



## Essex County Council Special Meeting Agenda

**Date:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023  
**Time:** 5:00 PM  
**Location:** Council Chambers, 2nd Floor  
360 Fairview Avenue West  
Essex, Ontario N8M 1Y6  
<https://video.isilive.ca/countyofessex/live.html>

Official Plan Review (2022-2052) - One Land, One Climate, One Future, Together

### Pages

1. **Recording of Attendance**
2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**
3. **Official Plan Review (2022-2052) - One Land, One Climate, One Future, Together**  
**Purpose:** Essex County Council will hold a statutory public meeting, pursuant to Section 26(3) of the Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990, as amended, for the purposes of discussing the proposed new Official Plan.
4. **Introductory Remarks**  
Opening remarks and introductions from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services, Larry Silani, Official Plan Planning Advisor, Miller Silani, Planning Consultants, Mary-Lou Tanner, Principal Planner, NPG Planning Solutions, and Heather Sewell, Manager of Planning, NPG Planning Solutions
5. **Delegations and Presentations**
  - 5.1 **Judy Robson, Resident**  
Judy Robson to make a presentation regarding Section 3 - Land Use Policies

**Recommendation:**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

That the delegation from Judy Robson, resident, be permitted to address County Council.

**5.2 John DeMarco, Resident**

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John Demarco to make a presentation regarding a Greenbelt for Essex County

**Recommendation:**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

That the delegation from John DeMarco, resident, be permitted to address County Council.

**5.3 Patricia McGorman, Resident**

Patricia McGorman, President, Canada South Land Trust, to make a presentation regarding Natural Land Preservation.

**Recommendation:**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

That the delegation from Patricia McGorman, resident, be permitted to address County Council.

**6. Communications**

**6.1 Correspondence**

There are no correspondence items for consideration.

**7. Reports and Questions**

**7.1 Statutory Public Meeting Section 26(3) of the Planning Act, County of Essex Official Plan Review**

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Report number 2023-0405-IPS-R07-RB, Statutory Public Meeting Section 26(3) of the Planning Act, County of Essex Official Plan Review, dated April 5, 2023, from Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services

**Recommendation:**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

That Essex County Council receive this report and information provided by NPG Planning Solutions regarding Phases 2 and 3 of the County’s Official Plan review.

**8. Adjournment**

# A GREENBELT... FOR ESSEX COUNTY?



John DeMarco  
March 22, 2023

# Better yet.... A Green NET





Even better...

