

What this Open House is About



This Open House focuses on **key growth management policies** that the City is proposing to advance.

1. Rural Estate Subdivision and Resource Protection (OPA 259)

These policies establish a framework for **limited rural estate residential subdivision development**, while also introducing policies to protect and preserve:

- **locally significant agricultural areas**, and
- **secondary mineral aggregate resources**

These topics are being addressed together because it is important to ensure that new residential development in rural areas does not negatively impact important resource lands or create long-term land use conflicts.

2. Urban Settlement Area Boundary Adjustments (OPA 260)

These proposed adjustments are largely **technical in nature**.

They are intended to refine the existing Urban Settlement Area boundary to better reflect on-the-ground conditions, including existing development patterns, servicing realities, and known development opportunities and constraints.

How this fits into the broader Official Plan work:

The City is currently preparing a **new Official Plan**, which will eventually replace the entire existing plan.

In parallel, the City is proposing to advance these **specific growth management policies** through an **Official Plan Amendment to the existing Official Plan**, rather than waiting for the full approval of the new Official Plan. This allows important growth management direction to be put in place sooner, while the broader Official Plan review continues.

Planning for Rural Communities

The City is reviewing policies to allow **limited, well-planned rural residential subdivisions** that support housing choice while protecting our rural character and resources.

Why Now?

Rural residential development has been restricted for nearly 30 years, but housing needs and land availability have changed.

- Population and housing demand are rising.
- Most existing rural lots have been built on.
- Residents have expressed interest in rural living options.

Goal: to balance housing choice with protecting locally significant agricultural areas, natural areas, and the city's long-term financial sustainability.



Rural Subdivisions Are Currently Not Permitted

Since 1996, the City's Official Plan has prohibited new rural residential subdivisions. Rural lot creation is only permitted through limited severances (up to two new lots plus one retained parcel).

This policy was put into place to:

- Manage costs of maintaining rural infrastructure and services.
- Prevent scattered development.
- Protect agricultural areas, rural characters, and natural resources.
- Use up the surplus of vacant rural estate lots that already existed.

By the Numbers

- **182** developable rural residential lots remain across the city.
- Only **9** lots (**11%**) are currently for sale.
- Gross rural lot supply equals roughly a **6-year** inventory at current demand levels.
- Since 2011, about **16%** of all new homes were built in rural areas.
- Since 2021, that share has dropped to **10.5%**.
- The city averages **4 to 5** new rural lots per year through severances.
- Rural housing growth is expected to average **30** homes per year to 2031.
- Rural subdivisions have not been permitted since 1996.
- About **79** existing lots are within older rural subdivisions (most now developed).
- Rural homes rely on private wells and septic systems but still depend on City services like roads, snowplowing, and waste collection.

Rural Estate Residential Subdivisions—Framework

Proposed Direction

- Generally maintain the current rural severance policies, and
- Introduce an **intake review window** to allow for carefully phased and well planned rural subdivisions.

What is a Subdivision Intake Review Window?

- A new way for the City to evaluate proposals for rural residential subdivisions.
- Instead of accepting applications at anytime, the City will open an **intake window once or twice a year**.
- All submissions are reviewed together against the same **scoring criteria** focusing on land suitability, environmental protection, and financial sustainability.
- There will be a **cap/quota** on the number of lots that the City will approve in a given year.

There are two stages to approval:

Stage 1 – Concept Review: simple plans, no costly studies.

Stage 2 – Those who score highest in Stage 1 are invited to submit a Full Application. Proposals that do not make it may be deferred to a subsequent intake.

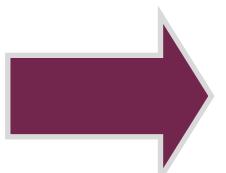
See the next panel for more detailed information on this process.

Rural Estate Residential Subdivisions—Framework

Intake Review Window—A Two Stage Process

Stage 1—Concept Review and Scoring

- Developers and landowners will be invited to **submit high-level submission packages** outlining the overall design and layout of a potential rural estate subdivision.
- Costly technical reports will not be required at this stage.** Developers and landowners will be invited to submit high-level submission packages outlining the overall.
- Planning staff will evaluate submissions against a **scoring criteria** and the lot quota.



The Scoring Criteria for Stage 1's Concept Review

- 1: Land use and growth management:** is it in an appropriate area for rural housing?
- 2: Compatibility:** is it well separated from industry, agricultural operations, or aggregate areas?
- 3: Natural heritage:** does it impact wetlands, forests, and habitats?
- 4: Hazards:** avoids steep slopes, floodplains, or unstable soils.
- 5: General policy conformity:** conforms to Provincial Planning Statement, Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, and City's Official Plan.

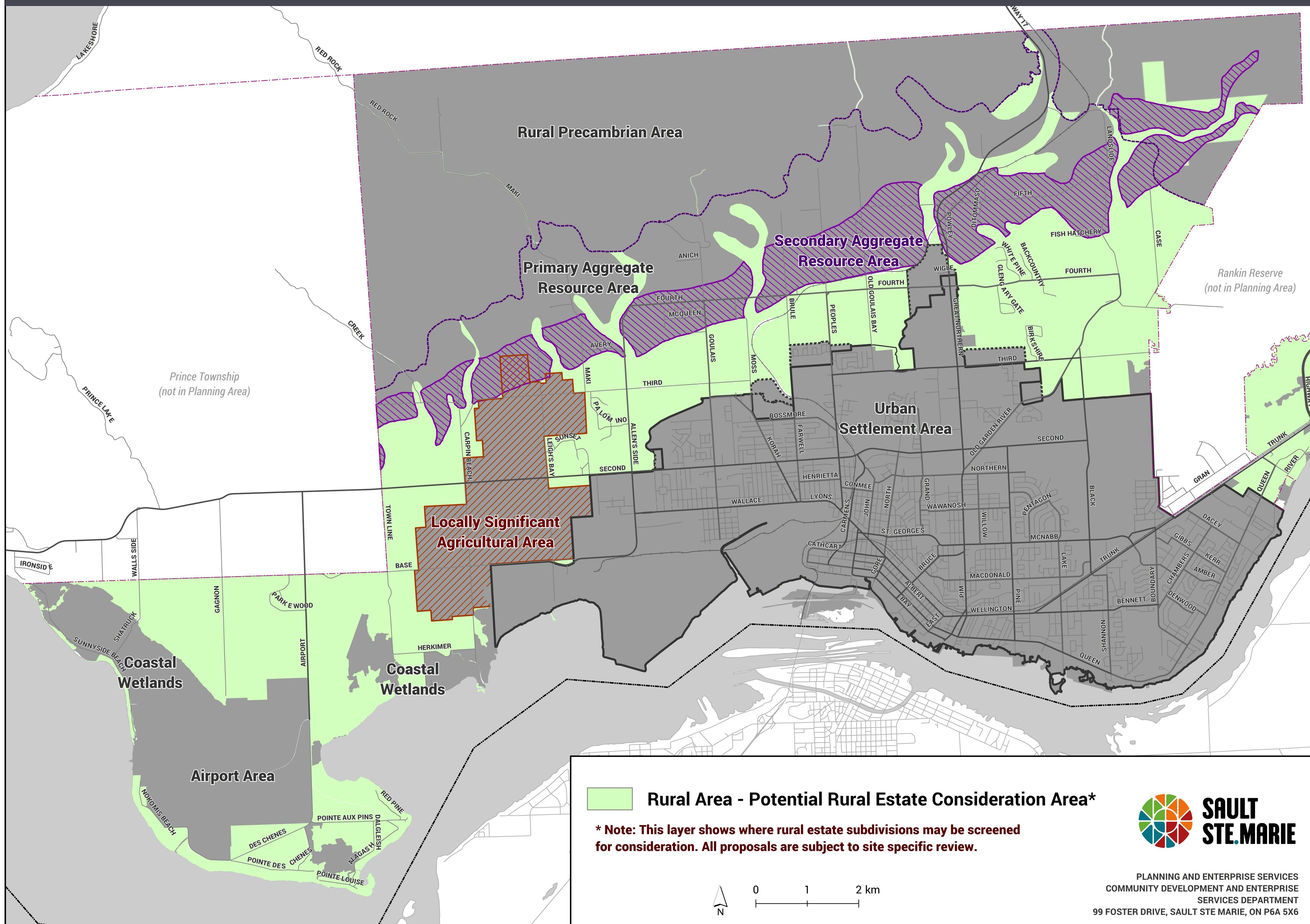
Each category is rated from 0 to 5:
0—Not suitable **3—Meets minimum standards** **5—Excellent**



Stage 2—Full Application

- Successful applicants from Stage 1 **will be invited to submit a complete Planning Act application** for a Draft Plan of Subdivision.
- If no application is received within 12 months of invitation, then eligibility lapses and applicant must re-apply to Stage 1. Subdivision approval will be withdrawn if lots are not registered within a certain number of years.

