

## **Appendix B: Presentation to Local Planning Staff**

- Natural Environment Work Program – Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Options. Presentation to Local Planning Departments (September 2020)



making our mark

# **NIAGARA**

## OFFICIAL PLAN

# **Natural Environment Work Program – Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Options**

**Presentation to Local Planning Departments**

**September 2020**



# Project Overview – Natural Environment

Project Phase	Activities
1	Project Initiation and Procurement
2	Background Study and Discussion Papers for Mapping and Watershed Planning Priority Areas
3	1 <sup>st</sup> Point of Engagement: Inform on Background Study
4	Develop and Evaluate Options for Natural System(s)
5	2 <sup>nd</sup> Point of Engagement: Consultation on Options for the Natural System(s)
6	Develop Regional Natural System(s)
7	Develop OP Policies & Finalize Mapping
8	3 <sup>rd</sup> Point of Engagement: Draft OP Policies and Schedules
9	Other Implementation Tools



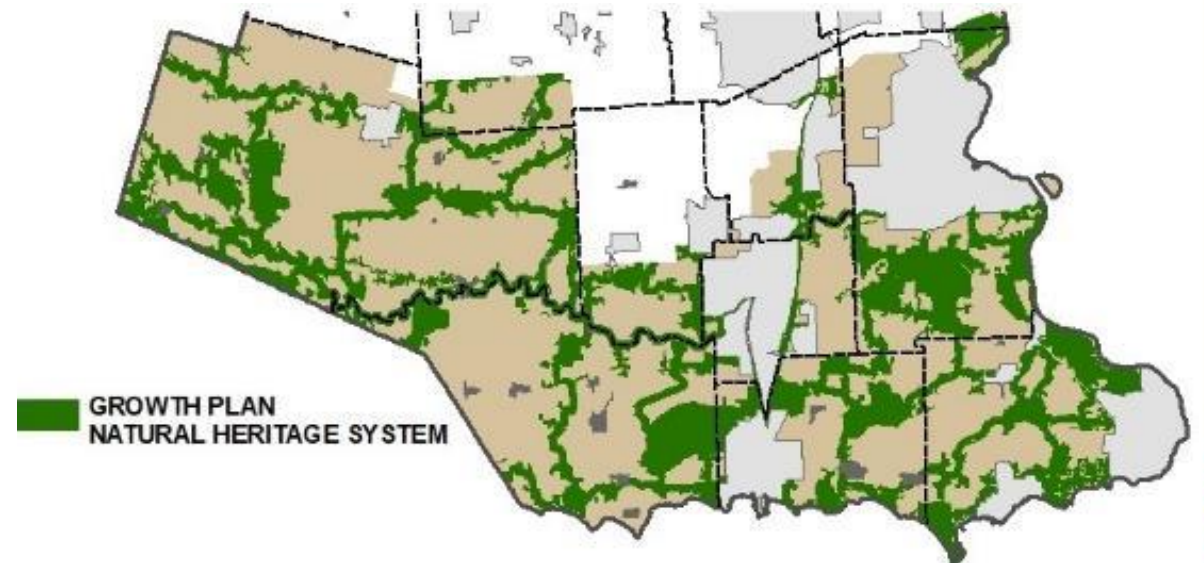
# Overview of Phase 4

- Incremental step between the background reports and the mapping and policy development process
- Goal is to establish the overall direction for the natural heritage system (NHS) and water resource system (WRS)
- Based on concepts for the natural systems only. Mapping, criteria, and policies were developed to a level-of-detail that was required to support the evaluation and engagement process only
- Detailed and region-wide mapping to be completed in subsequent phases of the work program



# Provincial Direction – Natural Environment

- The **Greenbelt Plan** and **Growth Plan NHSs** have been identified by the Province and are to be implemented by municipalities
- The Growth Plan and PPS also requires that a water resource system be identified and protected.
- The PPS identifies the types of natural features, areas, functions, that must be protected through Official Plan policies