A Green**R** Net

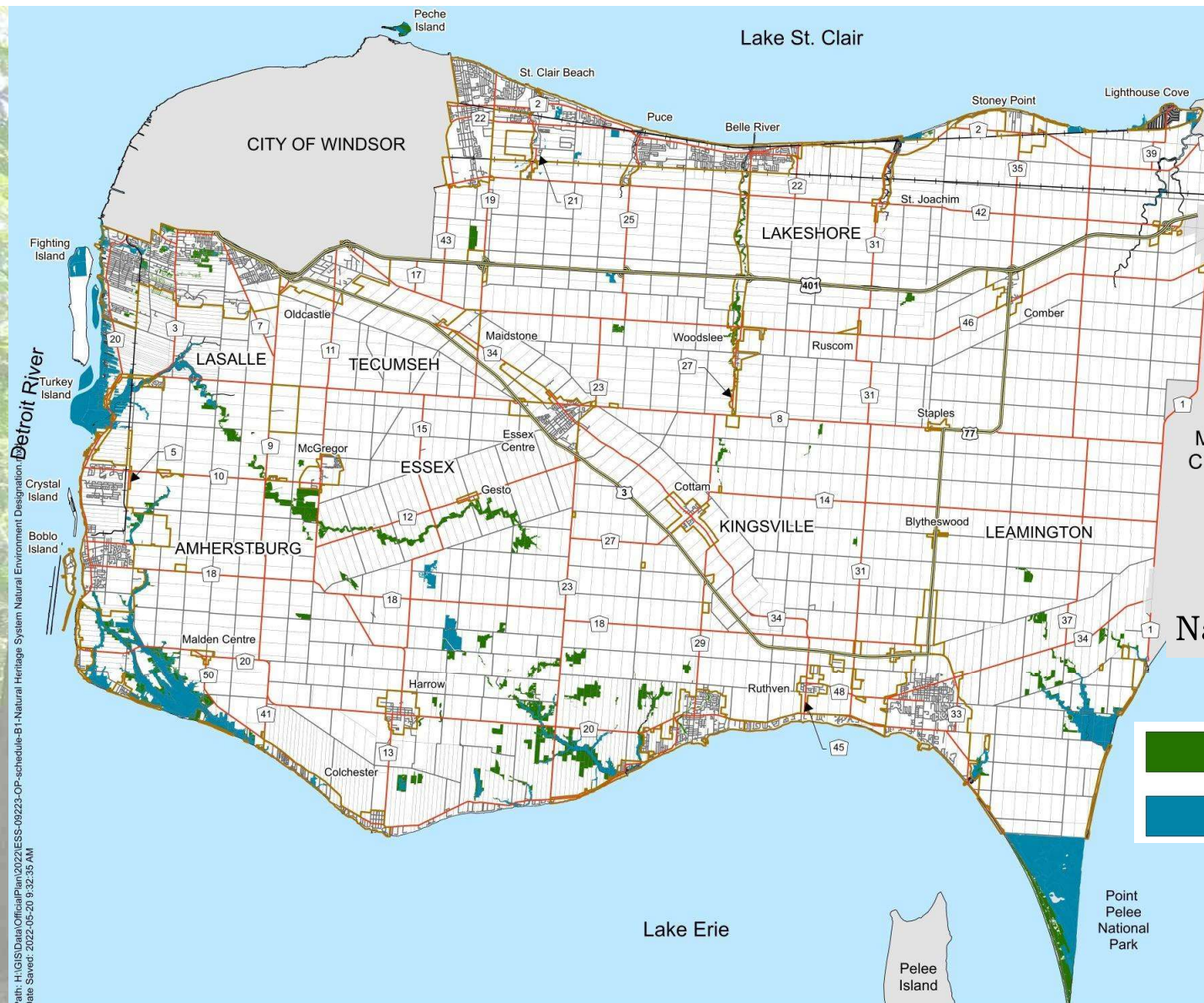
...where **R** is for **R**estoration



# What's in the 2014 Official Plan?

## “1.5 GOALS FOR A HEALTHY COUNTY

- a) To protect and enhance the natural heritage system by **increasing the amount of core natural area and natural buffers** where possible, particularly through **restoration** efforts.
- b) To **link wildlife habitat and natural heritage areas to each other**, human settlements to other human settlements and people to nature.”

