

THE BLUE PRINT

OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW



Density & Height Background Paper

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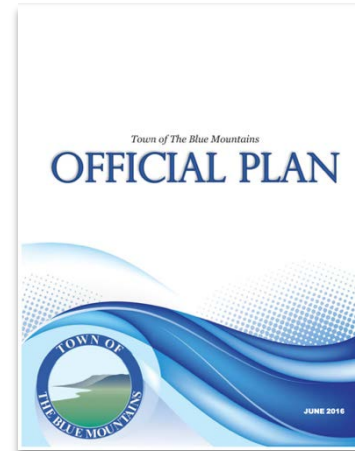


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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Town of the Blue Mountains is updating its Official Plan. Over the past years, the Town has been experiencing an influx of permanent and seasonal residential growth which is expected to continue due to demographic change, technological changes and the physical and natural characteristics that attract people to the Town. The Official Plan sets the foundation for where and how this residential growth is to occur.



Residential infill and intensification is directed to the Town's various settlement areas based on current direction within the County of Grey Official Plan and The Blue Mountains Official Plan, which is to be achieved through appropriate development and redevelopment in suitable locations. This intensification is to be carefully balanced with compatible built form and design that protects and enhances the unique small-town character of the Town's neighbourhoods and distinct areas.

The purpose of this Background Paper is to consider the current density and height framework in the Town's Official Plan in relation to the densities and heights that currently exist, and what is needed to accommodate growth to 2046. This Density and Height Background Paper was developed based on the findings of the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study (February 2022) and is intended to serve as a Town-wide companion document to that Study's extensive background analysis and recommendations.

As addressed within the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study, infill and intensification can lead to changes in a neighbourhood. However, it is important not to discourage re-investment in homes. There is an important balance to strike between maintaining neighbourhood character and encouraging new residential development in order to improve housing affordability and provide for a broader and more inclusive range of housing options for the current and future residents of The Blue Mountains.

This Background Paper also relies on, and was prepared concurrently with, the Growth Allocations and Fiscal Impact Report, and Housing Background Paper, as part of the Town’s Official Plan Five-Year Review:



1.2 Report Structure

This Density and Height Background Paper is structured as follows:

Section 1 – Introduction: Provides an introduction to the Background Paper and its purpose.

Section 2 – Provincial and County Direction: Provides an overview of the applicable policy direction from the Province and Grey County for growth and intensification.

Section 3 – Height and Density Framework Analysis: Sets out the current Official Plan residential height and density framework and provides a comparative analysis of the heights and densities that currently exist, as well as what is needed through updated policy direction to accommodate growth to 2046.

Section 4 – Urban Severances: Describes the Official Plan’s current policies for urban severances, analyzes past lot severances and provides preliminary recommendations for policy adjustments and considerations.

Section 5 – Height and Density Framework Considerations: Provides an overview of the considerations and recommendations to be incorporated into the Official Plan update.

2 Provincial and County Direction for Growth

The Town of the Blue Mountains Official Plan must conform with the Provincial Policy Statement and County of Grey Official Plan. The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) sets out high level policy direction for planning across Ontario related to growth, protecting the environment and public health. As land use planning is a shared responsibility between Grey County and its local municipalities, the County of Grey Official Plan contains goals, objectives and policies to manage and direct growth, as well as monitor its effects within the regional community.

Residential intensification is a key policy directive of the PPS and County of Grey Official Plan. As set out below, upper tier Provincial and County policies direct intensification to the settlement areas of municipalities, in order to provide current and future residents with appropriate and affordable housing choices.

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Planning authorities are encouraged to permit and facilitate residential intensification in order to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities that meet the projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents.

The PPS directs growth and development to settlement areas (Section 1.1.3.1) and within settlement areas, planning authorities shall:

“Identify appropriate locations and promote opportunities for transit-supportive development, accommodating a significant supply and range of housing options through intensification and redevelopment where this can be accommodated taking into account existing building stock or areas...” (Section 1.1.3.3).

The PPS also requires municipalities to create appropriate development standards that facilitate intensification, redevelopment, and compact built form. Planning authorities are also required to *“establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas”* (Section 1.1.3.5).

It is important to note that the PPS does not provide for unlimited intensification, but rather municipalities must identify appropriate locations and take into account existing building stock in determining what is appropriate for each community. Municipalities also establish appropriate standards for intensification which may vary depending on the area and characteristics of the community. For local municipalities, this also involves consideration for residential growth and intensification targets set by upper-tier municipalities, such as the County of Grey.

2.2 County of Grey Official Plan

Intensification

According to Section 3.4.1 of the County of Grey Official Plan, the Town of The Blue Mountains is to accommodate a minimum intensification target of 10% within the Primary Settlement Area of Thornbury/Clarksburg and 5% within its Secondary Settlement Areas. Local official plans should implement intensification strategies to phase in and achieve the required targets. Specifically, through intensification strategies, local municipalities are directed to:

- *“Promote and facilitate intensification and efficient use of land in built-up areas;*
- *Identify intensification areas to support the achievement of the intensification target;*
- *Promote the development of mixed use spaces within settlements;*
- *Identify areas appropriate for revitalization and redevelopment;*
- *Identify the type and scale of development appropriate for the intensification areas;*
- *Identify means to mitigate the effects of intensification on residential areas within intensification areas including consideration of transitional densities, built form, and land uses;*
- *Identify means to protect residential areas outside of intensification areas;*
- *Develop cost-effective and land efficient development standards; and*
- *Identify a program for monitoring the achievement of the intensification targets and evaluate the ongoing feasibility of achieving the targets.” (Section 3.4.1.1).*

Primary Settlement Areas

According to Section 3.5 of the County Official Plan, the majority of growth and intensification is to be directed to Primary Settlement Areas (Thornbury/Clarksburg in The Blue Mountains) and appropriately planned for within local official plans (Section 3.5.3). A minimum density of 20 units per net hectare for new development is to be achieved (Section 3.5.5).

