

Appendix H: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Consultation

- Update on Niagara Official Plan & Natural Environment Work Program - Presentation to NPCA Board (Thursday, September 17, 2020)
- The Niagara Official Plan and Natural Environment Work Program Update - Presentation to NPCA Public Advisory Committee (Thursday, September 24, 2020)
- Natural Environment Work Program – Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Options - Presentation to NPCA Staff (September 29, 2020)



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Update on Niagara Official Plan & Natural Environment Work Program

Presentation to NPCA Board




Thursday, September 17, 2020

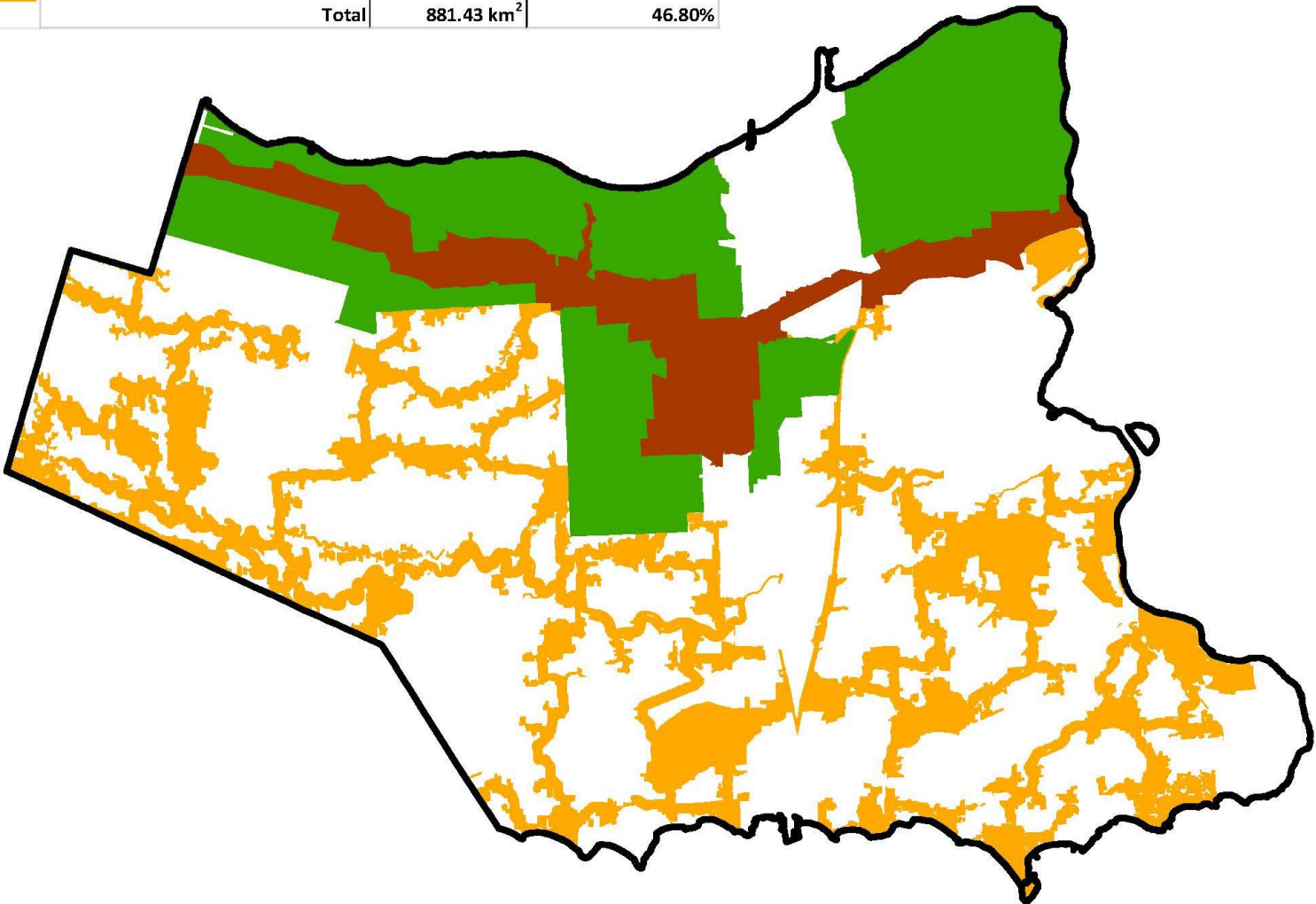


Planning Hierarchy in Ontario



Provincial Planning Coverage

NIAGARA REGION		Total Land Area	% of Total Land Area in Niagara Region
	Niagara Escarpment Plan	137.75km ²	7.30%
	Greenbelt Plan	356.49 km ²	18.90%
	Growth Plan Natural Heritage System	387.19 km ²	20.60%
Total		881.43 km ²	46.80%



