

OPEN HOUSE

Agriculture and Rural Area Development
Tuesday, March 27, 2018 - 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.

Shape the Sault.ca



Sault Ste. Marie Official Plan Review



City of
Sault Ste. Marie

The Official Plan



What is an Official Plan?

The Official Plan is a strategic document that guides the short-term and long-term policies on land use and development of the community.

“Shall be consistent with” - City Council is required to ensure that policies of the Provincial Policy Statement are applied as part of the land use planning decision-making process.

The Official Plan is the local planning document that guides zoning by-laws and public works projects.

The Official Plan policies provide general guidance when reviewing Planning Act Applications and determines the completeness of an application.



The Official Plan



What policies are included in the Official Plan?

Land use - general land classifications to group compatible uses and separate incompatible ones - residential, commercial, industrial, etc.

Growth and settlement - defines the Urban Settlement Area, which dictates when and where future urban growth will occur.

Hazards and constraints - ensures that development does not result in health and safety risks - flooding significant slopes, wildland fire, drinking water aquifer.

Protects significant natural heritage features - wetlands, endangered species, significant wildlife habitats, etc.

Protects the long term viability of major facilities/uses - sensitive use vs. noxious use.

Establishes minimum design standards - site plan design guidelines, landscaping guidelines.

Supports downtown revitalization - limits office space development outside of the downtown, community improvement plans, reduces development standards (lot-line to lot-line development, parking reductions).

Identifies minimum on-site infrastructure requirements.

Supports pedestrianism and active transportation.



The Guiding Documents of the Official Plan

The Official Plan is guided and influenced by provincial and municipal initiatives and policies, mainly the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, FutureSSM, and the Corporate Strategic Plan.

The Planning Act sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario and describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them. It also requires every city to review and update its Official Plan every five years, or ten in the case of a new one.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is the government's statement of policies on land use planning, and it includes policies aimed at mitigating the impacts of non-farm development on farm and agricultural operations.

The Community Adjustment Committee's *Common Cause and New Direction* report is part of an initiative for building a more resilient city. The recommendations and actions are grounded in a four pillar approach that includes:

- Economic Growth and Diversity
- Social Equity
- Cultural Vitality
- Environmental Sustainability

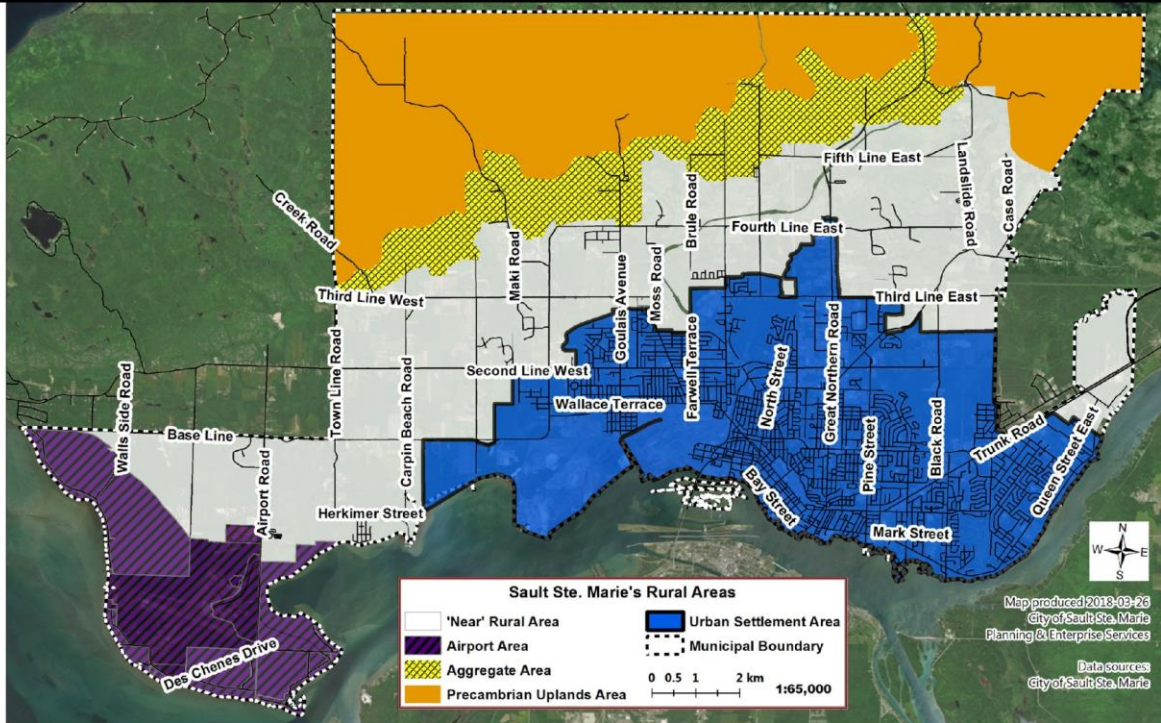
The Corporate Strategic Plan is a four-year plan that guides the work of City Council. The plan identifies the city's most important priorities and outlines necessary steps and actions to reach those goals, including strategic and tactical projects and initiatives.