In addition to the intensification strategy criteria listed above, intensification strategies in Primary Settlement Areas are to enable:

- Brownfield redevelopment;
- ‘As-of-right’ permissions in official plans for second units;

- The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas; and
- The expansion or conversion of existing buildings (Section 3.5.6).

Development through intensification is also to be compatible and take into account its surrounding built environment and land uses.

Secondary Settlement Areas

According to Section 3.6, Secondary Settlement Areas (Hamlets of Heathcote and Ravenna) have lower density targets, partial or private services and will accommodate limited residential growth, but a range of living styles (Section 3.6.1). Intensification opportunities are still encouraged within Secondary Settlement Areas to promote the development of health communities and are to consider the same strategies set out within the criteria for Primary Settlement Areas above.

Residential Intensification

The housing policies of Section 4.1 of the County Official Plan set out that the strategic approach to intensification is to retain the existing small town character of local municipalities and revitalize downtown areas, which is achieved through:

- *“Supporting increased densities in newly developing areas with a broad mix of housing types and integrated mixed-use developments, accessible housing and integrated services, and housing forms;*
- *Facilitating intensification in all areas within settlement areas including adaptive re-use or redevelopment of sites that previously had development and underutilized lands;*
- *Encouraging the addition of housing above commercial uses in and near the downtown, in residential transition areas, and in other main commercial areas;*
- *Encouraging intensification within Primary Settlement Areas along major roadways and arterial roads;*
- *Conserving built heritage, cultural heritage landscape, and archaeological resources where feasible, as built up areas are intensified and infilled, promoting construction distinguishable from, while sensitive and complementary to, existing built fabric and the overall streetscape attributes;*
- *Encouraging intensification which results in new rental accommodation;*
- *Sharing the Healthy Development Checklist created in partnership with the Grey Bruce Health Unit with developers and lower-tier municipalities to address healthy community design including public health and safety needs embedded*

within residential intensification, redevelopment, and new residential development. Some areas of consideration within this checklist include:

- *Supporting mixed land use by integrating a variety of residential development within 800 meters of retail, recreational centers, parks and public spaces;*
- *Including a variety of affordable housing options and prioritizing those available for low income households;*
- *Committing to the preservation of the natural heritage system by maintaining existing trees, soil integrity, and landscaping using native species;*
- *Including cycling infrastructure, such as bike lanes, paved shoulders, bicycle parking, and signage.*
- *Developers will be asked to consider the checklist as part of the application process. County planning staff will review the information provided and recommend any changes.*
- *Considering additional tools to measure and track impacts of larger developments on vulnerable or marginalized populations in terms of reducing chronic disease and risk of injury. For example, the use of Health Impact Assessments can identify the potential unintended health impacts of a development proposal. The County may require a Health Impact Assessment to be prepared by qualified professionals at the expense of the developer;*
- *Directing development to be cost effective, environmentally sound, sustainable, and compatible with existing uses;*
- *Ensuring adequate infrastructure is, or will be, established to serve the anticipated development.”*

2.3 Niagara Escarpment Plan

Development in the Town is also subject to the policies and regulations of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Niagara Escarpment Plan establishes land use designations within the Town of The Blue Mountains, for areas covered by the Plan, including the Escarpment Natural Area, the Escarpment Protection Area, the Escarpment Rural Area and the Escarpment Recreation Area designations.

A large portion of the Town and its easterly settlement areas are designated Escarpment Recreation Area (**Figure 1**), which include areas of existing or potential recreational development as well as both seasonal and permanent residences. According to Section 1.8.3 of the Plan, permitted residential uses include existing uses, single dwellings and secondary dwelling units. Additionally, within their permitted uses list, the Plan sets out that any uses permitted by The Town of the Blue Mountains

Official Plan, 2004, and any subsequent amendments, where they do not conflict with the Niagara Escarpment Plan, are also permitted.