Rural Estate Residential Subdivisions—Consideration Area



Locally Significant Agricultural Areas—Protecting Resources

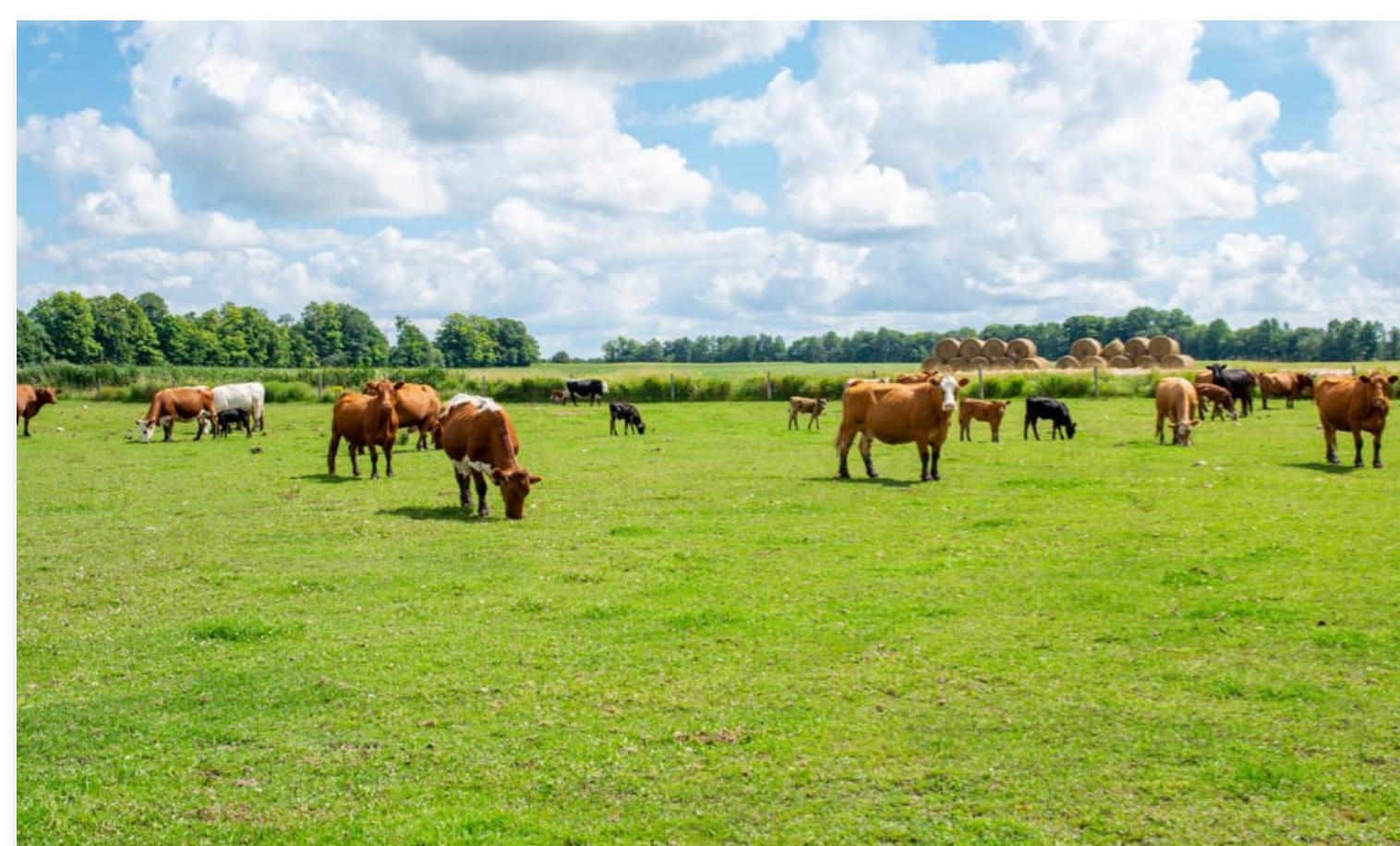
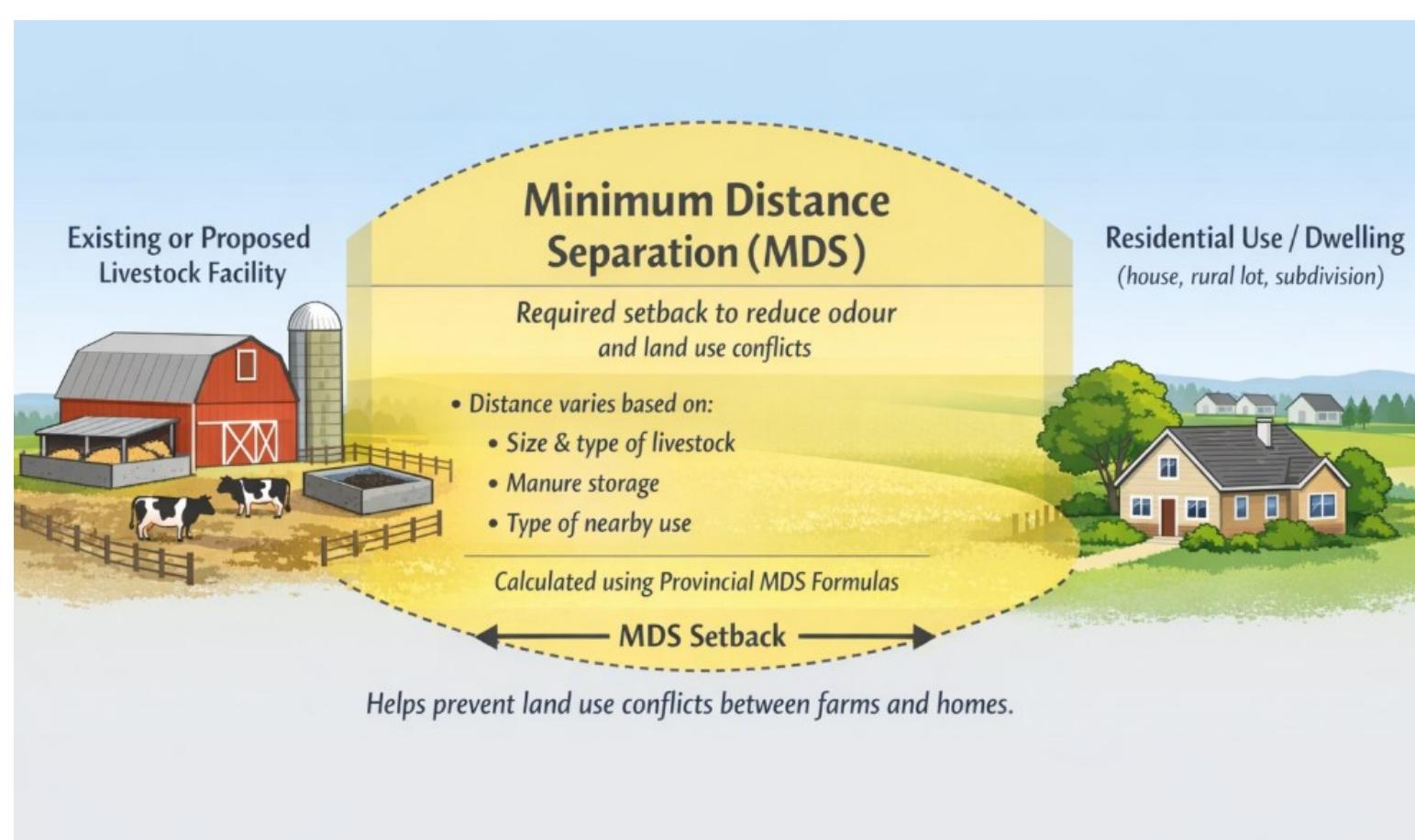
Balancing growth with agriculture protection:

The City has identified **Locally Significant Agricultural Areas (LSAAs)**, which are lands that have important agricultural use or potential that should be preserved for long-term agricultural viability and future food production.

Two key policies have been developed with the intent to preserve the LSAA for agricultural potential by reducing incremental fragmentation, limiting the spread of new sensitive residential uses into areas with agricultural potential, and preserves the size, flexibility, and long-term viability of farm parcels for ongoing operations and future expansion.

How LSAAs were Identified :

- Soil Capability (Canada Land Inventory Classes 1 to 4), in addition to local indicators:
- Existing agricultural operations and farm tax classification properties.
- Parcel size and continuity.