Niagara Official Plan

NATURAL HERITAGE & WATER RE
WATERSHED PI
CLIMATE CHA

URBAN DESIGN
CULTURE & ARCHAEOLOGY
DISTRICT & SECONDARY PLANS



REGIONAL STRUCTURE
REA BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS
WITH ALLOCATIONS
AND NEEDS
HOUSING

TRANSPORTATION
WATER & WASTEWATER
INFRASTRUCTURE
STORMWATER

RURAL & AGRICULTURE EMPLOYMENT LANDS
MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES

Alignment of Draft Vision with Public Consultation Results and Council Strategic Plan

Draft Vision	Public Consultation Results Public Information Centres Nov. 2019	Council Strategic Plan 2019 2022
EXCEPTIONAL development and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in well-planned, high quality development in appropriate locations that improves our communities, while protecting what's valuable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.1- enhance community wellbeing
DIVERSE housing types, jobs and population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant focus on achieving a greater mix of housing types, including affordable housing, for individuals and families living, studying and working in Niagara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.3- addressing affordable housing needs
THRIVING agriculture and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in leveraging the GO Train to boost tourism and advancing economic opportunities associated with agriculture and nature-based ecotourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.1- economic growth and development Objective 1.4- strategically target industry sectors
RESILIENT urban and natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong emphasis on the importance of protecting the natural environment and enhancing resilience of urban areas to mitigate and adapt to climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 3.2- environmental sustainability and stewardship



Alignment of Draft Directives with Public Consultation Results and Council Strategic Plan

Draft Directives	Public Consultation Results Public Information Centres Nov. 2019	Council Strategic Plan 2019 2022
GROWING REGION Manage growth strategically and diversify the housing stock to accommodate all ages and incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in directing growth to appropriate locations supported by infrastructure and servicing, and achieving a greater mix of housing types to support affordability, such as semi-detached dwellings, row housing and apartment buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.3- addressing affordable housing needs
VIBRANT REGION Elevate the livability and engaging qualities of communities, facilities and attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in proactive planning and design excellence that improves community livability, while celebrating Niagara's unique features and cultural assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.1- enhance community wellbeing
CONNECTED REGION Provide connections within and between communities and outside of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong emphasis on the importance of infrastructure to support growth, and enhancing public transit and active transportation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 3.1- advancing regional transit and GO rail service Objective 3.3- maintain existing infrastructure Objective 3.4- facilitating the movement of people and goods
COMPETITIVE REGION Plan and manage growth to position Niagara for economic prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant interest in managing resource extraction and rehabilitation wisely, as well as protecting employment lands and supporting economic opportunities through investments in transit and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.1- economic growth and development Objective 1.4- strategically target industry sectors
SUSTAINABLE REGION Enhance the sustainability and resilience of Niagara's built and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong emphasis on protection and enhancement of the natural environment and opportunities within urban areas to both mitigate and adapt to climate change to build resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 3.2- environmental sustainability and stewardship



Virtual Public Information Centres (Zoom Webinars)

Wednesday, Sept 23
6:00 p.m.

Topic: Natural Environment -
Natural Heritage System

Thursday, Sept. 24
6:00 p.m.

Topic: Natural Environment -
Water Resource System

Wednesday, Oct. 7
6:00 p.m.

Topic: Growth Management
- Growth Allocations,
Settlement Area Boundary
Review, Regional Structure,
Land Needs, Housing

Thursday, Oct. 8
6:00 p.m.

Topic: District & Secondary
Plans, Urban Design, and
Employment Lands

Tuesday, Oct. 20
6:00 p.m.

Topic: Rural & Agriculture,
Mineral Aggregate
Resources, Archaeology &
Culture

Wednesday, Oct. 21
6:00 p.m.

Topic: Infrastructure, Water
and Wastewater, Stormwater,
Transportation

Niagara Official Plan Consultation

Also this Fall/Winter:

- Official Plan Online Surveys
- Range of Stakeholder Engagement Sessions (virtual)
- Local Council Workshops
- 1:1 Meetings with Local Planning Departments



Natural Environment Work Program

Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Options



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 st Point of Engagement: Inform on Background Study
4	Develop and Evaluate Options for Natural System(s)
5	2 nd 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 rd Point of Engagement: Draft OP Policies and Schedules
9	Other Implementation Tools



Overview of Phase 4

- Incremental step between the background reports, 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



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
 - Represents an increase in protection 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 in 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- such as, regional linkages and buffers



Water Resource System Options

- 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
- “Informed by watershed planning or equivalent”



Join us at our Virtual Public Information Centres (PIC) to learn more and provide your feedback on the options