# Policy Direction – Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System



- In addition to preparing a map of the NHS, the Province has also mapped the agricultural system
- Within the agricultural system, the PPS and Growth Plan both require that Prime Agricultural Areas be designated in Official Plans
- In contrast, the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan requires NHS to be shown as overlay – to recognize the primacy of agriculture





# Policy Direction – Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System

- Policies will not limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue (PPS 2.1.9)
- Greenbelt and Growth Plan NHS policies both provide a wide range of exemptions for new agricultural and agricultural-related buildings and structures
- The requirement for a natural buffer is exempt where lands will continue to be used for agricultural purposes



# Policy Direction – Water Resource System (WRS)

- The Province has not prepared a map showing a WRS – however, the Growth Plan requires that a WRS be identified
- While some components of a WRS can be identified (such as wetlands and stream corridors), other components can only be identified through future study



“Watershed planning or equivalent will inform ...the identification of water resource systems.” (Growth Plan, 4.2.1.3a)



# Development of Options

- Range of considerations were reflected in the development of options including:
  - Impacts on agricultural community and rural development
  - Provincial requirements to accommodate growth and plan for complete communities in settlement areas
  - Best practices and recent issues and trends in natural environment planning including climate change & invasive species
  - The range of input received through the 1st point of engagement
  - The range of local needs and priorities across Niagara
- All of the options identified:
  - Conform with provincial requirements
  - Represent an increase as compared to the existing system and policies in Niagara