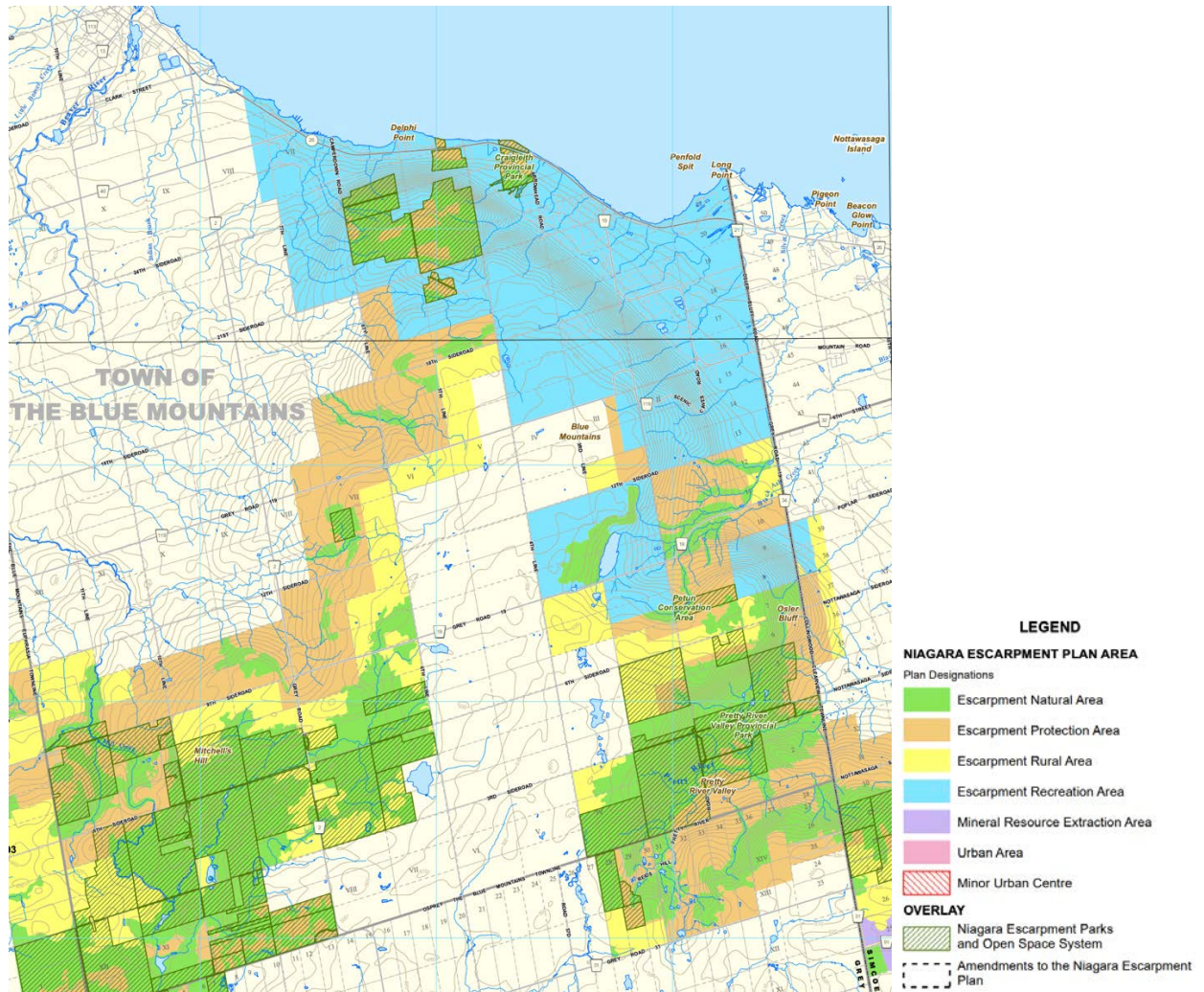


Figure 1. Niagara Escarpment Plan Map 6

3 Height and Density Framework Analysis



This section of the Background Paper summarizes the current density and height framework within the Town's residential and mixed use designations and provides a comparative analysis of the heights and densities that currently exist. Based on this comparison, this section recommends where specific heights and densities should be maintained or increased. The intent of this exercise is to continue to encourage appropriate residential density and intensification in alignment with Provincial and County direction and to provide for a broader and more inclusive range of housing options. However, this growth and intensification is to be achieved while balancing permissions for compatible built form in suitable locations across the Town's settlement areas. Compatible built form should maintain, and where possible enhance, the distinct character of The Blue Mountains' various communities.

The Phase 1 Official Plan Review Survey specified that the Town will be considering various neighbourhood build-out scenarios based on future growth forecasts, density, height, land needs and financial impacts. Respondents were asked to identify their preference for how the Town should grow. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, respondents generally indicated the Town should maintain their existing height limitations, as well as not increase densities or housing options within existing neighbourhoods. However, there was also importance placed on minimizing land consumption to accommodate new growth; the need to provide for a wide range of housing across the Town; and the need to more efficiently use existing infrastructure. This highlights a general desire for more gentle forms of intensification within neighbourhoods and support for a broader range of housing outside of existing neighbourhood areas.

A large portion of the Town's permanent population and new units are to be allocated to the Primary Settlement Area of Thornbury/Clarksburg. For this area, the analysis within this Background Paper relies on the recently completed Thornbury Density and Intensification Study, alongside a supplemented assessment of the Clarksburg urban area. The designations within Thornbury/Clarksburg include the Community Living Area designation, which encompasses the majority of the Primary Settlement Area, as well as the Downtown Area designation, which encompasses Downtown Thornbury as well as Downtown Clarksburg.

Question 16 asked respondents 'The Official Plan Review will be considering various neighbourhood build-out scenarios based on future growth forecasts. Density, Height, Land Needs, Financial Impacts, and other factors will be considered. On a scale of not important to extremely important, please rank the following:

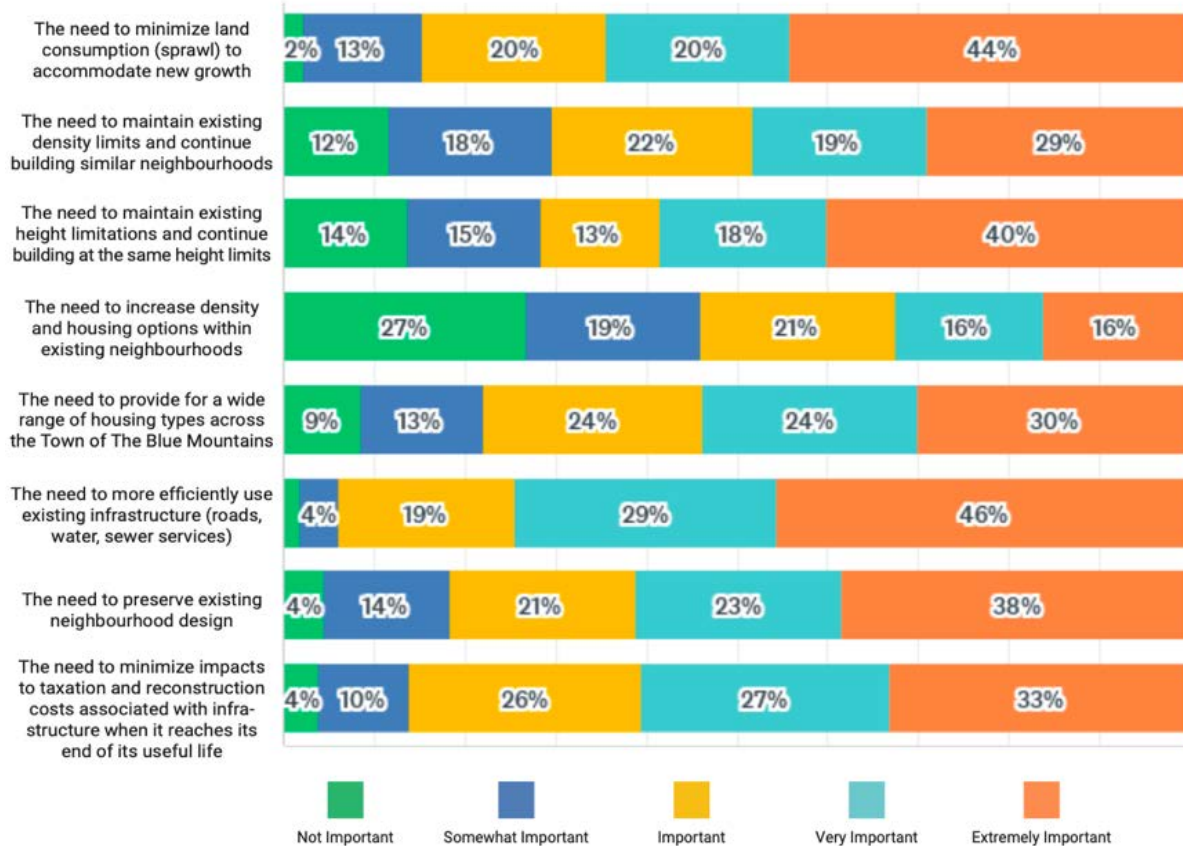


Figure 2. Phase 1 Survey Neighbourhood Buildout Question

The Town’s settlement areas of Lora Bay, Camperdown, Craigleith, Swiss Meadows, Blue Mountain Village and Castle Glen also play a role in accommodating density and intensification. The Residential/Recreational designation applies within these areas (apart from Castle Glen), as well as a few other area-specific residential designations within the Blue Mountain Village Area, Craigleith and the Castle Glen Community Secondary Plan.

The Hamlet Areas of Heathcote and Ravenna are intended to provide for limited growth and carefully controlled residential development, and therefore are generally only appropriate for gentle infill and intensification, such as the accessory apartments or infill of single detached dwellings. The existing permissions for only single detached dwellings are proposed to remain, and therefore the Town’s Hamlets are not discussed within this Background Paper.

3.1 General Height Provision

Official Plan Section B2.13

Under the General Policies for Land Use Designations, the Official Plan sets out a height policy applying across the Town that generally restricts all buildings to 11-metres and/or 3-storeys. The policy specifies that high rise buildings shall not be considered “conducive to the general amenity and character of development within the Town”.

Section B2.13 also sets out the following:

“It is intended that a variety of building heights be encouraged in order to improve the visual effect, variety and community identity within various parts of the Town. The height limitations specified under the Plan shall be considered maximum provisions, however, the implementing Zoning By-law may provide for a range of lower height restrictions to establish the desired diversity for various zoning categories based on the intended principle of development for neighbourhoods, commercial districts and industrial areas. Development shall not be permitted at the maximum height provided under this Plan unless Council is satisfied that the proposed buildings or structures are compatible with nature and character of the surrounding area.”

Table 1 below is organized by residential designation and provides a comparison of the Town’s Official Plan permissions for height and density versus what currently exists and preliminary opportunities based on this comparison.

Table 1. Official Plan Height and Density Framework

Settlement Area	Thornbury/Clarksburg		Lora Bay, Camperdown, Craigleith, Swiss Meadows, Blue Mountain Village Area		
	Community Living Area	Downtown Area	Residential/Recreational Area	<u>Blue Mountain Village:</u> Low Density Residential Medium Density Residential	<u>Craigleith:</u> Craigleith Village Residential
Maximum Permitted Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings: 2.5 storeys. Townhouse, multiple and apartment dwellings: 3 storeys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 storeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specified for designation. 3 storey maximum across the Town applies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specified for designation. 3 storey maximum across the Town applies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 metres/2 storeys
Permitted Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single detached dwellings: 10 – 25 units per gross hectare. Semi-detached and duplex dwellings: 15 – 35 units per gross hectare. Townhouses: 25 to 40 units per gross hectare. Multiple and apartments dwellings: 40 to 60 units per gross hectare. <p><u>New Greenfield Areas:</u> Minimum density of 20 units per net hectare (Direction from County of Grey Official Plan).</p> <p>It is recognized that in some areas maximum density may not be appropriate. Lower density may be reviewed to meet the provisions of Section B3.1.5.3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specified for designation. 	<p><u>Blue Mountain Village Area (Designated Residential/Recreational):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum 15 units per gross hectare. <p><u>All Other Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum 10 units per gross hectare. <p><u>Minimum Open Space Component:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% 	<p><u>Low Density Residential:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specified for designation. <p><u>Medium Density Residential:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum 35 units per gross hectare for any block. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not specified for designation.
Existing Dwelling Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily 1 and 2 storey single detached dwellings. Some 2 and 2.5 storey townhouses. Few 2 to 3 storey apartment dwellings (one 5-storey). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of 1 to 2 storey dwellings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of 1 to 2.5 storey dwellings. 	<p><u>Low Density Residential</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of 1 to 2.5 storey dwellings. <p><u>Medium Density Residential:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 storey dwellings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently being developed with single detached and townhouse dwellings, previously vacant.

