Saugeen Shores

Nodes and Corridor Study +
Community Planning Permit System
Implementation

Briefing Note 4: Revisiting Where to Build

March 20, 2026



Briefing Note 4:
Revisiting Where to Build

The Town of Saugeen Shores is undertaking a Nodes and Corridors Study and Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) to guide future growth and support a broader mix of housing options.

The Nodes and Corridors Study is intended to identify areas within the Town that are appropriate for growth through intensification (i.e. redevelopment or infill with higher density forms of housing) to increase housing supply and variety. The CPPS will be developed to provide a set of regulations that will guide growth in the targeted areas, replacing the Zoning By-law (See Briefing Note 1: What is a CPPS?).

In June 2025, an initial analysis of areas to be the potential focus of the CPPS was the subject of a public and stakeholder engagement. The analysis was focused on Port Elgin and also discussed potential building types (See Briefing Note 3: Identifying Focus Areas for the CPPS).

Based on feedback from that round of engagement, the scope of the Nodes and Corridors Study was expanded to also consider Southampton. This briefing note provides a high-level overview of that expanded analysis, plus complementary work on a Housing Opportunities System Study, which was undertaken to better understand housing supply and demand in the Town and to identify the kinds of housing currently being underprovided.

This briefing note concludes with a recommendation on the areas to be the focus of the CPPS. Briefing Note 5: What to Build, the next in the series, discusses what intensification could look like.

NODES AND CORRIDORS STUDY

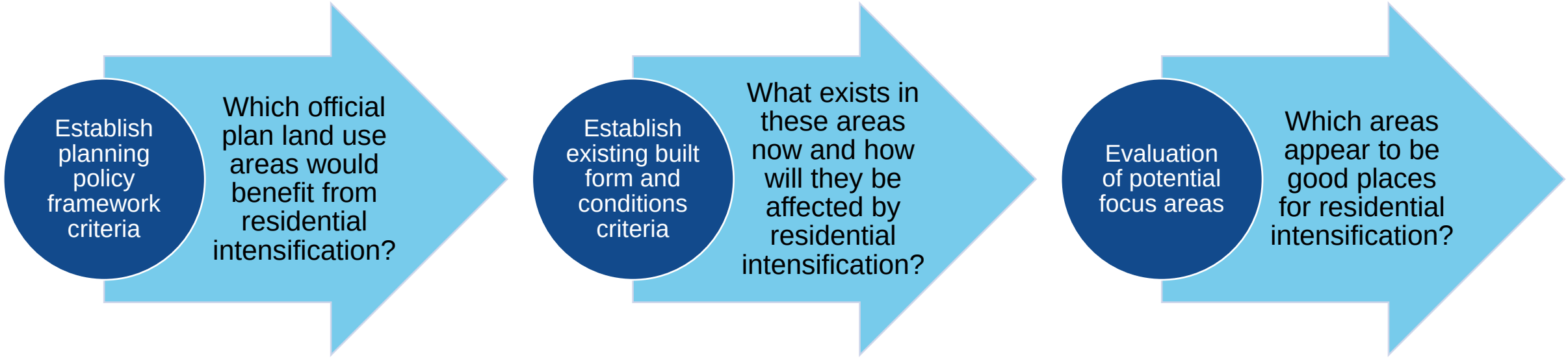


Shortlisting the Focus Areas for CPPS

In revisiting the areas to be the potential focus of the CPPS, our team used the same methodology as previously employed but with a geographic scope expanded to consider the entire Town. Our team examined the Town's planning policy framework and the existing built conditions to identify areas that may benefit from means to expedite residential redevelopment and intensification.

We looked for compatible official plan-level land use designations and matched them up with a geographic information systems (GIS) analysis of built-up areas and the parcel fabric to identify areas that could be conducive for residential redevelopment and intensification.

The conclusion was similar to initial round. Whereas the Core Commercial and Highway Commercial areas of Port Elgin emerged from the initial round, in the revision, the areas in Southampton that shared those Official Plan designations were also deemed appropriate for inclusion in a CPPS.