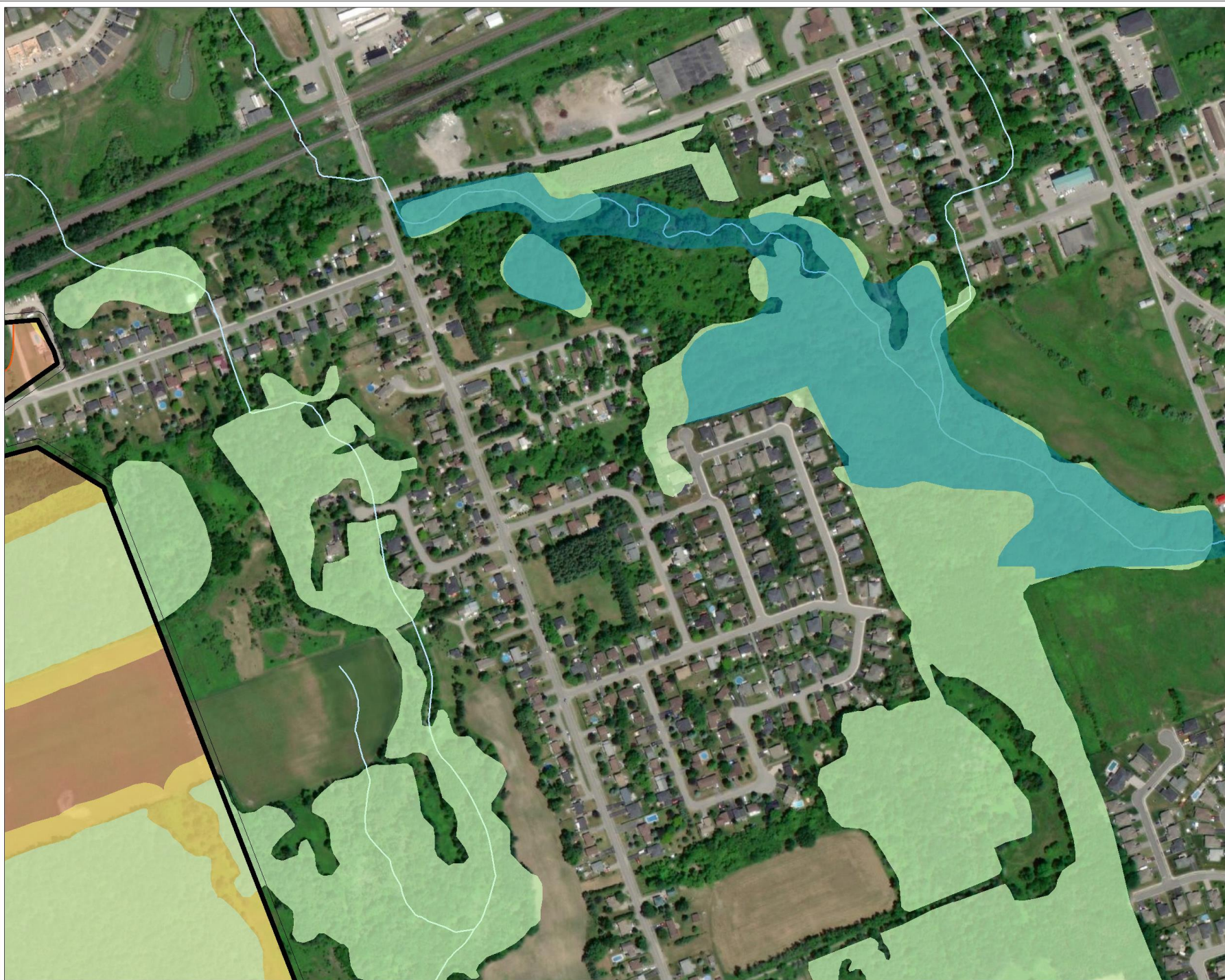


# Natural Heritage System Options

- Option 1 - “Minimum Standards – Overlay”
  - Implements minimum standards of PPS and provincial plans
  - Relies on the provincial NHSs to fulfil the requirements for a ‘system-based’ approach
  - Key features required by provincial plans would be mapped, including significant features identified by the PPS. outside of the Provincial NHSs
  - The NHS including individual features would be shown as an overlay in the Official Plan schedules
- Option 2 - “Minimum Standards – Designation”
  - Same as Option 1 but the key/significant features would be designated as a mutually exclusive land use on the Official Plan schedules
- Option 3 – “Going Beyond Minimum Standards”
  - Builds upon Option 1 and 2 by providing three scenarios that exceed minimum provincial standards, and includes an increasing range of additional components, regional linkages, and buffers.







# Conceptual Natural Heritage System Settlement Area Option 1 and 2

## Legend


 Settlement Area

## Required Components

 Growth Plan Natural Heritage System

 Vegetation Protection Zones

 Significant Woodlands

 Provincially Significant Wetland

 Watercourses

These maps are conceptual and for illustration purposes. These maps were prepared to demonstrate the differences between the various NHS options and are not intended to depict specific areas in Niagara Region.

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Project Number  
20-1149

Date:  
2020-09-09



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## Conceptual Natural Heritage System Outside Settlement Area Option 1 and 2

### Legend

#### Required Components

-  Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
-  Vegetation Protection Zones
-  Significant Woodlands
-  Provincially Significant Wetlands
-  Watercourses

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0 100 200 300 400 500 Meters