Locally Significant Agricultural Areas—Protecting Resources

How this affects development:

1. Exclusion Area for Rural Estate Subdivisions

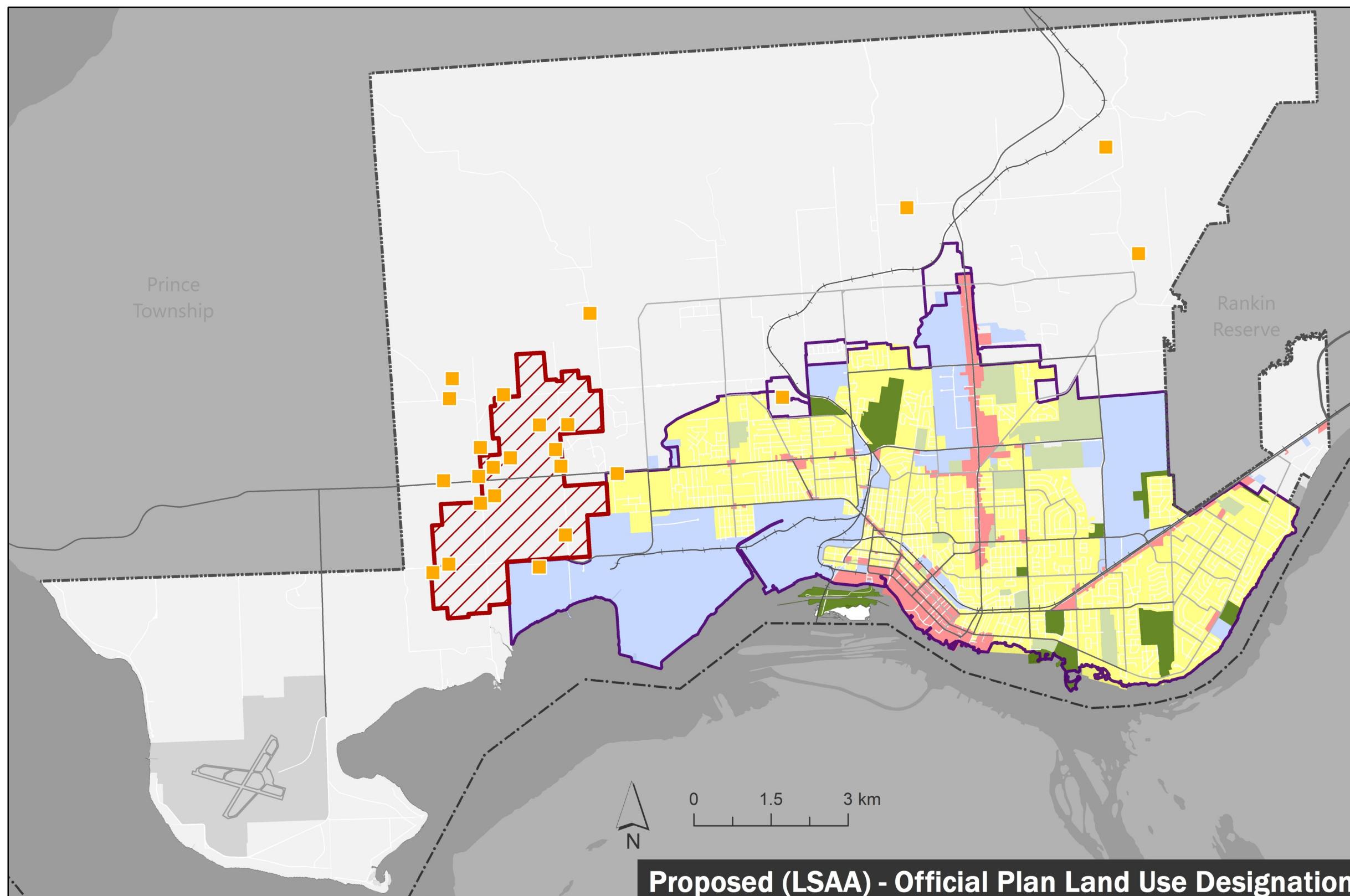
- New rural residential subdivisions **will not be permitted** within an LSAA. At present, rural subdivisions are not permitted, but should Council permit them, the LSAA will be an exclusion area.
- Any proposals near an LSAA will need to conform to Provincial MDS separation requirements to ensure no land use compatibility issues.
- This will ensure that rural housing development does not impact long-term agricultural capacity.

2. Additional Regulation for New Lots

- The existing OP policy that limits lot creation (consents) to no more than two severances plus the retained parcel will be maintained.
- Severed parcels intended to support agricultural use shall be a minimum of 4 hectares.
- Where a severed parcel is not intended for active agricultural use, the severed parcel shall be limited to a maximum lot area of:
 - 1.0 hectare for a new residential lot; and
 - 1.2 hectares for other non-agricultural lots

The LSAA **does not change zoning or permitted uses**. It protects agricultural areas by minimizing land fragmentation through the lot creation process.

Locally Significant Agricultural Areas (LSAA)



All Maps

- Proposed LSAA
- Urban Settlement Area
- Farm Property Tax Class Parcel

Official Plan Land Use Designation Map

Residential	Industrial
Commercial	Rural Areas
Institutional	Airport Lands
Parks & Recreation	