Wednesday, September 23 at 6:00pm – Natural Heritage System Options

Thursday, September 24 at 6:00pm – Water Resource System Options

Register at: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>



Updates on Supporting Projects

- Ecological Land Classification (ELC) Mapping Project
 - Update to the existing Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) dataset using 2018 aerial imagery. Project is being completed in collaboration with NPCA staff
 - Field verification process is currently wrapping-up. Final dataset is expected by the end of 2020
- Niagara Watershed Plan Project
 - Tertiary-level watershed planning project being completed in accordance with provincial direction. Project is being completed in collaboration with NPCA staff
 - Early-stages, reviewing background information and preparing draft goals and objectives
 - Project will be introduced at the Public Information Centre on September 24
- Work of Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is Ongoing
 - Group includes Planning staff from NPCA, Local Municipalities, and Province





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The Niagara Official Plan & Natural Environment Work Program Update

Presentation to NPCA Public Advisory Committee

Thursday, September 24, 2020



Planning Hierarchy in Ontario

PLANNING MANDATE FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN NIAGARA

ONTARIO HOUSING SUPPLY ACTION PLAN



What is an Official Plan?

- The Niagara Official Plan will be a long-range, policy planning document used to guide the physical, economic and social development of Niagara
- It will contain objectives, policies and mapping that form the Region's approach to managing growth and the economy, providing infrastructure and protecting the natural environment, cultural resources and agricultural land



Framework for the Niagara Official Plan



GROWING REGION

How we manage growth and development, with a range and mix of housing forms, including affordable housing

CONNECTED REGION

How we improve connections with transit, recreation and trails, infrastructure and technology

COMPETITIVE REGION

How we increase our competitiveness by supporting employment opportunities and protecting agricultural lands

VIBRANT REGION

How we enhance the vibrancy of communities by supporting strong urban design and protecting cultural heritage

SUSTAINABLE REGION

How we protect our natural environment and plan for climate change



Timeline for the Niagara Official Plan



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6:00 p.m.

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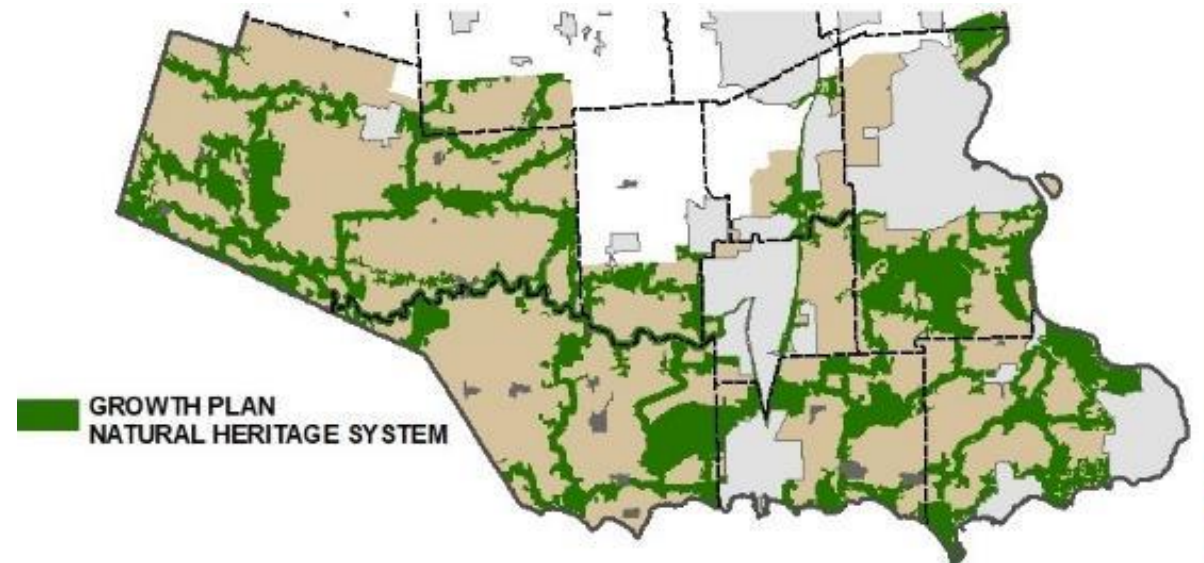
Overview of Phase 4

- Incremental step between the background reports, 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



Development of Options

- Range of considerations were reflected in the development of options including:
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Next Steps



