

Town of The Blue Mountains

Community Design Guidelines

Volume 2 - Community Vision and Structure



June 2026

Volume 2 - Vision and Structure

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1

Community Design Vision and Guiding Principles

1.1

Community Design Vision

The Community Design Guidelines are informed by the Community Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Town's Official Plan. Both the Official Plan and Design Guidelines are based on the collective vision for a **healthy, complete community** that **protects natural and rural resources, supports sustainability, values heritage** and **celebrates community character**.

The Town of The Blue Mountains is committed to **high-quality design** of the public and private realm across the Town. The Design Guidelines will ensure development and redevelopment enhances the **unique character** of the Town's various communities, complements the Town's **natural and cultural heritage** and contributes to the **overall vibrancy** of The Blue Mountains.

1.2 Community Design Principles

To implement the Town's vision, the following Community Design Principles will be used to guide development, redevelopment and design across The Blue Mountains:



Sustainable Design



Natural Character



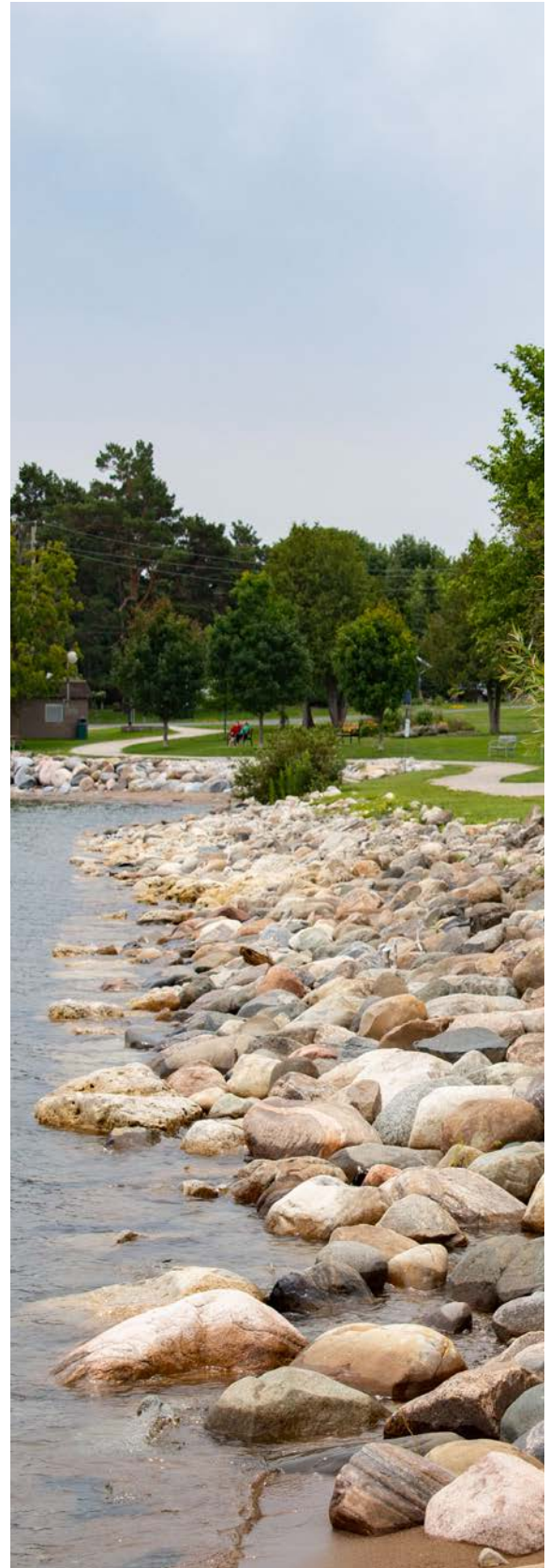
Community Character



Tourism and Recreation



Cultural Heritage





Community Character

Design Principles:

- Ensure development is designed to reinforce the Town's various communities as diverse, livable, safe, thriving and attractive.
- Foster a strong sense of place through high quality community design that considers both the public and private realm and interconnected open space network.
- Reinforce the uniqueness of each community across the Town, focusing on distinct heritage characteristics, prominent natural features, public art, cultural facilities, civic and gathering spaces, human-centered design and accessibility.
- Encourage the continued revitalization of Downtown Thornbury and Downtown Clarksburg through redevelopment and public realm improvements that reflect cultural and historic character and promote a mix of community uses and attractions that reinforce their function.
- Encourage investment and development in Craighleith Village that advances its function as a new vibrant, mixed use focal point for the community.
- Enhance gateways into community areas and revitalize the Highway 26 Corridor by recognizing it as a significant transportation and scenic corridor through the Town with views and vistas of Georgian Bay and the Niagara Escarpment.
- Retain the character of existing and well-established neighbourhoods while supporting infill, intensification and redevelopment that fits into and respects the scale and built form of existing development.
- Encourage the development of sustainable neighbourhoods that are compact, energy efficient, pedestrian-oriented and provide a mix of housing types, amenities and transportation options.
- Establish a well-designed, integrated transportation system that safely and comfortably accommodates various modes of transportation, including active transportation, between neighbourhoods, downtown areas, places to work, schools, parks and open space and other amenities and adjacent municipalities.
- Ensure development within the Town's Hamlets as focal points in the rural community that maintains and enhances hamlet character and scale.





Sustainable Design

Design Principles:

- Ensure the environment, social well-being and climate change mitigation is prioritized through sustainable design.
- Prioritize the creation of compact, mixed-use, complete communities where people of all ages, backgrounds and capabilities can meet their needs throughout all life stages.
- Ensure walking, cycling and other active forms of transportation are accessible, desirable, safe and well-designed to provide options for moving through the Town's built-up and rural communities.
- Recognize the interconnected system of open spaces and natural features across the Town in contributing to the health and character of communities.
- Promote sustainable development and energy conservation techniques designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimize air quality impacts.
- Encourage efficient neighbourhood, site and building design that minimizes energy consumption and the heat island effect.
- Promote design practices that conserve water and protect or enhance water quality.

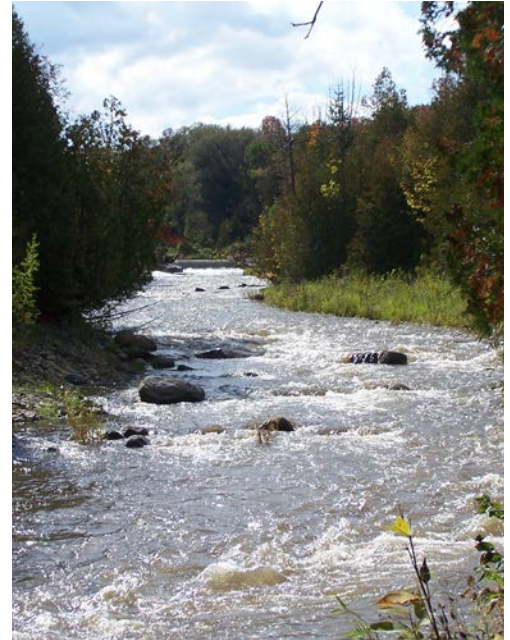




Natural Character

Design Principles:

- Protect and enhance the natural character of the Georgian Bay shoreline, Niagara Escarpment, Nipissing Ridge and Beaver River as unique and important features of the Town that contribute to overall quality of life, tourism, recreation and sustainable development.
- Maintain the visual quality and open space character of the Town, including significant views and vistas, when considering the design of development and redevelopment.
- Maintain a diverse and interconnected system of public open space across the Town that features convenient and comfortable access to parks, trails, natural features and shoreline areas.



