

# Strategies for Managing Rural Land

Monday January 19 | 10:15-11:30

Civic Ballroom South



# The County of Essex Official Plan: A Blueprint for Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Land Protection

Presented at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association  
Conference

Rebecca Belanger, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Planning Services  
County of Essex



# County of Essex Context

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Essex County spans 1,851 sq.km of prime agricultural land in southwestern Ontario

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Essex County is home to some of Canada's most productive farmland, supporting a diverse variety of row crops, vineyards and other specialty crops along the southern shore.

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The greenhouse industry in Essex County is massive with over 4,000 acres of operations which is the largest in Canada and second only to the Netherlands.

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Essex County is also surrounded by water on three sides including the Detroit River, Lake St.Clair and Lake Erie creating a mild climate and unique ecology.



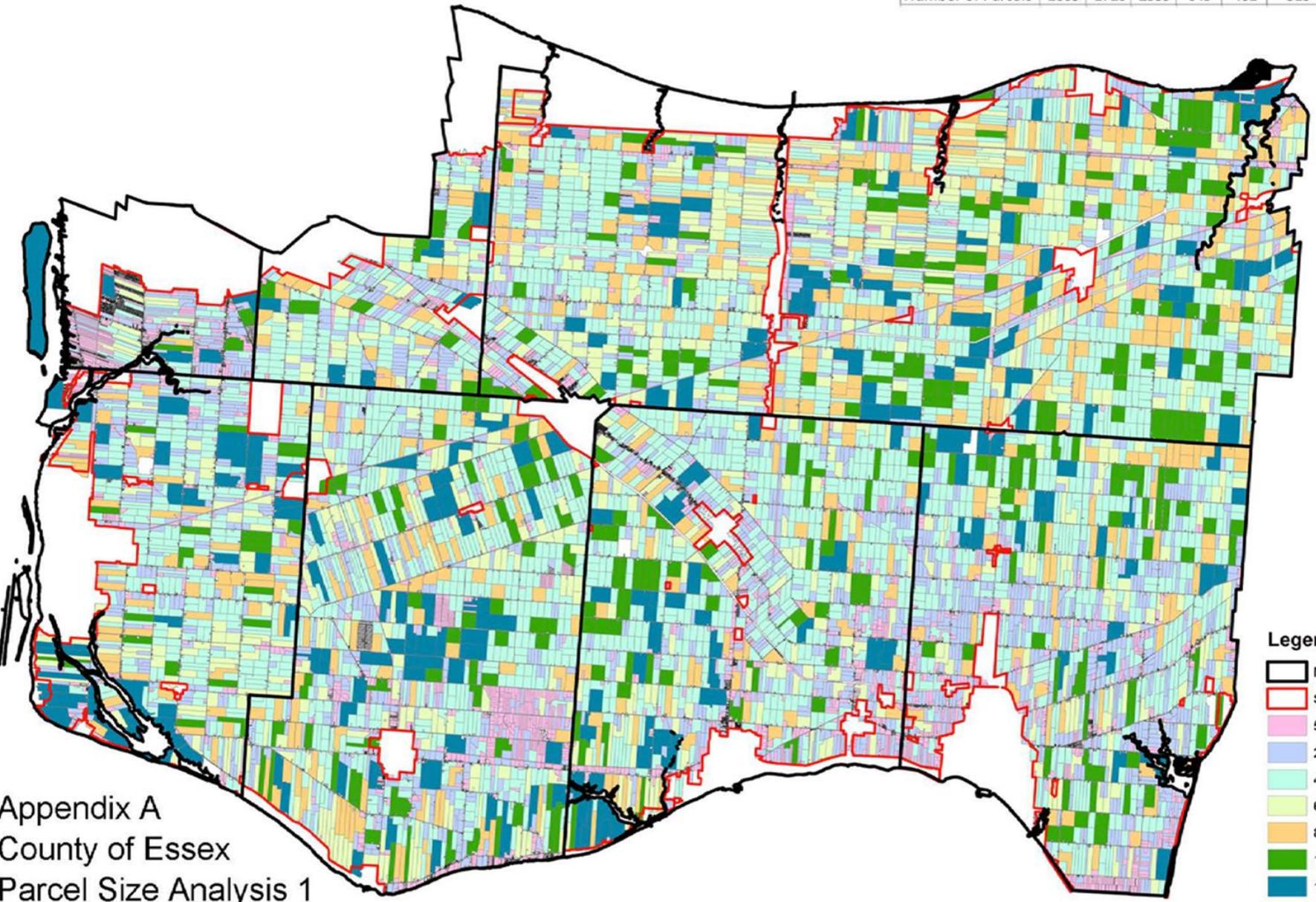
# County of Essex from 2021 to 2051

**From 199,100 to 268,100 - 315,000 People**

**From 71,400 to 101,200 - 124,200 Households**

**From 72,300 to 107,900 - 124,200 Jobs**

Parcel Size Analysis (Acres)								
Parcel Size	5-19	20-39	40-59	60-79	80-99	100-119	120+	Total
Number of Parcels	2065	1716	2339	645	461	318	202	7746



- Legend**
- Municipal Boundaries
  - Settlement Areas
  - 5-19 Acres
  - 20-39 Acres
  - 40-59 Acres
  - 60-79 Acres
  - 80-99 Acres
  - 100-119 Acres
  - 120+ Acres

Appendix A  
County of Essex  
Parcel Size Analysis 1



- ▶ Stakeholder engagements throughout the OP review process to obtain feedback on priorities
- ▶ Essex County Federation of Agriculture invited as an important stakeholder
- ▶ Consultations also included local First Nations and the environmental community.





# Policy Context

## Provincial Planning Statement 2024

6.2.9 Where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality, the upper-tier municipality in consultation with lower-tier municipalities shall identify

- ▶ Identify and allocate population, housing and employment projections for lower-tier municipalities;
- ▶ Identify areas where growth and development will be focused, including strategic growth areas, and establish any applicable minimum density targets;
- ▶ Identify minimum density targets for growth and development taking place in new or expanded settlement areas, where applicable, and
- ▶ Provide policy direction for the lower-tier municipalities on matters that cross municipal boundaries.





Based on the approval of the County Official Plan, Local municipalities will conduct local settlement area reviews which require an intensification strategy as first principle addressing the following:

identifies the importance of complete communities

avoid or mitigate risks to public health and safety

identify the location and boundaries of local growth centres and mixed-use corridors

densities that support existing public transit

supports the provision of affordable housing for both ownership and rental forms of housing;

identify the timing and efficient provision of municipal water and wastewater systems/services and their fiscal impacts on the local municipality; and,

identify updates to the local municipality's Zoning By-law to pre-zone sites for intensification

# Key Policy Updates

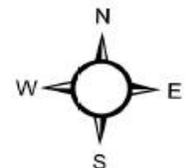
- ▶ Strengthened and updated agricultural policies focusing on the agricultural land base as a complete system including agricultural uses, agricultural related and on-farm diversified use policies
- ▶ Policy considerations for on-farm and off-farm worker accommodation to ensure that all farm workers will have a safe place to work and live
- ▶ Commitments to undertake a Specialty Crop Land Study and Greenhouse Study
- ▶ Robust Transportation Policy section focusing on all multi-modal forms of transportation and the hierarchy of our road network and priorities for each category of road
- ▶ The County's active transportation system added as a land use schedule as well as policy updates
- ▶ County Road 50 wine route recognized with policies to support agri-tourism