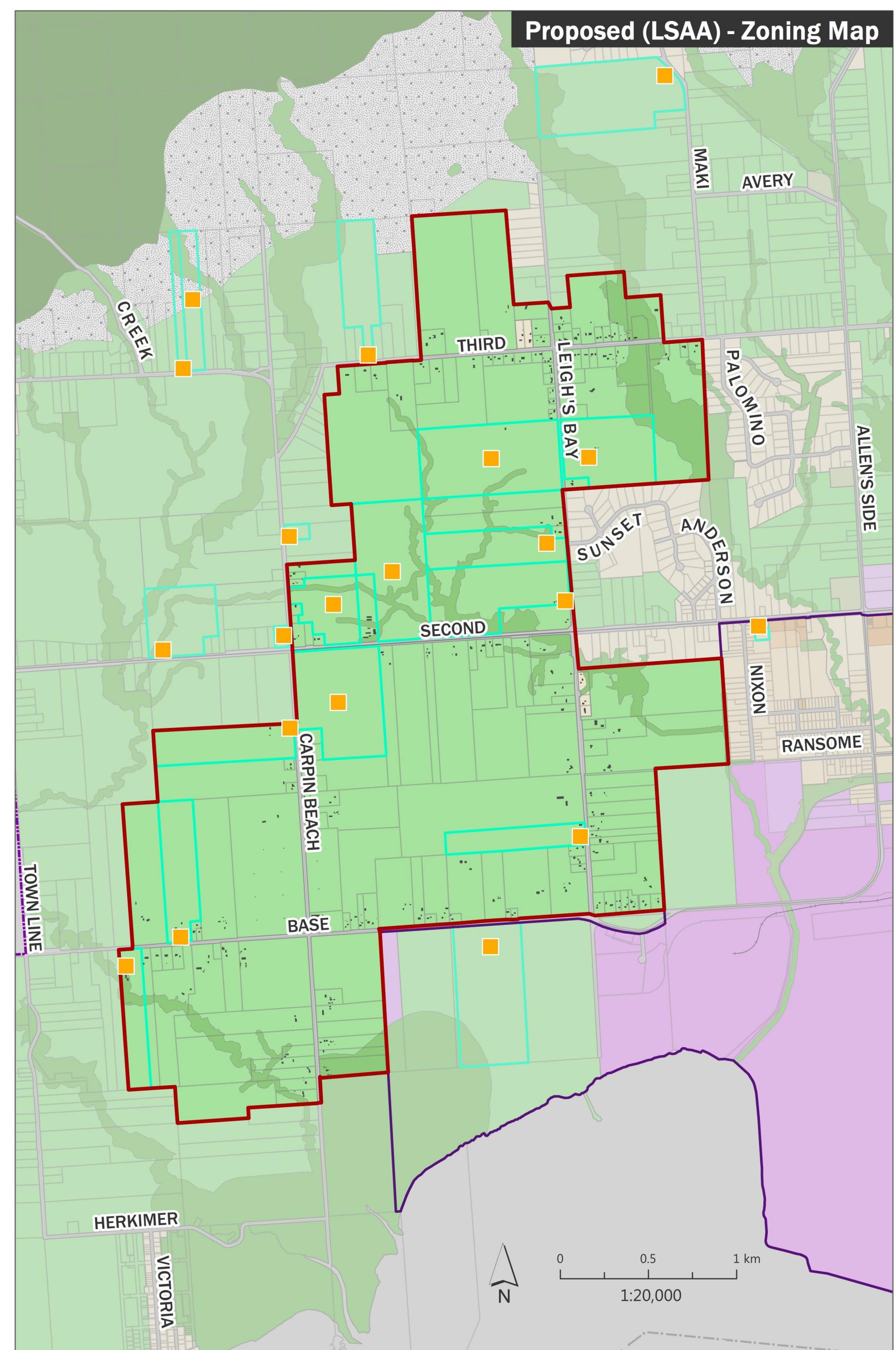
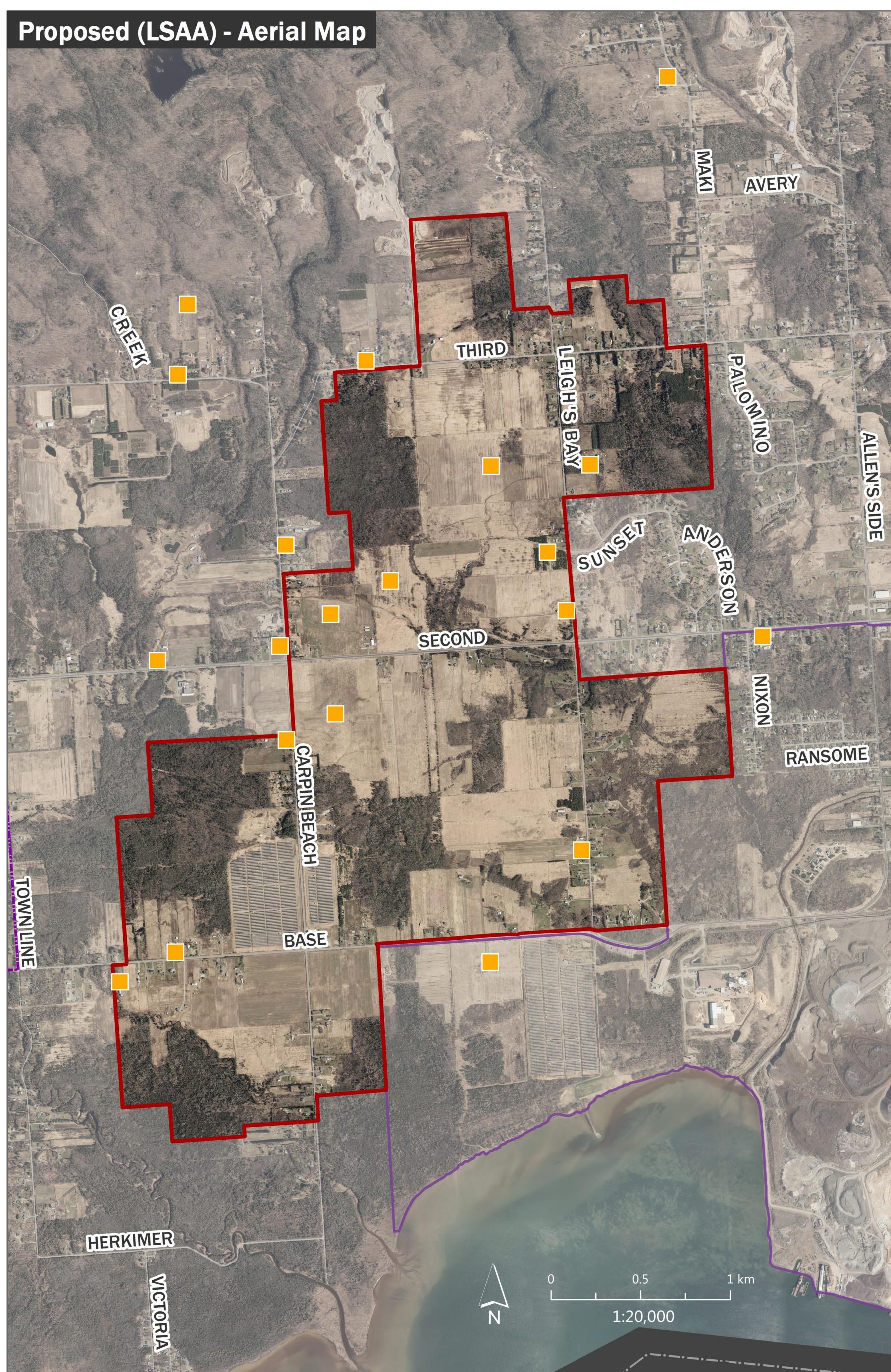
Zoning Map

Farm Property Tax Class Parcel
M1 - Light Industrial Zone
R1 - Estate Residential Zone
R2 - Single Detached Residential Zone
EM - Environmental Management Zone
PR - Parks and Recreation Zone
RA - Rural Area Zone
RP - Rural Precambrian Uplands Zone
REX - Rural Aggregate Extraction Zone



Planning and Enterprise Services
Community Development and Enterprise Services Department
99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste Marie, ON P6A 5X6
saultstmarie.ca | 705-759-5368 | planning@cityssm.on.ca

This map is for general reference only.



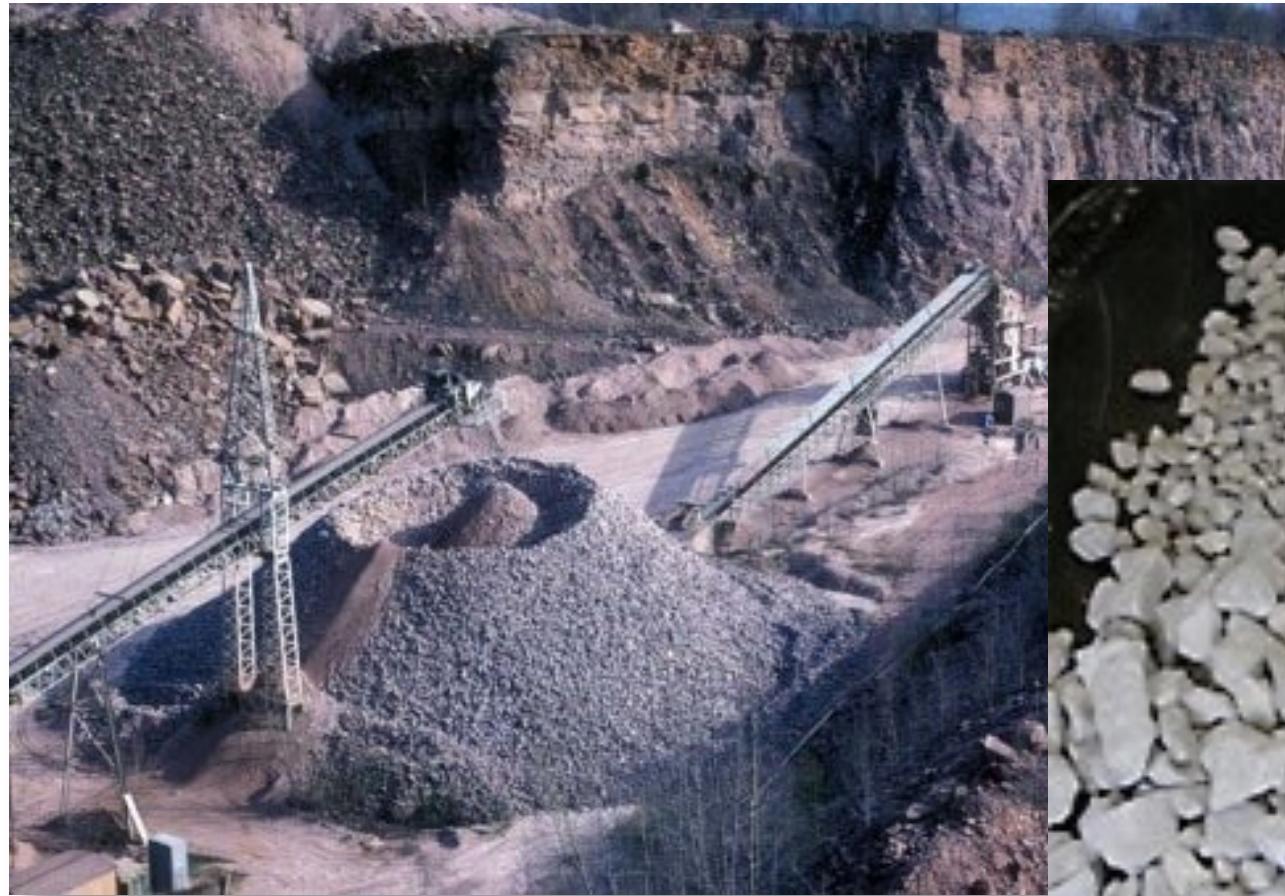
Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resources—Protecting Resources

Why are we talking about aggregate resources?

Mineral aggregate resources are naturally occurring materials such as sand, gravel, and crushed stone.