Cultural Heritage

Design Principles:

- Recognize the contribution that cultural heritage resources make to the built-up and rural fabric of the Town's communities.
- Encourage the protection of cultural heritage resources as a tool to attract economic development, increase tourism and enhance the character and vitality of communities and neighbourhoods.
- Ensure development and redevelopment is designed to incorporate, conserve and enhance cultural heritage resources as distinct elements or community focal points.
- Encourage development that is adjacent to, or incorporates cultural heritage features, to be of an appropriate scale and character.





Tourism and Recreation

Design Principles:

- Embrace The Blue Mountains as a world class, four seasons recreational community by ensuring the design of the public and private realm recognizes the Town's tourism, significant natural attributes, rural countryside character and cultural heritage attributes.
- Provide for a broad range of open space settings, activities and programs to expand recreation and leisure opportunities for both residents and visitors across the Town.
- Encourage the maintenance of existing recreational uses and the establishment of new recreation amenities in the context of a year-round recreational community, particularly skiing, fishing, golfing, walking, hiking biking, camping, marinas, waterfront access and equestrian activities.
- Contribute to the active transportation network with a high quality, all-season trail system that seamlessly and efficiently connects residents and visitors to all areas and communities of the Town.

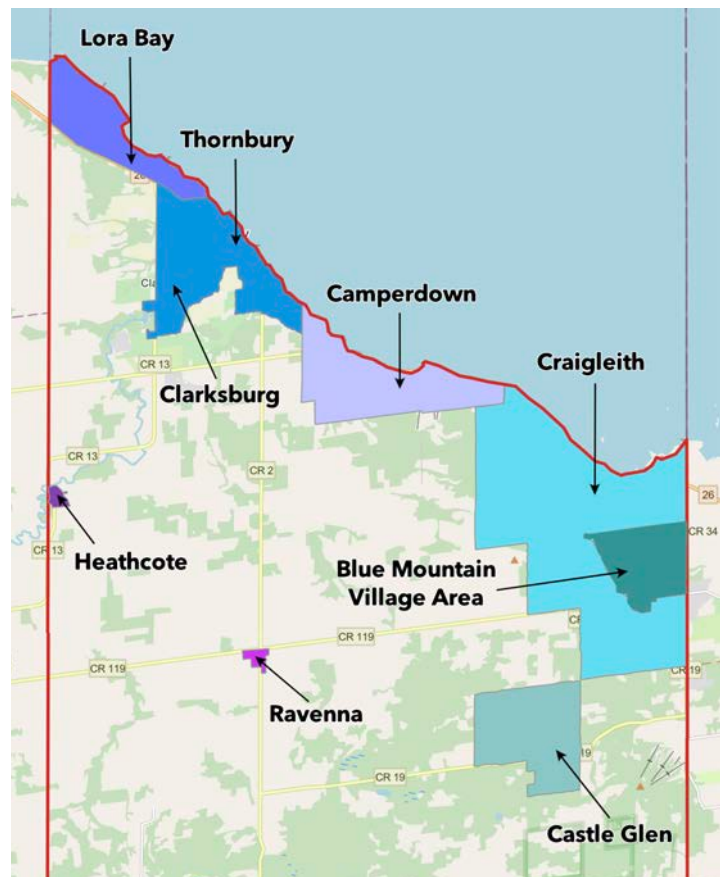


2

Community Structure

As identified in The Blue Mountains Official Plan, the Town's Community Structure is made up of different Settlement Areas, or communities, each with their own unique character, identity and sense of place. As the Town of The Blue Mountains continues to grow and evolve, the Town will ensure development and redevelopment is carried out in a manner that enhances the quality and vibrancy of life in each community, for both current and future residents.

This section of the Design Guidelines provides an overview of each of the Town's communities and sets out design objectives for how specific residential, commercial and downtown areas are envisioned to evolve. Reference is made to the applicable sections of the Design Guidelines that should be referred to when proposing development or redevelopment within each community area.



Together, **Thornbury** and **Clarksburg** make up the Town's **Primary Settlement Area**, as the main concentration of residential, commercial, cultural and institutional amenities in the Town. As Primary Settlement Areas, both Grey County and the Town of The Blue Mountains direct a significant proportion of the Town's new growth to Thornbury and Clarksburg.

The Town's **Residential Recreational Areas** extend along the Georgian Bay shoreline and some inland areas. These communities accommodate a mix of seasonal and permanent residential and recreational functions. **Craigleith, Swiss Meadows, Camperdown** and **Lora Bay** are all **Residential Recreational Areas**. The Blue Mountains Village Resort Area is also identified as a Residential Recreational Area, however these Design Guidelines do not directly apply to the **Village Resort Area**.

The smaller communities of **Ravenna** and **Heathcote** are identified as **Hamlets**, which provide limited opportunities for new growth but provide housing for existing residents and serve an important commercial function for surrounding residents and the agricultural community.

Key corridors and connections such as **Highway 26**, the **Georgian Trail** and **Georgian Bay Shoreline** throughout the Town play an important role in bridging the gap between the various communities of The Blue Mountains. Protection of the Town's natural, rural and open space character greatly contributes to the quality of life enjoyed by residents and sense of place cherished by visitors.



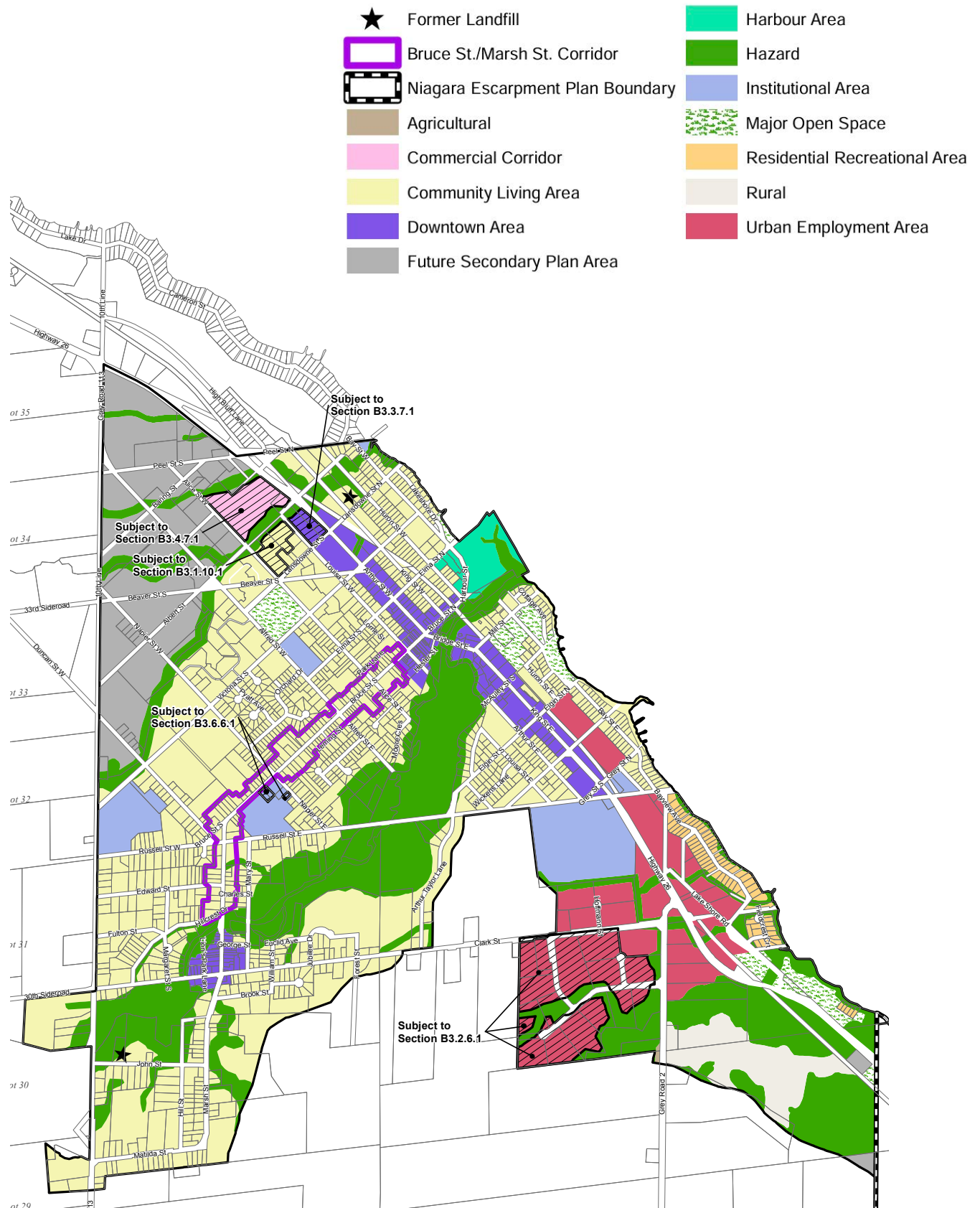
2.1 Thornbury and Clarksburg

Together, **Thornbury and Clarksburg** form the Town's central hub for residential, commercial, cultural and institutional amenities.