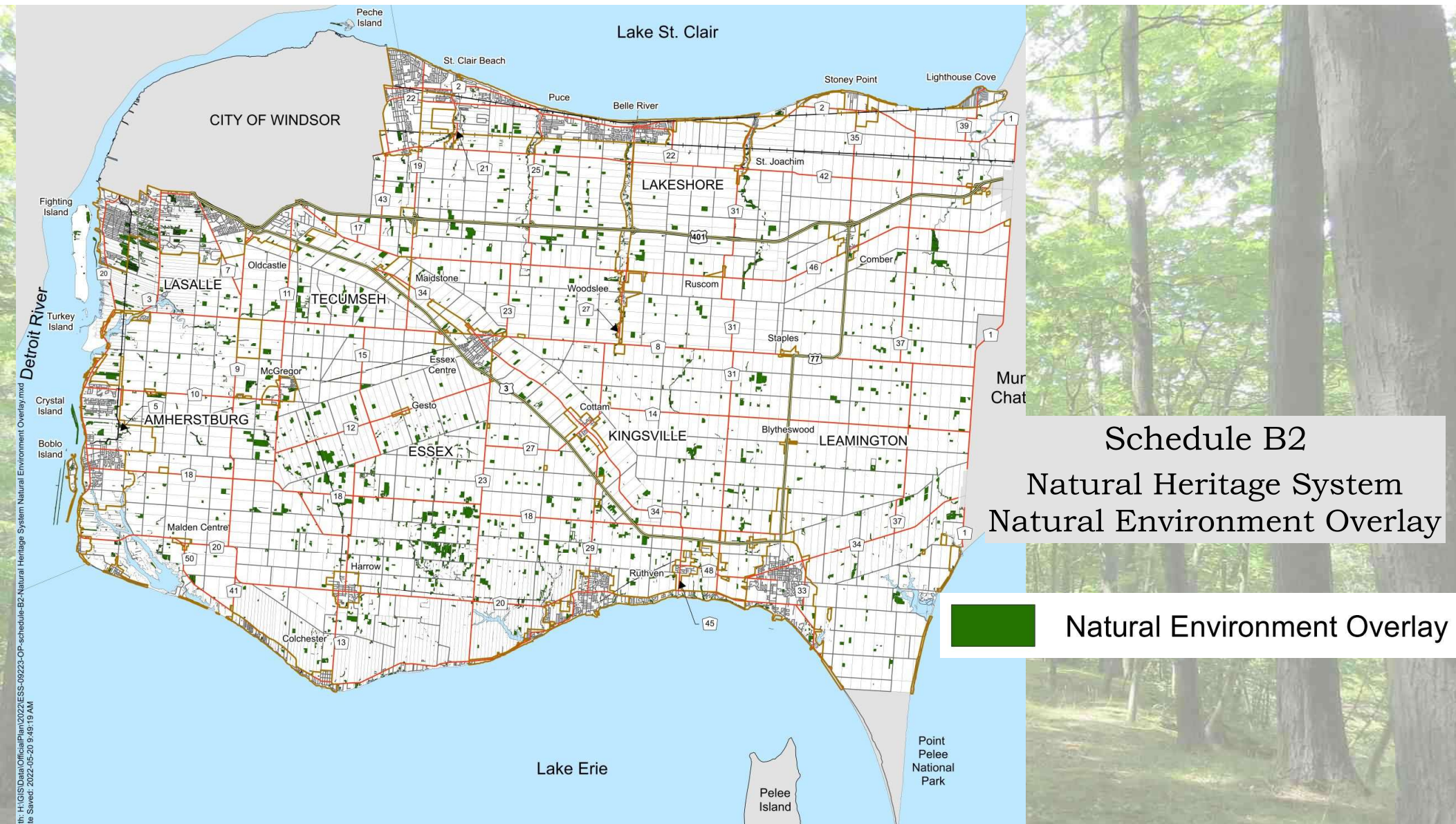


## Schedule B1

### Natural Heritage System

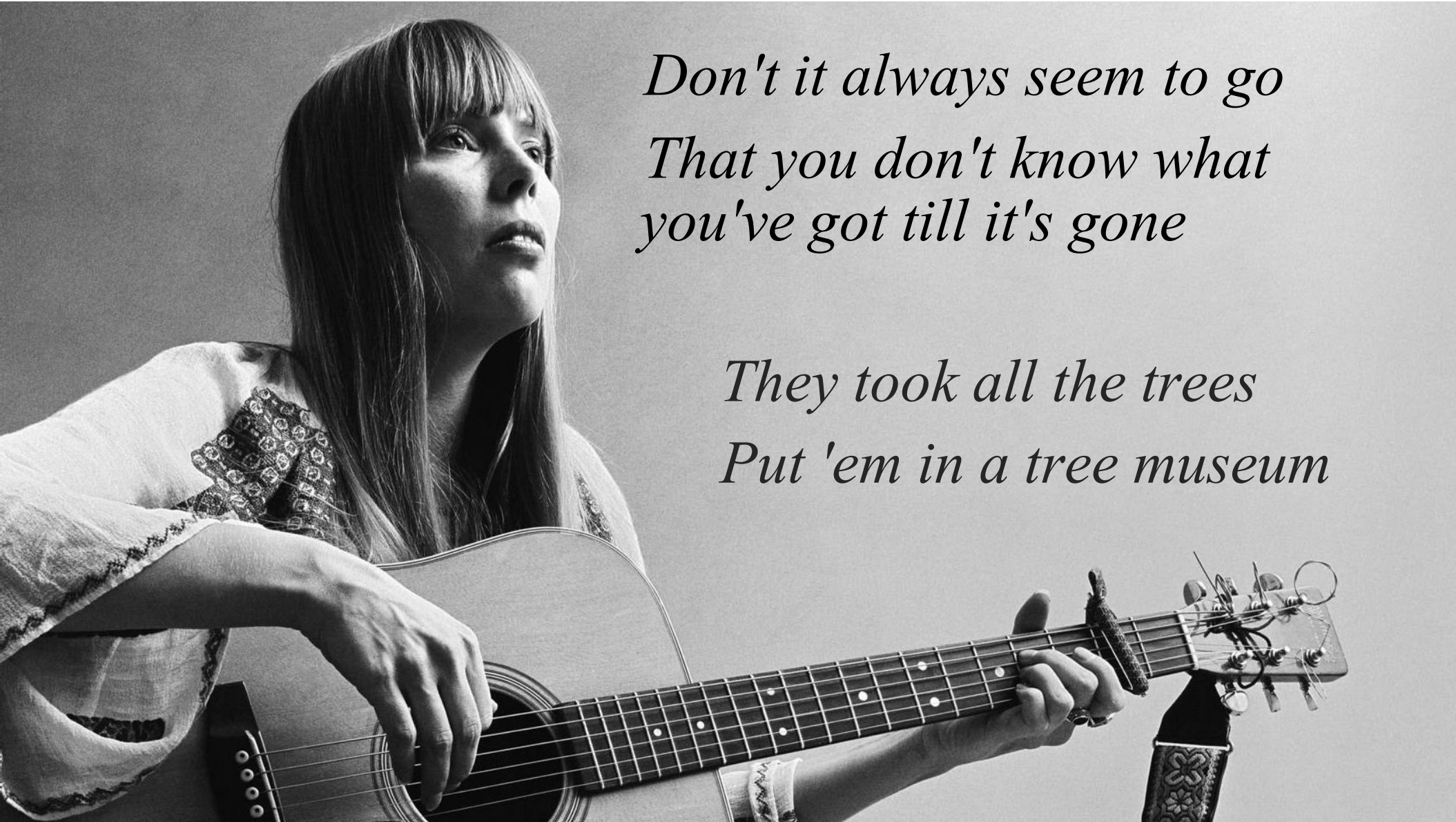
### Natural Environment Designation

- Significant Terrestrial Features