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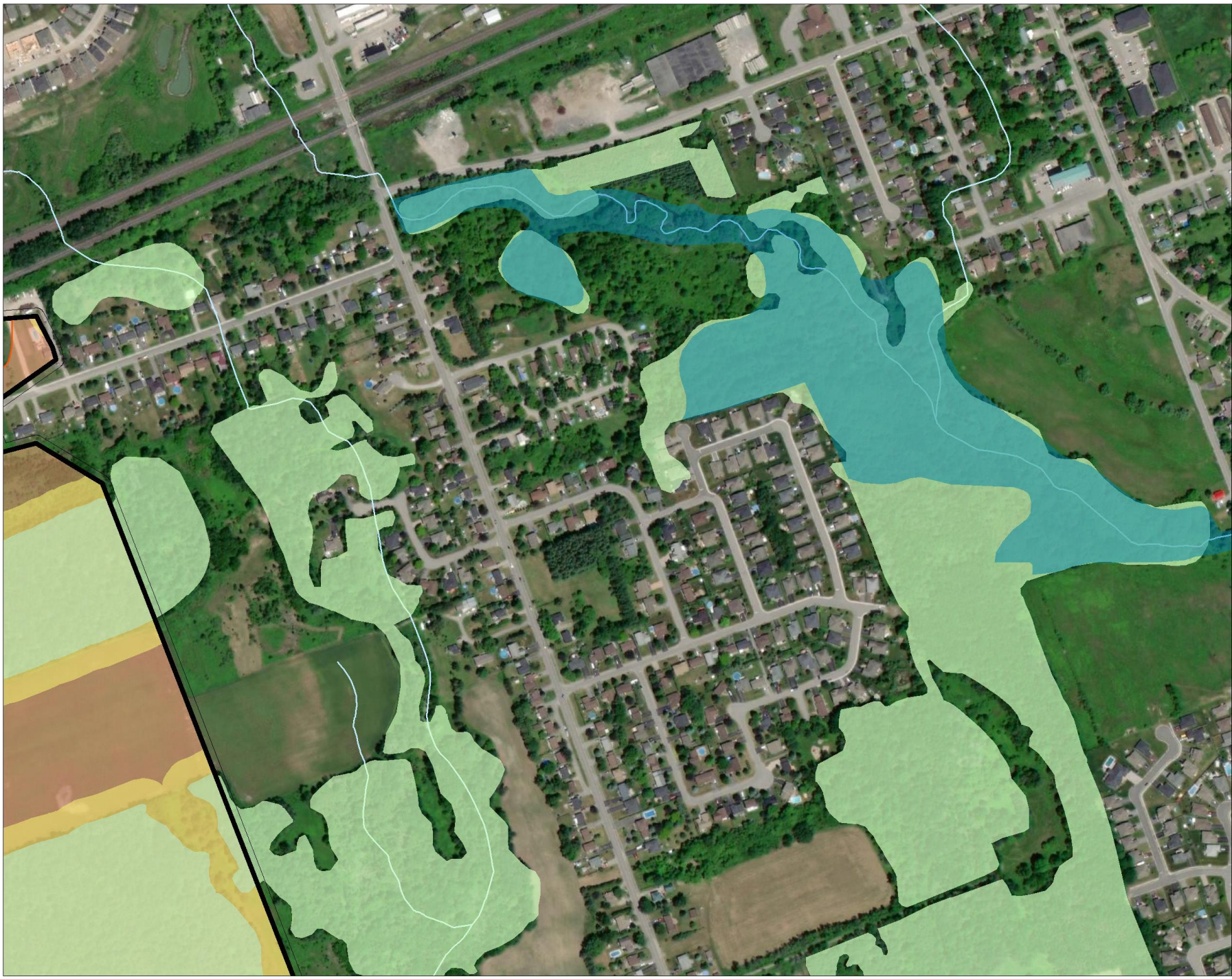
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# Comparison of Option 3A, 3B, & 3C

	N.H.S. 3A	N.H.S. 3B	N.H.S. 3C
<b>Component Features and Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Natural Heritage Features within the N.E.P.</li> <li>• Other Key Natural Features and Areas outside of provincial N.H.S.s, but only outside of settlement areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Natural Heritage Features within the N.E.P. as per Option 3A</li> <li>• Other Key Natural Features and Areas outside of provincial N.H.S.s both outside and in settlement areas</li> <li>• Supporting Features and Areas outside of settlement areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Natural Heritage Features within the N.E.P. as per Options 3A and 3B</li> <li>• Other Key Natural Features and Areas outside of provincial N.H.S.s both outside and in settlement areas as per Option 3B</li> <li>• Supporting Features and Areas in all of the Region, including both outside and within settlement areas</li> </ul>
<b>Connecting the System (linkages)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large Linkages only between Key Natural Features and Areas outside of settlement areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large and Medium Linkages between Key Natural Features and Areas outside of settlement areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large, Medium and Small Linkages between Key Natural Features and Areas outside of settlement areas</li> <li>• Small Linkages between Key Natural Features and Areas in settlement areas where the potential linkage area is in a natural state</li> </ul>
<b>Buffers/ Vegetation Protection Zones (to Key Natural Features and Areas)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested policy minimums outside of provincial N.H.S.s and outside of settlement areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested policy minimums outside of provincial N.H.S.s, both inside and outside of settlement areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory buffers outside of settlement areas (that can be reduced through study) with suggested policy minimums inside settlement areas</li> </ul>