At the water's edge of Georgian Bay, Thornbury is characterized by its proximity and access to the Georgian Bay waterfront, as well as its vibrant, historic downtown core along Bruce Street boasting a variety of local boutique shops, galleries, specialty food stores and cafes. The evolving Highway 26 Corridor traverses through Thornbury, which provides a broad mix of residential, commercial, specialty service, employment, government and tourism uses in a linear fashion.

Following the Beaver River and Bruce Street South, Downtown Clarksburg is characterized by a historic main street that is home to several art galleries, local shops, specialty service uses and community spaces. Both Thornbury and Clarksburg consist of several residential neighbourhoods, each with their own predominant lot and built form characteristics. The communities of Thornbury and Clarksburg will continue to function as a place of symbolic and physical interest for both residents and visitors.



Thornbury and Clarksburg Land Uses

2.1.1 Residential Neighbourhoods

Thornbury and Clarksburg's residential neighbourhoods are designated Community Living Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan. These areas are characterized by a small-town, neighbourhood-oriented sense of place, with a mix of established and newer homes, mature trees and walkable streets. Neighbourhoods are generally low-rise, with varied lot patterns, landscaped yards, and a comfortable relationship between buildings and the street. Access to and views of Georgian Bay, parks and open spaces further contribute to neighbourhood identity.

Design Objectives:

- Enhance the small-town character of existing and established residential neighbourhoods in Thornbury and Clarksburg by ensuring development and redevelopment is compatible with the scale and density of existing development.
- Encourage the development of a broad range of housing types, from single-detached and semi-detached dwellings to townhouses and low-rise apartments, in appropriate locations while maintaining compatibility with existing adjacent character.
- Encourage gentle infill and intensification in neighbourhoods through well-designed additional residential units and converted dwellings.
- Create and maintain walkable neighbourhoods that are well connected to their surrounding downtown area, parks, open space and community amenities.
- Ensure new residential development reinforces the uniqueness of each neighbourhood, including the prominent lot pattern, landscape and open space character.

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2.1.2 Downtown Thornbury

Downtown Thornbury along Bruce Street is designated Downtown Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan. Downtown Thornbury's characterized by a historic, small-town main street environment with a strong pedestrian focus and a mix of shops, services and community uses. The downtown core is defined by a low-rise built form, storefronts and cohesive streetscape elements, including sidewalks, street trees, lighting and signage. Its identity is further reinforced by strong connections to Thornbury Harbour and the Georgian Bay waterfront.

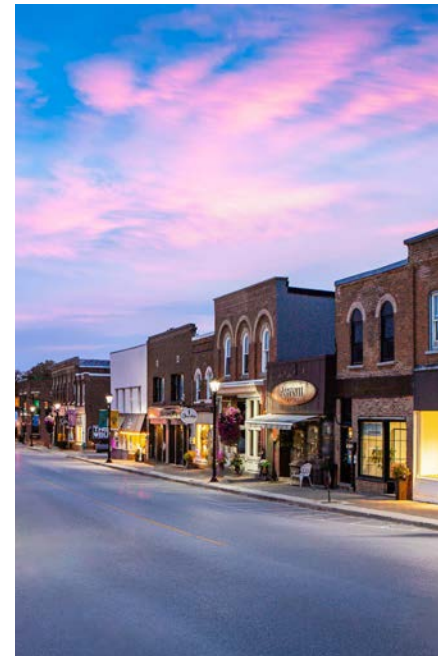
Design Objectives:

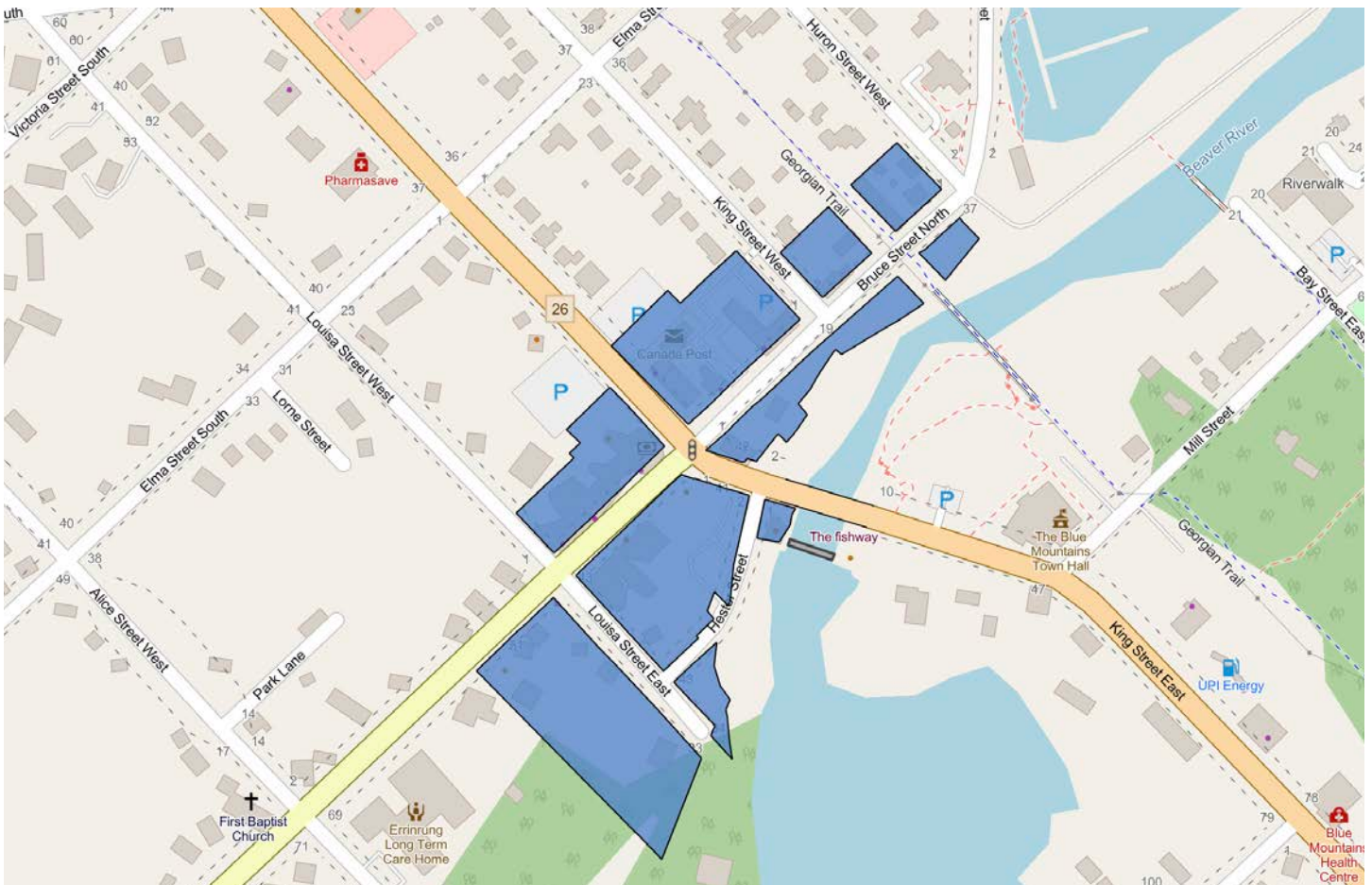
- Preserve the historic low-rise character of Thornbury's downtown core along Bruce Street.
- Ensure the scale and location of new development or redevelopment maintains and/or enhances the distinct heritage character of Downtown Thornbury.
- Reinforce the function of Downtown Thornbury as a primary cultural, business, entertainment and commercial focal point.
- Encourage a diverse, broad mix of compatible uses, including residential units above commercial uses, to enhance the overall vibrancy and accessibility of amenities within downtown.
- Encourage coordinated streetscape and façade improvements geared to the pedestrian that revitalize the cultural and historic character of Thornbury.
- Preserve and enhance cultural and historic features that exist within Downtown Thornbury, including the restoration and enhancement of building facades.
- Create new community focal points in Downtown Thornbury by encouraging the creation of new public spaces, pedestrian connections and public art.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience and connections along Bruce Street from the downtown core to Thornbury Harbour and the Georgian Bay waterfront.

