



Town of Essex New Official Plan

Public Information Centre

May 22, 2025



Introductions



Town of Essex:

Lori Chadwick, Director,
Development Services

Rita Jabbour, Manager, Planning
Services



WSP Canada:

Will Lamond, Project Manager

Greg Bender, Director,
Planning Ontario



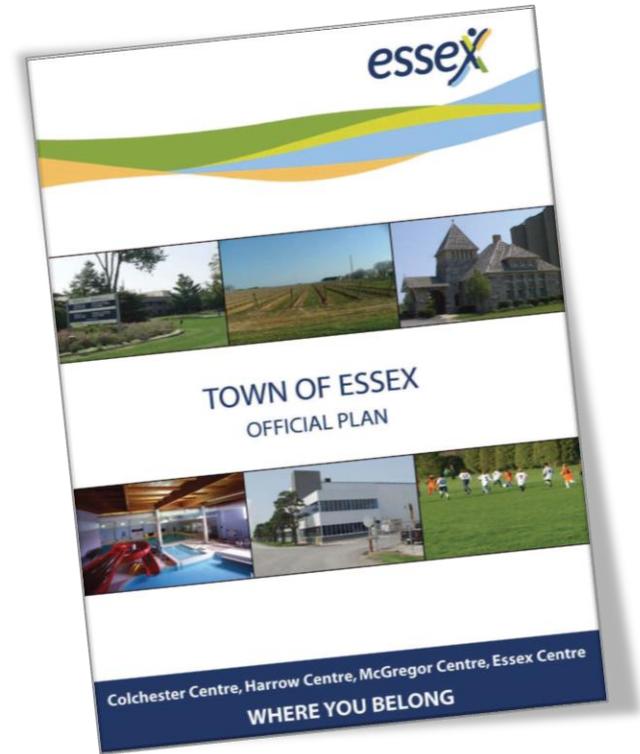
Agenda

- Present an overview of the work and consultation completed in Phase 1 of the project
- Provide an update on planned work in Phase 2 of the project
- Answer questions related to the Official Plan project



What is the Town's Official Plan (OP)?

- A long-range planning document containing goals, objectives and policies to **guide** land use, development and growth
- **Planning Act requires Official Plans to be updated every five years**
- The new OP requires updated and new policies to reflect Provincial, County, and Town priorities