Focus Area 1: Core Commercial

Good opportunity for new residential development at the heart of Port Elgin and Southampton

Strengths

- Port Elgin already has height permissions of 20 m
- Addition of residential units would support commercial vitality for shops and services
- Higher-density residential uses would reinforce the image and function as the town centres or nodes of Port Elgin and Southampton
- Near existing community facilities and services
- Create more opportunities for walking and cycling, while creating supportive conditions for the introduction of transit service

Challenges

- Small parcel size would require assembly
- Integrating with buildings or streetscapes with cultural interest or built heritage value
- Transitioning to surrounding lower density housing types
- New building types would evolve the built form character



Focus Area 1: Core Commercial Designations – Port Elgin and Southampton
Data source: Town of Saugeen Shores.

Focus Area 2: Highway Commercial

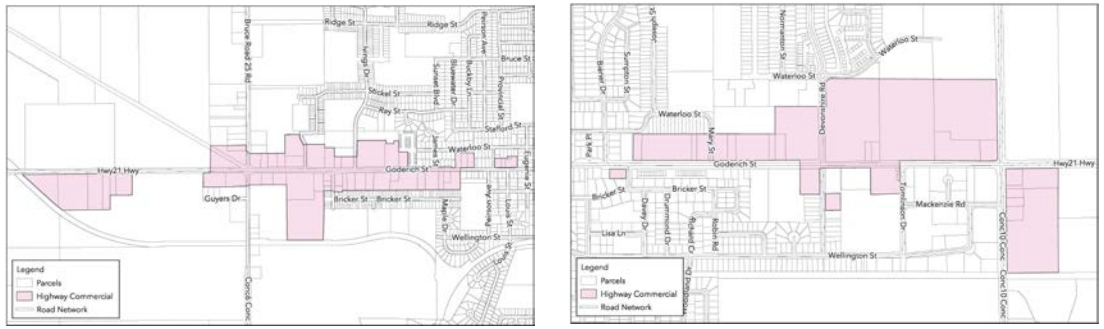
Good opportunity for new residential development along the Highway 21 corridor

Strengths

- Port Elgin already has height permissions of 20 m
- Larger parcels may simplify land assembly.
- Addition of residential units could add commercial vitality for Highway 21 corridor shops and services.
- Some areas are near existing community facilities and services, including Biener Park, The Plex, and the Aquatics and Wellness Centre.
- Support a shift to walking and cycling, while creating the conditions for the introduction of transit in the long term.
- There are already local examples of intensification.

Challenges

- Existing commercial leases may prevent redevelopment in the short- and medium-term.
- Businesses may be displaced.
- Shift away from the areas' existing core function which is to provide a location for large commercial spaces that do not fit within the downtown areas.
- Large parcels may also require additional applications, such as subdivision and part lot control, to ready development blocks.
- Would require an update to the Official Plan policies.



Focus Area 2: Highway Commercial Designations – Port Elgin
Data source: Town of Saugeen Shores.



Focus Area 2: Highway Commercial Designations – Southampton
Data source: Town of Saugeen Shores.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES SYSTEM STUDY



Overview

The Housing Opportunities System Study aims to:

- Evaluate how the housing system is currently functioning through an assessment of demand and supply
- Understand the role of the regulatory context in supply
- Identify the difference a CPPS could make in addressing housing need

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Demand

Demand for housing in Saugeen Shores is characterized by:

- Strong population growth
- Strong economy – Bruce Power, vacation destination, retirement destination
- Continued need for family-sized dwellings and age-friendly, accessible options including elevator-served apartments, bungalow/ground-oriented formats in walkable communities.
- Unmet demand for housing that supports both older adults seeking independence and younger adults seeking to establish their first homes.

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Supply

Supply of housing in Saugeen Shores is characterized by:

- Housing production is responding unevenly
- The stock remains predominantly single-detached and owner-dominant, but the composition is gradually diversifying, as row/semi and apartment forms have entered the market.
- Saugeen Shores has many large, ground-oriented homes but comparatively few smaller units near services for singles, couples, and downsizers.
- Priority should be given to the production of purpose-built rental and small multi-unit forms in serviced locations in order to diversify housing choice to service new household formation and the objectives of retirees and downsizers.

Planning Framework - What needs to be tweaked?