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Section 4 – Downtown and Commercial Areas





Thornbury Downtown Core



2.1.3 Highway 26 Through Thornbury

The stretch of Highway 26 through Thornbury, from Grey Street to Albert Street, is designated Downtown Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan. Highway 26 through Thornbury functions as a key gateway corridor, characterized by a mix of commercial, service and residential uses within a more open, auto-oriented setting. The corridor is defined by varied building setbacks, larger lot patterns and generally low-rise built form, with scattered landscaping and views to surrounding neighbourhoods and natural features. A broad range of uses is permitted, with residential uses encouraged within mixed-use buildings, while stand-alone residential development is directed to side streets to maintain the corridor's mixed-use character.

Design Objectives:

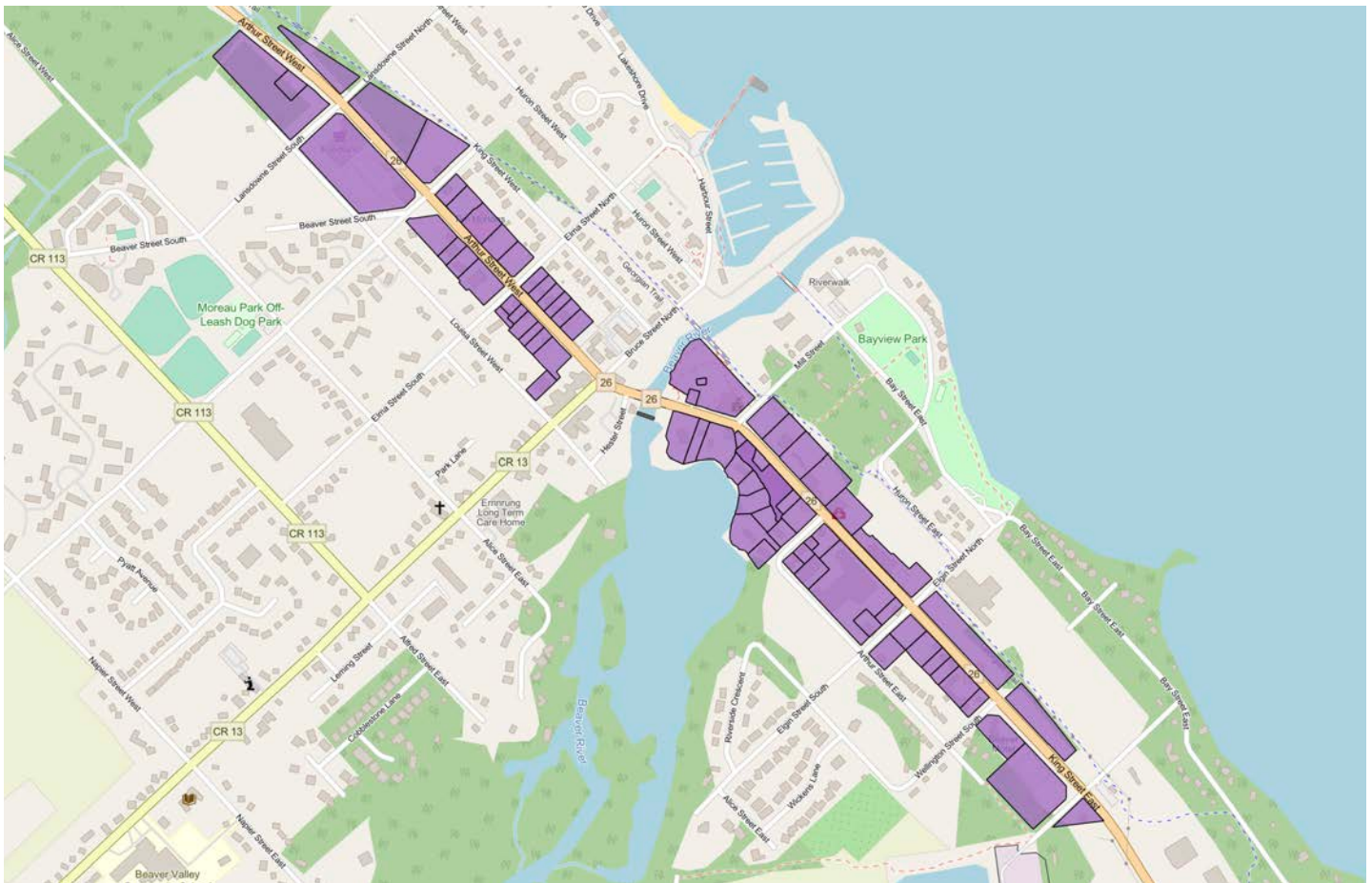
- Establish Highway 26 through Thornbury as a priority area for mixed-use development, redevelopment and intensification.
- Ensure development fronting onto Highway 26 is held to a high standard to building, landscape and site design, as the main gateway to and from Thornbury.
- Encourage the development of a broad mix of uses, including residential, to provide access to range of amenities, as well as vibrant and safe public places within walking distance.
- Ensure the low-rise character of adjacent neighbourhoods and Downtown Thornbury is protected through compatible intensification and appropriate transition.
- Maintain and enhance the open space character of properties along Highway 26 and ensure the continued and improved feeling of spaciousness through development and redevelopment.