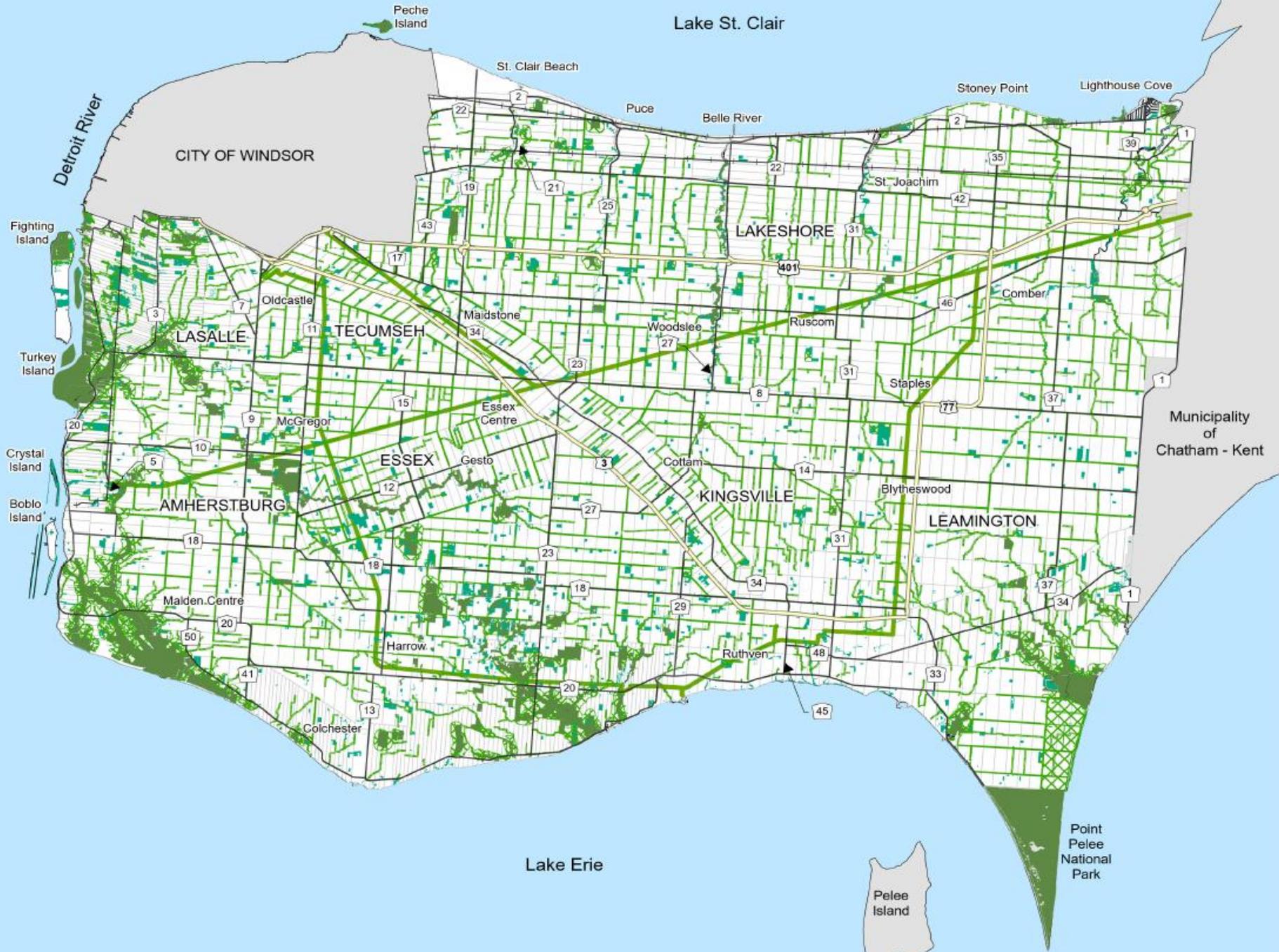
## Schedule B Natural Heritage System

-  Railway
-  County Roads
-  Provincial Highway
-  Lot Fabric
-  Natural Environment Designation
-  Natural Environment Overlay
-  Restoration Opportunity Overlay
-  Wildlife and Habitat Corridors

Created: April 2024  
Last Revised: June 2025



20 km



# Shoreline Natural Hazard Policy and Mapping Updates

- ▶ Shoreline natural hazard mapping has been updated and now includes a climate change scenario
- ▶ Many of the historic shoreline communities in floodprone areas have been removed as settlement area designation as part of the OP updates
- ▶ The intent of these policy and mapping updates is to reduce future lot creation in floodprone areas and reduce future risk to people and property



# Thank you

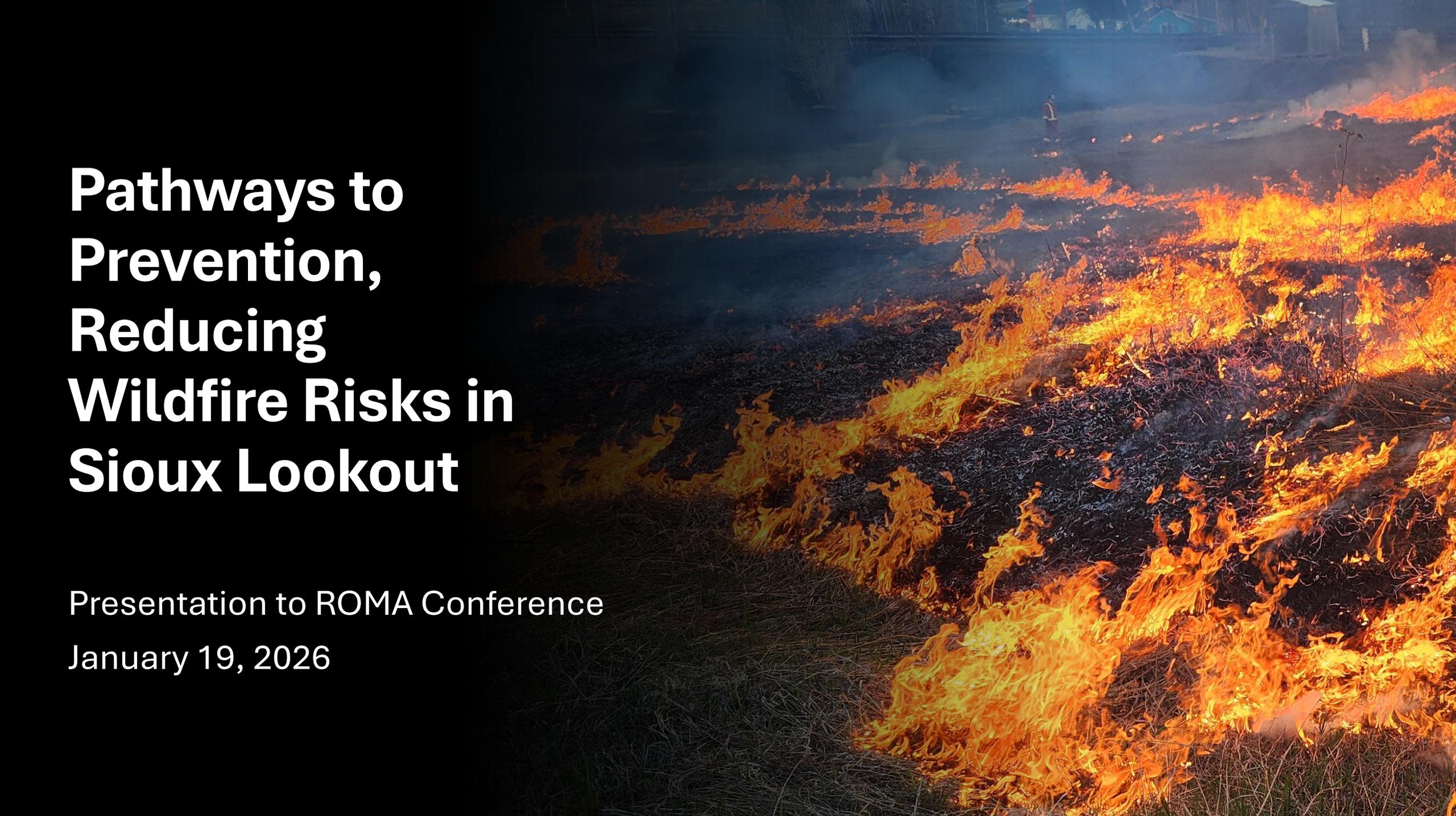
<https://www.countyofessex.ca/doing-business/planning-and-development/official-plan/comprehensive-official-plan-review/>



