants on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper floors. Elsewhere in the Village, various heritage architectural features are on full display, tracing the built heritage of the community from over several generations.

Similarly, Warkworth's settlement history dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, with several designated residential and institutional buildings in the community. For example, the Warkworth Town Hall stands prominently at the centre of Main Street, representing an excellent example of mid-Victorian Gothic design. The building has been preserved to the present day, and is now used as a Centre for the Arts, offering performance and gathering spaces in the heritage building.

The Trent-Severn Waterway is a national historic site that is maintained and operated by Parks Canada. The Trent-Severn is an important heritage and tourism resource for the Municipality and other host municipalities, particularly for boating and other recreational activities. There are 8 locks in Trent Hills and 3 swing bridges. The Campbellford Dam located at Lock 13 and the Ranney Falls Dam at Lock 10 are both under rehabilitative construction. It is anticipated that after the rehabilitation, more tourism will be attracted to each location.

4.0 Discussion

The purpose of this Discussion section is to provide high-level information and options for a range of key policy areas. In general, the topics in this section are drawn from the preceding summaries of land use policies and existing conditions, including Provincial and County direction.

The topics presented in this section are not exhaustive, nor will they necessarily contain all relevant details or analysis. The intent is to provide a high-level discussion on topics to be addressed in the new Trent Hills Official Plan for the benefit of Council members, Staff, stakeholders, neighbours, and residents.

The detailed policy direction for these topics and others will be determined through the planning process as the new Official Plan is prepared.

4.1 Natural Heritage

The policies for Natural Heritage features in the new Official Plan will be largely guided by the recent updates to the County Official Plan. While these new policies and mapping are currently awaiting approval from the Province, the policies generally reflect the most up-to-date policy framework in the PPS and Growth Plan.

As the policies of the new PPS generally reflect the policies of the current PPS, the new policies will not generally impact the County policy direction established through the Northumberland Next process. By contrast, the proposed repeal of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe will remove the necessity of incorporating certain policy details that are currently reflected in the proposed County policies. The Municipality should monitor the status of the County OPA to ensure the full extent of the final approved policies are reflected in the Trent Hills Official Plan. The Schedules in the new Trent Hills Official Plan will be revised to reflect the proposed mapping from the County Official Plan.

The new Official Plan will similarly include updated policies for protection of water resources. Updated policies will be revised to clarify direction, with one set of policies intended to protect the integrity of the water resource, and another set of policies intended to protect development from natural hazards. Additionally, new policies will reference the Trent Source Protection Plan, stating that development shall have regard for its provisions.

Similarly, the policies established through OPA 2 of the Trent Hills Official Plan generally remain consistent with the policy direction of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Nonetheless, the new Official Plan must reflect amendments made to the Conservation Plan in 2017, which include direction for:

- / Climate change;
- / Agriculture;
- / Infrastructure; and
- / Management of excess soils.

4.2 Agriculture

Policies for the protection of prime agricultural lands have evolved since the current Official Plan for Trent Hills was adopted. Currently, policies in Section 2.4.2 of the Official Plan highlight the importance of agriculture to the community and identify a separate designation for Prime Agricultural Lands, described as land with soil classifications 1 to 4 in the Canada Land Inventory. Land uses in the Prime Agricultural Lands designation are restricted to agriculture and farm-related uses, and land division (described as “fragmentation”) is restricted to create viable farm lots of 40 hectares or greater, except for surplus farm dwellings created through farm consolidation.

The current policies permit farm-related industrial uses in the Rural Policy Area and in the Prime Agricultural Lands designation. The policy cites grain drying and storage for farm produce as farm-related commercial or industrial uses. The policies include criteria for development of farm-related uses, including that the use of “good agricultural land” is minimized.

OPA 5 also added a new policy stating that lot severance is permitted to accommodate agriculture-related uses, subject to size and servicing criteria.

The Provincial and County agriculture policy contexts have evolved over time to enhance and refine protections for prime agricultural lands. At the County level, the Northumberland Next process will include updated mapping of prime agricultural lands, which in turn is refined from the Agricultural Land Base mapping under the Growth Plan. The new mapping must be reflected in the new Trent Hills Official Plan Schedules.

The 2020 PPS includes a policy specifying the scope of protection for agricultural lands:

Prime agricultural areas are areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2 and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the prime agricultural area, in this order of priority.

The PPS further refines the list of permitted uses in prime agricultural areas to include agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. The latter two of these land use categories shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. The Trent Hills Official Plan requires new policy language to reflect this policy direction. The Province has released Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas (Publication 851), which provides more detail to inform policy formulation and interpretation for these uses. Similarly, the University of Guelph and the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance have prepared Guidelines on Permitted Uses as a Tool to Achieve Farmland Protection, Farm Diversification and Economic Benefits. Both of these documents will be consulted in the preparation of the new Official Plan.

