Nodes & Corridors Study and Community Planning Permitting System (CPPS)

Phase 2 What We Heard Report

July 2025



Saugeen Shores

Image source: GPA

OVERVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

The Town of Saugeen Shores is experiencing sustained population growth and increasing pressure for a greater mix of housing options. In response, the Town is undertaking a Nodes and Corridors Study and preparing a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS). This builds on a 2022 feasibility study that recommended CPPS as a tool to streamline planning approvals and support housing diversity. The work is being led by Gladki Planning Associates, in collaboration with Hertel Planning.

The CPPS will replace the current zoning by-law and site plan approval process within designated areas. It is expected to consolidate various planning permissions into a single, streamlined system—reducing delays and enabling development that aligns with the Town's vision for inclusive and sustainable growth. The Nodes and Corridors Study supports this effort by identifying where such growth can most appropriately occur.

The goal of the initiative is to:

- **Increase housing supply** and variety and **improve housing affordability** in Saugeen Shores.
- A Nodes and Corridors Study will identify areas that are suitable for **intensification** and **higher density forms of housing**.
- A Community Planning Permit System will be implemented in those areas to better **guide development** and **streamline the development application process.**

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This document captures and analyzes the feedback received during Phase 2 of the public engagement process for the Nodes and Corridors Study and Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) in the Town of Saugeen Shores. It brings together insights from the in-person public meeting held on June 26, 2025, as well as responses submitted through the Town's online engagement platform between June 30 and July 10, 2025.

This report serves to:

- Document what was shared, discussed, and recommended by community members;
- Identify key themes, recurring concerns, and actionable ideas;
- Provide a foundation for refining draft planning directions and the CPPS framework;
- Inform the preparation of updated materials for Phase 3 engagement;
- Ensure transparency and accountability as the Town moves toward implementation.

PROJECT TIMELINE

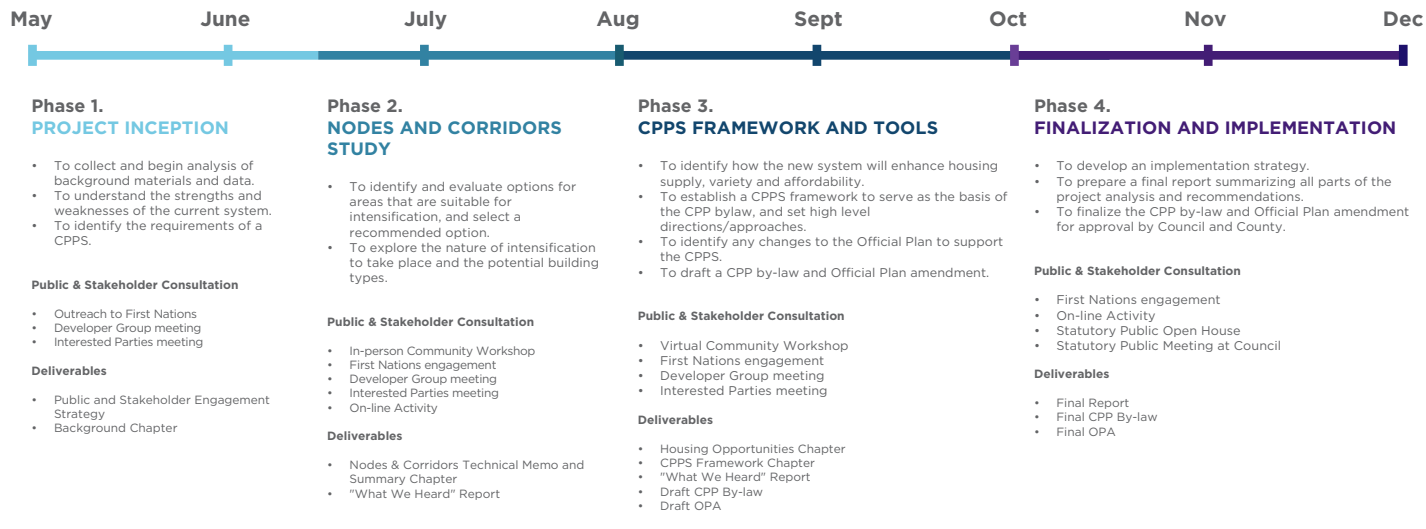
Spanning from May to December 2025, the project is structured into four distinct phases, each with clearly defined objectives, consultation components, and deliverables. This phasing ensures a transparent and iterative process that integrates community feedback into key milestones and policy recommendations.