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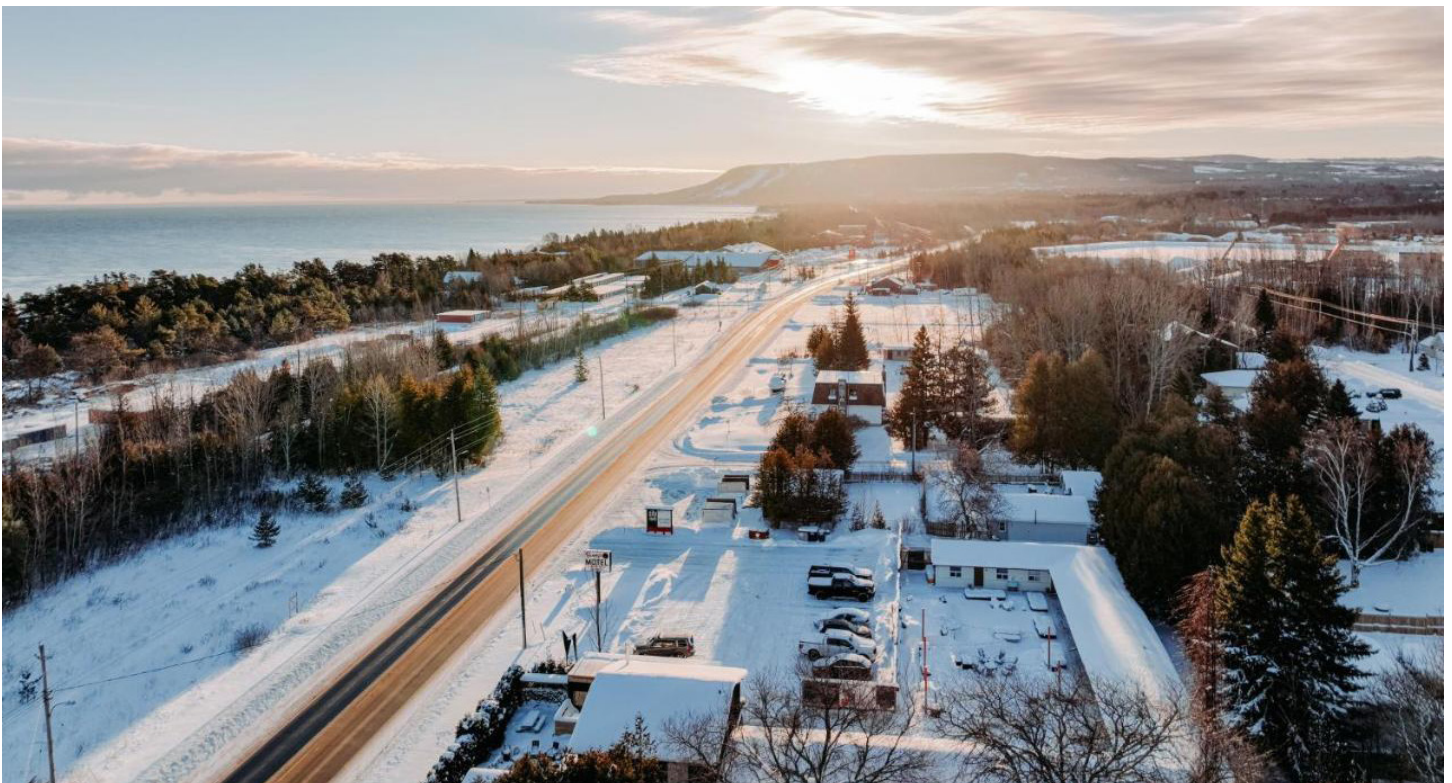
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Highway 26 Through Thornbury



2.1.4 Downtown Clarksburg

Downtown Clarksburg along Marsh Street and Clark Street is designated Downtown Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan. Downtown Clarksburg is characterized by a small-town main street environment with a strong arts and cultural identity, a mix of local shops, services and community uses and a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. The downtown features low-rise buildings, heritage storefronts and streetscape elements, including sidewalks, street trees, lighting and signage. Maintaining and enhancing the identity of Clarksburg through sensitive infill and redevelopment is essential to supporting Downtown Clarksburg's role as a vibrant, arts-focused community hub.

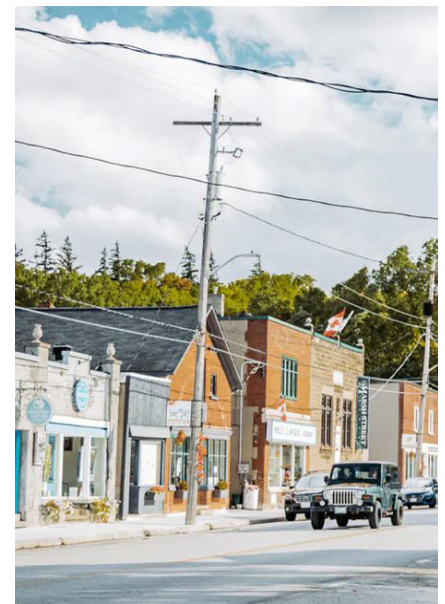
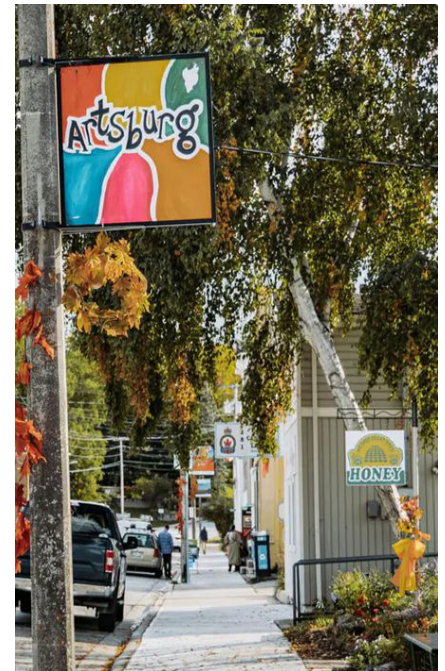
Design Objectives:

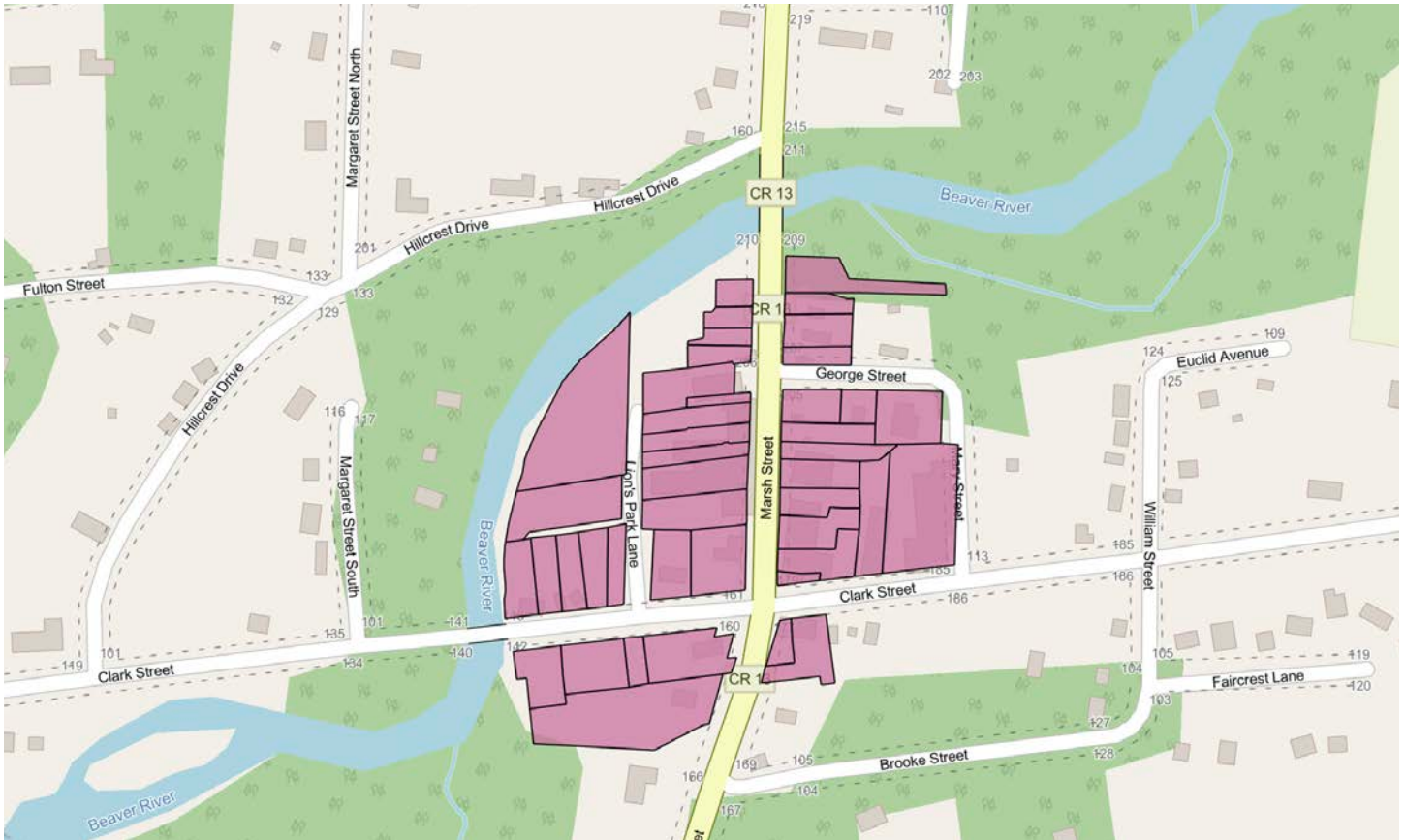
- Reinforce the vibrancy of Downtown Clarksburg as a local, vibrant community with a strong sense of place tied to arts and culture.
- Ensure the scale and location of new development or redevelopment maintains or enhances the built form and streetscape character of Downtown Clarksburg.
- Reinforce the function of Downtown Clarksburg as a mixed-use focal point for the surrounding community, accommodating cultural, business, entertainment, commercial and service uses.
- Encourage a diverse, broad mix of compatible uses, including residential units above commercial uses, to enhance the overall vibrancy and accessibility of amenities within downtown.
- Encourage coordinated streetscape and façade improvements geared to the pedestrian that build on the sense of place for Clarksburg.
- Preserve and enhance cultural and historic features that exist within Downtown Clarksburg, including the restoration and enhancement of building facades.
- Create new community focal points in Downtown Clarksburg by encouraging the creation of new public spaces, pedestrian connections and public art.