**OFFICIAL PLAN**  County of Essex

 **TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG**  
 **TOWN OF ESSEX**  
 **TOWN OF KINGSVILLE**  
 **MUNICIPALITY OF LAKESHORE**  
 **TOWN OF LASALLE**  
 **MUNICIPALITY OF LEAMINGTON**  
 **TOWN OF TECUMSEH**



A photograph of a large wildfire burning in a field. The fire is intense, with bright orange and yellow flames rising from the ground. In the background, a person wearing a red jacket and dark pants is visible, standing near the edge of the fire. The sky is dark and smoky, and some buildings are visible in the distance. The overall scene is dramatic and dangerous.

# Pathways to Prevention, Reducing Wildfire Risks in Sioux Lookout

Presentation to ROMA Conference

January 19, 2026

# What are the wildfire risks to our communities?





**FireSmart**<sup>TM</sup>  
Canada

**What can we do?**



**FIRESMART  
BEGINS AT HOME  
GUIDE**

**FIRESMART™  
HOME IGNITION  
ZONE ASSESSMENT  
SCORE CARD**



HOME ADDRESS:  
Address

For each Hazard Factor - select one point rating score and enter in score column on right.

**HOME**

HAZARD FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS AND POINT RATINGS		SCORE
1 Roof material	Fire-rated - good condition (metal, clay, asphalt shingles)		0
	Fire-rated - poor condition or untreated wood shakes		
2 Gutter type and roof cleanliness	Non-combustible gutter - no debris	Combustible gutter - no debris	0
	0	6	
3 Windows and egress	Non-combustible, fire-rated vents or vents with 3 mm screening		0
	Combustible vents, not fire-rated or without 3 mm screening		



FireSmart, Intelli-feu and other associated Marks are trademarks of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC).



**Small changes, can have big impacts on fire resistance.**

# How are we supporting our residents?



The Sioux Lookout Fire Service helps with the following;

- Home Ignition Zone self assessments,
- Application of FireSmart practices/recommendations,
- Risk mitigation through vegetation management & removal,
- Support the FireSmart neighborhood(s) program.

