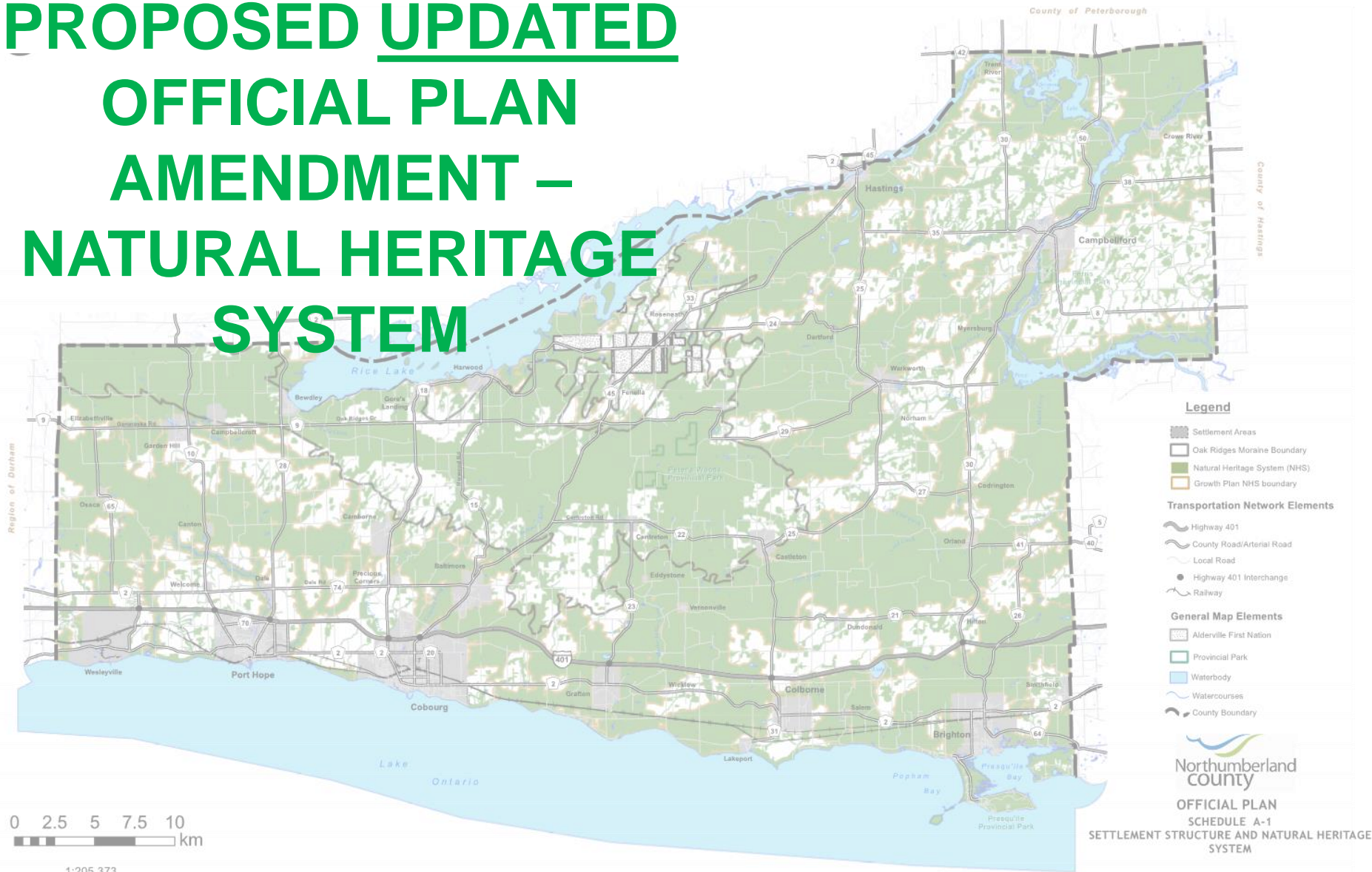


PROPOSED UPDATED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT – NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM

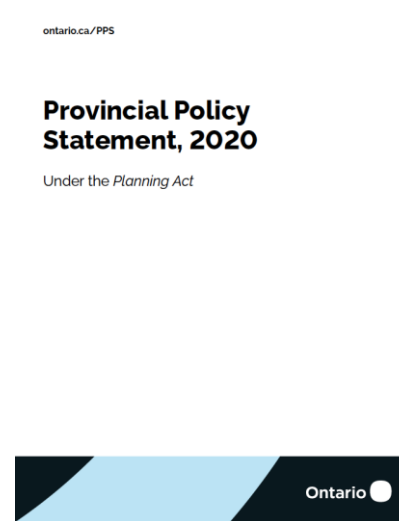


0 2.5 5 7.5 10
km

1:205,373

Some Background

- Current Official Plan does not include a natural heritage system ('NHS') policy framework
- The Provincial Policy Statement (2014) required that such an NHS be established
- The Growth Plan (2017) provided for the establishment of a Growth Plan NHS
- Council adopted OPA 1 in December 2021
- Growth Plan now repealed as of October 2024
- New Provincial Planning Statement now in effect
- Minister asked that County repeal OPA 1 and start over
- Not in the public interest to start over and the Province was so advised
- Proposed to modify OPA 1 instead to ensure consistency with new Provincial Planning Statement
- Public meeting held on December 4, 2024 to review modifications



Purpose of Presentation

1. review the public comments made before and at the public meeting held on December 4, 2024;
2. review the minor change proposed to the mapping of significant woodlands that is proposed to be made;
3. recommend a number of minor changes to the modifications I prepared on October 3, 2024; and
4. provide my land use planning opinion on whether the proposed modifications to OPA 1 are consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and represent good planning.

Public Comments and Mapping of Significant Woodlands

- Public comments submitted by Ms. Zednik and Mr. Fishlock on need for supporting studies and peer reviews of those studies – ***in response – the Official Plan includes robust Environmental Impact Study requirements and the County and local municipalities routinely require peer reviews***
- Significant woodland mapping – minor increase in amount of significant woodland by approximately 213 hectares, from 57,480 hectares to 57,693 hectares as a result of the simplification of the significant woodland criteria.
- This ***change is considered to be very minor because it represents an increase of 0.0036%*** and because the new policy framework permits development in significant woodlands provided the no negative impact test is satisfied (whereas the previous policy framework as per the Growth Plan simply prohibited development completely).

Minor Additional Modifications Required

Regionally important wetlands

- these were considered to be key hydrologic areas by Growth Plan and applied to areas outside of settlement areas
- With repeal of Growth Plan many changes had to be made to policies to reflect new terminology
- Some minor modifications recommended to ensure that 'no negative impact test' policies only apply to regionally important wetlands outside settlement areas
- Policies on 'other wetlands' will continue to apply within settlement areas

Significant woodland criteria

- Minor changes proposed (addition of bullets) to provide clarity on how significance is determined

Minor Additional Modifications Required (cont'd)

Minimum buffers

- Modification required to ensure correct use of terminology regarding different types of wetlands

Supporting Features and Areas

- Modifications proposed to make it clear that the Supporting Features and Areas shown on the schedules is not a designation

Complete set of modifications attached to my report

- 85 modifications in total – the majority deal with terminology changes, re-numbering and the re-ordering of policies

Recommendation

It is my opinion that the proposed modifications to OPA 1 are consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and represent good planning.

Once approved by the Ministry, the County will have achieved a significant milestone, which is the incorporation of a Natural Heritage System and a robust set of environmental policies into the Official Plan.