Conceptual Natural  
Heritage System  
Settlement Area  
Option 3A

Legend

- Settlement Area
- Required Components**
- Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
- Vegetation Protection Zones
- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetland
- Watercourses

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# Conceptual Natural Heritage System Outside Settlement Area Option 3A


## Legend

### Required Components



-  Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
-  Vegetation Protection Zones
-  Significant Woodlands
-  Provincially Significant Wetlands
-  Watercourses

### Optional Components

#### Other Key Features

-  Wetlands (non-Provincially Significant)

#### Linkages

-  Large Linkage (400m)
-  Mandatory Buffers

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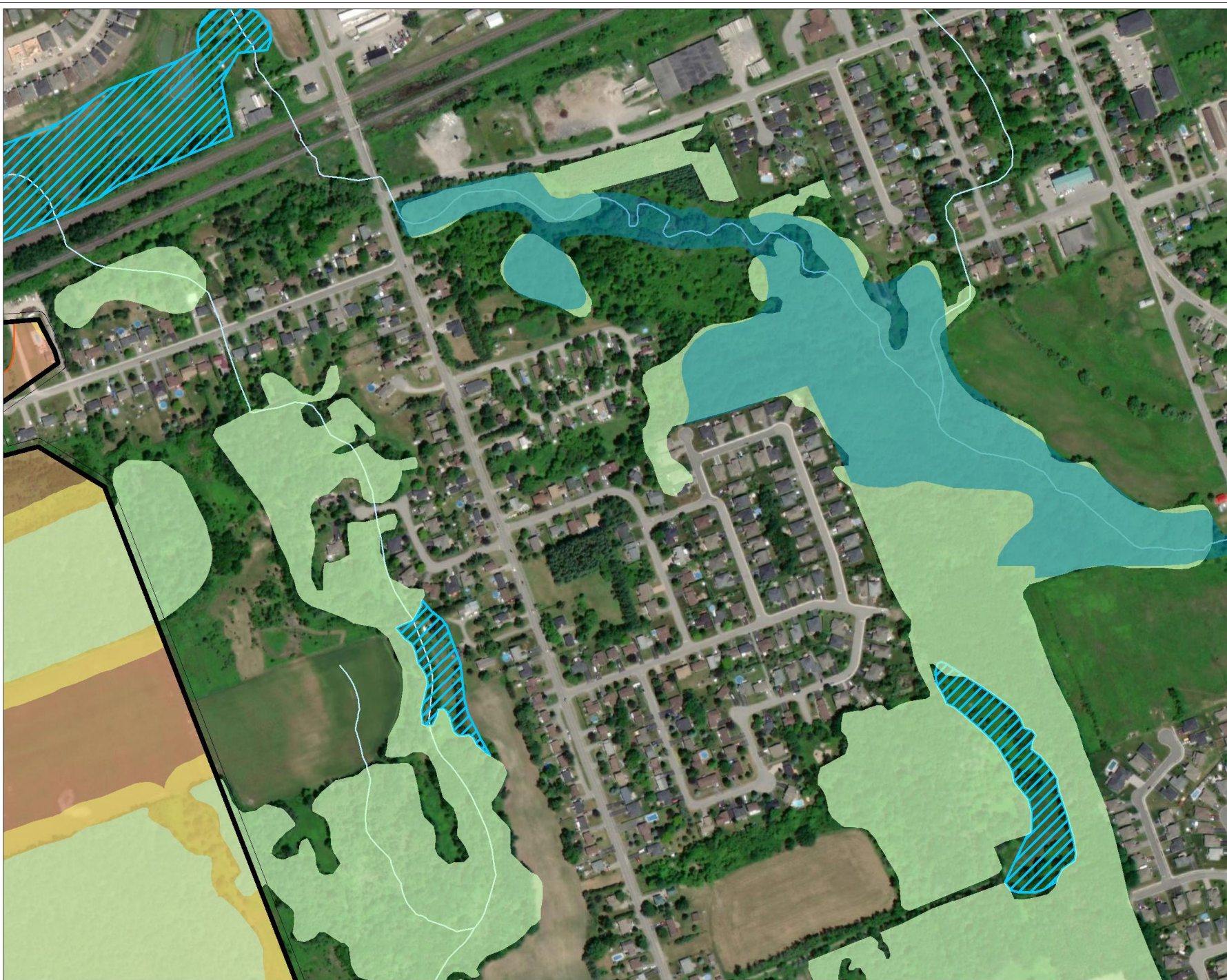
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# Conceptual Natural Heritage System Settlement Area Option 3B