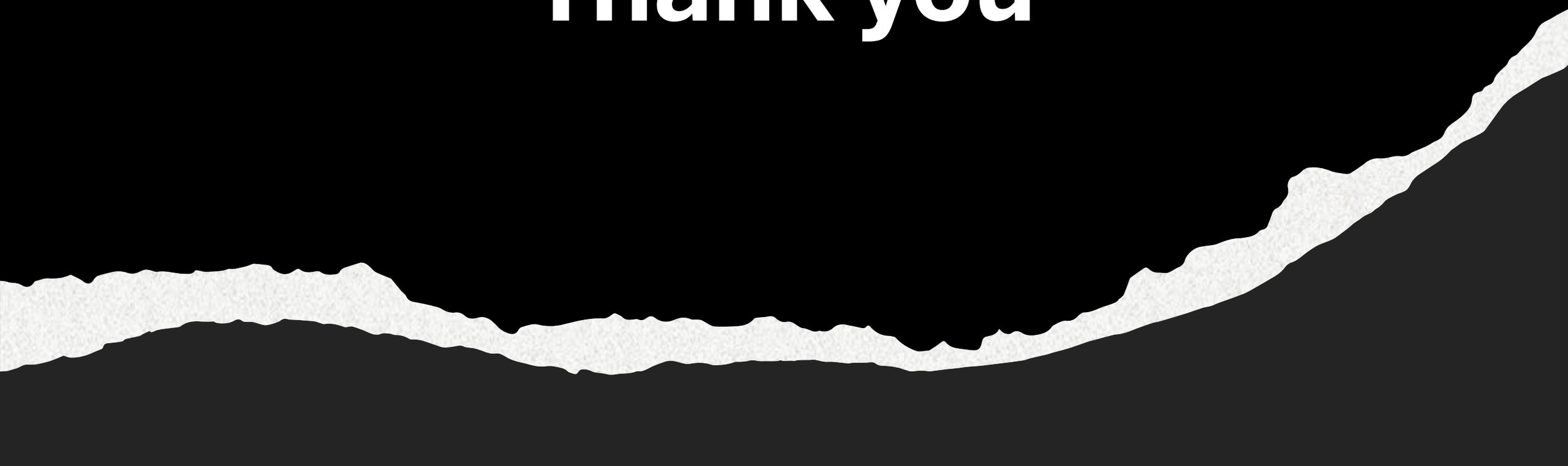




**We can't  
say it  
doesn't  
happen...  
Questions ?**



**Thank you**

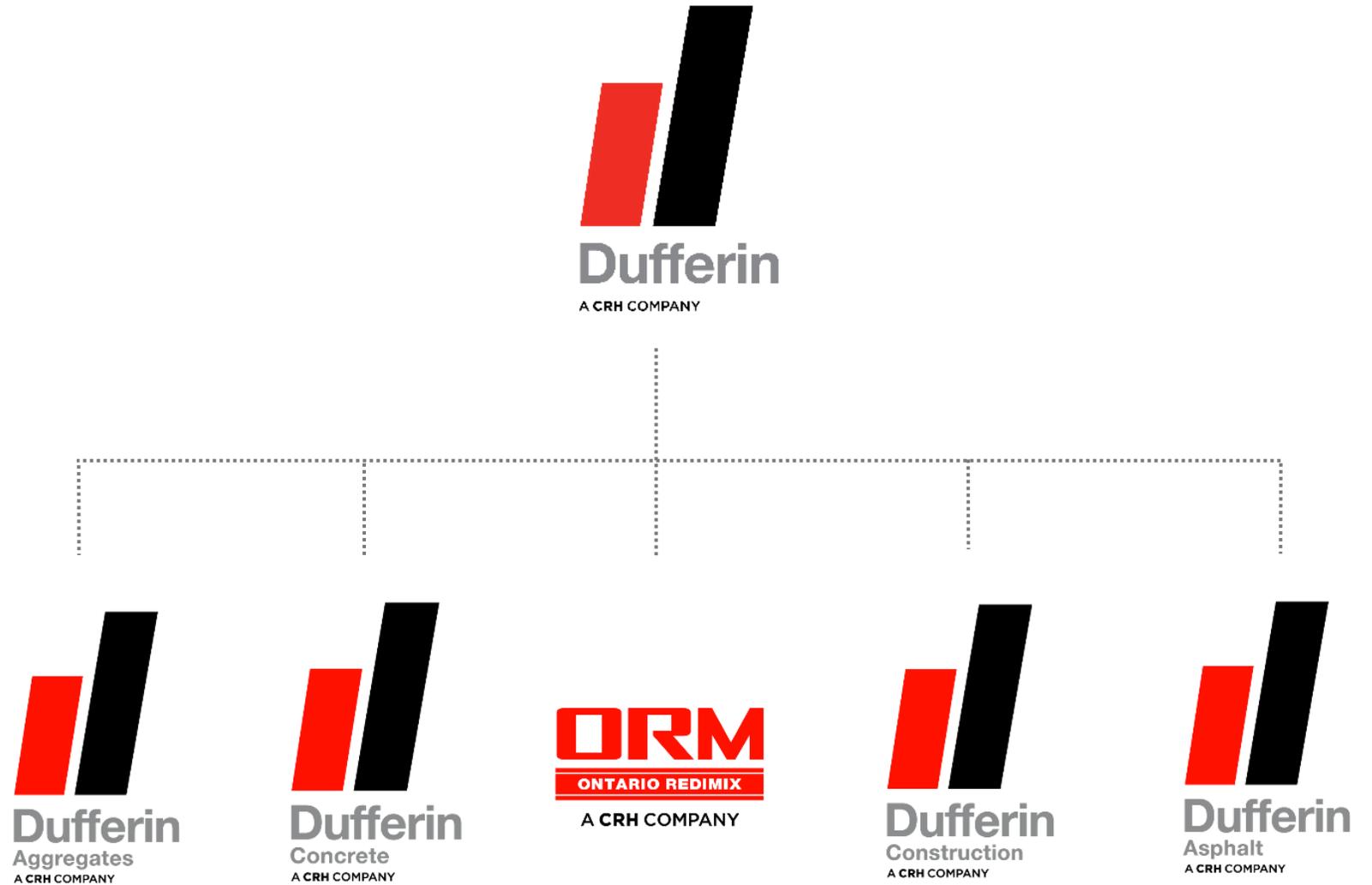
A white, torn paper effect runs horizontally across the bottom of the image, with a jagged, irregular edge that gives the impression of a piece of paper being pulled away from a dark surface.

# Collaboration Fosters Solutions

Jessica Ferri, MCIP RPP  
Manager of Land & Environment



**DUFFERIN:  
A GROUP  
IN OPERATION  
FOR 100+ YEARS**



# PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Two Case Studies will be showcased to demonstrate the importance of collaboration to foster and achieve solutions:

- **Navigating Land Use Conflict** – Finding the balance to allow for two conflicting land uses to co-exist in a manner that ensures the long-term availability of essential construction materials (sand, gravel, stone) and the necessary protections for both the aggregate operator and the sensitive land use (residential).
- **Streamlining a Technical Review** – The importance to have clear communication and an alignment with relevant experts to achieve desired deliverables and an approval that otherwise would have taken additional years and investment – LPAT HEARING AVOIDED!