1. Receive feedback through 2nd 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



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Niagara Region

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

Presentation to NPCA Staff

September 29, 2020



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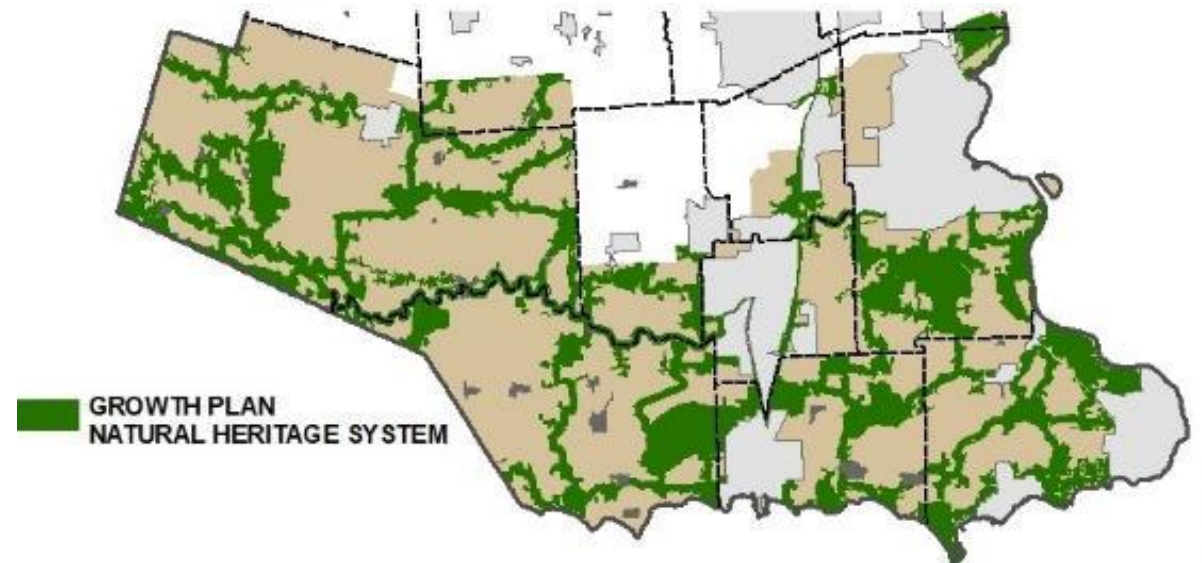
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- The PPS identifies the types of natural features, areas, functions, that must be protected through Official Plan policies



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

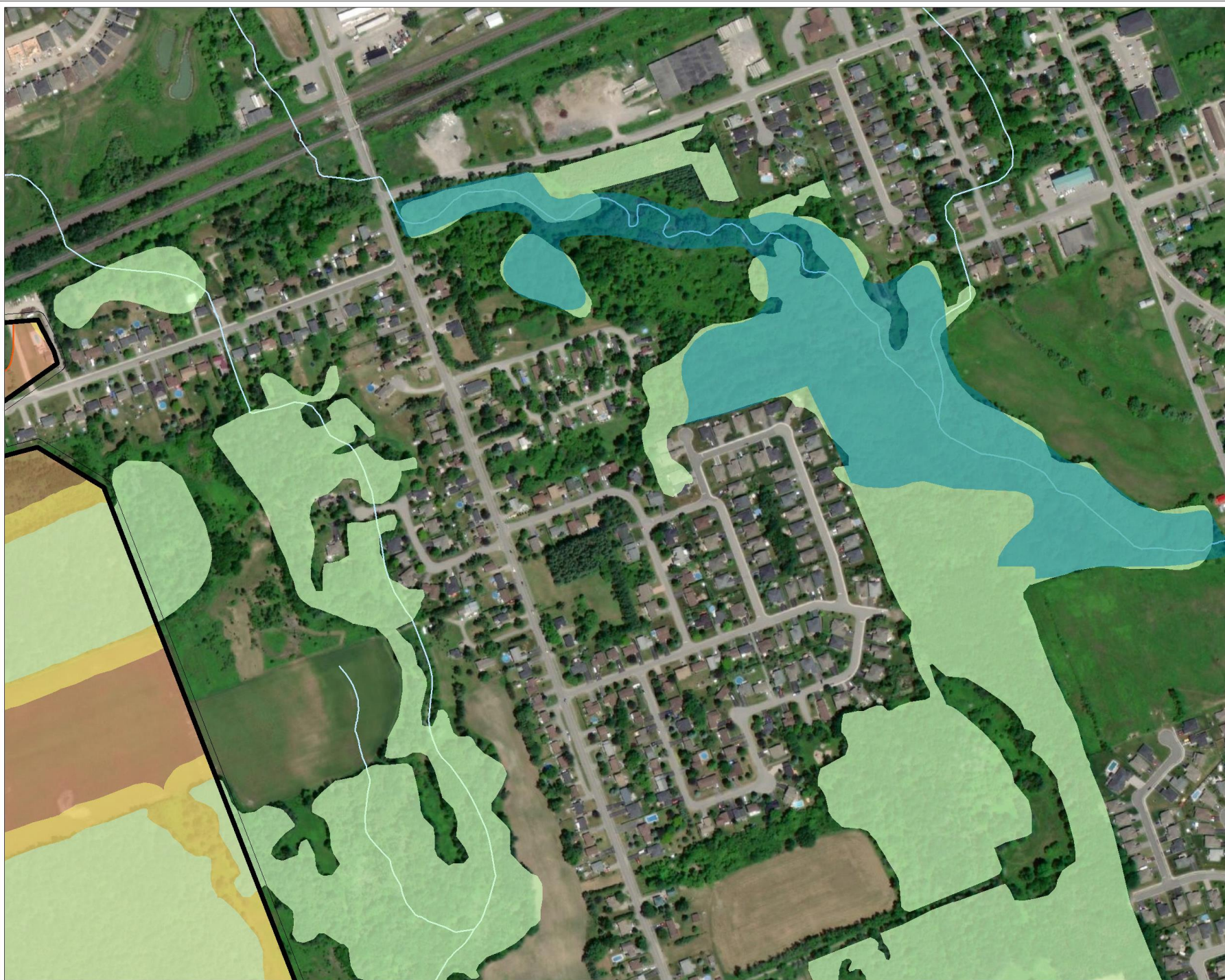
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Conceptual Natural Heritage System Settlement Area Option 1 and 2