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Downtown Clarksburg



2.1.5 Urban Employment Area

A variety of employment, industrial and manufacturing sites are located at the eastern edge of the Thornbury/Clarksburg Settlement Area, with predominant access from Highway 26 and Grey Road 2. The Blue Mountain Official Plan designates these lands as Urban Employment Area, which recognizes lands currently developed for employment uses, as well as lands identified to be the site of employment uses in the future.

The Urban Employment Area designation permits a range of manufacturing, assembly, processing and fabrication uses, as well as storage and warehousing, wholesaling establishments and similar uses.

Design Objectives:

- Prioritize opportunities for a diverse range of existing and new businesses to grow and develop in Thornbury in strategic locations.
- Ensure employment area development fronting onto the public realm is held to a high standard of building, landscape and site design.
- Ensure employment and industrial uses are adequately buffered and screened from any adjacent residential, open space or recreational use.

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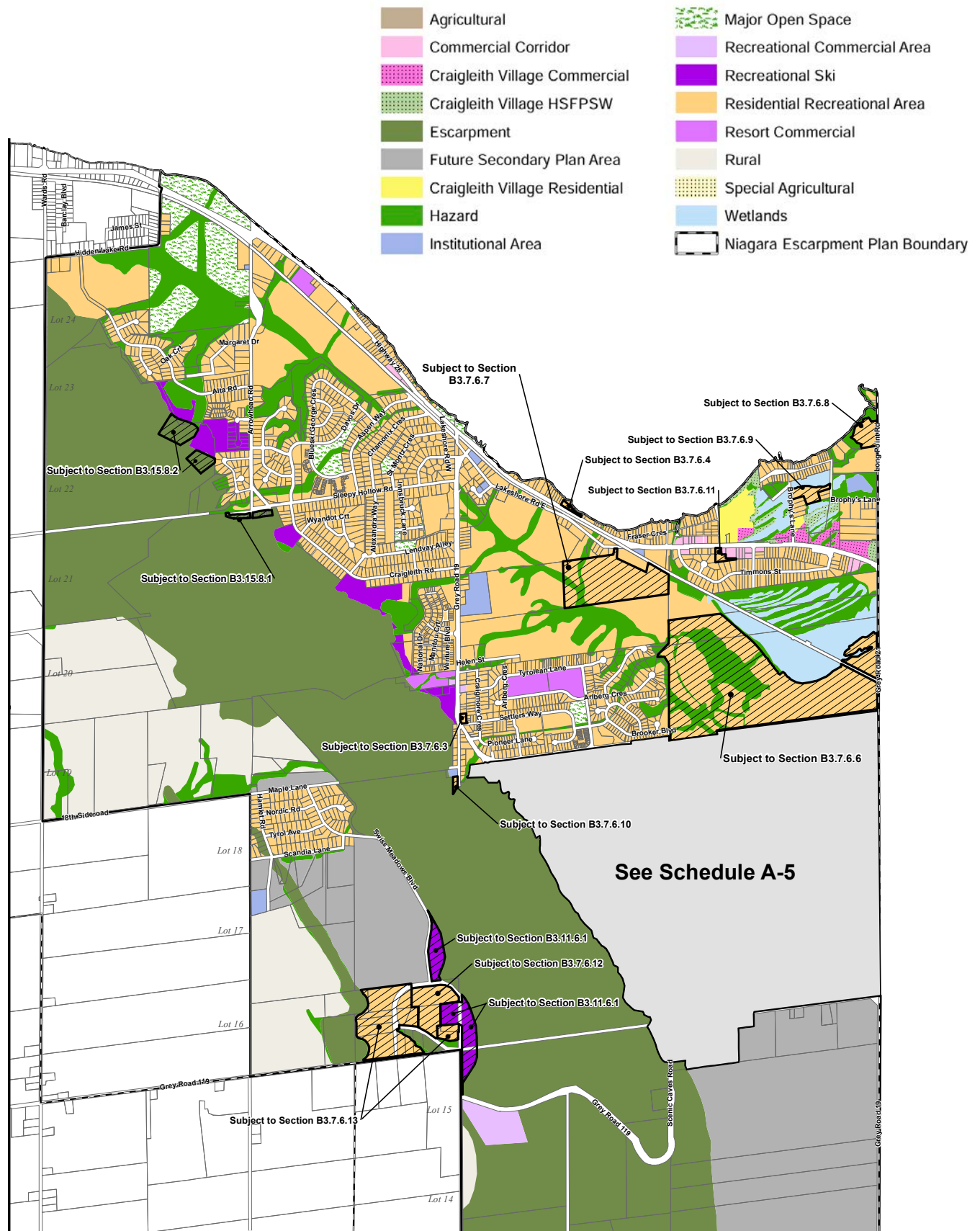
2.2 Craigleith

Craigleith is designated Residential Recreational Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan, providing both a seasonal and permanent residential and recreational function.



Situated between the Georgian Bay shoreline and the Niagara Escarpment, Craigleith is a residential community rooted in natural beauty and recreation. Craigleith is defined by its natural and recreational amenities across the community including ski clubs, golf courses and the waterfront, as well as Craigleith Provincial Park along Georgian Bay. Craigleith accommodates a variety of residential neighbourhoods and areas, from well-established chalet-style dwellings to newer subdivision development south of Highway 26.

Highway 26 serves as a significant linear connection through Craigleith, providing a few commercial and tourism-related uses along the way. Over time, Highway 26 is envisioned to accommodate a broader mix of commercial and service uses that bridge the gap between Collingwood and Thornbury. Craigleith Village, located at the eastern edge of the Town along Highway 26 is also envisioned to be redeveloped into a sustainable, compact community that accommodates a mix of residential and commercial uses and creates a new central node for existing Craigleith residents and visitors.



Craigleith Land Uses

2.2.1 Residential Neighbourhoods

Craigleith's variety of residential areas are designated Residential Recreational Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan. Craigleith is characterized by a recreational, landscape-oriented sense of place shaped by its location between the Georgian Bay shoreline and the Niagara Escarpment. The community is defined by its strong connection to natural features and recreational amenities. Residential areas include a mix of established chalet-style homes and newer neighbourhoods, generally set within a low-rise built form and a more open, natural setting. Residential development should build on Craigleith's natural setting and recreational character as the community continues to evolve.