They are used to build roads, buildings and other infrastructure. Almost every construction project relies on aggregate in some form.

These materials are heavy and expensive to transport over long distances, therefore, the Province considers it important to identify and protect local sources so future infrastructure can be built efficiently and affordably.



The Province requires municipalities to **protect mineral aggregate resources for long-term use** and, where information is available, to identify deposits such as sand and gravel that support construction and infrastructure (e.g., roads and buildings).

Primary vs Secondary deposit areas:

The City already has policies to protect **Primary** aggregate deposits, which are generally higher quality and have greater extraction potential.

Secondary deposit areas are also identified to meet provincial direction, but the resource potential is typically **more variable**. As a result, the City's approach is more **flexible** for non-aggregate uses where it can be shown that aggregate extraction is not realistically feasible.

- 'Not feasible' means that a qualified study determines that the aggregate resource cannot be extracted due to practical reasons (e.g. quality, depth, constraints, or surrounding uses), so the proposed development would not block a realistic resource opportunity.

Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resources—Protecting Resources

How this affects development:

1. Exclusion Area for Rural Estate Subdivisions

- New rural residential subdivisions **will not be permitted** within the secondary aggregate area. At present, rural subdivisions are not permitted, but should Council permit them, the secondary aggregate area will be an exclusion area.
- Rural estate subdivisions should remain excluded to protect long-term extraction viability and avoid land fragmentation in the secondary deposit areas.

2. Additional Regulation for New Lots

- **New lots (consents)** in Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas may only be permitted where a **Qualified Professional** study demonstrates aggregate extraction is not feasible due to:
 - resource depth/quality/quantity,
 - surrounding development (including sensitive uses) preventing extraction, or
 - the lot creation is clearly tied to an existing recreational use (e.g. a golf course).

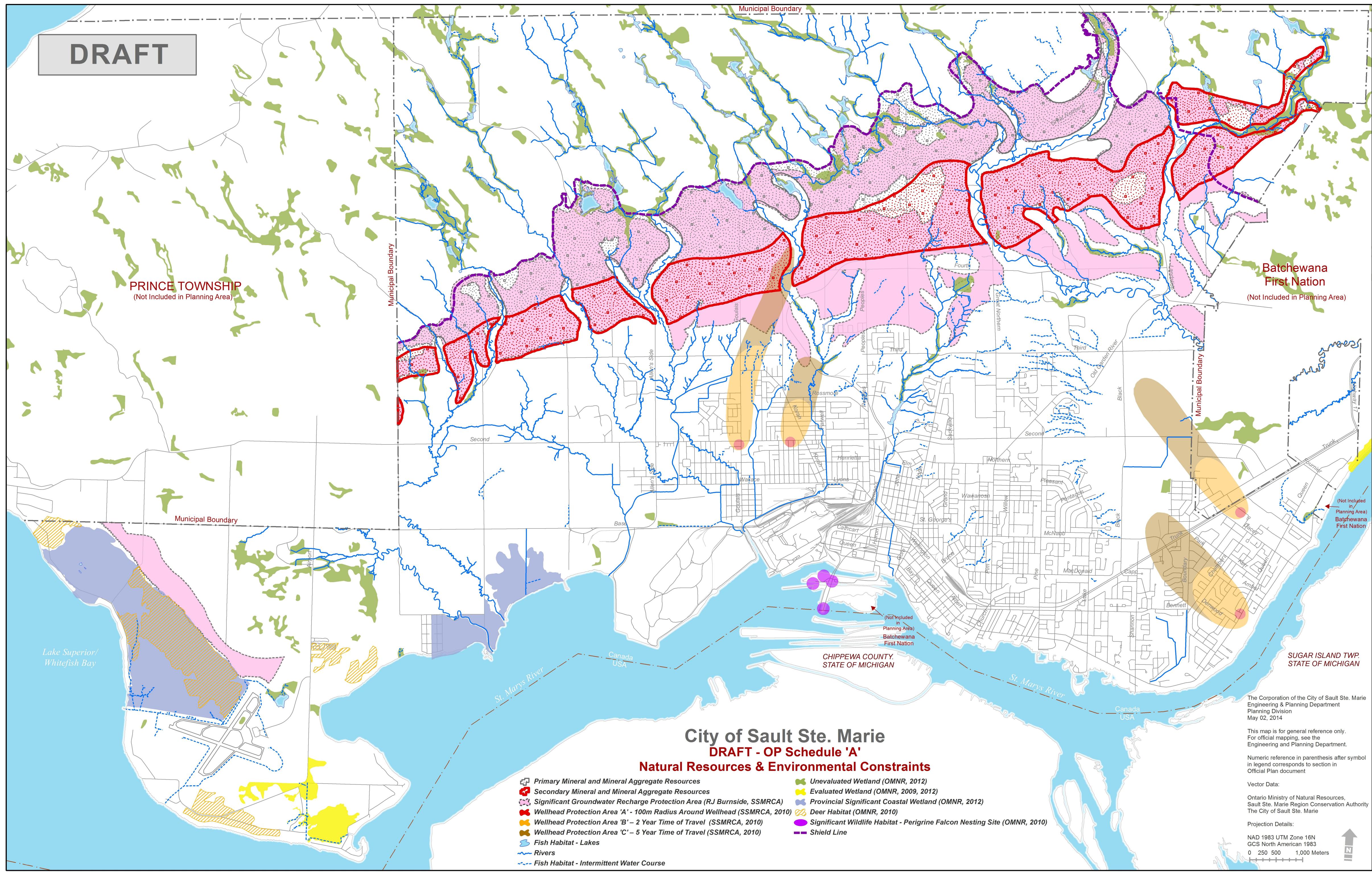
3. Compatibility Near Resources

- Development requiring Planning Act approval (e.g. rezoning, minor variance, consent, site plan control) on adjacent lands must demonstrate land-use compatibility and confirm they will not preclude or hinder current or future extraction.
- Compatibility may be demonstrated through a staff review or qualified study depending on the site.

This **does not change zoning or permitted uses** today. Protection is achieved by managing new lot creation and new sensitive uses so they do not fragment or preclude future resource extraction.

Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resources—Consideration Area

The proposed **Secondary Mineral Aggregate Resource Area** is shown as stippled **red** in the draft map:



Proposed Alterations to the Urban Settlement Area

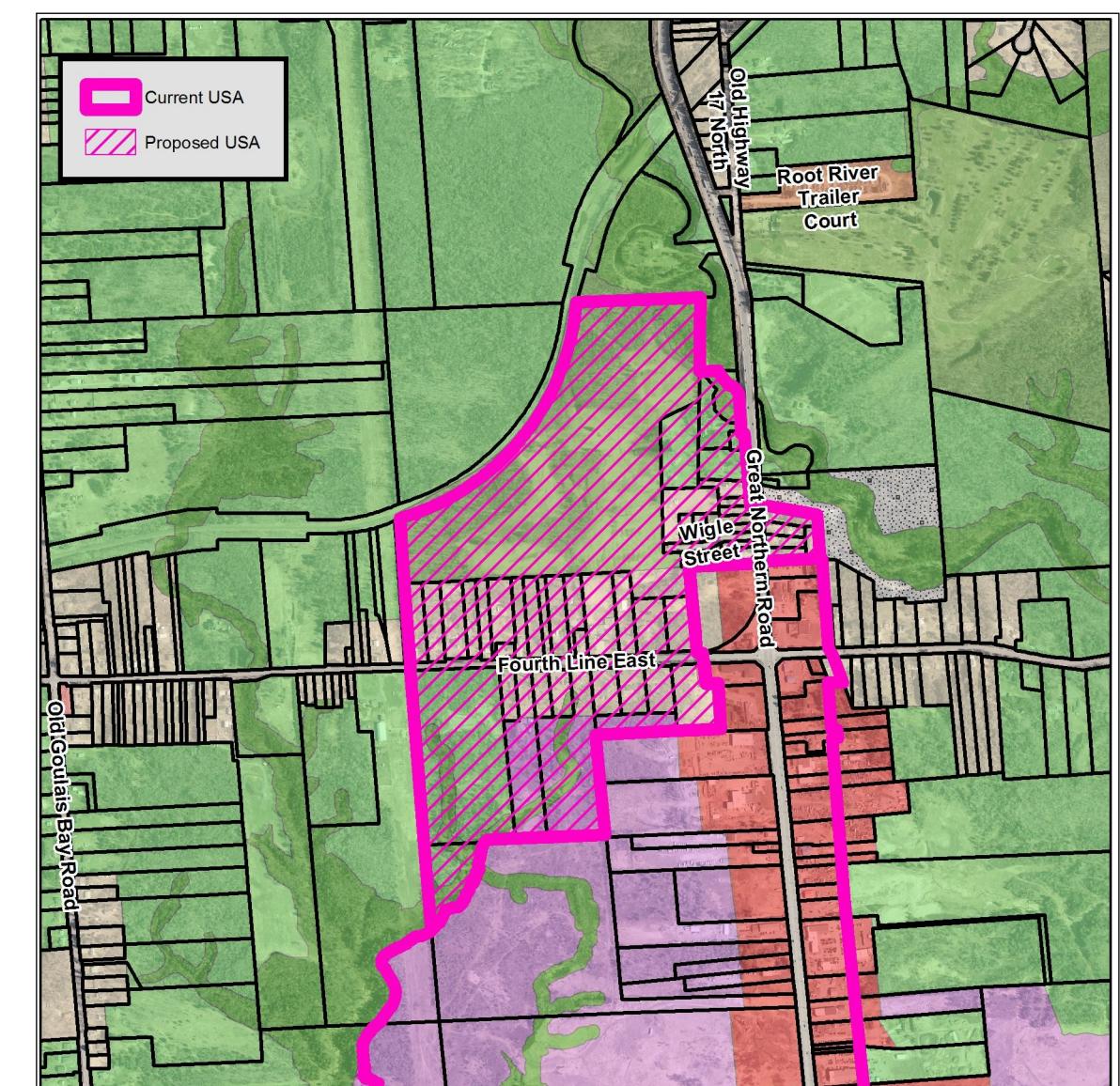
- 7 urban settlement area amendments are proposed. **6** additions and **1** small reduction.
- Overall, the changes would add **214.28 hectares** (529.49 acres) to the Urban Settlement Area.
- These adjustments largely ‘square off’ the urban boundary to reflect existing and future development potential.