- Provincially Significant Wetlands



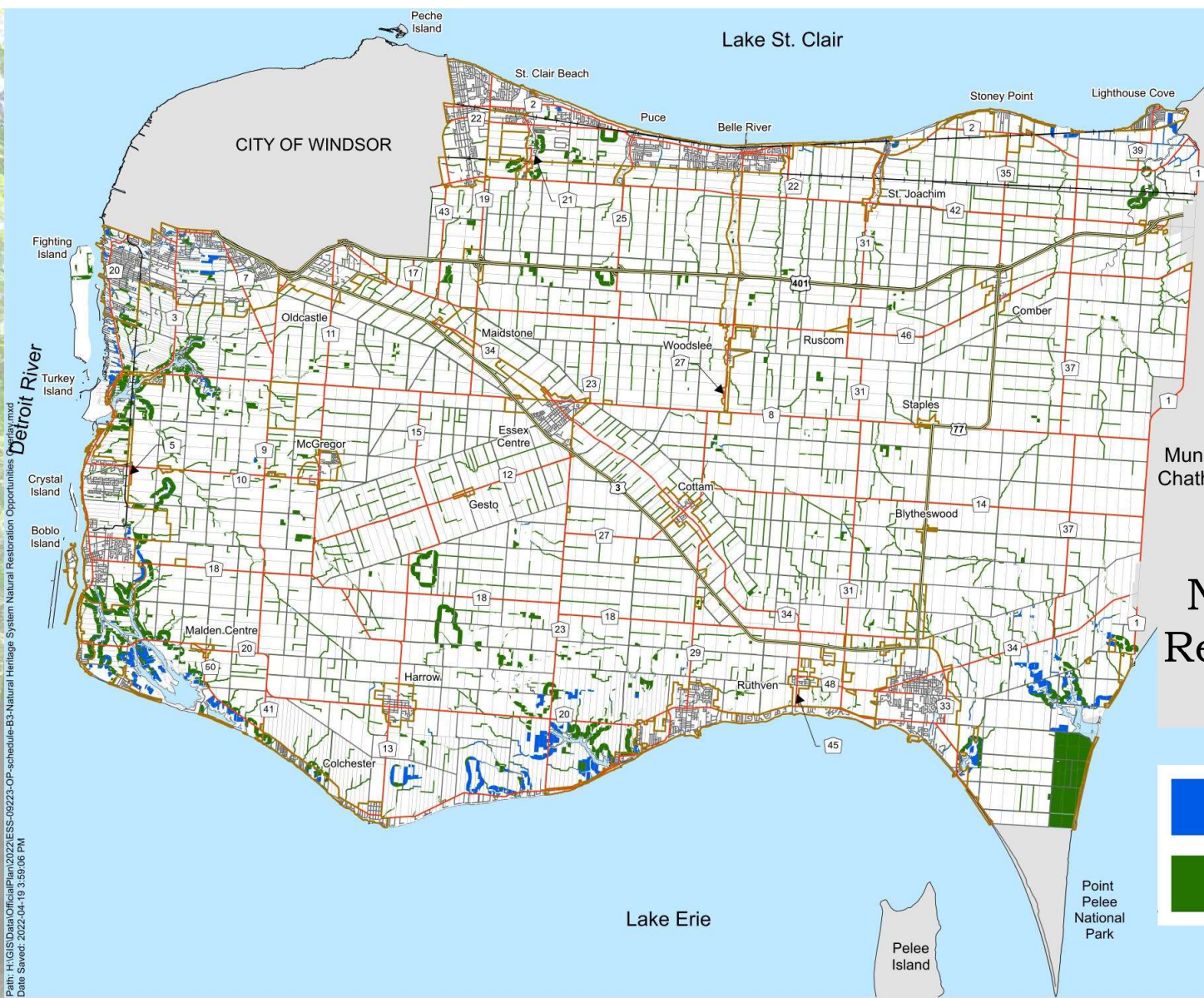


*Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what  
you've got till it's gone*

