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Phase 1 Discussion Paper

Intensification



Prepared by:



Prepared for:



Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 POLICY STRUCTURE	5
GROWTH PLAN	5
SIMCOE COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN	7
INNISFIL OFFICIAL PLAN	7
3 INTENSIFICATION ANALYSIS	9
4 INTENSIFICATION IN STABLE RESIDENTIAL AREAS	11
5 INTENSIFICATION AREAS	13

ABSTRACT

As one of the background discussion papers for the Town of Innisfil Official Plan Review: Our Place, this paper examines intensification potential in the Town and the policy approaches that can encourage intensification, while protecting the character of stable residential neighbourhoods. This paper provides background on the existing Provincial, Regional and local policy structure; provides an update of the vacant land inventory within the Built-Up Area; provides an assessment of the intensification potential on these lands; and discusses broad policy areas that can be considered in the next stage of the Official Plan Review.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the background work for Our Place, the Town of Innisfil Official Plan Review, this discussion paper examines intensification.

The Growth Plan requires that a certain percentage of growth in a Municipality occur through intensification, which means development within the existing developed area of the Town, which is termed the “built –up area”. The County Official Plan further supports this directive and requires that each local municipality address and encourage intensification within its Official Plan.

This paper identifies vacant lots within each settlement area and determines that approximately 3,000 units could be accommodated across the different settlement areas. This intensification would occur on individual infill lots (where only one more unit can be accommodated) and through development of larger lots, through severances or plans of subdivision. In addition, a section of Innisfil Beach Road in Alcona is identified as an Intensification Area where higher density intensification is anticipated and currently permitted in the Official Plan.

This report further identifies and broadly discusses policy approaches for further consideration. These policy approaches are differentiated into the three types of intensification: single infill lot development, development of larger parcels and intensification of Innisfil Beach Road.

1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the background work for Our Place, the Town of Innisfil Official Plan Review, this discussion paper examines intensification. This paper assesses the intensification potential within Innisfil and explores policy options that can be considered to promote intensification within intensification areas as well as explores policy approaches to protect stable residential neighbourhoods from inappropriate forms of infill and intensification.

2 POLICY STRUCTURE

Growth Plan

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2013, (Growth Plan) is a provincial document that provides direction on growth within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes the Town of Innisfil. The Growth Plan deals with many aspects of growth, including intensification. Intensification is generally defined as development of a property at a higher density than currently exists. This intensification may occur through:

- redevelopment of an existing developed property,
- development of a vacant property or area within a previously developed area;
- infill on smaller vacant lots; or
- the expansion or conversion of an existing building.

The Growth Plan requires municipalities to direct a significant portion of new growth to the “built-up area” in the community through intensification and to focus intensification in intensification areas and corridors. It is the responsibility of the Province (specifically the Minister) to delineate the “built-up areas” within urban areas within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

In Innisfil, built boundaries have been delineated in Alcona and Cookstown. These boundaries are shown in pink in **Figures 1** and **2**. In the other settlements (Stroud, Churchill, Fennell’s Corners, Sandy Cove, Lefroy-Belle Ewart and Gilford), no built boundaries were defined by the Province. These settlement areas are classified as having an undelineated built boundary. In settlement areas classified as having an undelineated built boundary, the entire settlement area comprises the built boundary. Thus, any development in these settlements counts towards the intensification target.

Figure 1: Built Boundary in Alcona

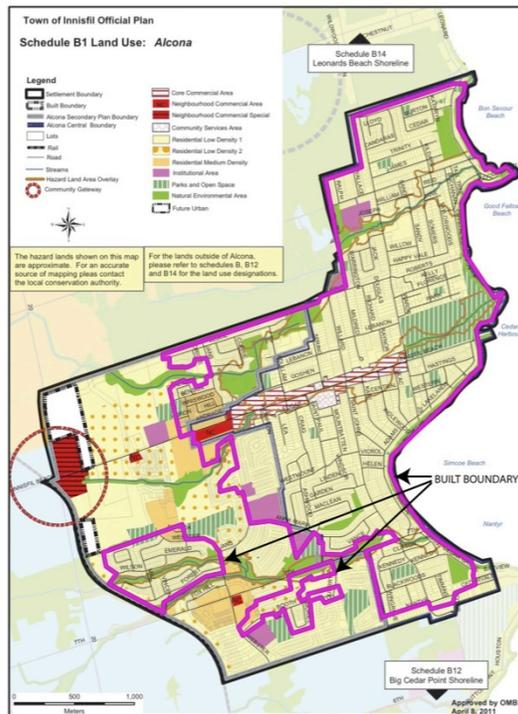
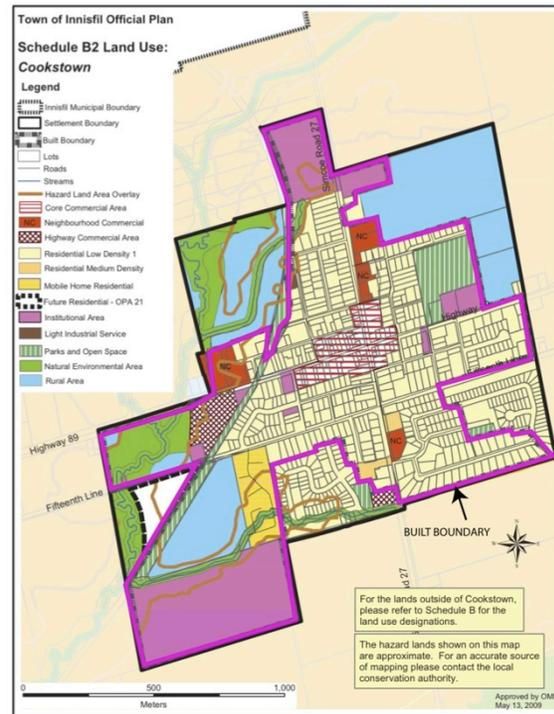


Figure 2: Built Boundary in Cookstown



The Growth Plan sets a target for the percentage of growth that must occur within the built boundaries in the County of Simcoe by the year 2015 and each year after. Any growth within the built boundary in Alcona and Cookstown (shown in **Figures 1** and **2**) and growth throughout the other settlements in Innisfil counts towards the minimum intensification target.