Existing Official Plan

Planning Act

Provincial Planning Statement

County of Essex OP

Town OP

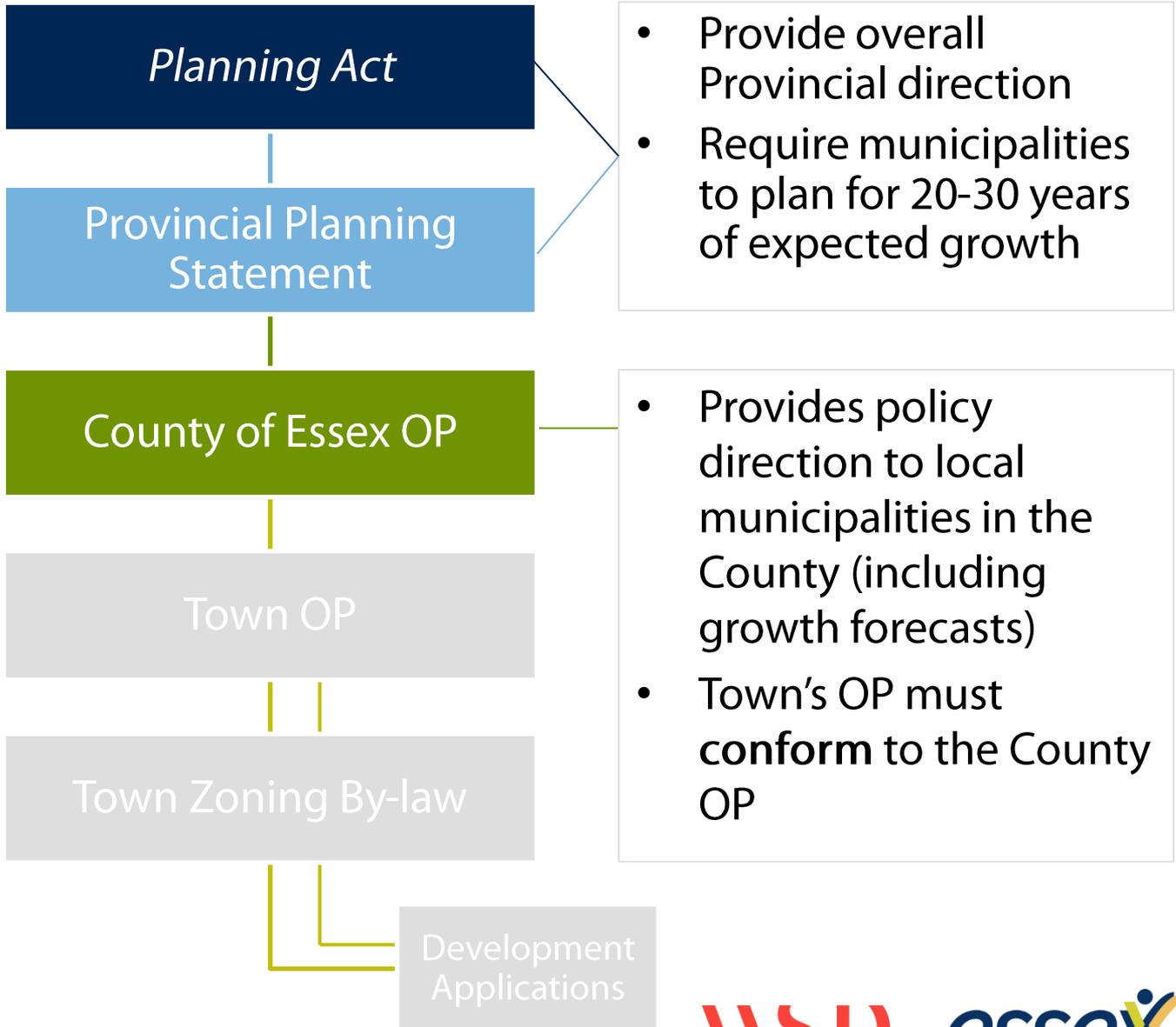
Town Zoning By-law

Development Applications



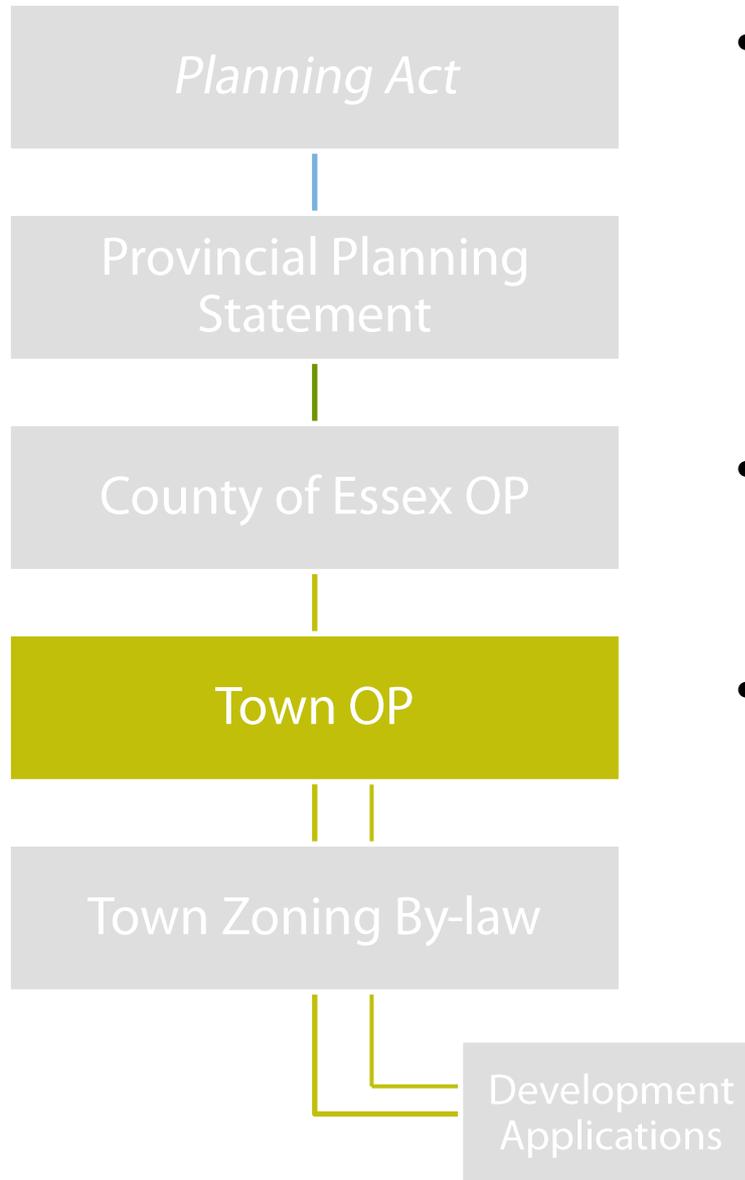
This Project!