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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Project Number
20-1149

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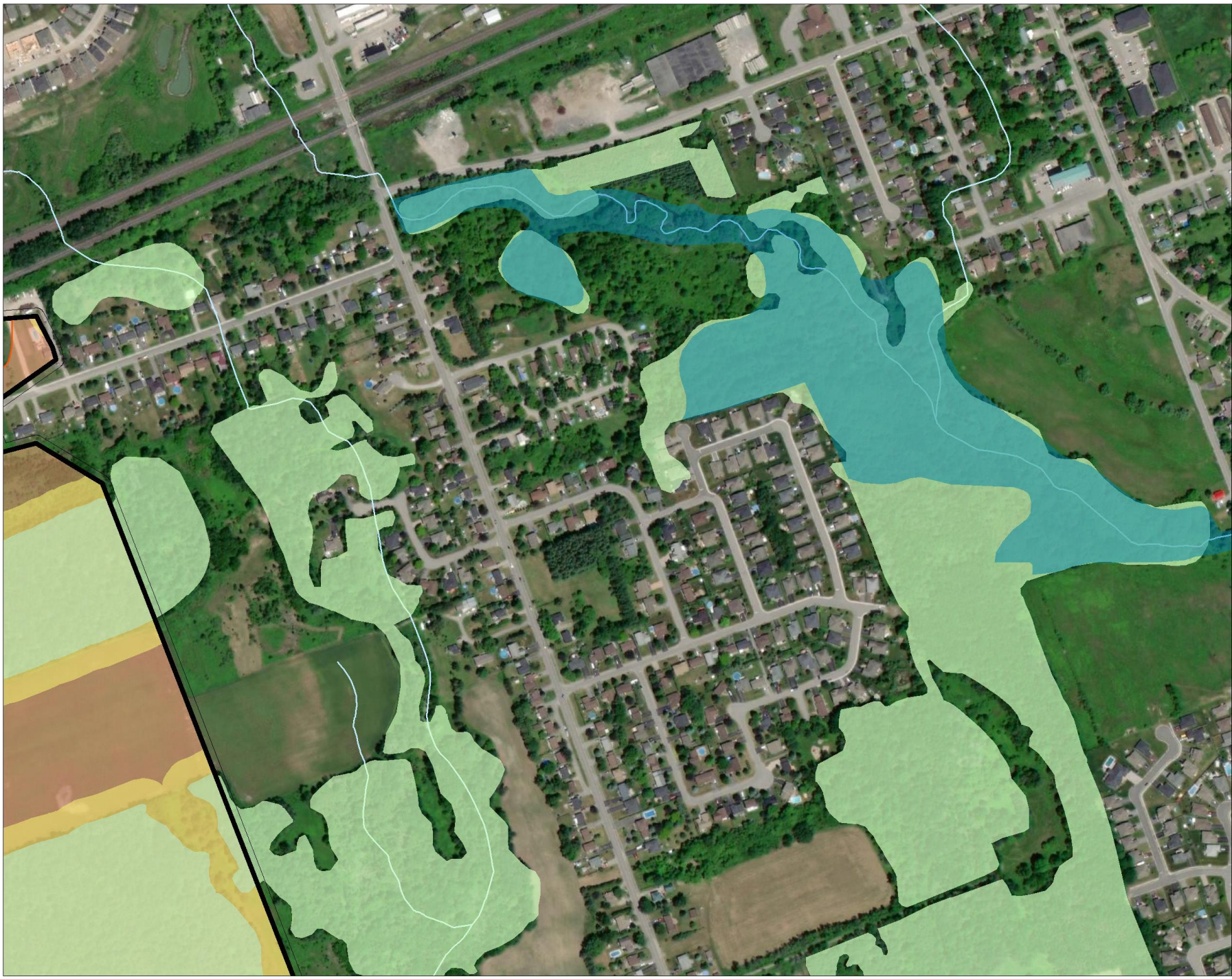
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Comparison of Option 3A, 3B, & 3C