## Legend

 Settlement Area

### Required Components

-  Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
-  Vegetation Protection Zones
-  Significant Woodlands
-  Provincially Significant Wetland
-  Watercourses

### Optional Components

Other Key Features

-  Wetland (non-Provincially Significant)

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Conceptual Natural  
Heritage System  
Outside Settlement Area  
**Option 3B**

**Legend**

**Required Components**

- Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
- Vegetation Protection Zones
- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Watercourses

**Optional Components**

**Other Key Features**

- Wetlands (non-Provincially Significant)

**Supporting Features and Areas**

- Enhancement Areas
- Other Woodlands

**Linkages**

- Large Linkage (400m)
- Medium Linkage (200m)
- Mandatory Buffers

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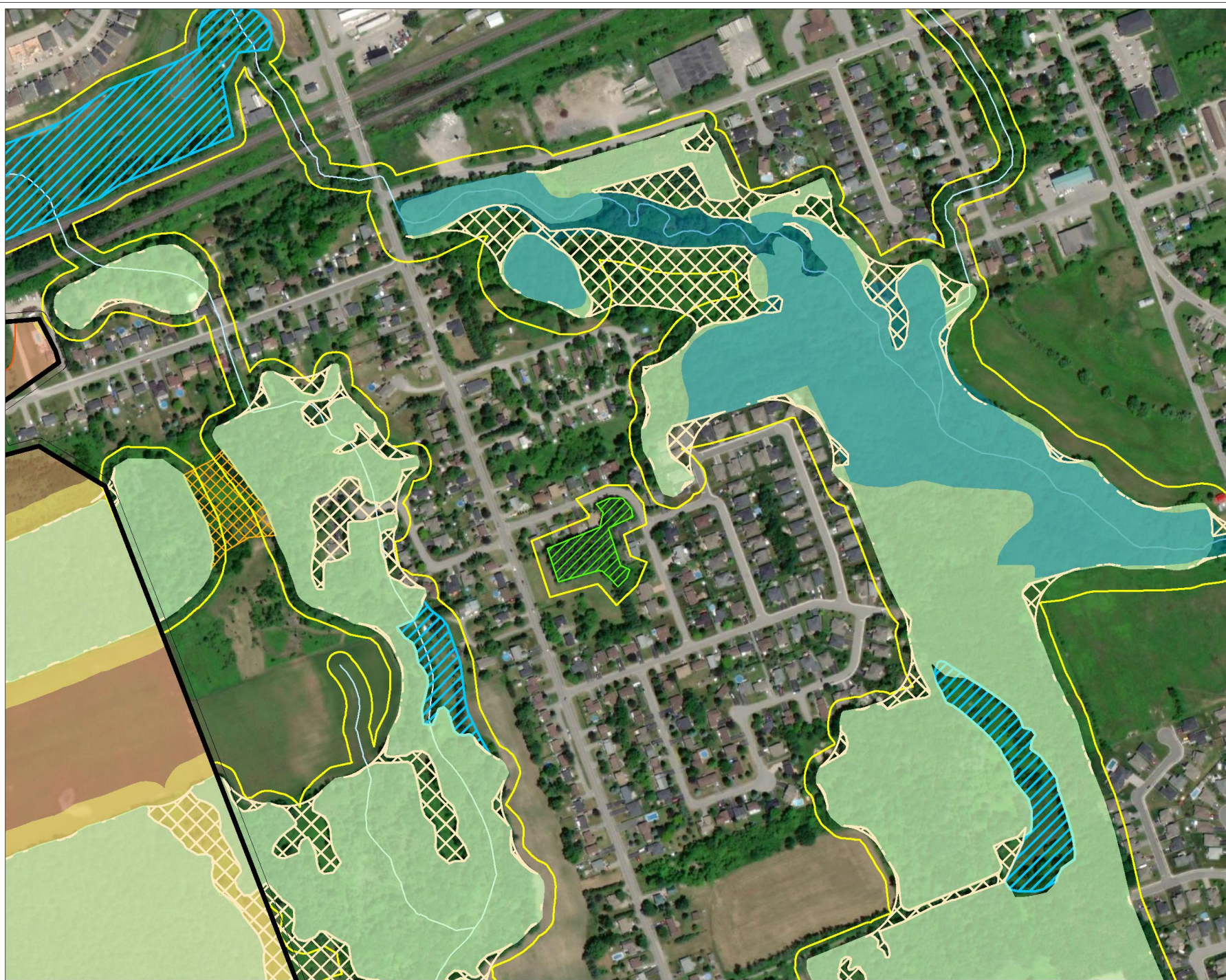