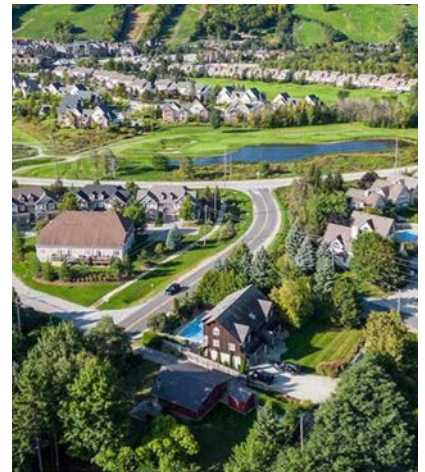
Design Objectives:

- Enhance the character of existing residential neighbourhoods in Craigleith by ensuring development and redevelopment is compatible with the scale and density of existing development.
- Encourage the development of a broad range of housing types and tenures, from single-detached and semi-detached dwellings to townhouses and low-rise apartments, in appropriate locations while maintaining compatibility with existing adjacent character.
- Encourage infilling and additional residential units in appropriate locations through well-designed residential built form to support walkability and create well-rounded neighbourhoods.
- Create and maintain walkable, compact neighbourhoods that are well connected to other residential areas, commercial uses, parks, open space and community amenities.
- Prioritize pedestrian-oriented design, cycling facilities and trail connections throughout Craigleith.
- Reinforce the uniqueness of each neighbourhood, with a focus on distinct heritage characteristics, civic and gathering spaces, natural features and areas, recreation amenities and accessibility.
- Ensure new residential development reinforces the uniqueness of each neighbourhood, including the prominent lot pattern, landscape and open space character.

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2.2.2 Craigleith Village

The Craigleith Village Community, located at the eastern edge of the Town along Highway 26, is an area prioritized to redevelop into a sustainable, compact mixed use community while protecting the character of the surrounding area. The Blue Mountains Official Plan divides Craigleith Village into sub-designations, including Village Commercial, Village Residential and Hazard Lands, Shoreline Floodplain and Provincially Significant Wetlands. The Craigleith Village Commercial designation intends to function as a primary commercial centre to serve the community of Craigleith and traveling public. Residential dwelling units are encouraged in the upper portion of mixed use buildings. The Craigleith Village Residential designation identifies lands where a compact residential community will be established on the shores of Nottawasaga Bay, together with complimentary recreational lands and facilities.

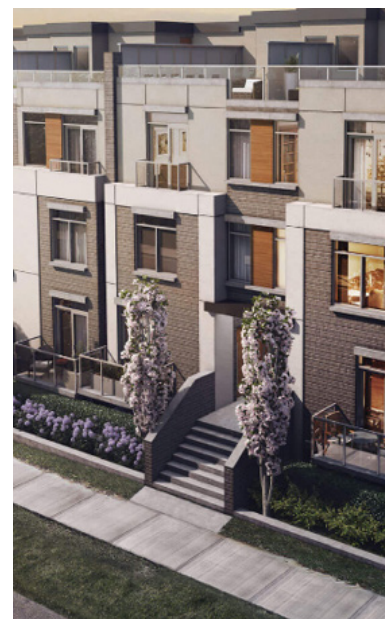
Design Objectives:

- Develop a strong identity for Craigleith Village that accommodates a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses and creates a new central node for residents and visitors.
- Ensure the scale and pattern of development in Craigleith Village respects surrounding residential lands and provides an appropriate transition.
- Encourage redevelopment in Craigleith Village to maximize residential intensification opportunities and variety through building sizes and inclusion of residential units above commercial uses.
- Encourage new coordinated streetscapes geared to the pedestrian, as well as new community focal points including public squares, that create a unique sense of place for Craigleith Village.
- Ensure the community road and trail network provide residents with a safe, functional and attractive neighbourhood that offers access to sustainable natural areas including wetlands, tree cover and the shoreline.
- Encourage the development of new recreation opportunities are tied to the environment and active, healthy living.

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Section 4 – Downtown, and Commercial Areas



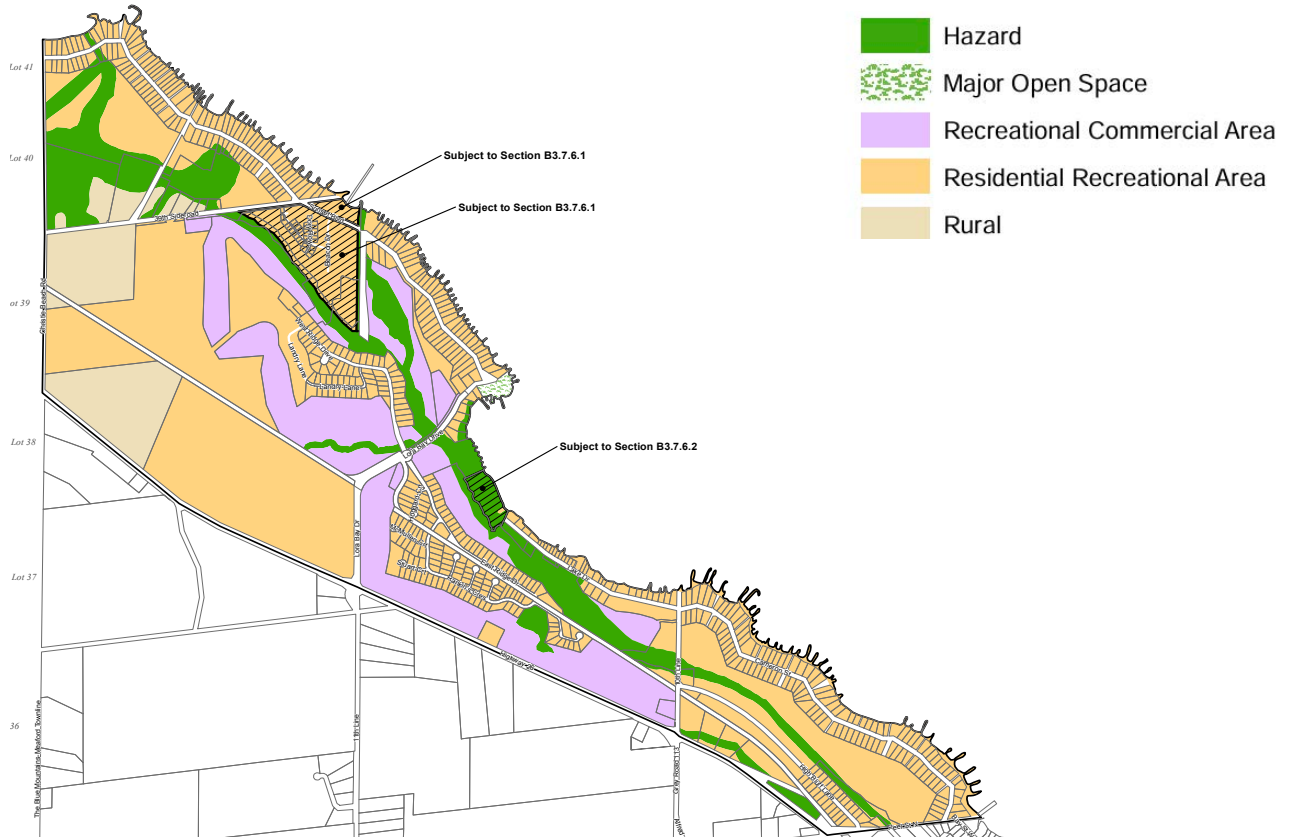
2.3 Lora Bay

Lora Bay is designated Residential Recreational Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan, providing a seasonal and permanent residential and recreational function.



