

Niagara Official Plan

Natural Environment System Option

Report PDS 8-2021 • COTW • December 1, 2021

Purpose of the Natural Environment System

The Niagara Official Plan will establish a regional-scale, integrated natural environment system (NES) that includes both the natural heritage system and water resource system

The development and implementation of these systems is required by the Province

Overview of Natural Environment Consultation

185+

Individual points of engagement to date, with more planned before the new Official Plan is approved

9 public information centres

9 stakeholder meetings held

10 reports to regional council

plus numerous and ongoing meetings and presentations to:

- Local Councils and Local Staff
- Region's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Niagara Parks Commission
- Niagara Escarpment Commission
- Indigenous Groups
- Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC)
- Provincial Ministries
- NPCA, Board, Staff, and PAC

NES Options Timeline



**JULY
2020**

**Options
Introduced**

NES Options first
presented to PEDC on
July 15, 2020

**FALL
2020**

**2nd Point of
Engagement**

Engagement with
public and other
stakeholders

**FEBRUARY
2021**

**Engagement
Feedback**

Results presented
to PEDC on
February 17, 2021

**SPRING
2021**

**Additional
Mapping**

Additional mapping
for NES Options
prepared

NES Options Timeline

MAY
2020



**Option
Endorsement**

NES Option 3B
endorsed by PEDC on
May 12, 2021

MAY
2020



**Endorsement
Amended**

Both Option 3B and 3C
endorsed by Regional
Council on May 20, 2021

SUMMER
2021



**Policy and
Detailed
Mapping**

Detailed policies
and mapping
prepared

OCTOBER
2021



**Draft Materials
Circulated**

Draft mapping and
policies circulated
to Local Planning
Staff



Endorsed NES Options

Regional Council directed staff to move forward with Option 3B and 3C for the integrated NES. Option 3B and 3C both exceed the required standards of the Province

The Regional Natural Environment System will include:

1

Provincial Natural Heritage Systems

3

Key Natural Heritage Features (Woodlands, Valleylands, etc.)

2

Key Hydrologic Features (Wetlands, Watercourses, etc.)

4

Key Hydrologic Areas and other water resources features to be informed by watershed planning



Difference Between Options 3B and 3C



LINKAGES

Small linkages are added inside and outside of settlement areas in NES Option 3C.

BUFFERS

Buffers in settlement areas added in NES Option 3C. Widths will be determined through site-specific study.

SUPPORTING FEATURES AND AREAS

Supporting areas and features (including enhancement areas) added in settlement areas in NES Option 3C.

Summary of Difference Between Options 3B and 3C

Mapping and policies have been prepared for both NES Options 3B and 3C. The differences between each option are summarized below:

IN MAPPING AND POLICY	IN POLICY ONLY
Small linkages are added both inside and outside of settlement areas	Supporting features and areas (including enhancement areas) are added in settlement areas.
	Mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers are added in settlement areas

Relationship Between NES Mapping and Policies

01

MAPPING ALONE IS NOT THE NES

Mapping needs to be considered along with policy and the definitions, criteria, and methodology

02

MAPPING CAN BE REFINED

Mapping can be refined through site-specific studies without an amendment to the Niagara Official Plan