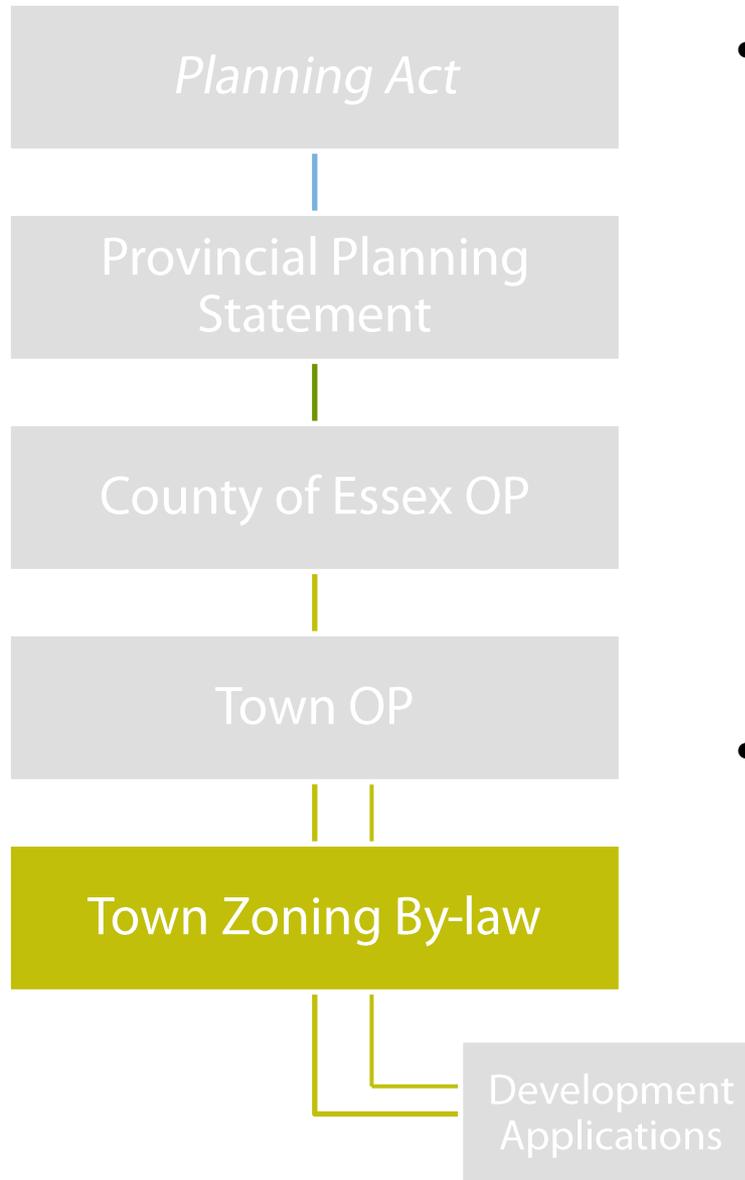


- Provide overall Provincial direction
- Require municipalities to plan for 20-30 years of expected growth