Phase 1: Project Inception (May – June 2025)
This phase focused on launching the study by analyzing the existing planning framework, identifying opportunities and challenges with current approval processes, setting the foundation for introducing a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) and consulting the Town to align the expectations and confirming the priority areas. Initial outreach to First Nations, developers, and key stakeholders helped inform the engagement strategy and contextual background.

Phase 2: Nodes and Corridors Study (Mid June – August 2025)
The second phase explored potential areas for growth through a nodes and corridors lens and introduced example building types to support intensification. Public engagement included an in-person community meeting and an online activity, allowing residents to provide input on focus areas, built form, and ongoing housing challenges.

Phase 3: CPPS Framework and Tools (August – October 2025)
In this upcoming phase, the project will shift toward policy and implementation, developing the CPPS framework and preparing draft planning tools such as the CPPS by-law and required Official Plan Amendment. Engagement will continue with the community, stakeholders, and Indigenous partners to test and refine the proposed framework.

Phase 4: Finalization and Implementation (October – December 2025)
The final phase will consolidate all findings and feedback into a complete set of deliverables, including a Final Report, CPP By-law, and Official Plan Amendment. These will be presented through formal public meetings and submitted for Council and County approval, marking the completion of the study and readiness for implementation.



IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

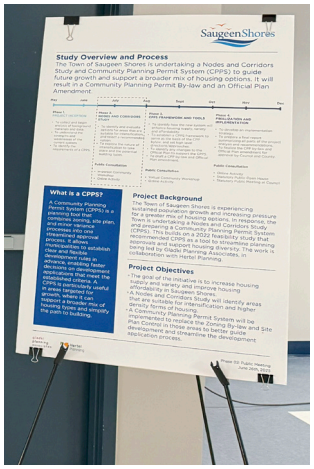


Figure 1: Boards containing information about the project, the details about the public meeting as well as the project timeline.



Figure 2: Community members viewing the information boards at the public meeting.



Figure 3: The team of GPA and Hertel facilitating the round table discussion during the public meeting.

As part of **Phase 2** of the study, an in-person community meeting was held on **Thursday, June 26, 2025,** from **6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Rotary Hall, 600 Tomlinson Drive, Port Elgin**. The event was designed to share information about the **Nodes & Corridors Study** and the proposed **Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)**, and to gather local insight on housing needs, growth areas, and planning challenges.

The meeting format included **a plenary presentation** and **facilitated roundtable discussions** supported by introductory boards of the project placed at the venue. Staff from the Town and the consulting team from GPA and Hertel were on site to assist with logistics, facilitate conversations, and document participant feedback. The meeting space was arranged to promote informal conversation and active participation.

The evening began with a presentation that introduced the purpose of the study, outlined what a CPPS is, and described how it could support local housing needs by simplifying the development approval process. Following the presentation, attendees participated in a roundtable discussion centered on **four key questions**:

- **Have we accurately captured the housing challenges facing Saugeen Shores?**
- **Do you have feedback on the focus areas or potential building types?**
- **Do you have any questions about the study's purpose or process?**
- **Do you have questions or concerns about what a CPPS is?**

The meeting concluded with a short presentation on next steps in the project process. Staff also collected all written feedback forms and participant registration sheets. Photos were taken throughout the session to document the event and to support future communication materials.