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



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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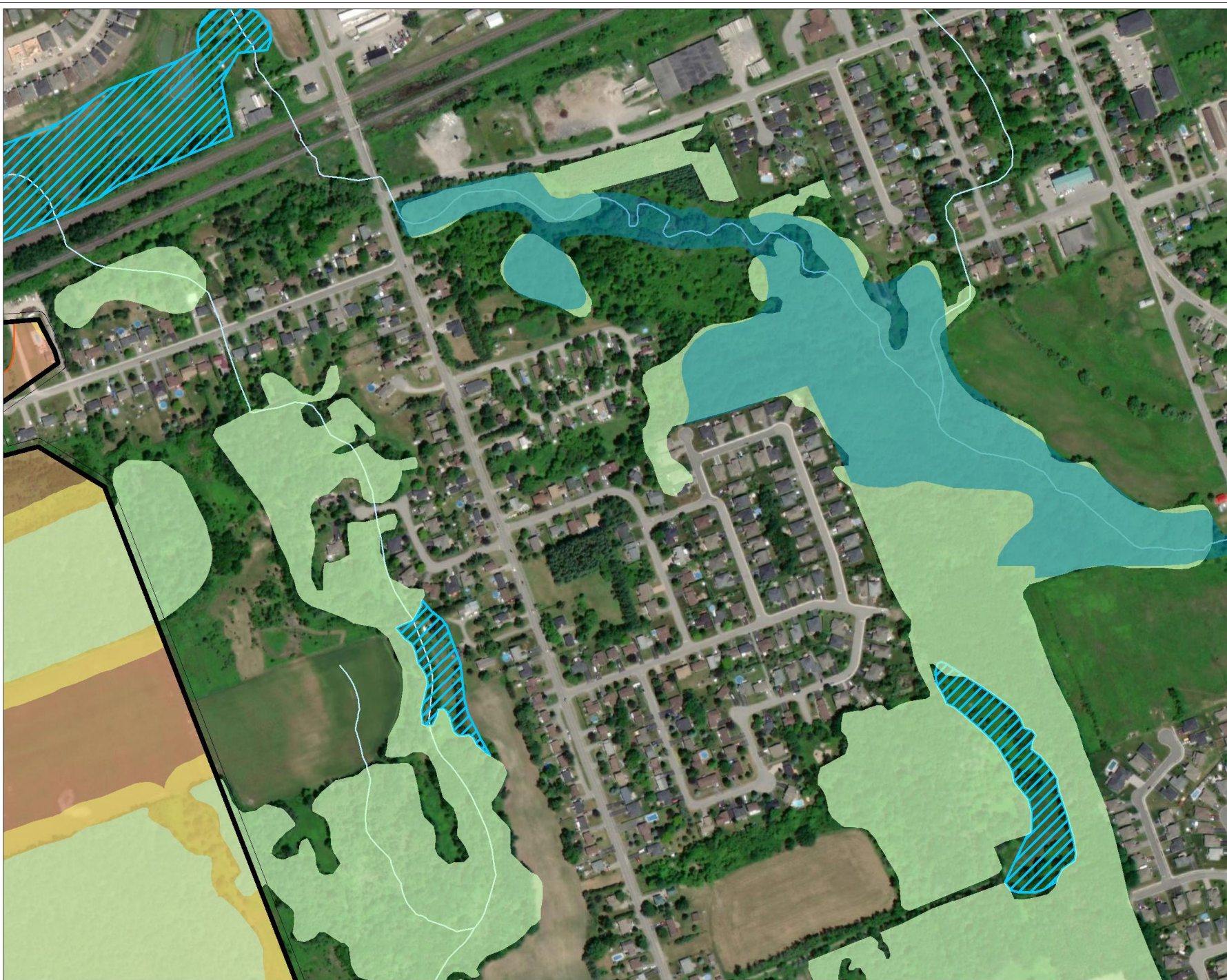
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Conceptual Natural Heritage System Settlement Area Option 3B