03

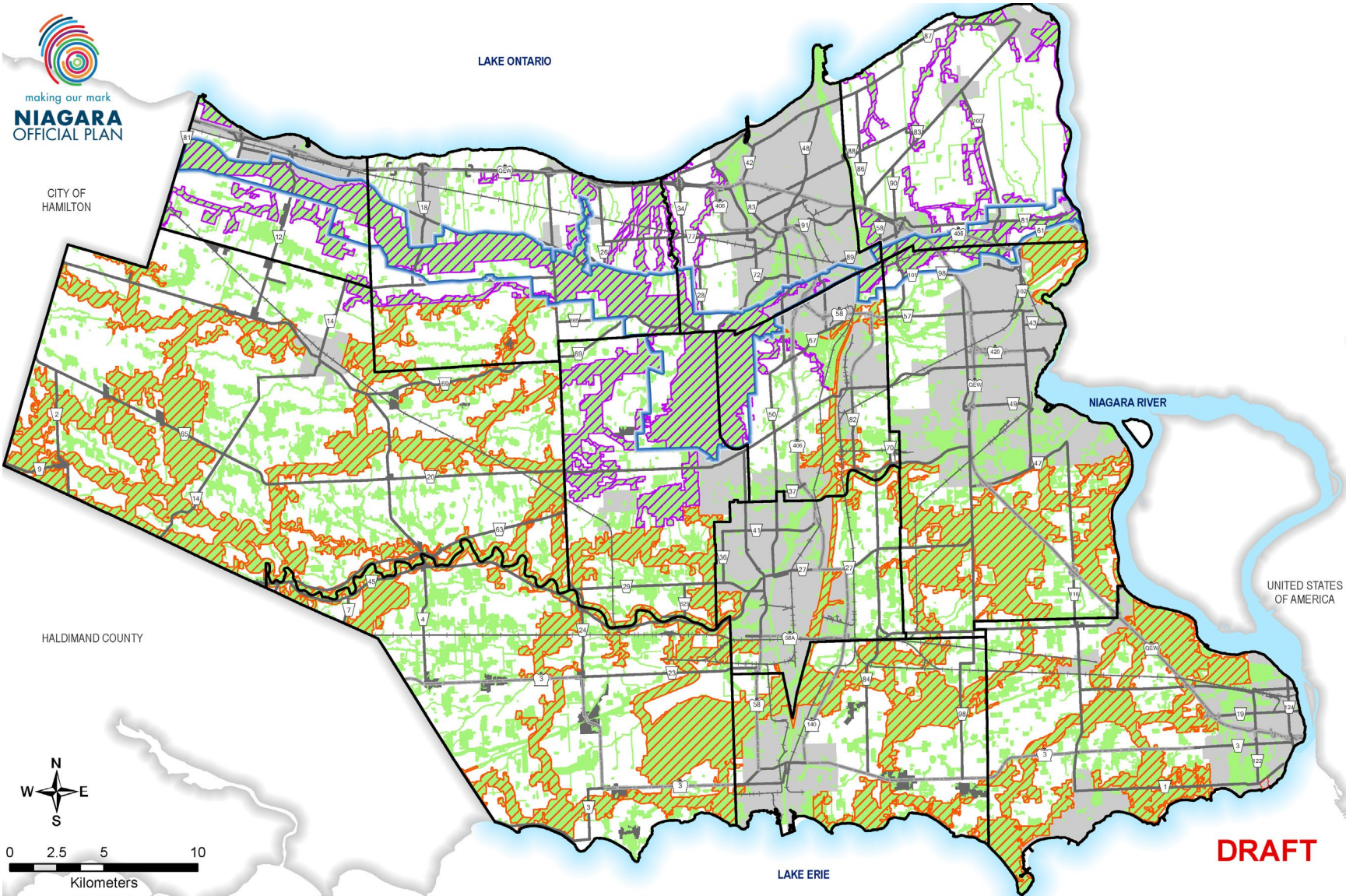
TRANSITION POLICES

Policies recognize existing approvals and applications in progress



CITY OF HAMILTON

HALDIMAND COUNTY



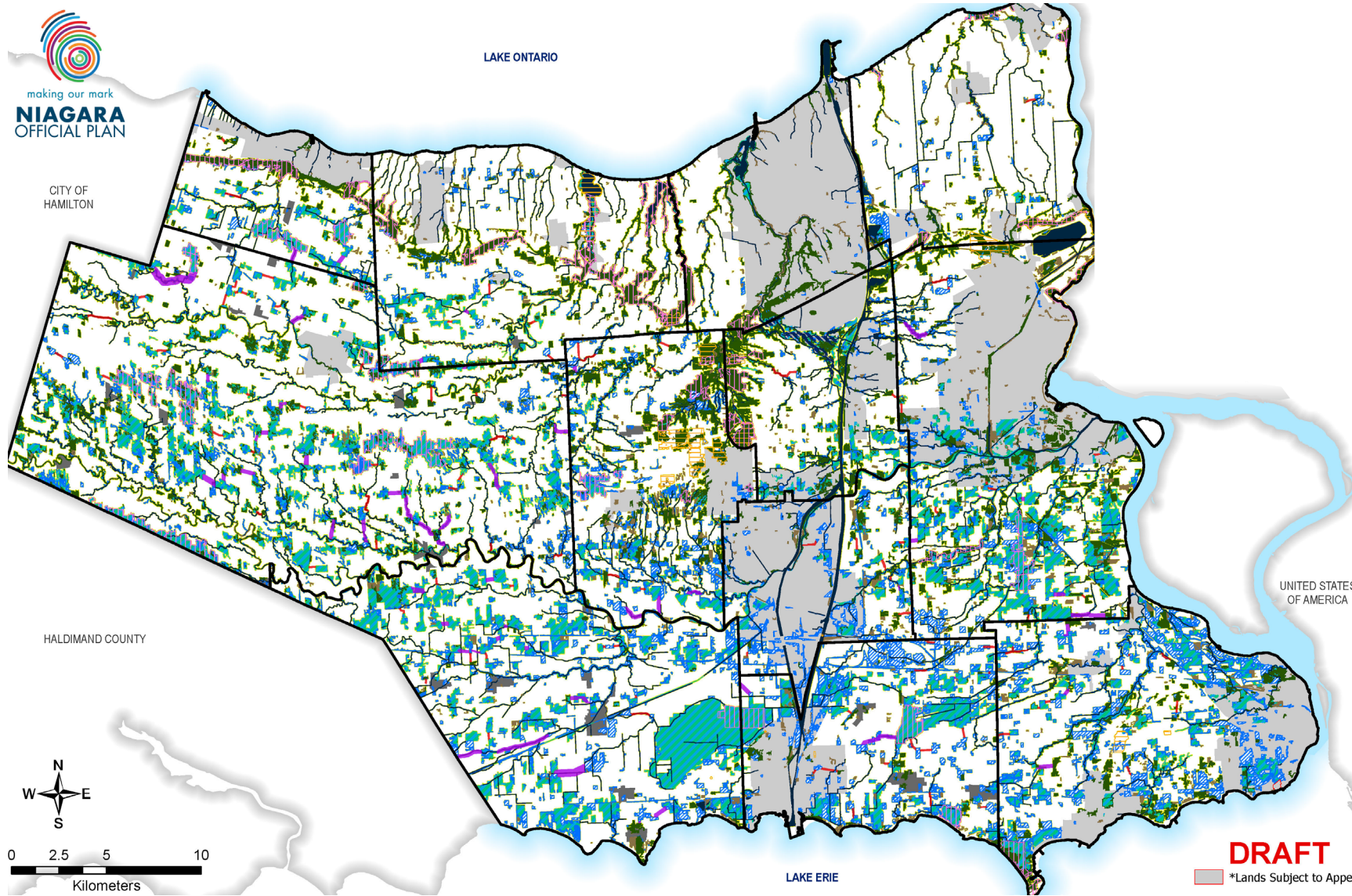
LEGEND

- Natural Environment System Overlay
- Growth Plan Natural Heritage System
- Greenbelt Plan Natural Heritage System
- Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
- Municipal Boundaries
- Urban Areas
- Rural Settlements