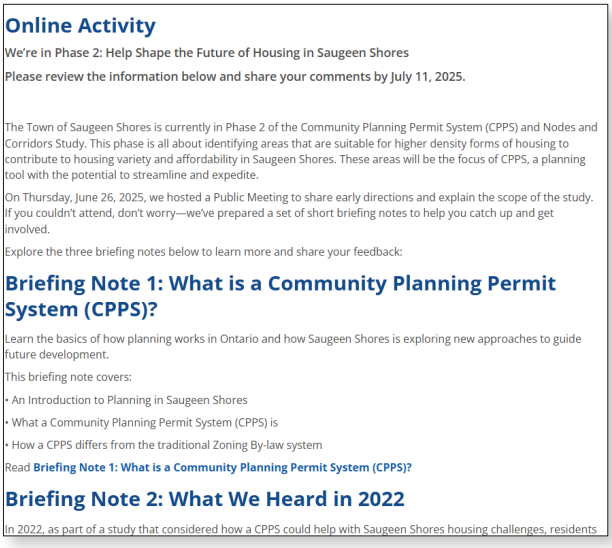
While attendance was **limited (9 participants)**, the event provided **rich qualitative insights and thoughtful reflections** from participants with lived, professional, and historical perspectives on planning and housing in Saugeen Shores.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

To complement in-person engagement, the Town launched an online activity through the Engage Saugeen Shores platform. Residents were invited to review three interactive Briefing Notes covering:

1. **What is a CPPS:** This note introduced the Community Planning Permit System, explaining its purpose, how it differs from traditional zoning and site plan control, and what it could mean for development approvals in Saugeen Shores.
2. **What we heard in 2022:** This note summarized the findings from a previous study completed in 2022 which considered the suitability of a CPPS to address housing challenges. The study identified concerns around housing affordability, supply gaps across the housing spectrum, and perceived disconnects between different wards and Council on housing priorities. The community was asked whether these themes still resonated in the current context.
3. **Areas and Typology:** This note outlined potential areas in Port Elgin that could serve as Focus Areas for implementing the CPPS, based on policy frameworks, built form analysis, and land use considerations. It also introduced illustrative examples of building types that could be enabled in these areas, such as live-work townhouses, low-rise apartments, and mid-rise mixed-use developments.

Briefing note 2 and 3 included an open-ended question to encourage thoughtful feedback. The activity was designed for self-guided participation, allowing residents to learn about the project and respond in their own words. A total of 6 written comments by 3 community members were submitted through the platform's embedded form. These responses provided valuable insight on housing affordability, development priorities, and the suitability of intensification areas, and were reviewed alongside input from the in-person meeting to inform next steps.



Online Activity

We're in Phase 2: Help Shape the Future of Housing in Saugeen Shores

Please review the information below and share your comments by July 11, 2025.

The Town of Saugeen Shores is currently in Phase 2 of the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) and Nodes and Corridors Study. This phase is all about identifying areas that are suitable for higher density forms of housing to contribute to housing variety and affordability in Saugeen Shores. These areas will be the focus of CPPS, a planning tool with the potential to streamline and expedite.

On Thursday, June 26, 2025, we hosted a Public Meeting to share early directions and explain the scope of the study. If you couldn't attend, don't worry—we've prepared a set of short briefing notes to help you catch up and get involved.

Explore the three briefing notes below to learn more and share your feedback:

Briefing Note 1: What is a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)?

Learn the basics of how planning works in Ontario and how Saugeen Shores is exploring new approaches to guide future development.

This briefing note covers:

- An Introduction to Planning in Saugeen Shores
- What a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) is
- How a CPPS differs from the traditional Zoning By-law system

Read **Briefing Note 1: What is a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)?**

Briefing Note 2: What We Heard in 2022

In 2022, as part of a study that considered how a CPPS could help with Saugeen Shores housing challenges, residents