For vacant lands added to the Urban Settlement Area:

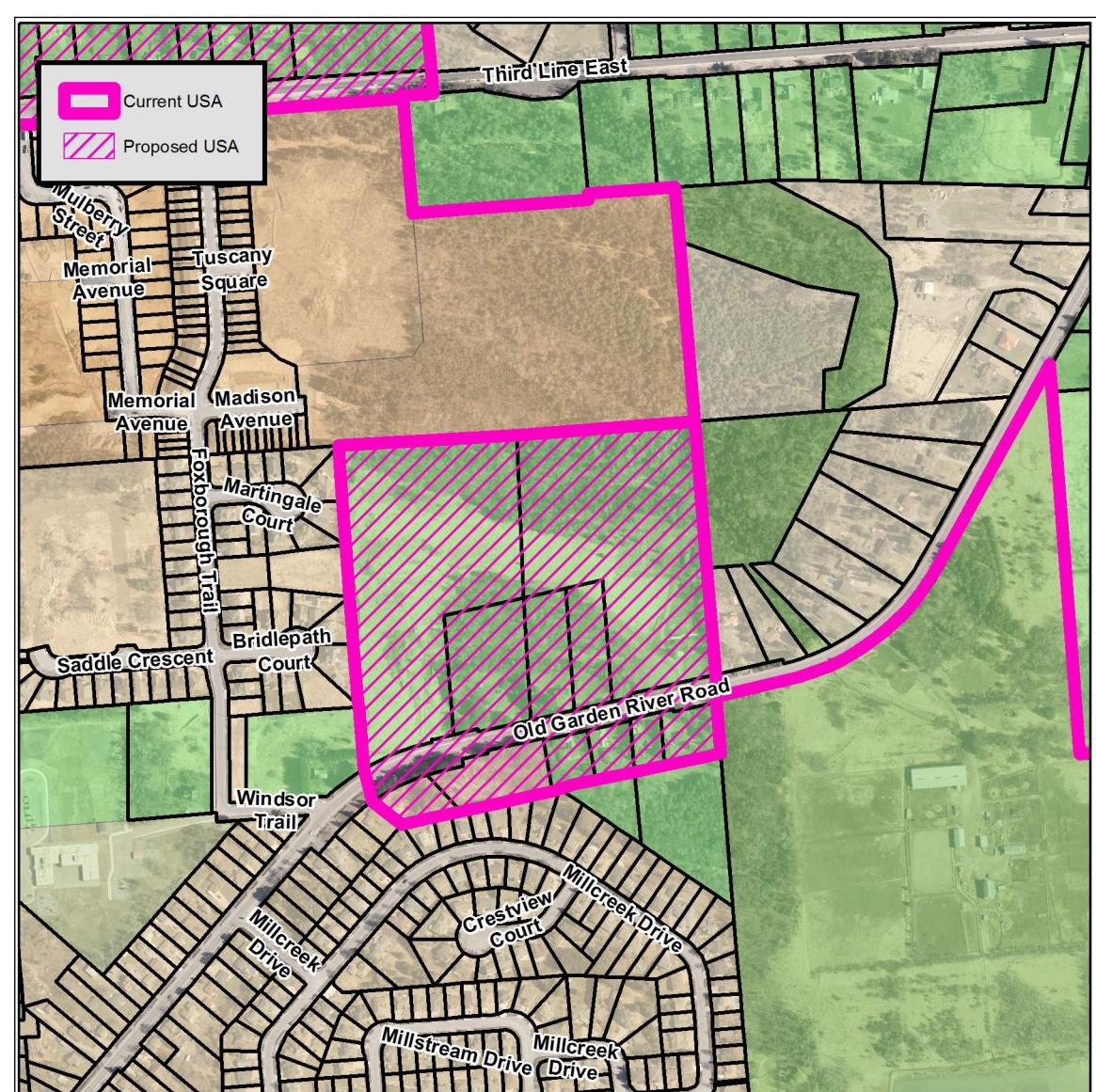
Current zoning and land use designation will remain for now. Future development will require *Planning Act* applications and public consultation.

For developed lands:

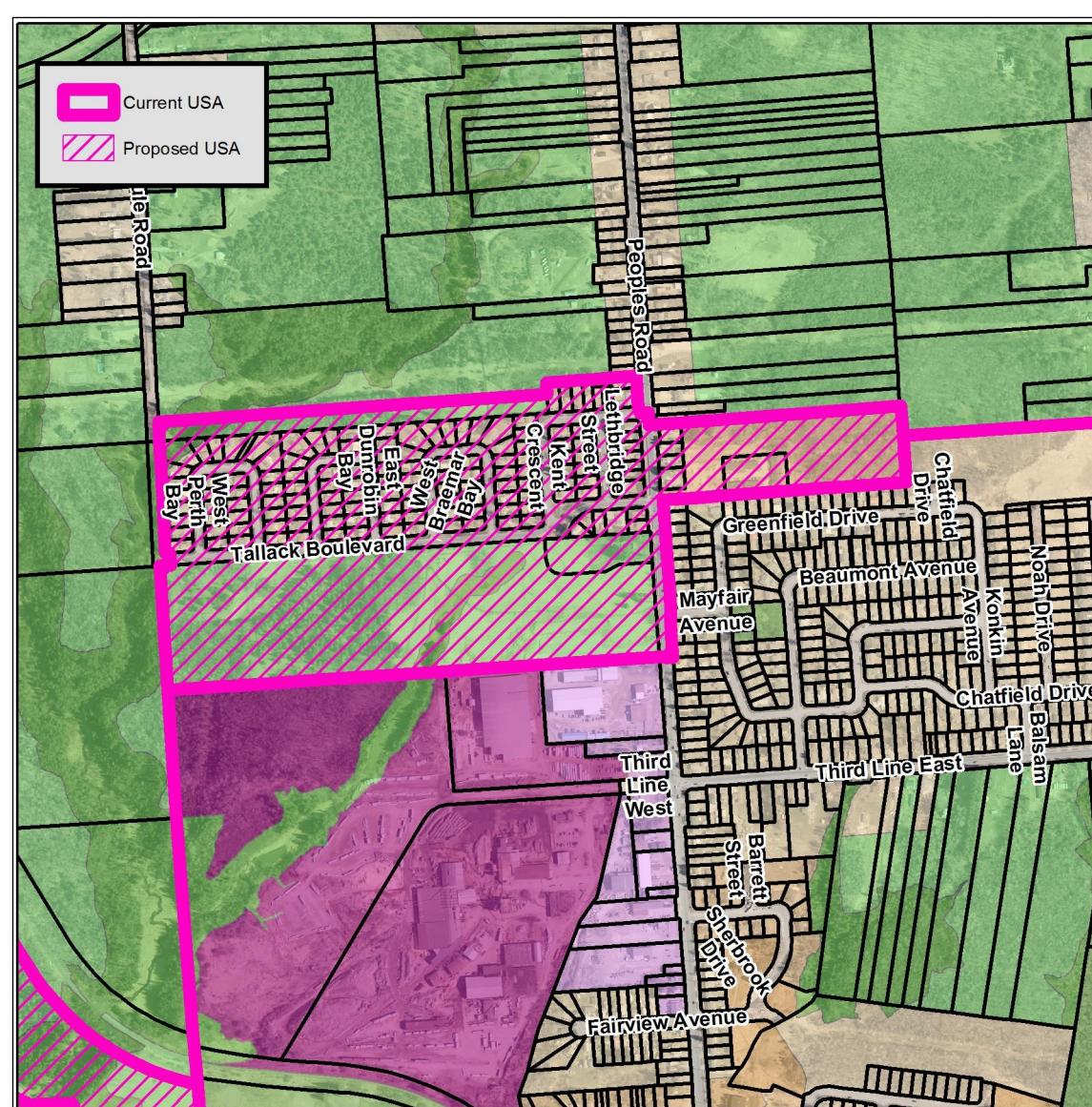
Existing land uses will continue under current designations.