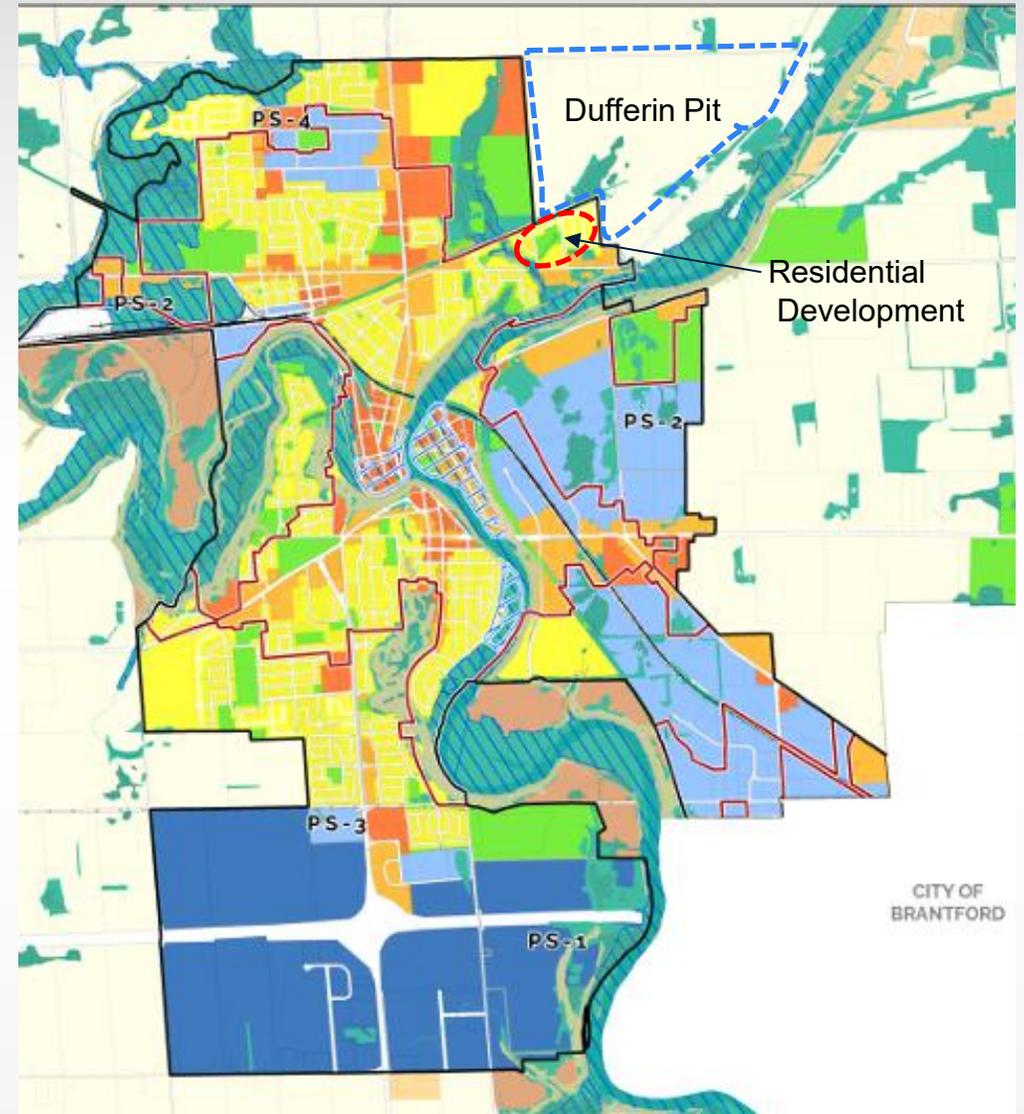
# Navigating Land Use Conflict

## What is a Land Use Planning Conflict?

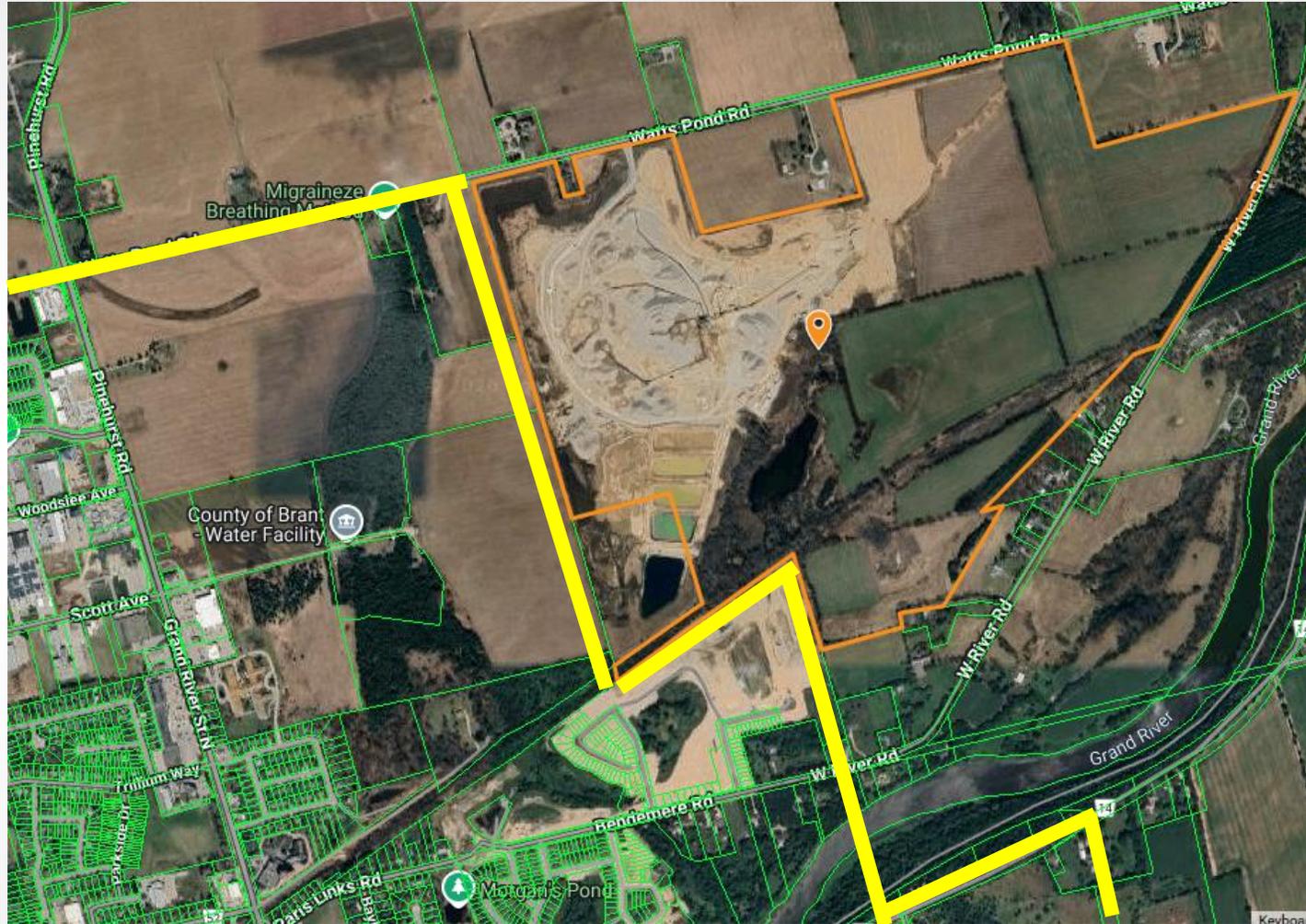
- The transfer over a property line of negative economic or environmental effects, including but not limited to: traffic, noise, vibration, odor, dust, and light/glare.
- Main Focus: Encroachment of sensitive land uses (i.e. residential) in and around major industrial facilities (i.e. pits, quarries, concrete batching plants, asphalt plants, and any other industrial use).

## What is the desired outcome and goal?

- Minimize threat to industries ability to operate.
- Significantly minimize or prevent exposure.
- Minimize adverse effects from the encroachment of incompatible land uses where a facility either exists or is proposed.



# Examples of Mitigation Measures to Reduce Conflict:



- Separation Distances / Buffers
- Noise Attenuation: Berms, Fencing, Plant Design/Orientation, At-Source Emission Reduction Equipment, and At-Receptor Emission Impact Reduction