- Recent changes to allow Additional Residential Units in neighbourhoods provide a path forward for gentle intensification in those areas.
- Greenfield development largely features singles, but with some notable developments of higher density forms.
- Core Commercial and Highway Commercial areas present opportunities for intensification, but existing planning framework mean that these are undertaken as one-offs through amendments rather than through clear signaling by planning policy and regulations.
- The CPPS should focus on intensification opportunities that diversify the housing stock: smaller unit, rental, multi-unit buildings.

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CPPS AREAS OF FOCUS



Selecting Areas of Focus

Core Commercial

- Core Commercial designation within Port Elgin and Southampton identified as the initial focus of the CPPS.
- This designation covers Saugeen Shores' two traditional downtowns.
- Current Official Plan policies are in alignment with mixed use intensification in these areas.
- The CPPS could more clearly outline the scope of change in these areas and simplify the development approval process.

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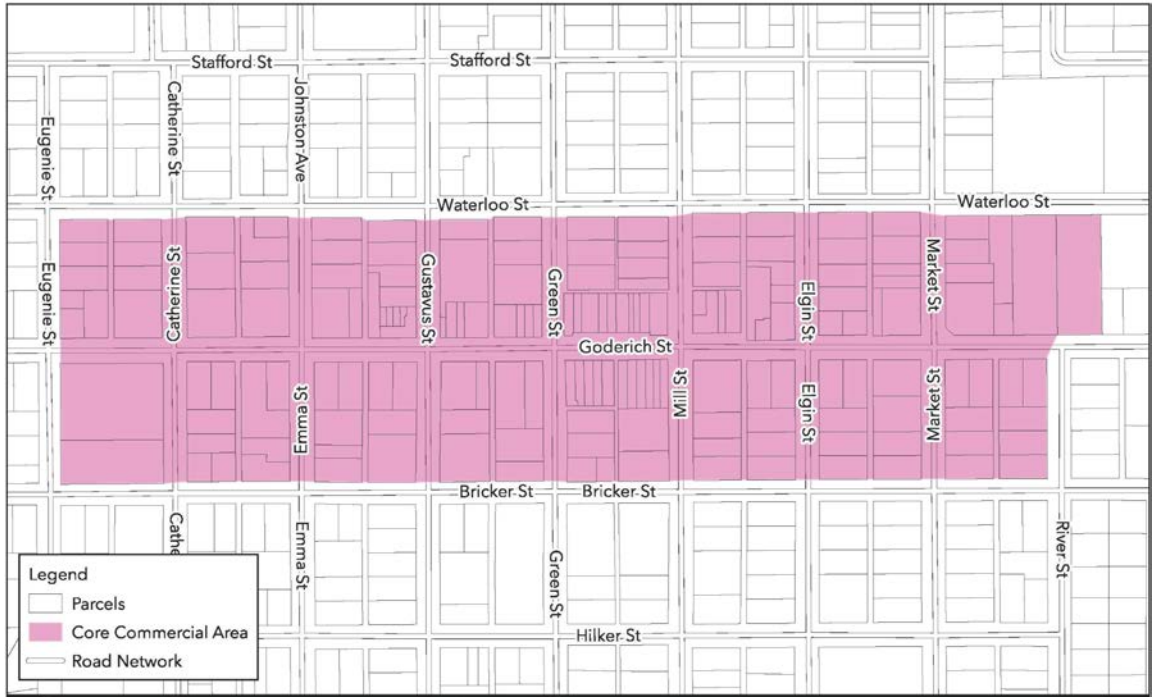
Highway Commercial

- Highway Commercial designation also holds great potential as an intensification area.
- However, it was determined that before the Highway Commercial areas are brought into the CPPS, Official Plan policies should be reviewed to better establish an overall vision for these areas as mixed use, rather than the primarily commercial uses envisaged in the current policies.
- Potential to include these areas in the CPPS as a 2nd phase after an evaluation of the 1st phase is done.

Recommended Areas of Focus

The areas recommended to be the focus of the CPPS are the Core Commercial Areas of Port Elgin and Southampton, the Town's traditional downtowns. The areas are shown in pink below.

Port Elgin



Southampton