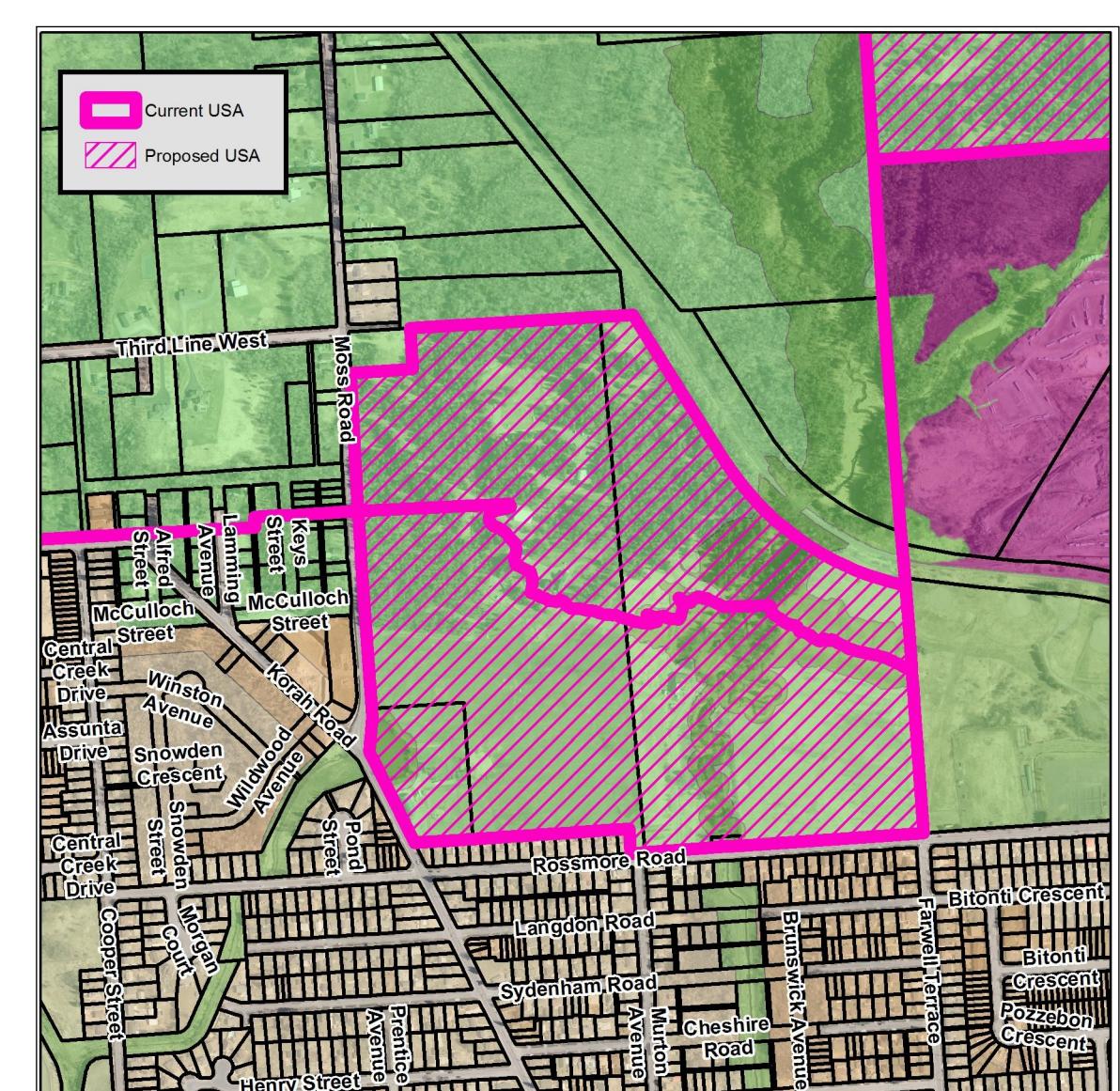
Fourth Line East and GNR Area



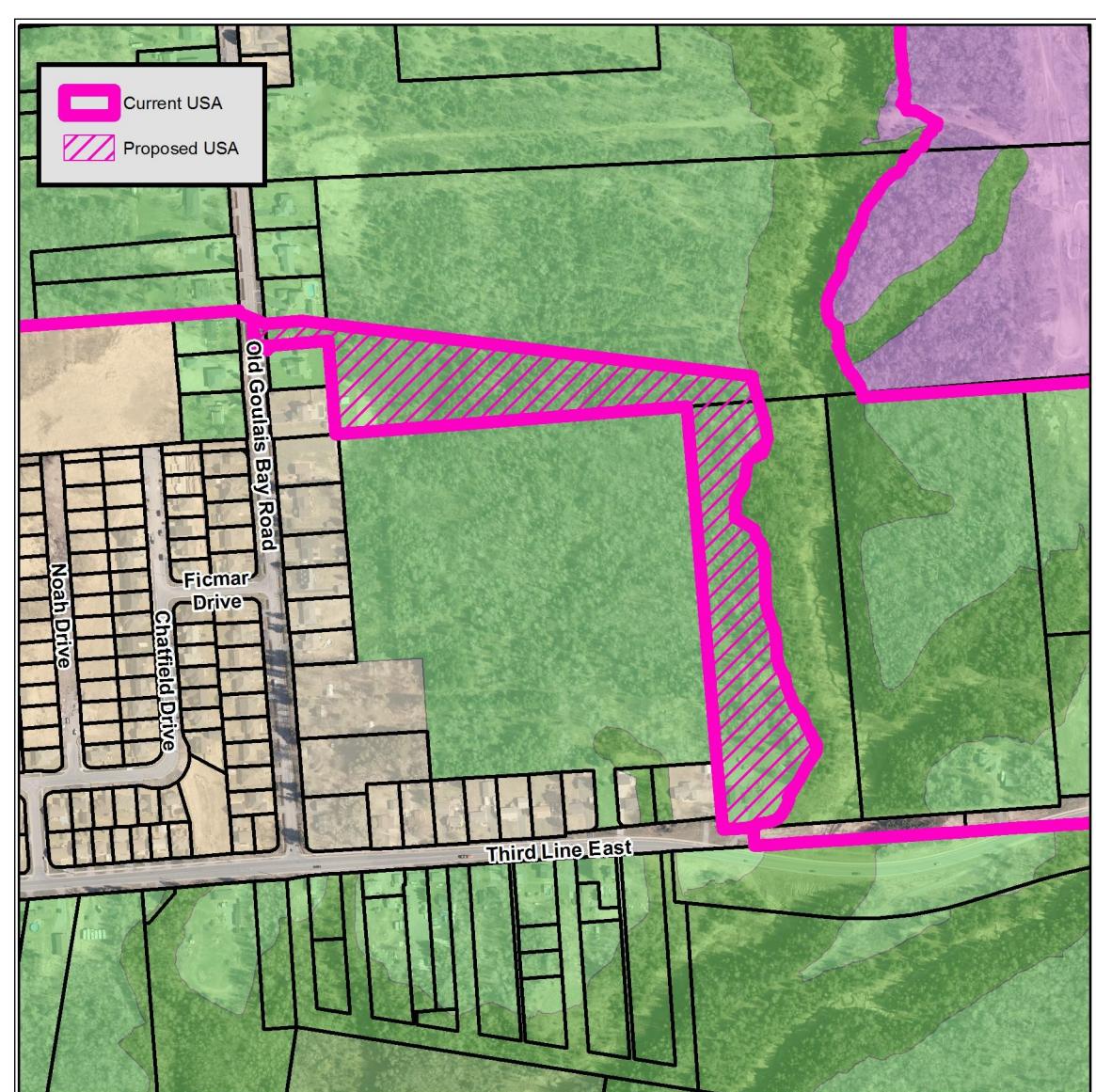
Old Garden River Road Area



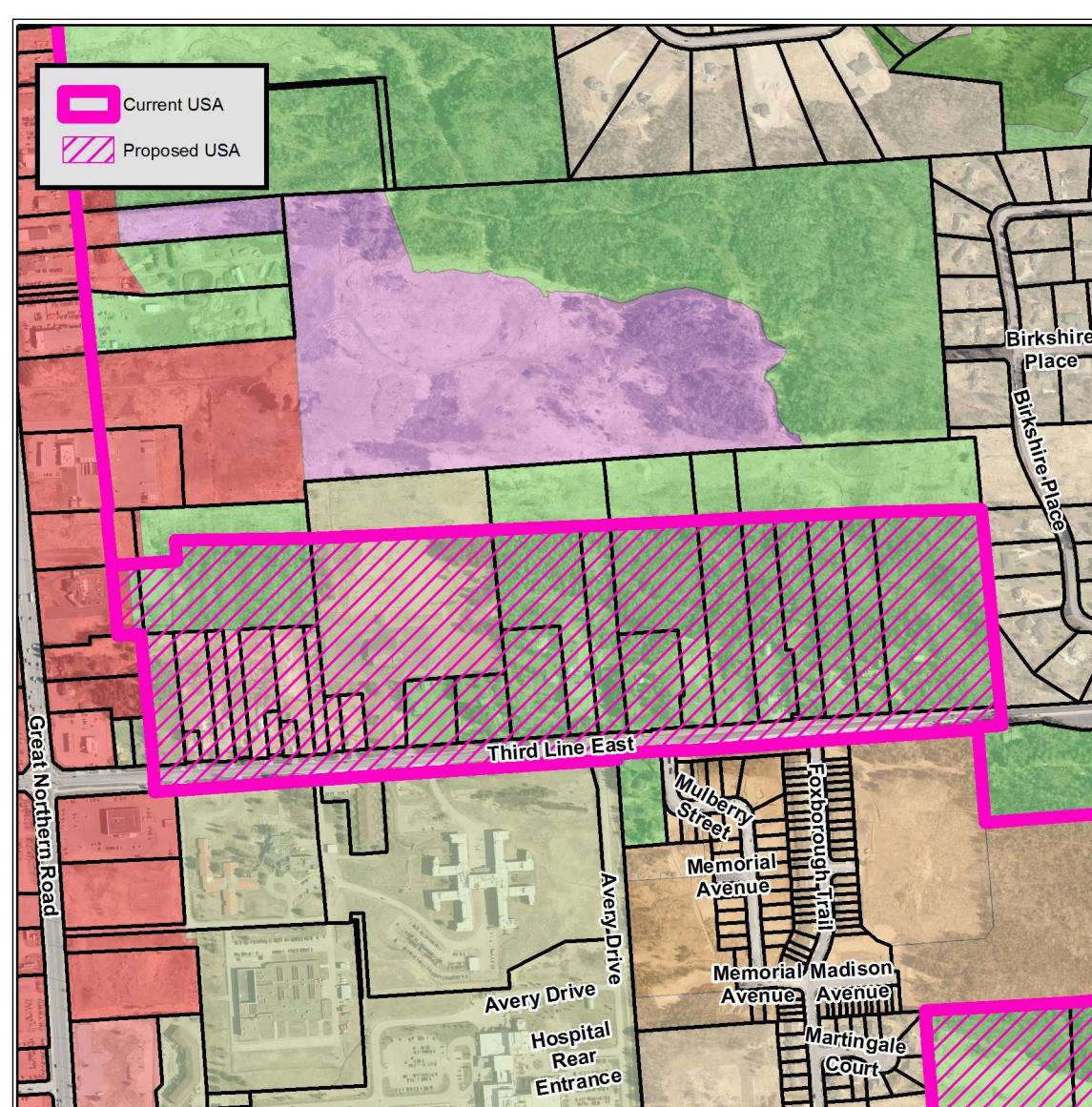
Peoples Road and Tallack Blvd.



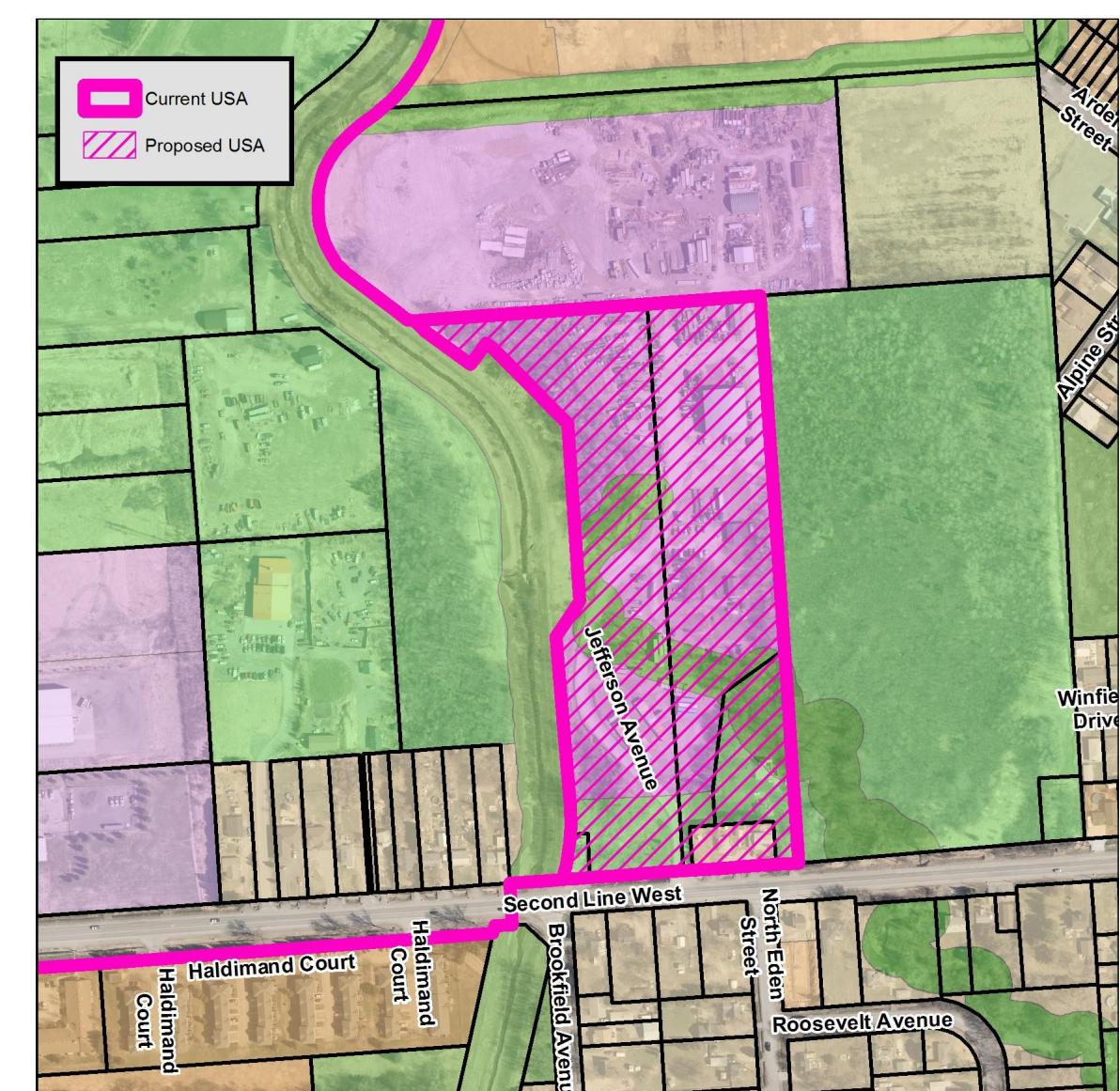
Rossmore Road



Third Line East and OGBR (remove)



Third Line East and GNR



Second Line and Flood Channel

1. Review of Public Input

Planning staff will review all submitted comments. Where appropriate, refinements may be made to the proposed policies based on public input.

Comments can be emailed to: Jonathan Kircal, j.kircal@cityssm.on.ca

or **mailed** to: Planning Division, 99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON, P6A 5X6

2. City Council Consideration

The proposed Official Plan Amendment will then be brought forward to **City Council for consideration and approval.**

The anticipated Council meeting date is **February 23, 2026**, or shortly thereafter.

3. Stay Informed

For updates, open house display panels, and background info, please visit:

shapethesault.ca/openhouse

You may also sign up to receive email notifications and Council meeting updates by submitting your email address to:

j.kircal@cityssm.on.ca