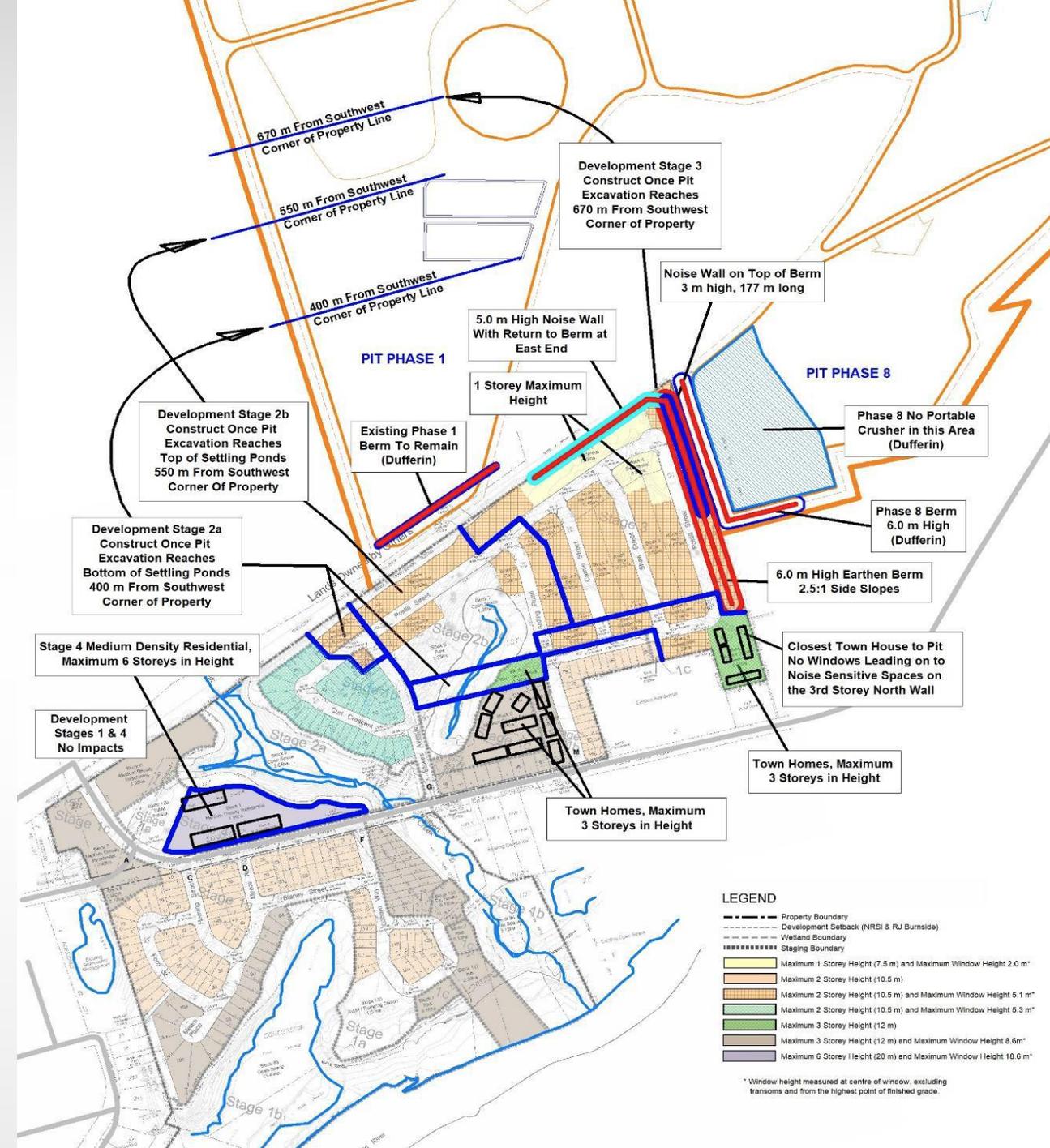
- Height Restrictions
- Phasing

## BUT HOW?

- Early Engagement with Regulators and Neighbours
- Policy / Regulation
- Private Agreements

# Effective Use of the Zoning By-law, Subdivision Control, & Site Plan Control

- Noise Modelling Completed in Advance to Understand Design and Mitigation Requirements
- Phasing - Lots are Oriented North South to Limit Number of Noise Sensitive Receptors (i.e. minimal windows)
- Implement Window Height Restrictions
- Easements were Obtained on Lands identified for Noise Attenuation Berms and Fence
- Established Subdivision Staging/Phasing - Implement 'Holding' Zones Where Residential Uses are Only Permitted Once Extraction is Either Complete or a Set Distance Away



# Industrial and Mining Lands Compensation Act Agreement – *What is it & How Can it Be Used?*

- Can be registered on Title and can Bind Future Third-Party Owners (unlike other private agreements which only bind those making the agreement).
- Can be an effective tool to address potential future nuisance claims, register positive covenants, implement restrictions on lands, obtain easements, etc.
- Ability to register Warning Clauses on Title (current and any future owner);
- Ability to register Easements for Access and Maintenance of Noise Attenuation Berms and Fencing;
- Ability to register Environmental Easements to Emit Noise, Vibration, and other Fugitive Emissions, etc. Over the Lands
- Can restrict the Sale of Lots Without Acknowledgement Agreement;
- Can contain Positive Covenants to Maintain Noise Attenuation Measures; &
- Can Prohibit the Removal of Noise Attenuation Measures.

## The Industrial and Mining Lands Compensation Act

1. It is lawful for an owner or operator of a mine, factory, industry or works, or a person contemplating acquiring or operating a mine, factory, industry or works, to make an agreement with the owner or lessee of any land for payment to the owner or lessee of the land of compensation for any damage or injury resulting or likely to result to the land or to its use and enjoyment from the operation of the mine, factory, industry or works in connection therewith. R.S.O. 1950, c. 177, s. 1, *amended*.  
Agreement for compensation

2. The agreement, if so expressed therein, binds and ensures to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, or the successors and assigns of the parties thereto, and may relate not only to a mine, factory, industry or works then in operation, but may also relate to a mine, factory, industry or works that may thereafter be established by the party paying the compensation, within a specified area, even though the land upon which the mine, factory, industry or works is thereafter operated is not at the time owned or leased by the party making the compensation. R.S.O. 1950, c. 177, s. 2, *amended*.  
Effect and extent of operation of agreement

3. Where the land in respect of which the agreement is made is not under *The Land Titles Act*, the agreement shall be registered, and where the land is under *The Land Titles Act*, a notice of the agreement shall be registered in the register of the title of the parcel of land on which the burden is imposed with a note referring to this Act, and any subsequent agreement cancelling an agreement so registered or in respect of which a notice is registered shall in like manner be registered or the notice deleted, as the case may be. R.S.O. 1950, c. 177, s. 3, *amended*.  
Registration of agreement R.S.O. 1950, c. 204

4. The payment of compensation under the agreement affords a complete answer to any action that may be brought for damages or for an injunction in respect of any matter for which compensation has been made. R.S.O. 1950, c. 177, s. 4.  
Payment of compensation to be an answer to action

# Utilizing these Planning Tools to Mitigate Risk and Decrease the Possible Nuisance Complaints Through Collaboration.

- Official Plan Policies;
- Zoning By-laws;
- Subdivision Control;
- Site Plan Control;
- IMLCA Agreements – Positive Covenants and Waiver of Potential Claims;
- Easements;
- Restrictive Covenants; and
- Warning Clauses;

# Streamlining a Technical Review – Milton Quarry East Extension Application

Based on current extraction rates, the existing Milton Quarry will be depleted within the next year or so.