The four guiding strategic focus areas of the Plan are:

- Infrastructure
- Service Delivery
- Quality of Life
- Community Development and Partnerships



Defining Sault Ste. Marie's Rural Area



The Sault's rural area can generally be divided into four distinct areas:

1. The 'near' rural area.

The part of the rural area adjacent to the built-up part of the Sault, as defined by the Urban Settlement Area. It is where most of the agriculture and rural residential development in the Sault is located.

2. The airport area.

The main features are the Sault Ste. Marie airport and shoreline residential developments. This area is popular for outdoor recreation during the warmer months, offering beaches and campgrounds. Wetlands and other environmentally sensitive natural habitats are found here as well.

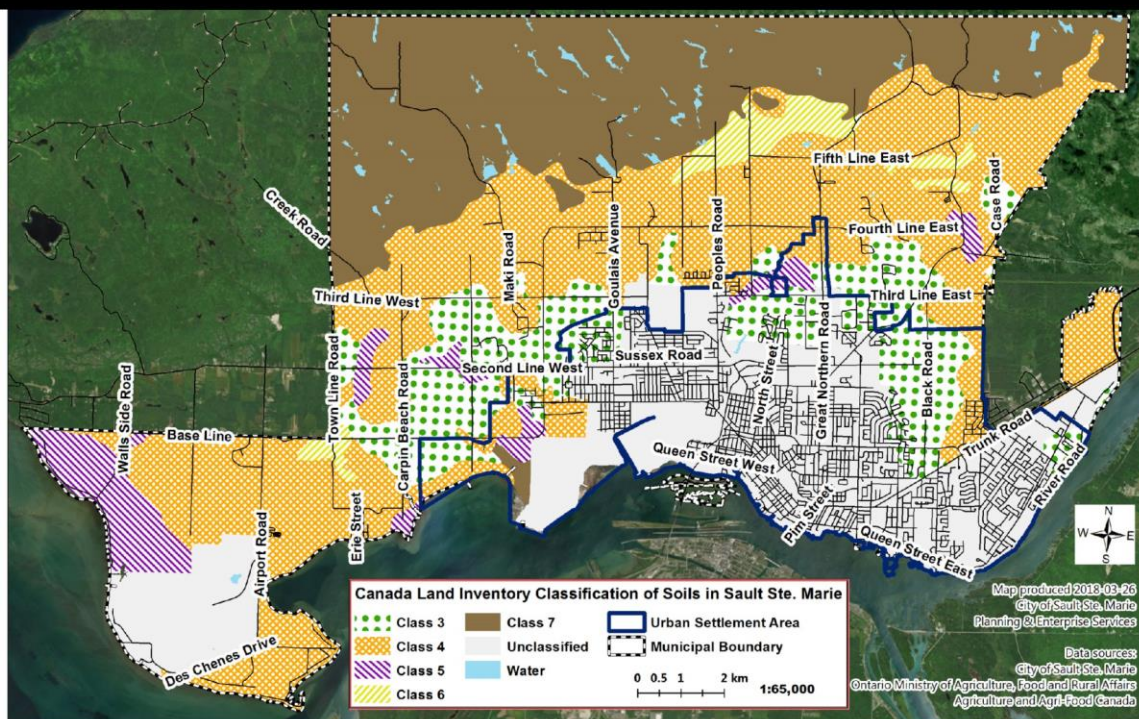
3. The aggregate area.

Aggregate deposits are found here, just below the Precambrian Shield Line in the northern part of the Sault.

4. The Precambrian Uplands area.

This area forms the northernmost part of Sault Ste. Marie, located above the Precambrian Shield Line. The Shield Line is defined by the first exposed outcroppings of the Uplands' bedrock. This plateau rises above the rest of the Sault, and is recognized as an environmentally sensitive area with minimal topsoil and rugged terrain.

Importance of the 'Near' Rural Area



For Agriculture:

The 'near' rural area contains the majority of the agriculture in Sault Ste. Marie. It is also the only part of the Sault where our best soils (Class 3) are located.