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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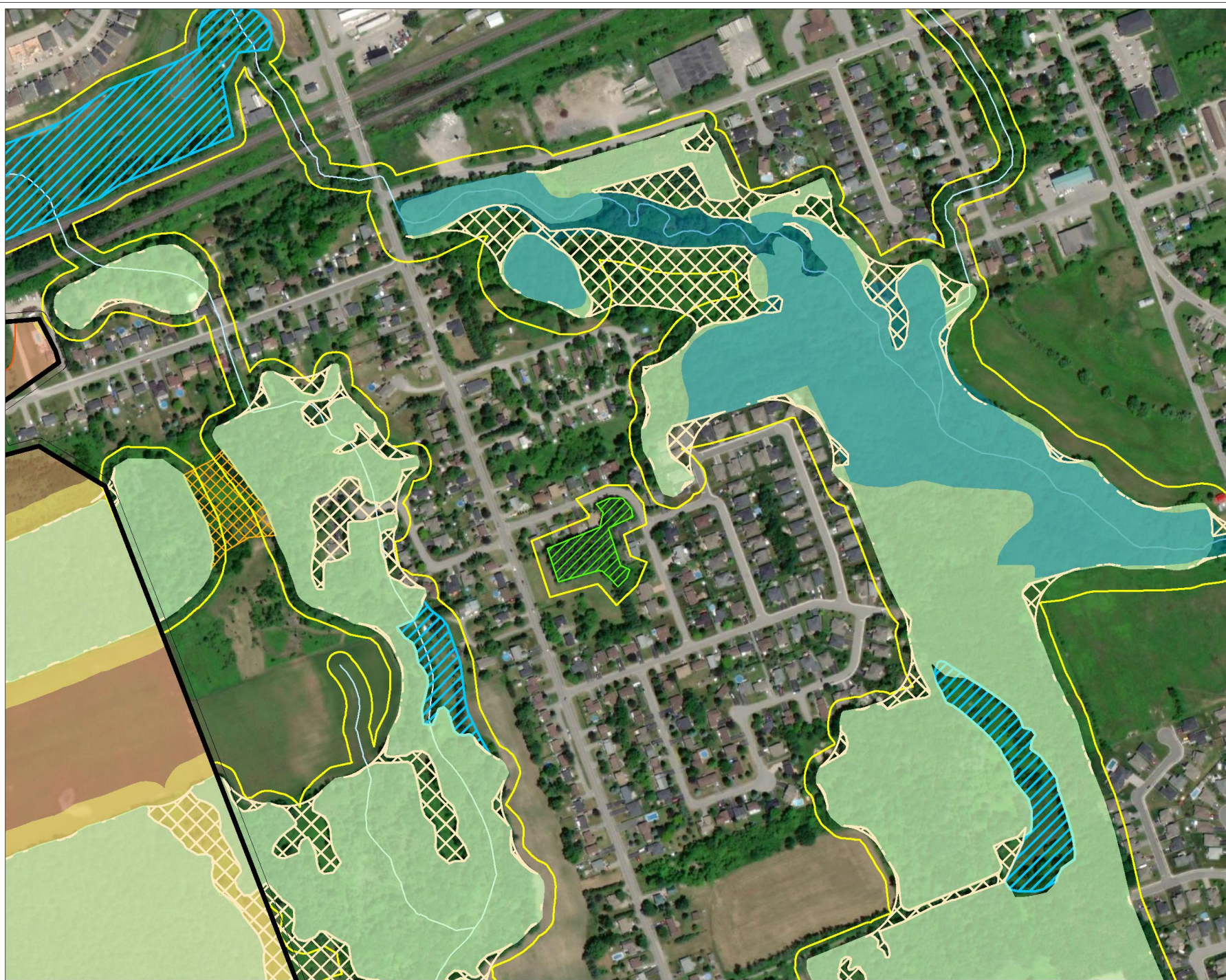
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Conceptual Natural Heritage System Settlement Area Option 3C

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

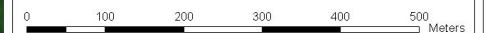
-  Enhancement Areas
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-  Large Linkage (400m)
-  Medium Linkage (200m)
-  Small Linkage (100m)

-  Minimum Buffers

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What is a Water Resource System?

- “A system consisting of ground water features and areas and surface water features (including shoreline areas), and hydrologic functions, which provide the water resources necessary to sustain healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and human water consumption. The water resource system **will** comprise **key hydrologic features** and **key hydrologic areas**”. (Growth Plan 2019)



Components of a Water Resource System

- Key Hydrologic Features (required)
 - Provincially Significant Wetlands and other wetlands
 - Permanent and intermittent streams
 - Inland lakes and their littoral zones
 - Seepage areas and springs
- Key Hydrologic Areas (required)
 - Significant ground water recharge areas
 - Highly vulnerable aquifers
 - Significant surface water contribution areas
- Hydrologic Functions
- Groundwater features
 - Recharge/discharge areas
 - Ecologically Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas
 - Water tables
 - Aquifers and unsaturated zones
- Surface Water Features
 - Headwaters
 - Recharge/discharge areas
 - Associated riparian lands
- Shoreline Areas
- Vegetation Protection Zone