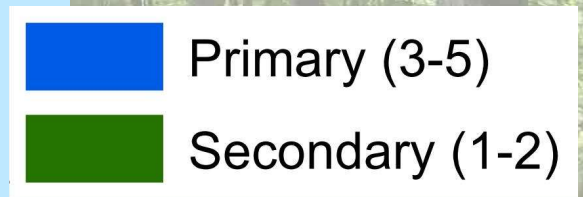


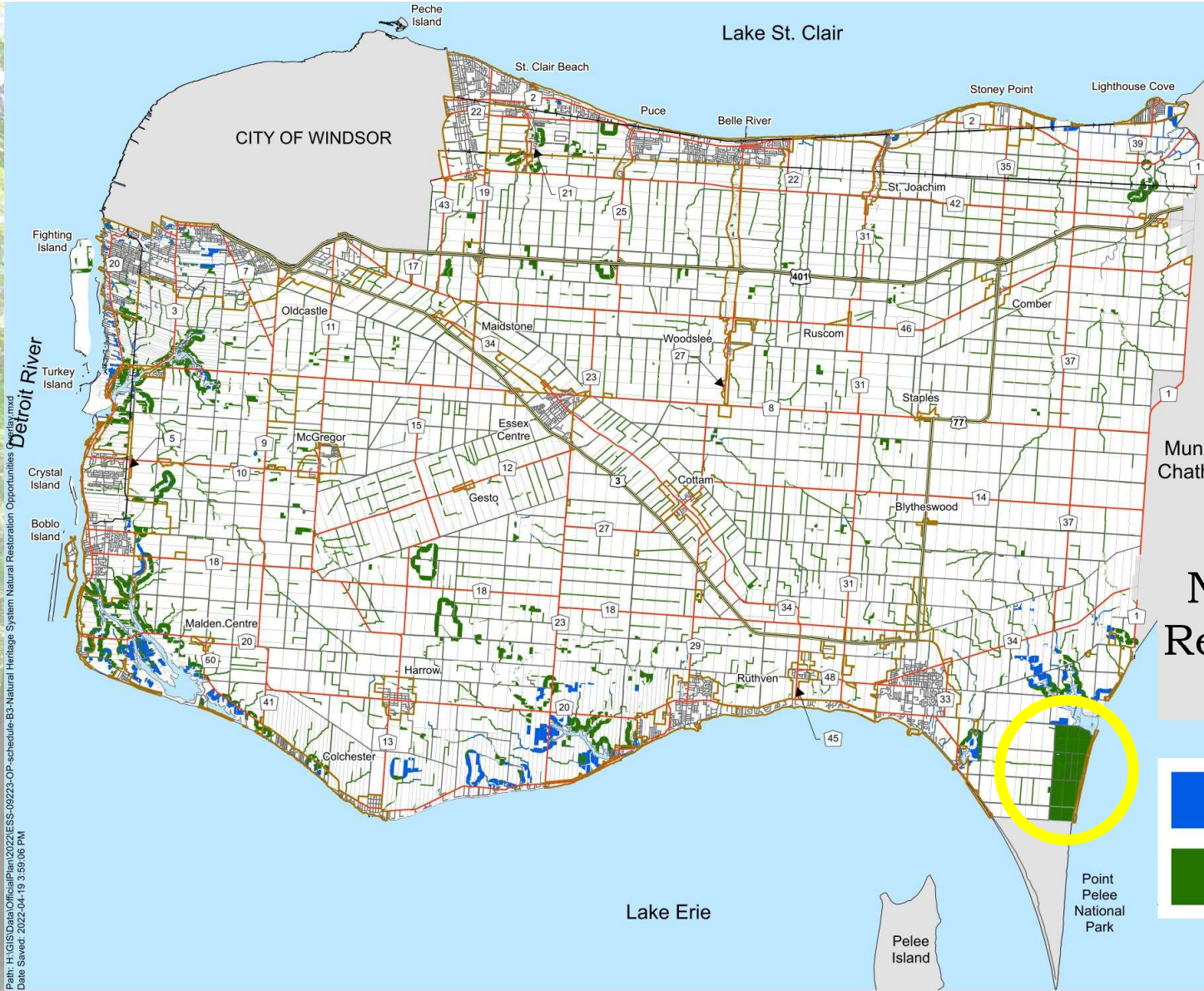
*Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what  
you've got till it's gone*

*They took all the trees  
Put 'em in a tree museum*



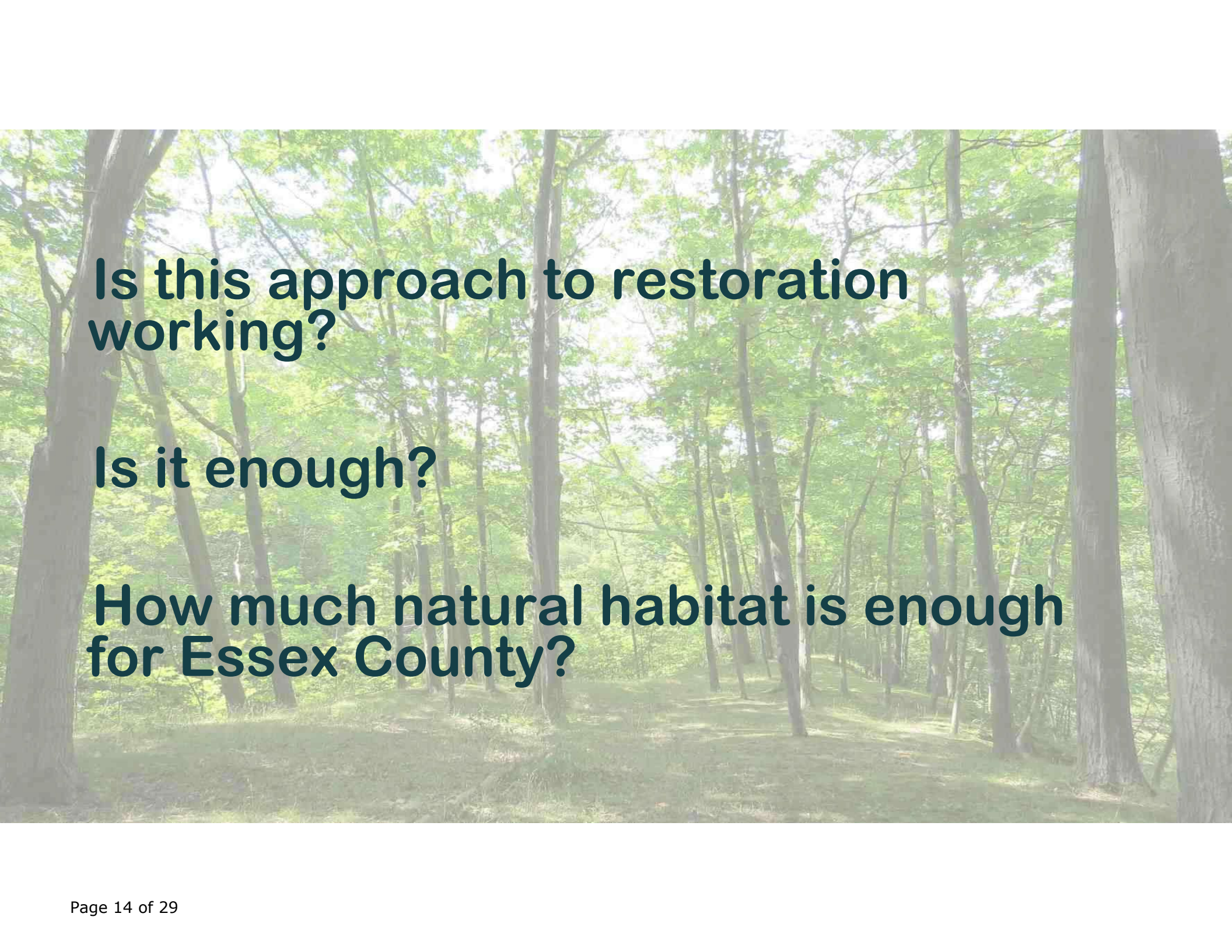
## Schedule B3 Natural Heritage System Restoration Opportunities Overlay