Local farmers have been able to farm productively despite the fact that Sault Ste. Marie lacks the Class 1 soils found in "prime agriculture" regions such as Southern Ontario. Class 2 soils can be found in the surrounding region east of the Sault between Desbarats and Iron Bridge.

For Potential Future Development:

The 'near' rural area plays an important role as a 'land bank' for potential future development.

Some future developments could require large and affordable lots that are difficult to find within Sault Ste. Marie's built-up area, but are more widely available in the 'near' rural area. One example is the solar farms on Base Line.

The City has defined an Urban Settlement Area to prevent premature outward development, as required by the provincial government. However, if there becomes a need to expand the Urban Settlement Area, it is more efficient to develop the rural lands located closest to our existing built-up area rather than establish pockets of new development in a 'leapfrog' style.

Local Agriculture Has a Bright Future in the Sault!

- There is a growing recognition of smaller-scale local agriculture as a more sustainable, environmentally friendly alternative to large-scale commercial agriculture. Locally grown products from smaller-scale farms are often fresher as they are not transported long distances and are usually grown with less chemicals and fertilizers.
- More people are embracing initiatives that support local agriculture, such as buying local, the 100-mile diet, farmers markets, and farm-to-table restaurant menus.
- Across northern regions in Canada and worldwide, growing seasons are being increasingly extended due to climate change.
- More affordable land is available in the Sault and Algoma region, compared to other regions such as Southern Ontario.
- Building a vibrant local agriculture sector can bolster the local economy and lead to numerous spin-off activities. Good examples would be the Cherry Festival in Traverse City, or pancake breakfasts and tours hosted by local maple syrup producers.

The Algoma region has 280 animal raising and crop yielding farms. Farm revenues in the region totalled \$16.4 million in 2016 and were the third highest in Northern Ontario.

Competing and Conflicting Land Uses in the Rural Area

To many non-farmers, the Rural Area offers a lifestyle of open space, peace and quiet, whereas for farmers, it is seen as a place for business. The conflicting expectations have negatively impacted the farming community by sterilizing and fragmenting the land base.

Sterilized land base

The introduction of rural residences (a sensitive land use), places restrictions on nearby farms. This impedes the day-to-day operations of the farm as well as removes the flexibility it may need to diversify or intensify to meet consumer trends and stay competitive. These restrictions also prevent new farm operations from establishing in the area. The land is in effect, “sterilized” from an agricultural perspective.

Fragmented land base

The Rural Area contains the large contiguous parcels that are required for not only farming activities, but future urban growth and other development opportunities.

Each new residential lot fragments this land base.

In the Rural Area, the current Official Plan does not permit new residential subdivisions, nor residential development on lots that have previously been severed twice.

Should lands with good agricultural potential be reserved for agricultural use?

How can residential growth be accommodated?

Should the city change the number of consents per lot?



Permitting Non-Farm Related Uses on Active Farm Properties

As the economic fabric of our city changes, agricultural communities face changing needs and circumstances, which have created a demand to incorporate a broader range of farm and non-farm related uses on their properties. Policies can unlock this economic potential while still protecting neighbouring farms and businesses from adverse impacts.

Farm related businesses

- Related to farm operations or supports the agricultural economy.
- Compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agriculture operations.
- Examples include farm equipment repair shops, food processing plants for local produce, roadside produce stands, winery using local grapes, and more.

Non-farm related businesses

- Secondary to the principle agriculture use of the property.
- Compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agriculture operations.
- Examples include agri-tourism and recreation uses, bed and breakfasts, bakeries, culinary classes with locally sourced ingredients, contractor yards, hosting weddings, storing, woodworking facilities, and more.

What businesses are currently permitted in the Rural Area?

- Agricultural uses.
- Campgrounds.
- Commercial wind and solar.
- Bed and breakfast.
- Golf course.
- Group home.
- Home based business.
- Pet care services.
- Veterinary clinic.
- Other uses of similar characteristics.

How should permitting non-farm uses on farm properties be approached?

What type of home based businesses should be allowed on farms?

What uses should be permitted and with what type of regulations?



Shape the Sault Timeline

We are currently
in Phase 1



Winter and Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Winter 2019	Spring/Summer 2019	Fall 2019
Phase 1 Educate, market, and gather informed feedback	Phase 2 High level policy directions	Phase 3 Draft Official Plan	Phase 4 City Council review	Phase 5 Provincial Ministry review

Community engagement opportunities will occur throughout the timeline

Shape the Sault.ca



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Contact Information

Shape the Sault.ca






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