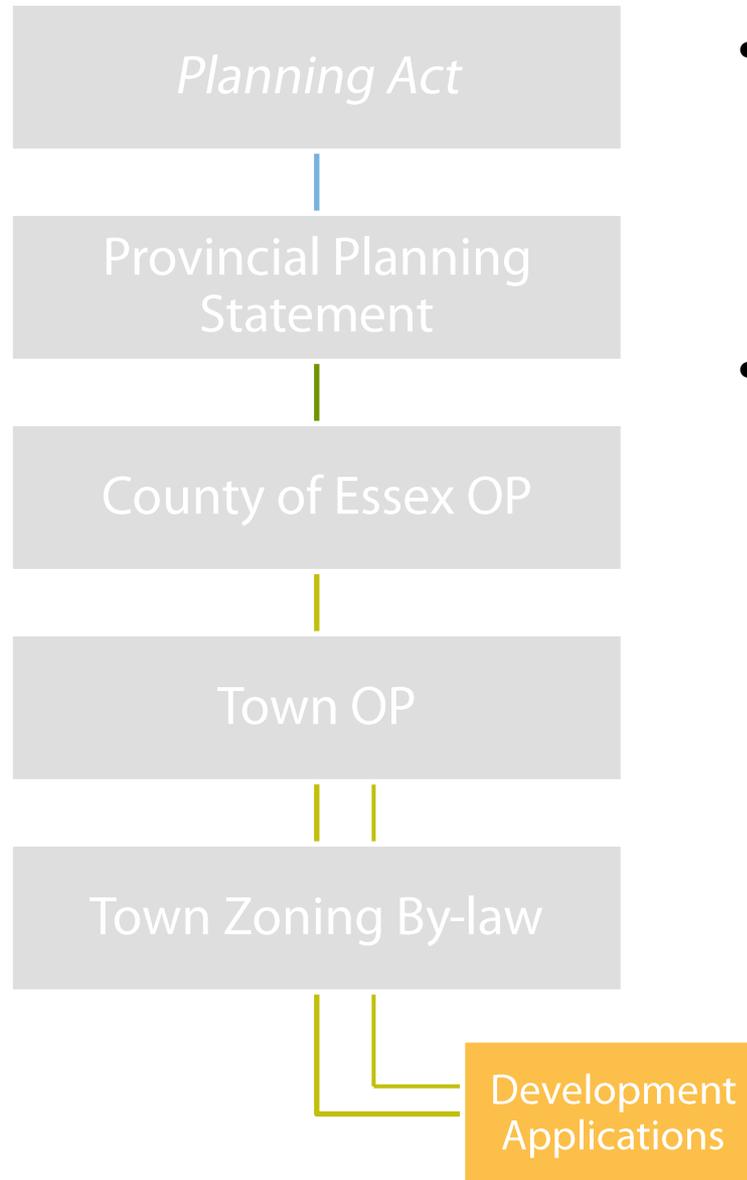
- Provides policy direction to local municipalities in the County (including growth forecasts)
- Town's OP must conform to the County OP



- Sets the vision and principles for growth, development, and infrastructure in the Town
- Policies to **guide, not force** development
- Higher level, implemented mainly through the Zoning By-law



- Regulates the permitted uses, building requirements, and parking and loading requirements on all properties in the Town
- Technical and highly specific



- Privately-led (or in some cases by other public bodies like school boards)
- Reviewed by the Town against OP and Zoning By-law



Phase 1 Summary

Phase 1 Completed Work

- Background Report
 - Review and analysis of gaps and opportunities to develop overall direction and priorities
- Colchester Parking Study
 - Review of current on-and off-street parking areas in Colchester
- Colchester Cultural Heritage Feasibility Study
 - Study of lands in Colchester with potential for heritage designation

Phase 1 Completed Work

- Policy Directions Report
 - Detailed discussion of the issues to be addressed in new Official Plan
- Draft Official Plan
 - Updated land use policies and mapping to respond to future growth and development
- Draft Colchester Secondary Plan
 - Updated planning directions for Colchester area

Phase 1 Consultation

- Technical Advisory Group Meetings
- Two Community Stakeholder Working Group Meetings
- Two Development Advisory Group Meetings
- Three Public Focus Groups
 - Included one Focus Group devoted to Colchester
- Three Public Open Houses on the Draft New Official Plan and Colchester Secondary Plan
 - One each in Essex Centre, Harrow, and Colchester



What We Heard

Agriculture



What We Heard

- Emphasis on the importance of preserving farmland
- Perception that greenhouse development is being encouraged
- Opposition to including cannabis cultivation policies in the OP

Agriculture



Response

- A primary goal of the Town (directed by the Province) is to protect prime agricultural lands (including specialty crops)
- The Town cannot prohibit greenhouse or cannabis uses – OP policies allow for the Town to direct them to the most appropriate places
- The Settlement Area Review will consider any agricultural impacts