With additional consideration of the PPS and County Official Plan, key approaches in formulating the new policies include:

- / Defining agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses, with special regard for agri-tourism uses;
- / Providing examples of supportive uses for each category;
- / Specifying land uses that do not qualify under each category;
- / Inclusion of compatibility criteria, including the foundational criterion that agricultural operations or potential not be hindered on the property or on surrounding lands;
- / Servicing requirements correspond with private servicing capacities, which in some cases may require Provincial approvals (e.g. Permit to Take Water application);
- / Limitations on scale and/or cumulative impacts, which may be further implemented through zoning provisions;
- / Policies for lot creation to accommodate supporting uses;
- / Guidance for site planning, such as loading, storage, signage, lighting, and building design;

Other policies must be incorporated to ensure conformity with Provincial policies, including:

- / Policies for lot creation in prime agricultural areas, including criteria for surplus farm dwellings;
- / Policies for non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas;
- / Policies requiring evaluation against Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae; and
- / Policies defining and permitting “normal farm practices.”

The new proposed PPS also contains new policies for agricultural uses, which must be reflected in the Trent Hills Official Plan, if approved. For example, the new PPS clarifies that a principal dwelling associated with an agricultural operation may be permitted in prime agricultural areas as an agricultural use, along with two additional residential units, subject to criteria.

4.3 Mineral Aggregate Resources

Section 2.4.3 of the current Trent Hills Official Plan contains policies for Mineral Aggregate Resources. The policies generally address the key Provincial and County policies for these resources. Modest updates to these policies will be required in the new Official Plan to ensure full conformity, including:

- / Evaluation criteria for amendment applications to establish a new extraction operation;
- / Clarification that demonstration of need is not required;
- / More specific policy wording ensuring compatibility of new adjacent development, including outside of the identified resource extraction areas; and
- / Stronger policies requiring rehabilitation of extraction sites.

4.4 Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources

Section 4.2 of the current Trent Hills Official Plan contains several policies for cultural heritage and archaeological resources. However, these policies are embedded in the “Healthy Communities” section alongside other urban design and growth management policies. By contrast, the new Official Plan will feature a section dedicated to cultural heritage and archaeological resources, carrying forward the general spirit of existing policies and reflecting Provincial and County policy obligations.

Marine archaeological resources will also be referenced, introducing a new dimension to these policies. In the Trent Hills context, the Trent River in particular may accommodate archaeological resources warranting recognition and protection. In addition, the cultural heritage policies should make reference to the Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

As Trent Hills is the traditional territory of several First Nations, heritage and archaeological resource policies must also reflect Indigenous values and histories. The new Official Plan may have a role to play in assuring the protection or identification of historic or sacred spaces, recognizing the significant role that First Nation Partners play in this regard.

4.5 Excess Soils

Provincial legislation and policies have been amended in recent years to encourage better, safer, and more efficient use of excess soils through site alteration and construction projects. While some of the direction resides outside of the land use planning system, Official Plans can also play a role in sustainability of soil use. Proper management can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, prevent environmental contamination, reduce illegal dumping, decrease road damage, minimize soil deposits in landfills, and generate cost savings.

Specifically, the Growth Plan requires municipal Official Plans to incorporate best practices for the management of excess soil generated, and fill received, through development activities. The Official Plan will contain policies concerning excess soils, including:

- / General encouragement of reuse of excess soils, in accordance with Provincial regulations;
- / Identification of areas that are not appropriate for receiving excess soils, including direction for implementation;
- / Enabling of temporary soil storage sites; and
- / Direction for excess soil management for municipal public works.

4.6 Water Conservation, Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change

The *Planning Act* and PPS requires Official Plans to contain policies that identify goals, objectives and actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to provide for adaptation to a changing climate.

The current Official Plan references climate change in select contexts, such as encouraging the use of sustainable design methods to respond to climate change and other environmental issues (Section 5.2.6.2(p)). The new Official Plan can build upon this direction by including policies that address:

- / Mitigation of climate change impacts by:
 - Supporting active transportation infrastructure and complete street design;
 - Promoting reductions in private vehicle travel through the creation of complete communities;
 - Encouraging high-performance design for buildings;
 - Supporting denser forms of housing; and
 - Supporting policies for alternative energy generation and energy storage.
- / Adaptation
 - Protecting wetlands and greenspaces that provide ecological services;
 - Considering expected storm and flooding conditions in land use mapping and development review;
 - Reduce the urban heat island effect by introducing green infrastructure and reducing hard surfaces, where feasible; and
 - Consideration of climate change through infrastructure planning initiatives.
- / Resilience
 - Planning for social infrastructure (parks, gathering spaces) in infrastructure planning and development review;
 - Supporting the local food system;
 - Providing cooling centres and warming centres for emergency support.

Additionally, the new Official Plan will contain general policies encouraging energy and water conservation through development, including compact form, appropriate densities, opportunities for active transportation, building design and orientation, and maximization of vegetation within settlement areas.

5.0 Conclusion

This Discussion Paper serves to provide background information and a high-level analysis on topics to be incorporated into the new Trent Hills Official Plan. It seeks to explain how the policy and legislative framework must inform the Municipal Official Plan policy direction, and how each of these documents contributes to shaping a healthy community.

The purpose of this paper is also to generate interest in the Official Plan update project and provides a starting point for stakeholder engagement through the planning process. The preparation and release of these Discussion Papers will be followed by engagement with residents, landowners, workers, and Indigenous communities who live, work, and play in Trent Hills.