Lora Bay is a master planned, resort-like residential community located just west of Thornbury, along the shore of Georgian Bay. The Lora Bay community has continued to develop over time through multiple phases of subdivision development. Centred around the Lora Bay Golf Course, the open space character of the community is defined by its location along the water, as well as a series of public parks and private open spaces. The community primarily consists of single-detached residential units, with multiple residential units dispersed throughout.

The Residential Recreational Area designation permits a range of low-rise residential uses, as well as parks, open spaces, trails, community centres, cultural facilities, recreational clubs and other similar day uses. Lora Bay's residential areas are characterized by predominantly low-rise dwellings, including single and semi-detached and townhouse units, that share a coordinated architectural style and cohesive design language. Well-landscaped streetscapes and consistent built form contribute to a unified community character, centered around an amenity-rich open space environment.



Lora Bay Land Uses

2.3.1 Residential Neighbourhoods

Design Objectives:

- Encourage development that is in keeping with the evolving open space and built form character of Lora Bay.
- Encourage a mix a broad range of housing types in appropriate locations while maintaining compatibility with existing adjacent character.
- Encourage gentle infill in neighbourhoods through well-designed additional residential units.
- Ensure neighbourhoods are well connected to parks, open space, the waterfront and community amenities.
- Ensure new residential development reinforces the uniqueness of each neighbourhood, including the prominent lot pattern, landscape and open space character.

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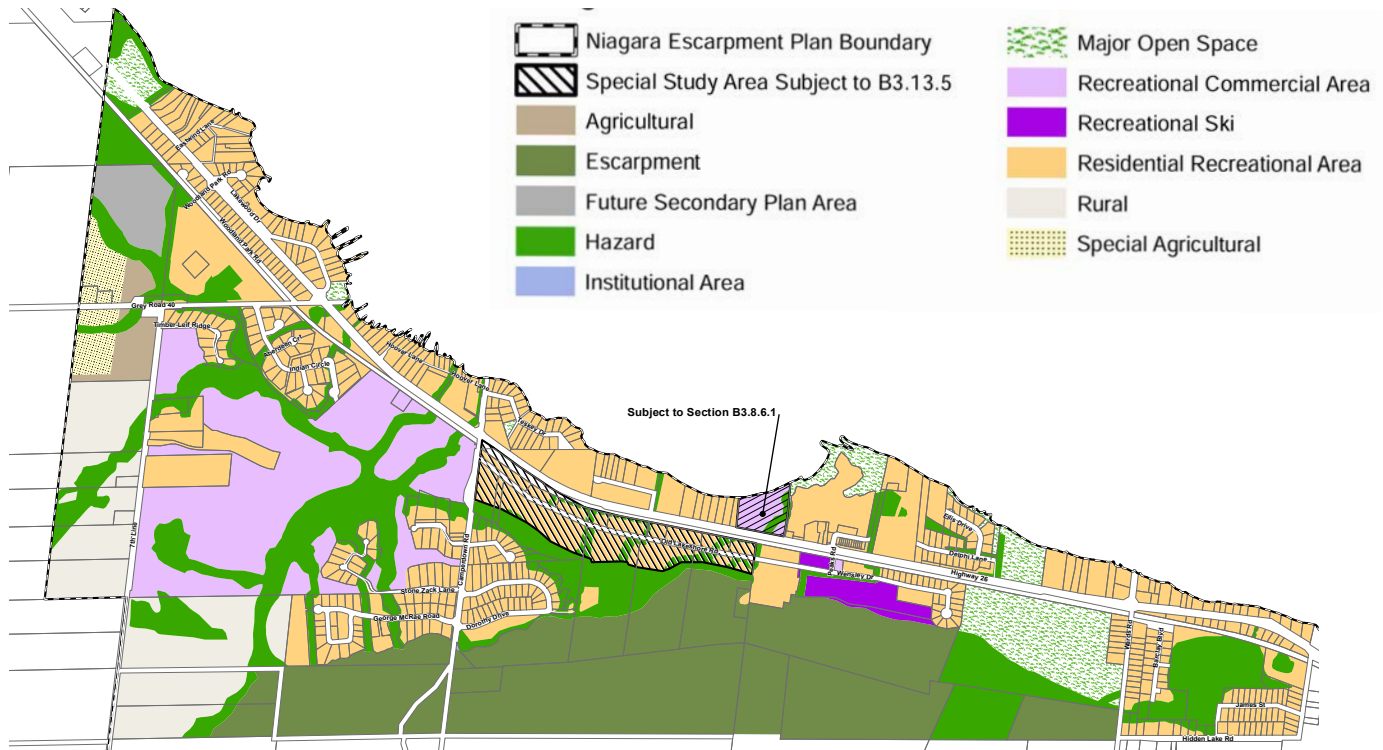
2.4 Camperdown

Camperdown's residential areas are designated Residential Recreational Area in The Blue Mountains Official Plan.



Camperdown is a primarily residential community immersed in the natural beauty between the Georgian Bay and Niagara Escarpment. The community is characterized by its surrounding ski clubs, golf courses, natural areas and considerable open space areas. Camperdown accommodates a mix of established and new residential dwellings north of Highway 26 along the edge of Georgian Bay, as well as several new estate residential dwellings and subdivisions south of Highway 26. An eclectic mix of dwelling and neighbourhood types defines the unique, varied character of Camperdown that should be celebrated and enhanced through any development or redevelopment.

The Residential Recreational Area designation permits a range of low-rise residential uses, as well as parks, open spaces, trails, community centres, cultural facilities, recreational clubs and other similar day uses. Camperdown's residential areas are characterized by a varied and evolving built form, including a mix of estate lots and newer subdivisions. Streetscapes are generally more rural in character while architectural styles and lot patterns are diverse. Development is unified by its strong relationship to the surrounding natural landscape, including views, topography and adjacent open spaces. This contributes to a distinct and flexible residential character that responds to its natural setting and lifestyle.



Camperdown Land Uses

2.4.1 Residential Neighbourhoods

Design Objectives:

- Ensure new residential development reinforces the uniqueness of each neighbourhood area in Camperdown, including the prominent lot pattern, scale, built form characteristics, landscape and open space character.
- Encourage a broad range of housing types while maintaining compatibility with existing character.
- Encourage infilling and additional residential units in appropriate locations through well-designed residential built form to support walkability and create well-rounded neighbourhoods.
- Create and maintain walkable, compact neighbourhoods that are well connected to other residential areas, commercial uses, parks, open space, the waterfront and community amenities.
- Prioritize pedestrian-oriented design, cycling facilities and trail connections.

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2.5 Villages and Hamlets

Heathcote and **Ravenna** are formally identified as Hamlets, or Secondary Settlement Areas, by Grey County and The Blue Mountains Official Plan.



Interspersed along and atop the Niagara Escarpment is a collection of the Town's Villages and Hamlets. The Town's Hamlet Areas are existing communities with residential, commercial and recreational uses that function as small central places within the Town. These rural areas offer natural view corridors, local stores and markets, restaurants and farm-related uses.

The rolling hills and undulating topography, rivers and streams and open setting of the Town's rural landscape are all components that define its character. Development will be limited across the Town's rural communities and must be compatible with the character, role and function of the rural landscape.

2.5.1 Villages and Hamlets

Design Objectives:

- Ensure any new development or redevelopment is compatible with the character, role, scale and function of the surrounding natural, agricultural and rural landscape.
- Ensure Hamlets are maintained as focal points for the surrounding rural community and tourism with a mix of diverse and compatible uses in proximity to each other.
- Protect and enhance the natural character of the Niagara Escarpment as a unique and important feature of the Town.
- Carefully control new residential development in Hamlet Areas in order to maintain existing scale and character.
- Provide opportunities for small-scale commercial and tourism related uses that are compatible with the character and scale of these areas.
- Preserve and enhance the natural and historic features that exist in each rural community.