# Schedule B3 Natural Heritage System Restoration Opportunities Overlay

- Primary (3-5)
- Secondary (1-2)



**Is this approach to restoration  
working?**

**Is it enough?**

**How much natural habitat is enough  
for Essex County?**

**Fragmentation  
continues..**



**2017**



**2022**



# Official Plan Review

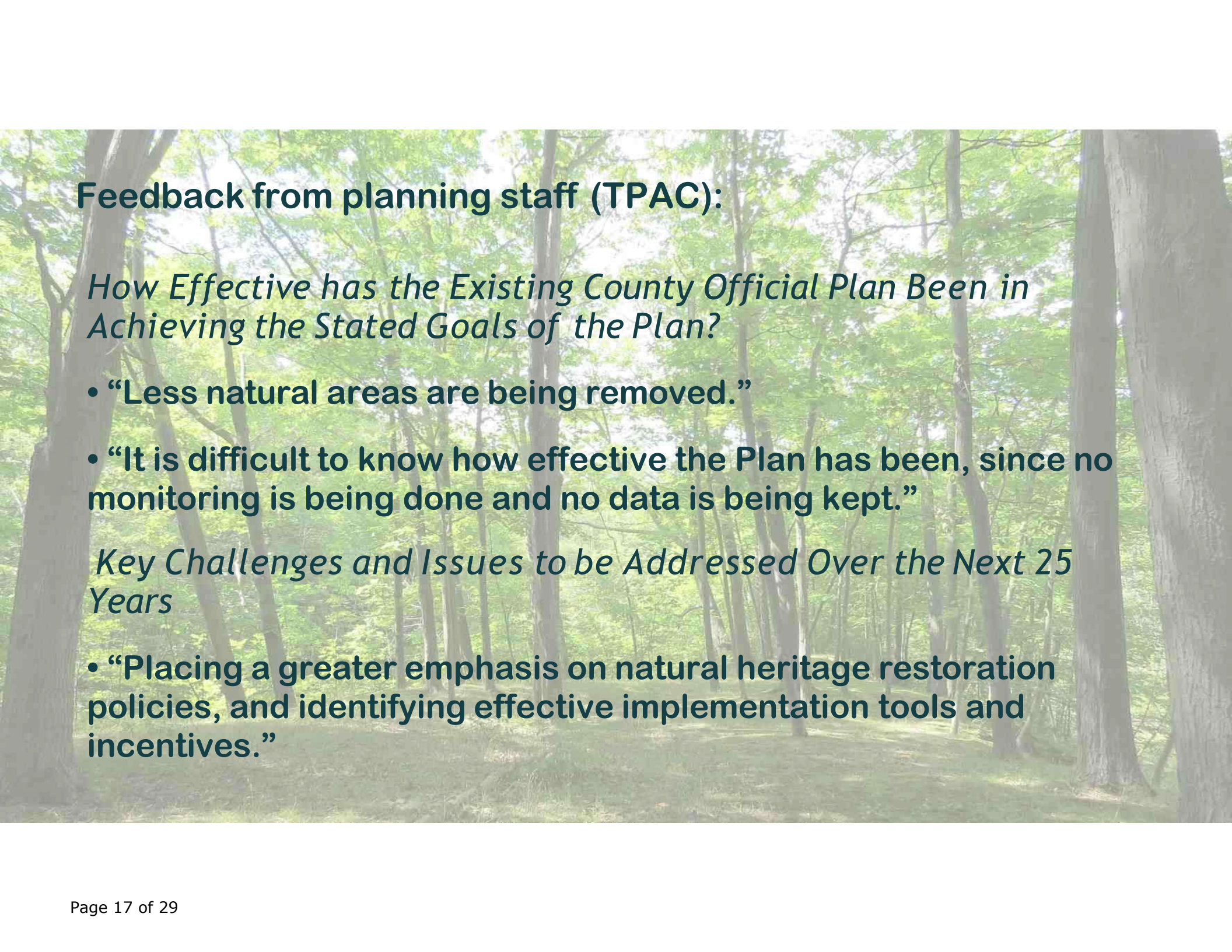
Phase 1 Background Report

One Land, One Climate, One Future, Together



**Feedback from Council members:**

**“The OP needs to do a better job on environmental matters, and to provide targets for natural heritage protection county-wide.”**



## Feedback from planning staff (TPAC):

*How Effective has the Existing County Official Plan Been in Achieving the Stated Goals of the Plan?*

- “Less natural areas are being removed.”
- “It is difficult to know how effective the Plan has been, since no monitoring is being done and no data is being kept.”