## Proposed Licence Area

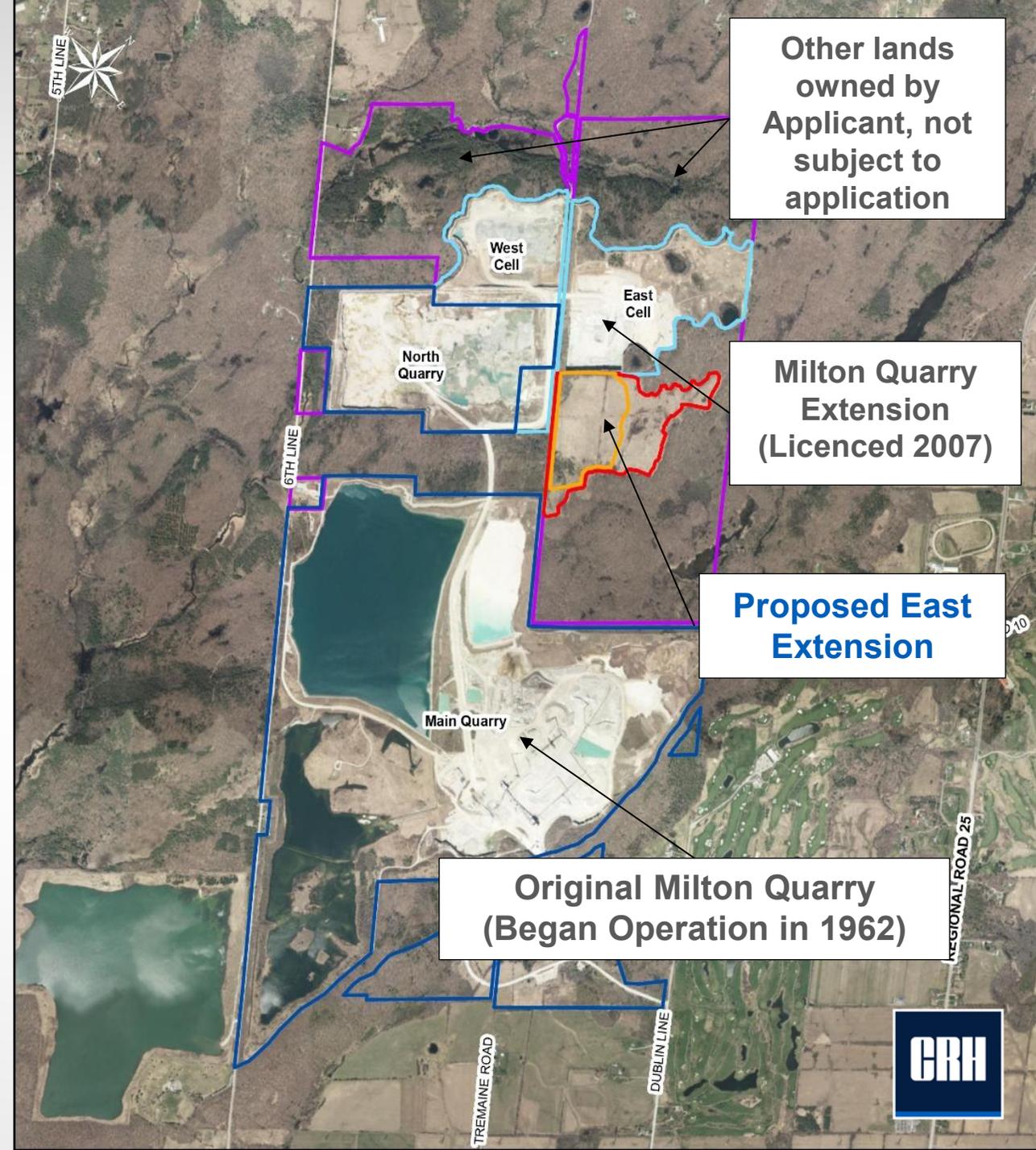
30.2 ha

## Proposed Extraction Area

15.9 ha

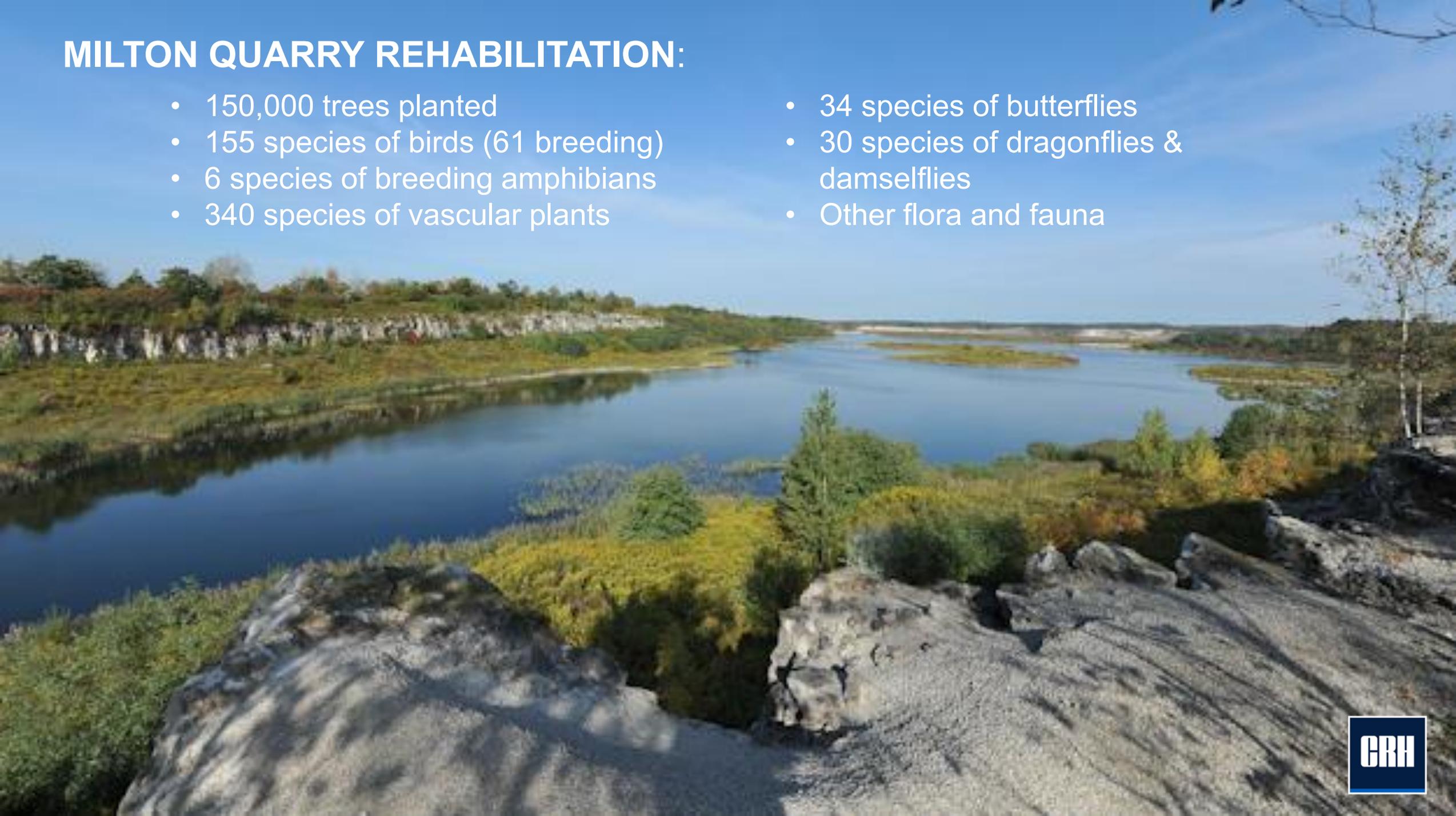
15 million tonnes of aggregate

Approximately 3 to 8 years

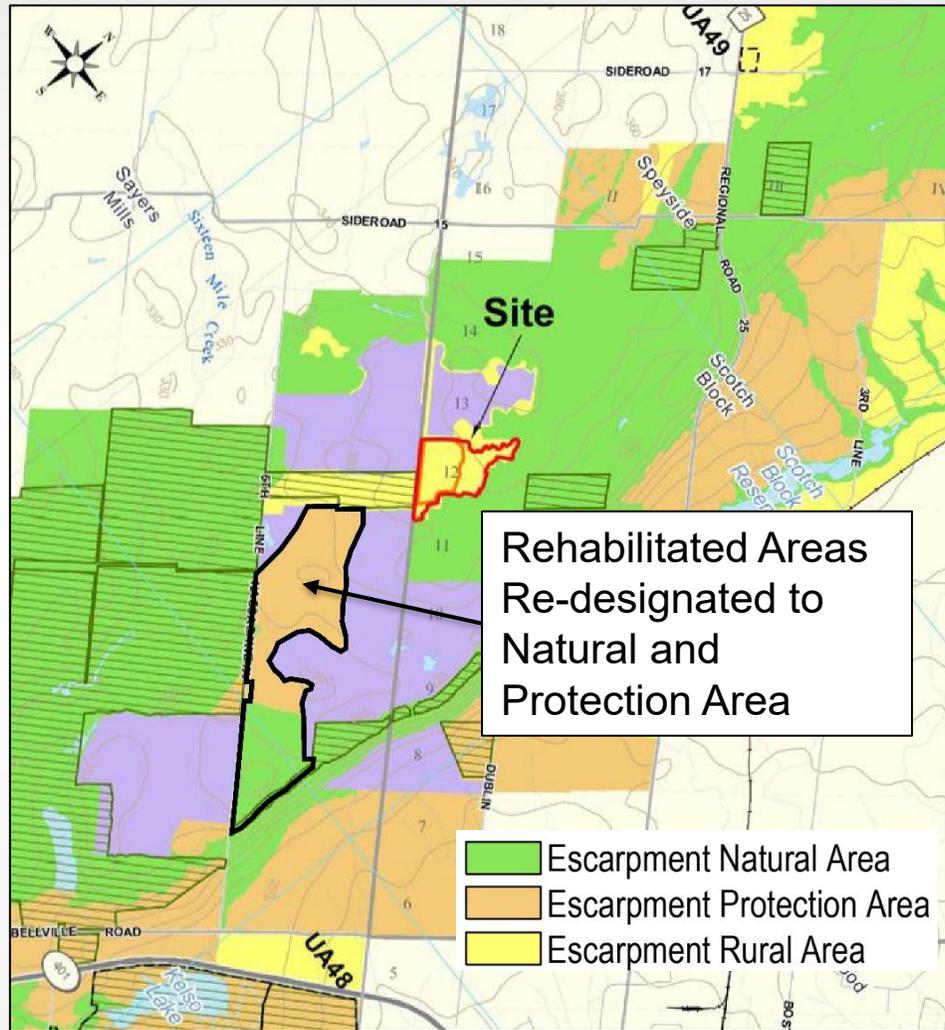


# MILTON QUARRY REHABILITATION:

- 150,000 trees planted
- 155 species of birds (61 breeding)
- 6 species of breeding amphibians
- 340 species of vascular plants
- 34 species of butterflies
- 30 species of dragonflies & damselflies
- Other flora and fauna



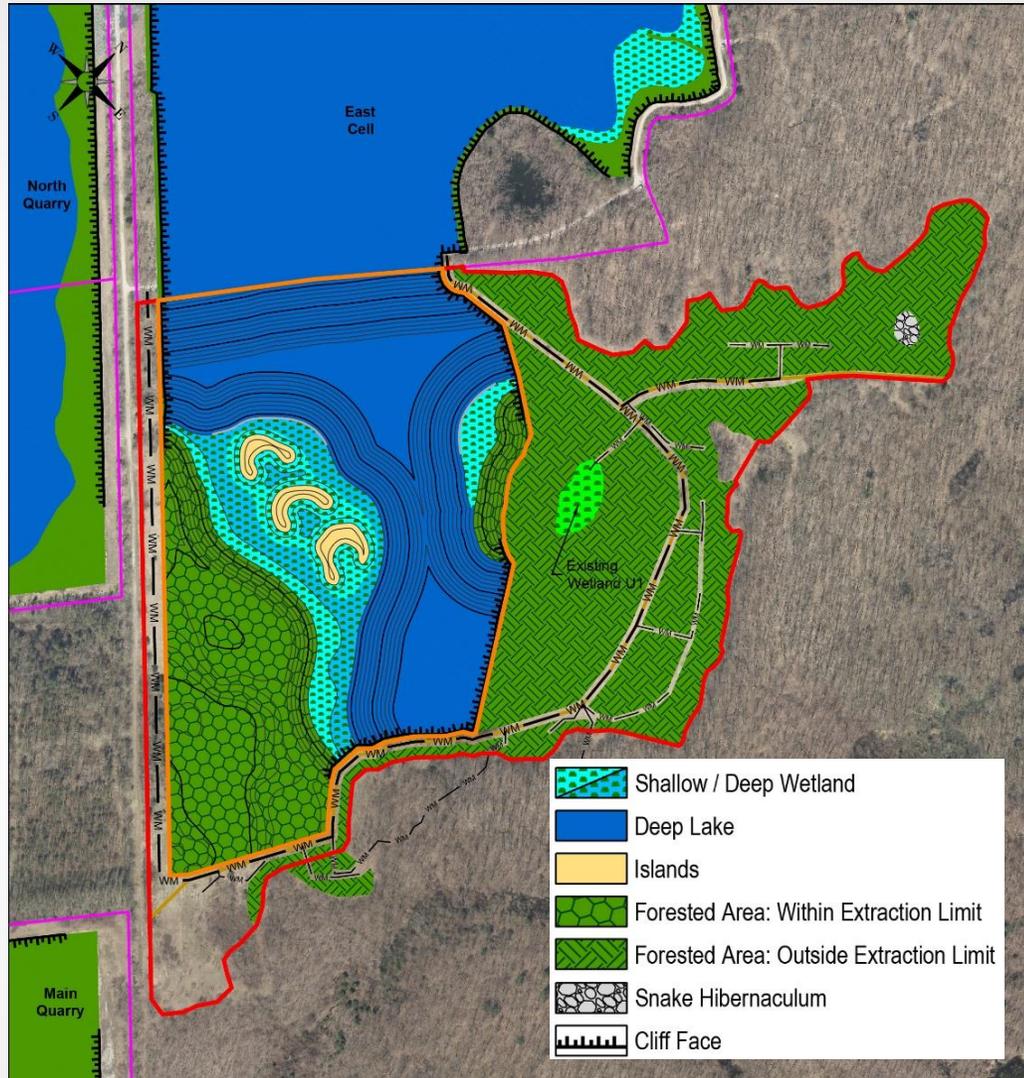
# Niagara Escarpment Plan



- Rehabilitated portions of the existing quarry already designated Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area.
- Escarpment Rural Area has objective to:

*“To provide for the consideration of new Mineral Resource Extraction Areas which can be accommodated by an amendment to this Plan.”*

# Milton Quarry East Extension Rehabilitation Plan



- Environmentally based plan.
- Extraction area (15.9 ha) rehabilitated to wetland, lake, island, forest and cliff.
- Area not proposed for extraction (10.55 ha Ecological Enhancement Plan) to forest and snake hibernaculum. To be completed within 2 to 5 years of approval.

# Key Milestones for Project

- *Dec 2019* – CRH Purchased the East Extension Lands.
- *Jan 2020* – Technical studies & Field work commenced.
- *Jan 2020 to Dec 2021* – CRH worked with JART Reviewers to get concurrence on criteria to be addressed in technical support documents.