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# Conceptual Natural Heritage System Settlement Area Option 3C

## Legend

Settlement Area

## Required Components

Growth Plan Natural Heritage System

Vegetation Protection Zones

Significant Woodlands

Provincially Significant Wetland

Watercourses

## Optional Components

### Other Key Features

Wetlands (non-Provincially Significant)

### Supporting Features and Areas

Other Woodlands

Enhancement Areas

### Linkages

Small Linkage (100m)

Minimum Buffers

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# Conceptual Natural Heritage System: Outside Settlement Area Option 3C


## Legend

### Required Components



-  Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
-  Vegetation Protection Zones
-  Significant Woodlands
-  Provincially Significant Wetlands
-  Watercourses

### Optional Components

#### Other Key Features

-  Wetlands (non-Provincially Significant)

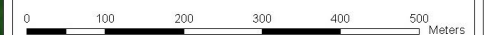
#### Supporting Features and Areas

-  Enhancement Areas
-  Other Woodlands

#### Linkages

-  Large Linkage (400m)
-  Medium Linkage (200m)
-  Small Linkage (100m)
-  Minimum Buffers

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# Water Resource System Options

- “Informed by watershed planning or equivalent”
  - ‘Niagara Watershed Plan’ project has been initiated by the Region
- Option 1 - “Minimum Standards – Overlay”
  - Implements minimum standards of PPS, Growth Plan, and Greenbelt Plan
- Option 2 - “Going Beyond Minimum Standards”
  - Same as Option 1 but identified additional/optional components:
  - Option 2A – additional/optional features outside of settlement areas only
  - Option 2B – additional/optional features Region-wide, including within settlement areas





# Niagara Region Natural Environment Work Program Water Resource System - Option 1 and 2

## Legend

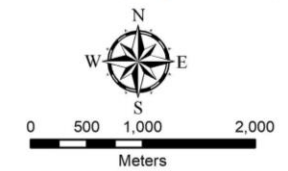
### Key Hydrologic Features

- Wetlands
- Waterbodies
- Watercourses

### Key Hydrologic Areas

- Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas
- Highly Vulnerable Aquifers
- Roads
- Railway
- Settlement Areas