DRAFT

NES Overlay

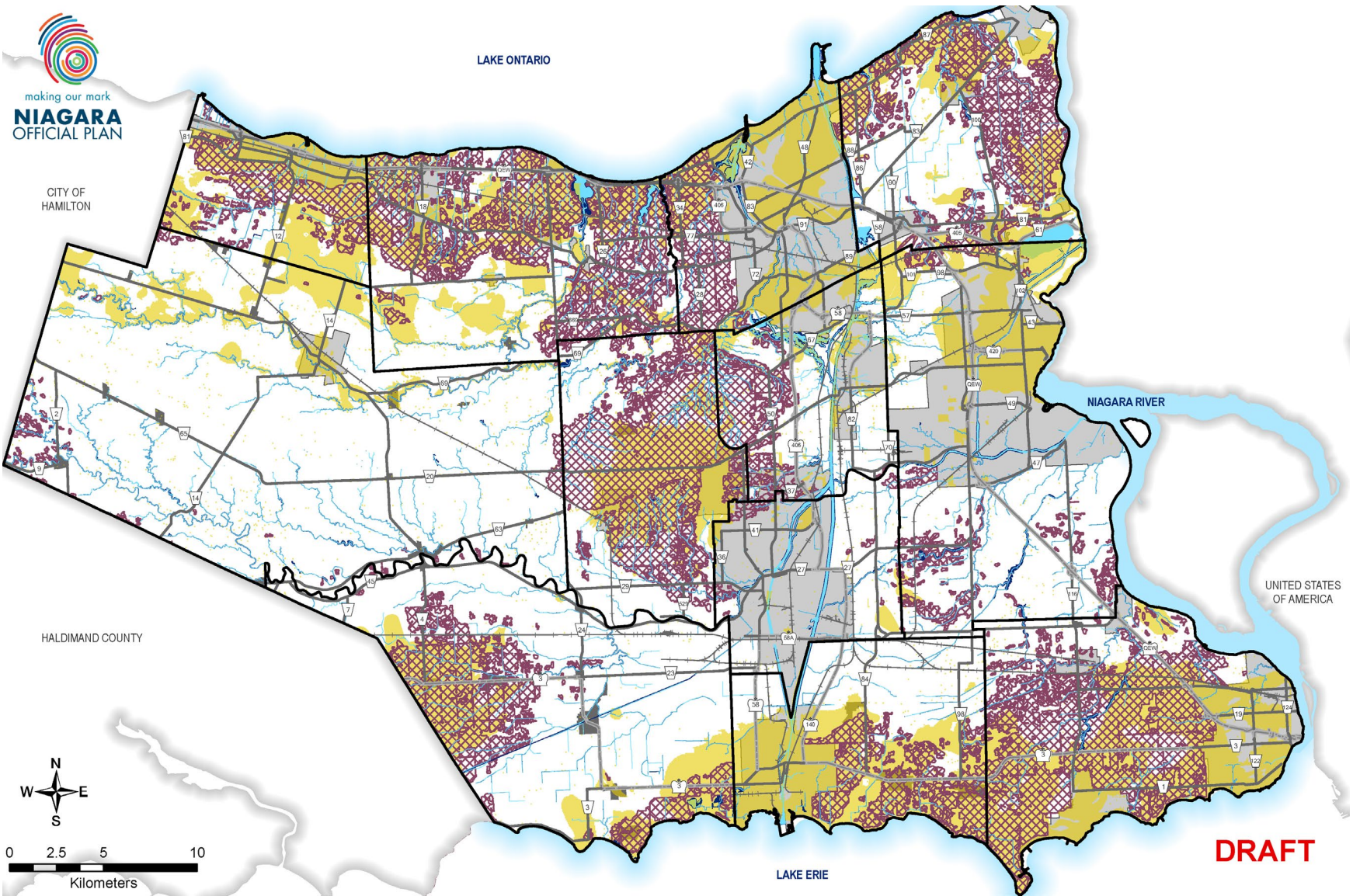
Individual Components



LEGEND

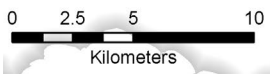
- Medium and Large Linkages
- Small Linkages
- Life Science ANSI
- Earth Science ANSI
- Significant Woodlands
- Other Woodlands
- Other Woodlands and Non Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Permanent and Intermittent Watercourses
- Waterbodies
- Inland Lakes
- Mapped Vegetation Protection Zones and Buffers
- Municipal Boundaries
- Urban Areas
- Rural Settlements

Key Hydrologic Areas



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LEGEND

- Shoreline Areas
- Significant Groundwater Recharge Area
- Highly Vulnerable Aquifers
- Permanent or Intermittent Watercourse
- Waterbody
- Municipal Boundaries
- Urban Areas
- Rural Settlements

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Direction Required

We are not asking for endorsement of the policy and mapping. We are asking for direction on which option should be incorporated into the consolidated draft of the Niagara Official Plan



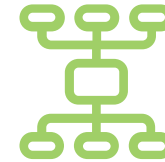
PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Both options conform to Provincial requirements and could be implemented



IMPROVE EXISTING SYSTEM

Both options represent an increase as compared to the existing system in Niagara



MAPPING AND POLICY HAVE BEEN PROVIDED

Mapping and policy have been provided to Council support the decision making process



LOCAL STAFF HAVE BEEN CONSULTED

Local Staff provided the opportunity to comment on draft mapping and policy

Next Steps and Ongoing Consultation

01

confirm mapping and policy

Staff will adjust mapping and policy based on the NES direction of Regional Council

03

engagement program

Staff will undertake a comprehensive engagement program. Comments will be collected and considered

02

incorporate into plan

Staff will incorporate the selected NES option into a consolidated draft of the new Niagara Official Plan

04

ongoing consultation

Consultation and engagement will continue to take place throughout this process