<p>Recommended Heights and Densities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain maximum 2.5 storey height for single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings. • Maintain maximum 3 storeys for townhouses, multiple units and apartments across the designation. • Encourage higher density multiple and apartment dwellings in appropriate areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain historic low-rise character of Downtown core areas by maintaining a maximum height of 3 storeys. • Permit higher density dwellings up to 5 or 6 storeys in appropriate areas, generally on the edge or outside of the core of each Downtown. • Where apartments up to 5 or 6 storeys in height are deemed appropriate, establish a maximum density generally not to exceed 100 units per gross hectare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out maximum 2.5 storey height for single detached and semi-detached dwellings. • Set out maximum 3 storey height for townhouse dwellings. • Permit higher density multiple and apartment dwellings up to 5 or 6 storeys in appropriate areas based on surrounding characteristics, generally outside of established low-rise neighbourhoods. This permission should generally be geared towards seasonal units, in order to direct intensification and population growth to the Thornbury/Clarksburg Primary Settlement Area. • Where apartments up to 5 or 6 storeys in height are deemed appropriate, establish a maximum density generally not to exceed 100 units per gross hectare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the current density and height framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the current height framework.
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3.2 Primary Settlement Area Designations

3.2.1 Community Living Area

The Community Living Area designation applies to the majority of Thornbury and Clarksburg. Objectives for the Community Living Area designation include:

- Maintaining a unique small town feel and character;
- Maintaining compatibility and enhancing the character of existing residential areas;
- Encouraging a full range of housing opportunities to meet projected needs;
- Promoting the efficient use of infrastructure through residential intensification where appropriate; and
- Maintaining the community's low height profile and density.

Single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings are permitted up to 2.5 storeys. Townhouse, multiple and apartment dwellings are permitted up to 3-storeys. All existing single detached and townhouse dwellings within the Community Living Area in Thornbury and Clarksburg generally fall within and below these permitted height categories. The exception to this includes the five-storey apartment building located at 10 By Street East, adjacent to the Beaver River.

The Thornbury Density and Intensification Study provides extensive detail on existing dwelling types and heights within Thornbury's Community Living Area designation. The Study delineated eight different Planning Neighbourhood areas, as shown on **Figure 3** below, which were categorized based on similar defining density, built form, open space and lot characteristics. Within each Planning Neighbourhood, the Study identified various opportunities for intensification as well as site and built form recommendations for a number of example sites. In addition to more gentle forms of infill and intensification such as accessory apartments and infill dwellings and subdivisions, numerous opportunities and sites were identified for higher density forms of housing including townhouses and apartments up to three-storeys. Direction for these various opportunities developed through the Study was intended to be comprehensive and applicable across other similar situations, which in this situation, can also be applied to Clarksburg's neighbourhoods.

While the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study did not specifically recommend the permission for buildings heights greater than three-storeys within the Community Living Area designation, there may be opportunities to permit higher density multiple and apartment dwellings in certain areas where the proposed built form and site and surrounding context is appropriate. A number of large, vacant greenfield areas still exist within the overall Community Living Area designation, as well as a number of large lots with low coverages, which are appropriately separated from low density neighbourhoods and may provide opportunities for intensified development.