Figure 4: Snapshot of the Online activity

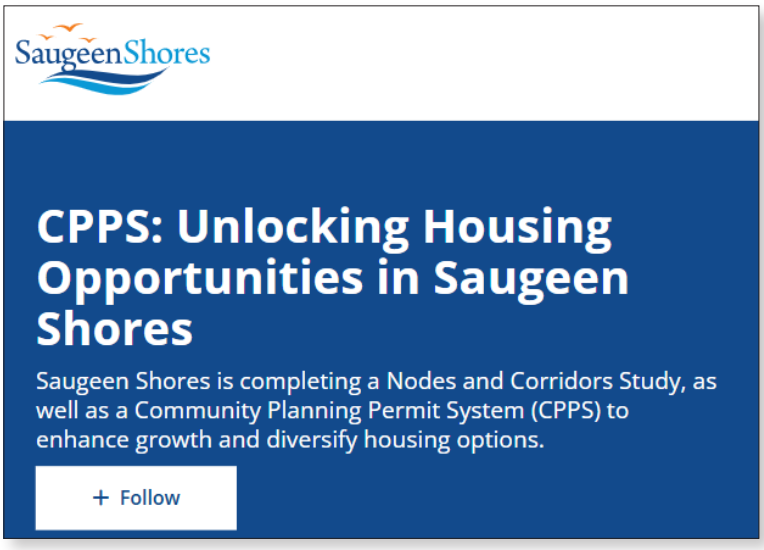


Figure 5: Project Webpage

WHAT WE HEARD: IN-PERSON

PLANNING APPROVALS AND JURISDICTIONAL CLARITY

Participants raised questions about how a Community Planning Permit System would interact with the existing planning responsibilities of the Town and the County. The current arrangement where zoning by-law amendments are processed by the County and site plan control is managed by the Town, was identified as a source of complexity. It was noted that in some cases, applications require approvals from both levels. The CPPS was seen as a potential tool to streamline approvals, but further clarity on roles and coordination would be necessary.

CHALLENGES WITH ACTIVE AND PAST PROJECTS IN FOCUS AREAS

To contextualize the challenges of implementation, several existing or proposed projects in the Town's intensification focus areas were referenced. These included the Port Elgin Cinema redevelopment, underground parking projects such as the Patel application and other proposals near 6th Street and Highway 21, as well as two mixed-use developments near Maple Square Mall. Adaptive reuse projects on Waterloo and Johnson Streets were also noted. These examples highlighted the challenges faced by applicants in navigating approvals and feasibility, particularly in constrained areas like the commercial core.

ZONING CONSTRAINTS AND REGULATORY BARRIERS

Zoning regulations were identified as a barrier to intensification through in-fill and small-scale development. One participant shared a specific example where a detached accessory residential unit (ARU) could be built as close as four feet to a rear lot line, while a home addition was required to maintain a 14-foot setback. This discrepancy was attributed to zoning regulations intended for sheds and garages. The complexity and cost of complying with current regulations makes it more viable to pursue new greenfield construction than to add onto existing structures. As summarized by one participant,

"Zoning and the complexity of the development approval process is a barrier — it adds to the costs and the hurdles."

AFFORDABILITY AND HOUSING MARKET PRESSURES

Participants highlighted the growing affordability gap in the local housing market. The high cost of land and construction—estimated between $650,000 and $800,000 per unit—was cited as a major obstacle to homeownership. As a result, many residents are pushed into the rental market, but rents are also prohibitively high, making it difficult for families to save for future ownership. This cycle of cost and inaccessibility has contributed to the out-migration of young people, who are increasingly relocating in search of more affordable options. There was also acknowledgement of a growing trend toward multi-generational living in Saugeen Shores. Although new 3-4 bedroom apartments were identified as a positive step, participants emphasized that the broader housing outlook remains grim and that deeper solutions are needed.

PRESSURES FROM TEMPORARY AND SEASONAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

It was noted that housing demand is likely to intensify further with planned expansion of the Bruce Power facility, which will bring an influx of temporary workers. While Bruce Power has contributed to housing initiatives in the past, it was acknowledged that this support has not been at a scale necessary to meet future demand. Seasonal tourism workers were also mentioned as facing similar housing challenges. The impact of short-term rentals on housing supply was discussed. Participants pointed out that the Town has not yet addressed this through licensing or taxation policies, despite the fact that short-term accommodations continue to play a significant role in the local tourism economy. The move toward short-term accommodation has seen the closure of motels and hotels that previously met these needs.