Housing and Development



What We Heard

- Comments on the need for affordable housing but that new developments should not alter the lifestyles, demographics, or cultural nature of existing communities
- Concerns over “over development” and too much growth

Housing and Development



Response

- Housing affordability is a key need, and the status quo isn't enough
- The Town needs different housing types and tenures to support aging in place, starter homes, etc.
- Appropriate location and scale of new housing will continue to be considered

Colchester Secondary Plan

What We Heard

- Significant concern over the proposed Colchester Bay development at Dunn Road and County Road 50 and that the land uses proposed in the Secondary Plan are not appropriate



Colchester Secondary Plan



What We Heard

- Concerns that the draft Official Plan and Colchester SP prioritize tourism over the needs of local residents.
- Concerns over the capacity of infrastructure (especially sewage and roads)
- Concerns that the Town would be expropriating land from homeowners to force commercial development

Colchester Secondary Plan



Response

- Purpose: not to spur major residential growth - intended to support Colchester's evolution over 30 years
- Colchester Bay proposal is separate from the Secondary Plan, but policies for those lands will be revisited

Colchester Secondary Plan

Response

- Intent is to improve connections to the lakefront for residents and visitors
- Policies for the waterfront will be revisited
- No home/landowners will be forced to sell or redevelop their properties



Community Involvement



What We Heard

- Calls for more engagement and consultation in the project

Response

- Phase 2 of the project will include more chances to participate in the overall Official Plan project
- A revamped Colchester Focus Group will be organized in Summer 2025 to help refine the vision and goals for Colchester



Phase 2 Work Plan

Phase 2 Tasks

- Settlement Area Review
 - Identification of candidate lands (Summer 2025)
 - Analysis and recommendations (Fall 2025/Winter 2026)
 - Results will be presented at future Council Meeting
- Colchester Secondary Plan
 - Additional consultation (Summer 2025) to refine vision, permitted land uses, and heights and densities
- Draft Official Plan
 - Next Draft Official Plan for Public Consultation, implementing Settlement Area Review (2026)\
 - Additional Public Open House(s) and Public Meeting(s)

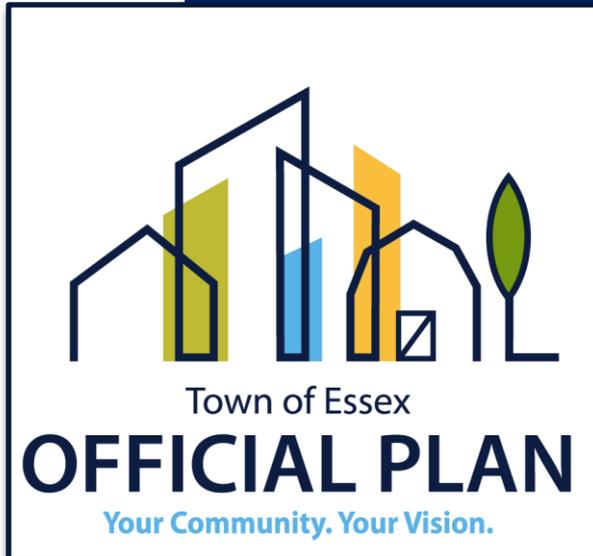
Settlement Area Review

- Based on the County's OP, the Town has to review its existing Settlement Areas
- The Review has two primary outcomes:
 - Identify lands to be added to the Town's Settlement Areas to support future job growth.
or
Identify lands to be banked for future designation.
 - Identify adjustments to the Town's Settlement Area boundaries to support future residential growth.
or
Identify lands to be banked for future designation

Non-Feasible Lands

- Certain lands in the Town's Settlement Areas may not be feasible for development and can be removed and replaced by other lands in Primary Settlement Areas
- Potential considerations for removal:
 - Presence of natural heritage encumbrances
 - Lack of servicing capacity
 - Lack of development or sales interest by landowner
- Non-feasible lands will be confirmed through Settlement Area Review

Stay Involved!



- Submit comments and questions to the Town on the Draft New Official Plan
- Watch the website for updates!

<https://www.essex.ca/officialplan>

For more information please contact:

officialplan@essex.ca

519-776-7336 ext. 1128

2610 County Road 12, Gesto





Q & A