*Key Challenges and Issues to be Addressed Over the Next 25 Years*

- “Placing a greater emphasis on natural heritage restoration policies, and identifying effective implementation tools and incentives.”



# A GreenR Net for Essex County:

It starts with  
a vision of  
the future  
landscape

# How to get there?

## Initial thoughts...

Start by engaging with First Nations - could there be common ground to work together on a historic restoration process?

Take time – maybe 100 years? – to gradually restore land to natural vegetation under diverse arrangements.

In the interim, use all available tools and strategies to minimize irreversible land use changes in areas targeted for restoration: stricter regulations, persuasion, mobilizing a range of stakeholders...

# Suggested land uses in Green R Net

| ALLOWED USES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | NOT ALLOWED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Continuation of soil-based agriculture</p> <p>Tree plantations, including mixed use</p> <p>Conservation areas</p> <p>Naturalized wetlands to receive flood waters</p> <p>Game / hunting reserves</p> <p>Wind farms</p> <p>Existing homes and buildings remain</p> | <p>No conversion to incompatible land uses</p> <p>No greenhouses or other infrastructure-intensive agriculture</p> <p>No new housing or other built development: find a way to direct it elsewhere</p> <p>No new roads</p> <p><i>NB: Land designated for restoration would in most cases already be zoned agricultural.</i></p> |
| <p><b>Long term: gradually restore to native vegetation, under a range of ownership and management regimes.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



# Recommendations to Council

1. Adopt a resolution articulating a long-term vision and targets for habitat restoration.
2. Open a dialogue on shaping the future landscape with concerned First Nations, followed by other stakeholders.
3. Build a process into the Official Plan for developing a spatial restoration plan, strategy and actions during the next 5 years.
4. In the interim, strengthen regulations and use all available tools to avoid built development outside of settlement boundaries.

A photograph of a dense forest with tall, slender trees and vibrant green foliage. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. The text "THANK YOU!" is overlaid in the center in a bold, dark blue font.

**THANK YOU!**



## **Administrative Report**

### **Office of the Manager, Planning Services**

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Rebecca Belanger, MCIP, RPP  
Manager, Planning Services

**Date:** Wednesday, April 05, 2023

**Subject:** Statutory Public Meeting Section 26(3) of the Planning Act, County of Essex Official Plan Review

**Report #:** 2023-0405-IPS-R07-RB

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#### **Purpose**

To provide County Council with information pertaining to:

- The purpose of this statutory public meeting under Section 26(3) of the Planning Act regarding the County's Official Plan review process;
- the work program for Phases 2 and 3 of the Official Plan Review.

#### **Background**

Further to the report that was provided to County Council on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Administration has been authorized by Council to retain the services of NPG Planning Solutions to assist County Council with the preparation of the County's new Official Plan.

Section 26(3) of the *Planning Act* requires that before an Official Plan is updated, that Council shall, consult with the approval authority (the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and with prescribed public bodies with respect to the revisions required; and to hold a special meeting of Council, open to the public, to discuss the revisions that may be required.

The County's Official Plan came into effect in April of 2014, and since this time there have been several changes to the planning framework at the Provincial level that need to be addressed. For example, the *Planning Act* requires Municipalities ensure that their Official Plans have regard to matters of provincial interest and are consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement*

(PPS). The PPS was revised in 2020, and as a result, the County's Official Plan needs to be examined and updated to ensure consistency. There is also further Provincial legislation that has been created or amended, which will impact policies in the County's Official Plan.

The County is engaging the Province, Local Area Municipalities, Indigenous communities, County Council, Conservation Authorities, the public and other stakeholders, to obtain input on the comprehensive review.

The updated Official Plan when adopted will guide and provide direction to landowners, business owners, developers/homebuilders, and the community at large on matters such as:

- the location and extent of urban settlement areas, and how growth is managed, communities are serviced, and new lots are created;
- population, employment and housing projections, and corresponding land resources needed to meet these growth forecasts;
- agricultural land and natural heritage protection and enhancement;
- how people and property are protected from flooding and other hazards;
- other policy matters and implementation tools as required to responsibly address *Planning Act* and *Provincial Policy Statement (2020 PPS)* requirements.

## Discussion

Based on previous reports to County Council, Phase 1 of the County's Official Plan Review process has been completed with the preparation of the new 30-year County and local population, household and employment forecasts. Of note, from 2021 to 2051, the County is anticipated to accommodate a population increase of approximately 69,000 to 116,000 persons and will require between 29,700 and 42,900 additional homes. During this time frame, the County is also anticipated to provide for an increase of 36,000 to 52,000 jobs.

A Phase 1 Background Report was also prepared that summarizes consultation held with County Council and stakeholders on issues, opportunities and constraints. The Phase 1 Background Report provides valuable insight into the priorities for the community including: addressing housing and affordability, growing the economy, agricultural lands and issues, the commitment to active transportation, protecting the natural environment and working in partnership with the seven local municipalities.

Prior to advancing with the Phase 2 work program, it is appropriate to host the statutory public meeting. The purpose of the public meeting is to provide an opportunity for members of County Council and interested residents to provide comments regarding any issues or matters that should be considered as part of this Official Plan review. Community engagement is a critical component to the success of this initiative. NPG will be working with the County to develop a strategy to build off community engagement that has taken place to date. There will be additional opportunities for consultation with the public and various stakeholders during key milestones in this project.