SUPPORT FOR MIXED-USE AND GENTLE DENSITY

Participants expressed general support for mixed-use development, especially in the commercial core, with retail at grade and residential above. There was a recognition that more residents would support intensification if new development "looked like the rest of the neighbourhood." However, heritage character was acknowledged as difficult to define, and participants emphasized that compatibility in scale and form was essential. Parking was flagged as a continuing necessity, with the observation that most households still require two vehicles to support two incomes. There was interest in exploring different approaches to density, including whether adding another storey to existing buildings was feasible or if there were simpler ways to increase housing stock. At the same time, concerns were raised—particularly from developers—about the cost and difficulty of delivering commercial space, with housing seen as a more immediate and cost-effective option.

LAND ASSEMBLY AND DEVELOPMENT READINESS

The challenge of land assembly was highlighted as a key issue in enabling redevelopment. It was noted that Saugeen Shores does not have a strong tradition of assembling land for development, and most lots remain under fragmented ownership. As such, even where policies encourage intensification, the lack of larger, consolidated parcels presents a significant barrier. One participant observed,

"People think there's lots of vacant land, but there really isn't — you have to make the best use of what we've got."

EXPANDING DEVELOPMENT BEYOND THE CORE

While participants agreed with the general direction of the study, there was a perception that areas outside the core, particularly Highway Commercial corridors, may offer more practical intensification opportunities than the historic downtown. One suggestion included extending the commercial core into Office Residential areas. Others noted that laneways in adjacent areas such as Southampton could be explored as an opportunity for additional residential units. Importantly, there was a call to ensure that housing affordability is framed as a shared concern across communities, not just in Port Elgin.

CONSULTATION WITH SAUGEEN OJIBWAY NATION

Concerns were raised about how the CPPS could affect engagement with Indigenous communities, particularly the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. With CPPS potentially reducing notice and appeal requirements, thought needs to be paid as to how meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities can be incorporated into the process, to address core concerns and issues in an efficient manner.

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH GAPS

Several participants expressed concern about the limited awareness and low attendance at both the developer and public meetings. One noted that the only place they saw the meeting advertised was in a Chamber of Commerce newsletter. The Town's social media feeds were described as ineffective. It was suggested that the Town develop a targeted outreach list for developers and other key stakeholders and invest in more proactive and direct forms of communication.

WHAT WE HEARD: ONLINE

BRIEFING NOTE 2 – WHAT WE HEARD (2022 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY)

Participants were asked whether the priorities outlined in the original 2022 study remained valid in the current context. Responses were mixed in tone but generally supportive of the overall direction.

1. One respondent expressed concern that the process had been under way for several years with little visible progress. They called for the Town to move from analysis to action, suggesting some fatigue with planning exercises that do not lead to implementation. This feedback points to the need for the Town to demonstrate tangible outcomes from the process, including built examples and clearer timelines.
2. Another respondent voiced concerns about the pace of infill development. While acknowledging the importance of affordability, they cautioned that in-filling green spaces or increasing density in established neighbourhoods could erode the very character that draws people to Saugeen Shores.
3. A third participant offered a balanced view, noting the importance of affordable housing while advocating for small-scale interventions that integrate it with existing neighbourhoods. This comment supports the principle of gentle density and suggests that scale, form, and design will be critical in securing community buy-in.

BRIEFING NOTE 3 – AREAS AND TYPOLOGIES

Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on the proposed intensification nodes and types of housing that should be encouraged.

1. One comment emphasized the need for affordable rental housing, identifying the Highway Commercial Area and town laneways as promising locations. They noted that with appropriate incentives for secondary suites, these areas could help increase rental supply beyond the limited potential of the downtown core.
2. Second supported intensification in the downtown to enhance vibrancy, but expressed concern about in-filling around existing homes and green spaces, citing potential negative impacts on property values.
3. Third response recommended that higher-density and attainable housing be focused near essential services, such as grocery stores - particularly in the north and south ends of town. This would benefit seniors and people with disabilities who may lack access to transit. They also emphasized the need for a dedicated senior living community and programs to reduce isolation among older adults.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

There is a strong appetite for housing diversity,
but it must be delivered in a way that protects neighbourhood character and offers practical solutions to affordability challenges.

Zoning reform would be beneficial,
updating regulations that discourage small-scale intensification.

The CPPS is broadly supported,
but its structure, process, and implications must be clearly explained. Residents want transparency and predictability.