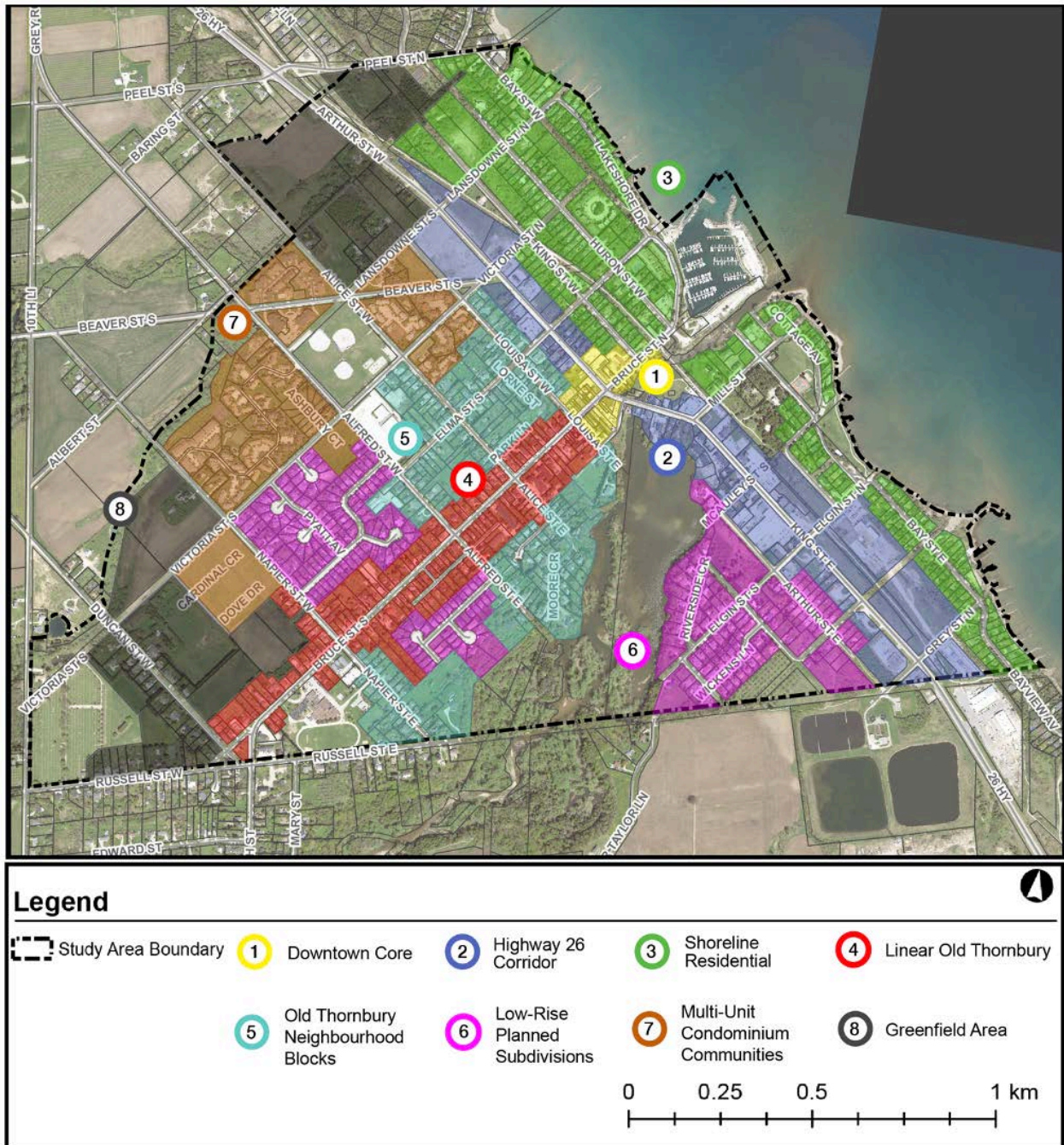


Figure 3. Thornbury Density and Intensification Study Planning Neighbourhoods

Official Plan Opportunities:

- The maximum 2.5 storey height for single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings and 3 storeys for townhouses, multiple units and apartments should be maintained. The Official Plan Update should consider how to further encourage development up to three-storeys which is already permitted by the existing policy framework. This opportunity ties back to stronger encouragement within the Official Plan to accommodate a range of dwelling types as already permitted and the provision of a diverse community within Thornbury/Clarksburg in order to provide housing opportunities for all current and future residents while making use of existing infrastructure, services and developable land.
- Thornbury/Clarksburg is the Town's primary focus area for its growth and intensification is to be encouraged. While it is recommended to maintain the maximum three-storey height for all buildings, there may be opportunities to permit higher density multiple unit and apartment dwellings in appropriate areas, generally outside of, and appropriately transitioned from, established low-rise neighbourhoods.
 - An option for implementing this would be to create policies for permitting higher density development based on specific site and locational criteria within the Official Plan. These criteria would require a transition in height to any surrounding low density residential uses, as well as criteria to respect and enhance existing character such as separation distances between dwellings, maximum lot coverage, etc.



- Another option would be to specifically map and designate lands for higher density uses within the Official Plan, which would likely involve splitting up the current Community Living Area designation into a number of sub-designations. This option would provide the opportunity to pre-zone lands for higher densities, through a separate Town-initiated planning process. The Official Plan could also consider implementing policies that discuss where pre-zoning may be appropriate and set out applicable criteria for where and how this should occur.



- The potential permission for higher densities with the Community Living Area should be assessed and further considered as part of the Official Plan Review so as to not detract from the Downtown Area designation as the main focus area for growth and intensification.
- Generally, the density ranges for single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings are appropriate. The Official Plan could consider increasing the density range for townhouses, to allow for more dense development as appropriate and provide flexibility in built form such as the provision of stacked townhouses.
- There is an opportunity to increase the minimum density for new greenfield areas from 20 to 25 units per net hectare as a way to promote the development of varied housing types and densities.
- Where higher densities are deemed appropriate, the Town could establish a maximum density that generally does not to exceed 100 units per gross hectare. To provide local context, within Thornbury, the five-storey Riverwalk Apartment development located at 10 Bay Street East represents 100 units per gross hectare (**Figure 4**). Alternatively, rather than relying on a specific density for development, the Official Plan could provide policies that address built form to

dictate how dense a development should be on a particular site including direction for more detailed regulations to be implemented through zoning. There are numerous tools that could be referenced to ensure dense built form is appropriate for a site or area which includes maximum building height, setbacks, floor plate size, building length, step backs above a certain height, and transitions to low rise dwellings and neighbourhoods.



Figure 4. Riverwalk Apartments – 100 Units Per Gross Hectare Example Site

3.2.2 Downtown Area

The Downtown Area designation applies to Downtown Thornbury and Downtown Clarksburg, with the intent to accommodate a mix of uses, including residential. The existing character of the Downtown Area is to be maintained and/or enhanced through the scale and location of new development and redevelopment, to be accomplished in part by limiting the height of new buildings to three-storeys.

The Downtown Area designation permits residential uses as part of a commercial building or multiple unit apartment. Along the main streets of King/Bridge/Arthur Street and Marsh Street, new residential uses are directed to the upper floors of buildings. Along side streets, stand-alone townhouses, free-standing multiple unit buildings and apartments are permitted subject to a rezoning and site plan approval.

As further detailed within the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study, there are two distinct areas that constitute the Downtown Area designation within Thornbury. As illustrated on the map in **Figure 3** above, these two areas include the “Downtown Core”, concentrated at Arthur/Bridge Street and Bruce Street, and the “Highway 26 Corridor” on either side of the “Downtown Core”. The Clarksburg Downtown Area designation has similar built form character to Thornbury’s “Downtown Core” area.

The central downtown core areas of both Thornbury and Clarksburg are characterized by one and two-storey commercial units. Existing residential dwellings within both designated Downtown Areas include a mix of one and two-storey single detached dwellings. Recommendations from the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study suggested the historic low-rise character of Thornbury’s “Downtown Core” should be maintained where built form is predominantly two-storeys, which can also be applied to Clarksburg’s smaller historic Downtown Area. The Study identified numerous opportunities to accommodate taller buildings up to five-storeys in appropriate locations outside the Thornbury “Downtown Core” particularly along the “Highway 26 Corridor” leading to and from the “Downtown Core”. There are a number of vacant lots and existing development with low coverages that provide opportunity for redevelopment, many of which are appropriately separated and/or buffered from low density dwellings and neighbourhoods.