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

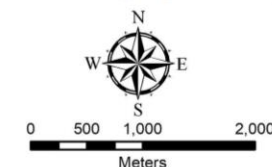
Key Hydrologic Features

- Wetlands
- Waterbodies
- Watercourses

Key Hydrologic Areas

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

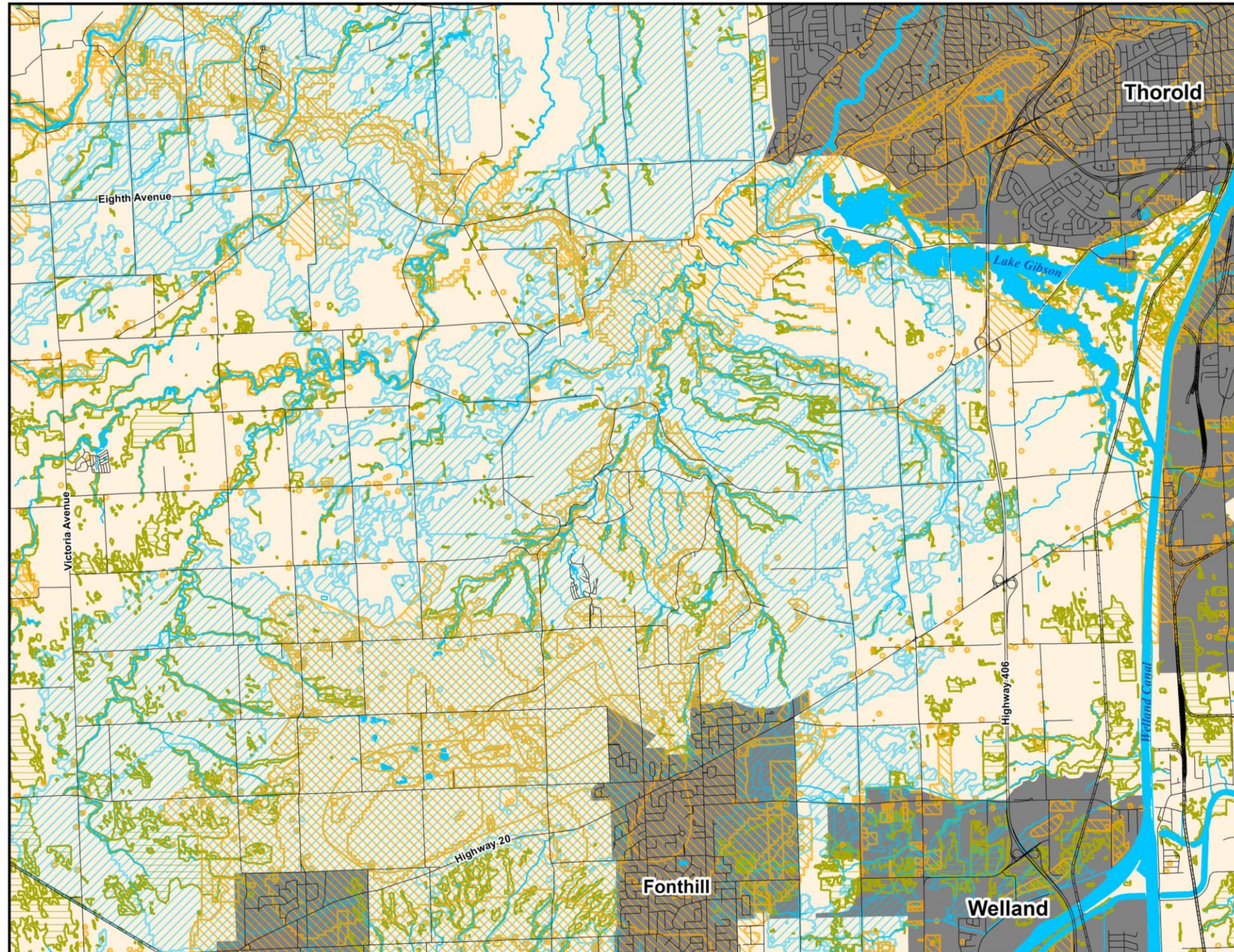
Conceptual figure for
discussion purposes only



north-south
ENVIRONMENTAL



June 11, 2020



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
- 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.



Updates on Supporting Projects

- Ecological Land Classification (ELC) Mapping Project
 - Update to the existing Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) dataset using 2018 aerial imagery. Project is being completed in collaboration with NPCA staff.
 - Field verification process is currently wrapping-up. Final dataset is expected by the end of 2020.
- Niagara Watershed Plan Project
 - Tertiary-level watershed planning project being completed in accordance with provincial direction for an 'watershed planning equivalency document'. Project is being completed in collaboration with NPCA staff.
 - Early-stages, reviewing background information and preparing draft goals and objectives.



Next Steps



1. Receive feedback through 2nd 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