Affordability remains the core issue,
with escalating land and construction costs driving demand for new models of ownership and rental.

Community outreach must evolve,
using more direct and proactive methods to reach underrepresented groups.

Cultural and Indigenous consultation must be preserved and strengthened,
regardless of process streamlining.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged,
but commercial space requirements must reflect market realities, with flexibility to ensure viability.



Next Steps

In response to the feedback received, the project team will:

- Refine public messaging to improve clarity about the CPPS process.
- Conduct one on one consultations with local builders and developers.
- Consider feedback in the drafting of the Nodes and Corridors Study and CPP By-law regulations.
- Plan the next round of public engagement for Fall 2025 to review the proposed CPPS framework, including geographic area of focus and regulations.
- Continue to engage with Indigenous partners to ensure respectful, meaningful consultation.
- Make adjustments where possible to encourage greater public input.



Image source: GPA

APPENDIX - A

VERBATIM COMMENTS FROM THE ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Read Briefing Note 2 and tell us: Does this still reflect your opinions and priorities today?	We want to know your thoughts! Read Briefing Note 3 and let us know what you think about the areas and types of housing that could be promoted there.
This initiative has been going on for 3-4 years. While it has potential, I am concerned that the amount of effort and money spent on getting it in place outways the potential benefit. I attended the public session on June 26, 2025. The number of consultants (I counted 7) outnumbered the members of the public that attended. I am concerned about the cost of consultants for these initiatives. I am aware that the Town of Innisfil has a CPPS in place for it's shore communities. Although it is a good document, it is over 100 pages long, and I expect this took a lot of time and money to prepare. I would ask that the Town of Saugeen Shores reach out to other municipalities to see what their experiences were and incorporate any lessons learned. I am very much in favour of expanding our housing, making it more expeditious and less expensive to get in place. We need to get the process right, but in my opinion these initiatives are taking far too long to implement.	The Town of Saugeen Shores should promote rental accommodations - particularly affordable ones. I see limited potential in the core commercial area, but more potential in the highway commercial area. Another area I see as having potential are the laneways in town. Although lands abutting the laneway are privately owned, if there could be incentives to build secondary suites on these lands, that could be a benefit to increasing the supply of rental units in town.
I'm worried we're moving too fast to in-fill green spaces and that we'll lose the natural beauty of Saugeen Shores. To me the in-fill is disruptive to existing home owners and it would be more fair to everyone to continue to expand outward rather than inward. I think our efforts our better spent on having more diverse accommodations in our outward expansion as it seems to me the growth of Port Elgin to the North and South are all large homes approaching or at $1M	The downtown makes sense to enhance the vibrancy of the town. I'm worried about in-fill around existing homes and green spaces reducing property values which people rely on for their savings.

Read Briefing Note 2 and tell us: Does this still reflect your opinions and priorities today?	We want to know your thoughts! Read Briefing Note 3 and let us know what you think about the areas and types of housing that could be promoted there.
While I agree affordable and attainable housing is an issue in the area this region is a unique “bubble” in comparison to other towns/cities in province to compare against. Yes there is a greater divide in household incomes as a result of hydro jobs in the area. However as the town grows and expands that will naturally balance out when majority of population is not solely employed by hydro jobs. There needs to be a means to attract other businesses outside of just Bruce Power and its primary vendors. Additionally, the cost of living is not only a problem here but wider spread and while there needs to be bridging strategies it is on higher levels of government to fix the root causes (inflation, population growth, drug availability, mental health education and care etc)	Areas located closed to services (stores) should be where high density low income and attainable housing is developed. Not using up patches of green spaces in existing communities that are valued by existing community members. Many of those who qualify for low income/attainable housing may or may not have a vehicle so being able to walk to a grocery store (including in our winters) is important. Especially for those with disabilities or seniors who may not have transit means. The north end near food basics or across from Walmart in south is an ideal location. No impact of high density apartments on existing neighbours and located suitably to access services (groceries). Consideration should also be made to attract a senior living community to the area. There are a large number of seniors in the area but lack of programs to bring them together and meet others.



Image source: GPA