In order to appropriately direct intensified growth and increased height allowances, the Official Plan could direct buildings up to five or six-storeys under specific circumstances including but not limited to the following:

- On sites where community services and amenities are within walking distance;
- Where it can be demonstrated that the development will not cause traffic or congestion issues;
- Where it can be demonstrated that the development will not cause impacts on adjacent low density residential areas, parks or the public realm from shadow, overlook or massing impacts; and
- Where the use of intervening new two to three-storey buildings can be provided between existing low density neighbourhoods and taller buildings.

Official Plan Opportunities:

- The Official Plan could implement a policy framework and language that speaks to generally respecting the existing building heights within the core of both Downtown Areas with heights permitted up to three-storeys, while allowing for increased building heights up to five or six-storeys leading to and from each Downtown core area on appropriately sized and situated lots and the provision of built form transition.
- The Official Plan should direct the Town’s mid-rise buildings up to five



or six storeys along the “Highway 26 Corridor” (delineated within the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study), outside of the “Downtown Core” area, provided a transition in heights and densities is provided to any surrounding low density residential uses.

- Where apartments up to five or six storeys in height are deemed appropriate, it is recommended to establish a maximum density generally not to exceed 100 units per gross hectare.
- The Downtown Area designation does not set out any specific height or density requirements for permitted uses, while the Community Living Area designation, among others, do. The only reference to a maximum three-storey height is provided within **Section B3.3.4** which sets out the general vision for the area. It is recommended that the review of the Official Plan considers implementing a clear structure for the height and density allowances within each designation, particularly if the blanket maximum height of three-storeys across the Town is changed.



3.3 Residential/Recreational Area

The Residential/Recreational Area designation applies to Lora Bay, Camperdown, Craigeith, Swiss Meadows and the Blue Mountain Village Area. A range of low-rise housing types are permitted from single detached dwellings to townhouses, as well as low-rise multiple units. The policies of this designation do not set out a maximum height, and it is therefore assumed the general Town-wide 3 storey maximum height applies. The vast majority of existing and recently developed housing within these areas consist of one to 2.5 storey single detached dwellings.

Official Plan Opportunities:

- In alignment with the Community Living Area designation, a maximum 2.5 storey height could be set out for single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings and 3 storeys for townhouses, multiple units and apartments.
- As discussed within the Housing Background Paper, there opportunity to bolster existing policies to encourage or require higher density forms of housing (such as townhouses or low-rise apartment buildings) by increasing the minimum density requirement. This would still allow for single detached dwellings but would also encourage the development of higher density housing types to provide for a more compact built form.
- Complementary to the increased height recommendations discussed above, the Official Plan could implement policies to permit higher density dwellings up to five or six-storeys throughout the Residential Recreational Area based on surrounding context and alignment with a set of criteria. This permission would generally be geared towards seasonal and resort units in order not to detract from the focus of population growth and intensification within Thornbury/Clarksburg.
- Where apartments up to five or six-storeys in height are deemed appropriate, it is recommended to establish a maximum density generally not to exceed 100 units per gross hectare.



3.4 Other Residential Designations

Table 1 above also considers the additional residential designations that apply within Blue Mountain Village (Low and Medium Density Residential), Craigleith (Village Residential) and Castle Glen (Resort Residential). As addressed within the Housing Paper, these designations establish the permission for a range of housing types and their overall framework is not recommended to change. These designations also establish detailed density permissions which either relate to the built-out areas of Blue Mountain Village (except for a site-specific area), the developing area of Craigleith and the Castle Glen Secondary Plan area which has very specific policies that will apply when these lands are developed.

4 Urban Severances/Consents

This section of the Background Paper evaluates the Town’s current policies for urban severances, which are referred to as “consents” within the Official Plan. These two terms are typically used interchangeably.

Infill development through lot severances involves the creation of two or more lots from one existing larger lot, as illustrated in **Figure 5** below. Typically, a large lot with an existing single detached dwelling is severed to facilitate the development of a new adjacent single detached or semi-detached dwelling on the newly created lot. The existing dwelling may be demolished and replaced by a new dwelling, or it may be retained, depending on the configuration of the severance.