During Phase 2, additional technical studies will be prepared to address key issues, challenges and opportunities identified during Phase 1. This additional technical work will include a comprehensive analysis of future urban land requirements County-wide. The technical reports will feed into a Policy Options Report focusing on achieving the established vision for the County of Essex, as well as ensuring Provincial Policy conformity.

Phase 3 involves the preparation of the draft new Official Plan, and the circulation/ presentation to County Council, to local Councils (and to senior staff from each of the local municipalities), to adjacent municipalities, to Indigenous communities, and to provincial ministries and agencies for their review, and to obtain their input and feedback.

In accordance with the *Planning Act*, the notice of public meeting appeared in the Windsor Star on February 24, 2023 and March 3, 2023 (copy attached). The notice was also published in the Essex Free Press, Harrow News, Rivertown Times and Southpoint Sun.

## **Financial Implications**

None

## **Consultations**

Larry Silani, the Official Plan Planning Advisor was consulted during the preparation of this report.

## **Recommendation**

That Essex County Council receive this report and information provided by NPG Planning Solutions regarding Phases 2 and 3 of the County's Official Plan review.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rebecca Belanger*

Rebecca Belanger, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Allan Botham*

Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Mary Birch*

Mary Birch, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

| Appendix Number | Title                                                                    |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1               | Notice of Statutory Public Meeting- County of Essex Official Plan Review |



## Official Plan Review (2022-2052)

### One Land, One Climate, One Future, Together

#### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING PROPOSED NEW OFFICIAL PLAN**

##### **PURPOSE**

Essex County Council will hold a statutory public meeting, pursuant to Section 26(3) of the *Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990*, as amended, for the purposes of discussing the proposed new Official Plan. The public meeting will be held as follows:

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 5, 2023  
5:00 P.M.**

**COUNTY OF ESSEX, COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex, ON, N8M 1Y6**

**THE PUBLIC MEETING** is intended to provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments regarding any issue or matter that should be considered in creating the new Official Plan. Members of Council will also be providing input on issues or matters to be considered during the new Official Plan process.

##### **BACKGROUND ON THE NEW OFFICIAL PLAN**

The long-term prosperity, health and well-being of residents living and working in Essex County will to a large degree be shaped by the land use, transportation, growth management, environmental, housing and fiscal policies that are incorporated as part of the County of Essex Official Plan. It is one of the most important policy documents that County Council adopts, and it contains a broad range of goals and policies that guide and provide direction to landowners, business owners, and the community at large pertaining to how growth is managed and resources are protected.

Once approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the new Official Plan will replace the existing in force and effect Official Plan.

The *Planning Act* requires that an Official Plan conform with provincial plans or that it does not conflict with them; has regard to matters of provincial interest; is consistent with provincial policy statements; and addresses recent legislative changes. Taking into account the timing of the approval of the current Official Plan, the introduction of a 2020 Provincial Policy Statement and amendments to the *Planning Act*, R.S.O., 1990 the County has initiated the creation of a new Official Plan.

This public meeting is the first of the statutory meetings to be held in relation to the County's Official Plan review and will include an overview presentation by the County's planning consultant. Throughout the OP review process there will be additional opportunities for the public to review draft documents and to provide comments to Council and staff, including an Open House and Statutory Public Meeting under section 17 of the Planning Act that will occur prior to County Council considering the adoption of the proposed new County Official Plan.

### **SUBJECT LANDS**

The new Official Plan will affect all lands within the municipal boundary of the County. Accordingly, no key map is provided.

### **YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT**

Any person may attend the public meeting and/or provide written or a verbal representation. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you may provide written comments by submitting them to the address below.

**By Mail:** Rebecca Belanger, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Planning Services, County of Essex, 360 Fairview Avenue W, Essex, ON, N8M 1Y6

**By Email:** [officialplanreview@countyofessex.ca](mailto:officialplanreview@countyofessex.ca)

If you wish to be added to the mailing list, please utilize the email or address noted above. A copy of the agenda for the public meeting, including a staff report and any attachments, will be available in advance of this public meeting on the County's website.

The County's current Official Plan may be reviewed on the County of Essex website at <https://www.countyofessex.ca/en/doing-business/official-plan.aspx> . A copy of the two background reports that were prepared as part of the initial phase of the County's Official Plan Review can be viewed at <https://www.countyofessex.ca/en/doing-business/comprehensive-official-plan-review-2021-2023.aspx>.

## **NOTICE OF COLLECTION**

Personal information collected as a result of this public meeting is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*, the *Planning Act*, and all other relevant legislation, and will be used to assist in making a decision on this matter. All personal information (as defined by MFIPPA), including (but not limited to) names, addresses, opinions and comments collected will be made available for public disclosure to members of the public, at the meeting, through requests, and through the County of Essex website. Questions regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of this personal information may be directed to the Clerk, Essex County Civic; 360 Fairview Avenue W, Essex, ON, N8M 1Y6.

This notice published on February 24, 2023 and March 3, 2023.

## **COVID-19 Information:**

The health and safety of residents, Council, and staff is the most important part of this meeting. Residents who do not wish to attend the meeting have the option of submitting their comments in writing. Both in person and written comments are equally valued.