- *Dec 2021* – Planning Act & Aggregate Resources Act filed.
- *Jan 2022 to July 2023* – JART review completed & final JART report issued.
- *Dec 2023* – CRH addressed all comments in JART report.
- *Jan 2025* – NEC Commission gives approval & Minister issued Development Permit
- *Mar 2025* – Town of Halton Hills Planning Act issued approval.
- *Jul 2025* – Ministry (MNR) issued Aggregate Resources Act Permit.

# Technical Studies Filed to Support Application

- Noise Impact Study
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Stage 1 and 2 Archaeological Assessment
- Stage 3 Archaeological Assessment.
- Blast Impact Analysis
- Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
- Fiscal Impact Study
- Geology and Water Resources Assessment
- Addendum to Updated Adaptive Environmental Management and Protection Plan (AMP)
- Level 1 And 2 Natural Environment Technical Report (NETR) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) & Rehabilitation Plan Report
- Traffic Impact Study/ Haul Route Assessment
- Visual Impact Assessment
- Progressive and Final Rehabilitation and Monitoring Study
- Public Consultation Strategy
- Aggregate Resources Act Site Plan
- Planning Justification Report and Aggregate Resources Act Summary Statement



**Thank you**

[jessica.ferri@ca.crh.com](mailto:jessica.ferri@ca.crh.com)  
cell. 416-845-0713

155 University Avenue Suite 800, Toronto, ON M5H 3B7  
416.971.9856 | roma@roma.on.ca | www.roma.on.ca