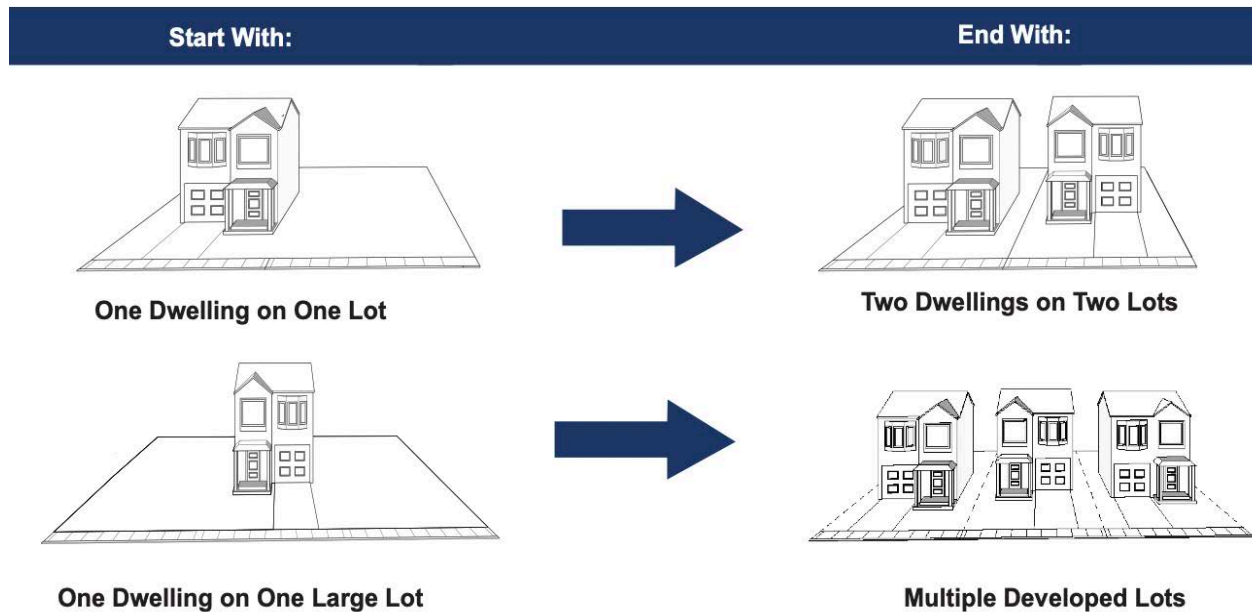


Figure 5. Severance/Consent Examples

4.1 Severance/Consent Policy Framework

Within the Subdivision of Land section under the General Development Policies of the Official Plan, **Section D4.2** sets out the following general criteria for the creation of new lots by consent. In the creation of a new lot for any purpose, the Town must be satisfied that the lot:

- *“Fronts on and will be directly accessed by a public road that is maintained on a year-round basis;*
- *Will not cause a traffic hazard as a result of its location on a curve or a hill;*

- *Can be serviced with an appropriate water supply and means of sewage disposal;*
- *Will not have a negative impact on the drainage patterns in the area;*
- *Will not affect the developability of the remainder of the lands, if they are designated for development by this Plan; and,*
- *Will not have a negative impact on the features and functions of any environmentally sensitive feature in the area and lot lines should avoid bisecting environmental features.”*

Consents are also addressed **within Section B3.3.5.1** of the Downtown Area designation which requires the consent does not “*unduly fragment the land base of the Downtown Areas, making it more difficult to accommodate useable building space*”. Consents are not permitted where they may result in the demolition of historically or culturally significant buildings.

Within the Residential/Recreation Area designation, **Section B3.7.4.2** generally prohibits consents within registered plans of subdivision in order to “*maintain the intended density and character of the development*”. The policy states individual consents may be considered in accordance with the Infill Development policies of the Community Living Area designation. These policies are for the creation of lot(s) for single detached and semi-detached dwellings between existing residential lots are commented on within the Housing Background Paper.

Data from the Town for the past ten years (2011 to 2021) generally highlights that the number of consent applications processed each year is typically 3 or 4, with the exception of 2018 where 5 were processed and 2019 where 7 were processed.

Official Plan Opportunities:

- There is an overlap of the criteria for infill development within **Section B3.1.5.2** and the consent criteria of **Section D4.2**. The Housing Background Paper recommended applying the infill policies of the Community Living Area designation to additional residential designations. There is an opportunity to streamline the criteria and their applicability to all types of infill development, including severances.
- Many large residential lots exist within the Town and offer opportunities for infill and intensification. The update of the Official Plan should consider how to encourage and possibly increase the number of consents while still providing for appropriate development that respects the existing surrounding character.

5 Summary of Opportunities

The following provides a summary of the preliminary opportunities to update the Town's Official Plan height and density framework:

- A maximum height of three-storeys applies across the Town, however the Community Living Area designation specifies maximum heights for dwelling types within its policies. It is recommended that the review of the Official Plan considers implementing a clear structure for the height and density allowances within each designation, particularly if the Town-wide maximum height of three-storeys is changed. It should consider specify maximum heights within each residential designation and situations where additional height may be permitted.
- The Town-wide maximum building height of three-storeys shall generally be maintained, except where higher density development can be appropriately located and accommodated so as to not cause any negative impacts and fit in with the established character of the Town's communities. It is recommended to develop a framework for the Community Living Area (in appropriate locations), Downtown Area and Residential/Recreational Area (focused on seasonal dwellings) designations where development of up to five or six-storeys may be permitted. This may involve establishing criteria (which may differ or be the same based on each designation) for allowing higher density development. Alternatively, the Official Plan could specifically map and designate areas where mid-rise heights may be permitted.
- A framework is recommended to be established for the Downtown Area designation that generally respects the historic low-rise character of each core area, while allowing for increased heights on the edges, and, in Thornbury's case, along the "Highway 26 Corridor" Planning Neighbourhood identified in the Thornbury Density and Intensification Study (**Figure 1**).
- Where apartments up to five or six storeys in height are deemed appropriate, it is recommended to establish a maximum density generally not to exceed 100 units per gross hectare. Alternatively, rather than relying on a specific density for development, the Official Plan could provide policies and zoning that address built form to dictate how dense a development should be on a particular site. There are numerous tools that could be referenced to ensure dense built form is appropriate for a site or area which includes maximum building height, setbacks, floor plate size, building length, step backs above a certain height, and transitions to low rise dwellings and neighbourhoods.

- There is an opportunity to bolster existing policies to encourage or require higher density forms of housing (such as townhouses or low-rise apartment buildings) by increasing the minimum density requirement. An option is to increase the minimum density target for new greenfield areas from 20 to 25 units per net hectare. This policy would still allow for single detached dwellings but would also encourage the development of higher density low-rise housing types to provide for a more compact built form.
- There is an opportunity to streamline the existing criteria for infill development and severances and their applicability across the Town's residential designations. The update of the Official Plan should consider how to encourage and possibly increase the number of severances while still providing for appropriate development that respects the existing surrounding character.



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