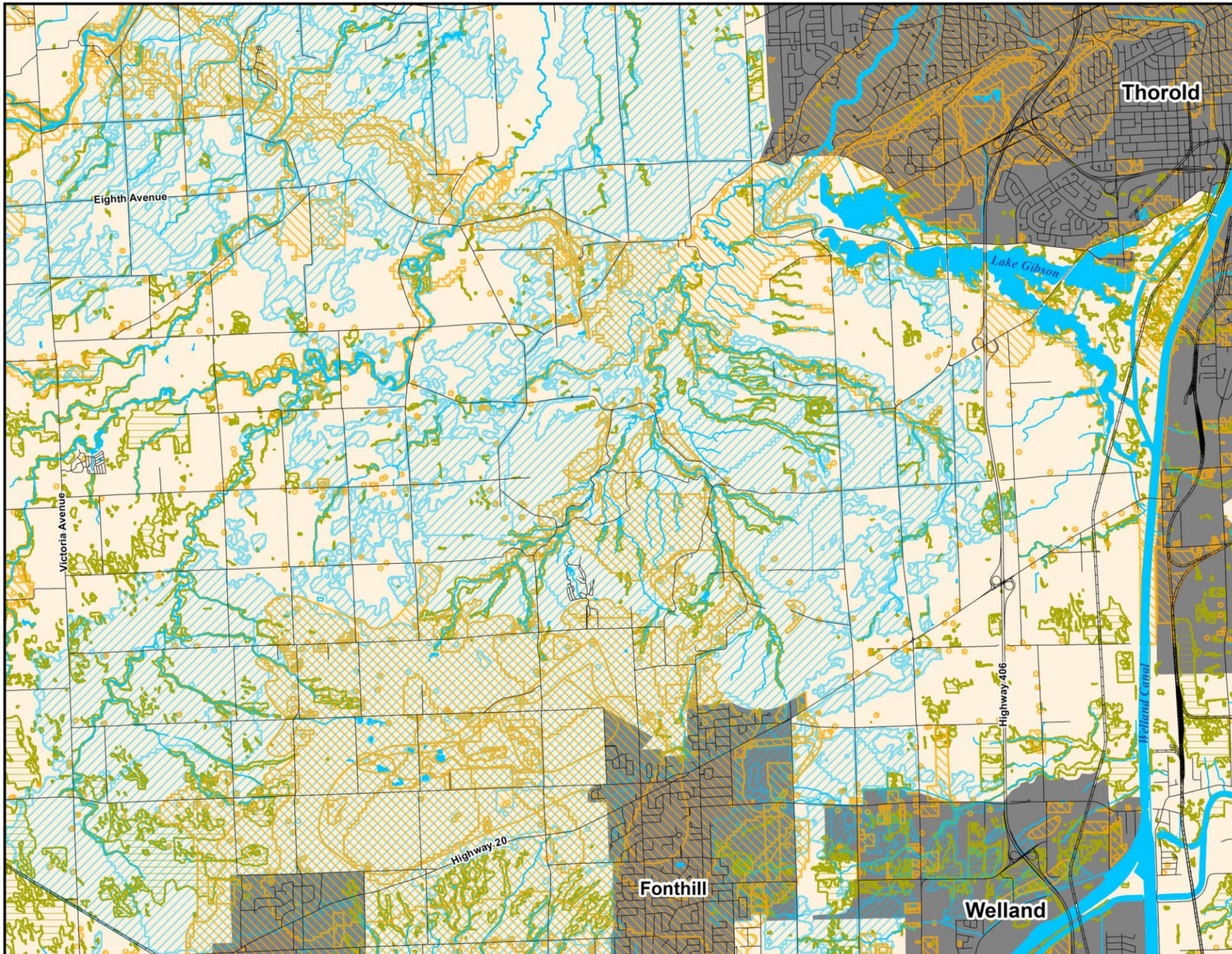
Conceptual figure for  
discussion purposes only



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June 11, 2020





# Your Feedback is Requested



# Additional Considerations for the Natural Environment System

- Offsetting will not be considered as part of the policy framework for the new Niagara Official Plan
- Fish habitat is not recommended to be mapped as part of the new Niagara Official Plan (although it would be fully protected by policies in the Official Plan as required by provincial policy and federal legislation).
- There will be a need to update existing guidelines and to prepare new guidelines to support the implementation of the NHS and WRS



Central Mudminnow (bottom) can be found in slow moving streams, marshes, weedy ponds and ditches.



# Next Steps



1. Receive feedback through 2<sup>nd</sup> point of engagement with public, stakeholders, and Indigenous groups
2. Analyze the input received to recommend the final preferred options
3. Seek council endorsement of final preferred options
4. Prepare detailed design of the preferred options and recommendations for OP policies



# Discussion Questions

- Do you require any additional information or clarification on the options presented?
- What do you like and/or dislike about the range of options developed?
- Which options do you think are appropriate for your municipality – given the range of competing land uses and other planning considerations?
- What is your vision for environmental planning in Niagara moving forward?