Further, the Growth Plan directs municipalities to develop through their Official Plans a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve intensification and the intensification target. Among other things, the intensification strategy is to:

- “encourage intensification generally throughout the built-up area;
- identify intensification areas to support achievement of the intensification target;
- recognize urban growth centres, intensification corridors and major transit station areas as a key focus for development to accommodate intensification;
- identify the appropriate type and scale of development in intensification areas; and
- plan for a range and mix of housing, taking into account affordable housing needs.”

Official Plans are also to designate intensification corridors, which should include a “mix of residential, office institutional and commercial development, where appropriate,” and be planned to “accommodate local services including recreation, cultural and entertainment uses” (Section 2.2.5.1 and 2.2.5.3, respectively).

Simcoe County Official Plan

The Simcoe County Official Plan directs local municipalities to plan to meet their respective intensification target by 2015 and every year thereafter. In the Town of Innisfil, this target is 33% (Section 3.5.24), thus, 33% of the Town’s residential development must occur within the built boundary.

Further, in Section 3.5.25 of the Official Plan, the County requires that local municipalities include an intensification strategy in their Official Plan. Through the strategy, local municipalities shall

- “promote and facilitate intensification and efficient use of land in built-up areas,
- identify intensification areas to support achievement of the intensification target,
- promote the development of mixed use areas 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 in intensification areas on stable residential areas including consideration of transitional densities, built form and land uses,
- identify means to protect stable residential areas outside of intensification areas, and
- develop cost-effective and land efficient development standards...”

The County, through its Official Plan, has also identified primary settlement areas where growth will be focused and requires that local municipalities must, in their official plans, recognize these primary settlement areas, identify intensification areas within these primary settlement areas and ensure policies support development of primary settlement areas as attractive and vibrant places (Section 3.5.6).

Within Innisfil, Alcona is identified as a Primary Settlement Area.

Innisfil Official Plan

The existing official plan provides direction on intensification by encouraging it within settlement areas, particularly in the Core Commercial Area designation, which, along corridors, are planned as intensification corridors, under section 2.3.3.

The Official Plan addresses infill, intensification and neighbourhood character in section 2.10 by, recognizing a need for protection of existing residential neighbourhoods from undue impacts and recognizing that development should be in keeping with the scale and character of the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

To ensure neighbourhood character is protected, in Section 2.10.5, the Official Plan also specifically provides direction on elements to consider during the application process for intensification proposals. These elements include overlook, shadow and transition of heights and densities. Further, specific to urban design, the Official Plan also provides policies with regards to encouraging infill and intensification that respects the scale of existing uses and built form, that reinforces the facades of the main street and that complements heights, massing, scale and architectural features of the neighbourhood character (Section 5.5/6.5).

The Official Plan also contemplates the location of intensification, to ensure existing residential neighbourhoods are protected, by requiring an update of the Alcona and Cookstown Secondary plan with the purpose of identifying and facilitating infill and intensification areas.

In summary, the Provincial and County level policies require that the Town's Official Plan encourage intensification and designate intensification areas. The existing Official Plan already does address and encourage intensification, and it does so in a manner that requires consideration in how intensification will impact existing residential areas. Section 3 of this report discusses further potential additions and refinement of the existing policies.

3 INTENSIFICATION ANALYSIS

This section identifies potential intensification areas within Innisfil. To conduct the intensification analysis, the Town’s vacant lot inventory was updated in comparison to air photos while taking into account in-progress applications. The analysis identified different categories of intensification potential. Maps from the land budget analysis are shown in **Appendix A**.

Within many of the settlements, individual lots with potential for one unit were identified. These lots are shown in yellow on the maps in **Appendix A**. Also identified were properties that may be subdivided or severed to accommodate more than one unit. These properties are shown in pink on the maps in **Appendix A**. Despite being in a built-up area, there are some areas which are vacant but currently designated as Rural. These areas would require re-designation to an urban designation in order for intensification to be permitted. These areas are shown as brown on the maps in **Appendix A**. Specific only to Innisfil Beach Road are areas identified as “Potential Redevelopment Intensification Site”. Residential intensification is permitted on these sites through the policies of the Core Commercial Area designation in Alcona. For clarity, currently vacant areas that are subject to subdivision applications, draft plan of subdivision approvals or registered plans of subdivision are also shown in **Appendix A**.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of potential areas available to intensification by settlement.

Table 1

	Alcona	Churchill	Cookstown	Fennell's Corner	Gilford	Innisfil Heights	Lefory Belle-Ewart	Sandy Cove	Stroud	Total
Area of Vacant Lots with Multiple Unit Potential (Hectres)	9.0	8.5	3.7	0.0	22.6	0.0	16.7	19.2	41.8	121.5
Area Medium of Density Designation (hectares)	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Area of Retirement residential Area Designations	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.8	0.0	99.8
Area of Rural Designation (hectares)	0.0	0.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4	0.0	15.9
Area Potential Intensification Site Along Innisfil Beach Road (hectares)	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Area of Draft Plan of Subdivision (In Progress or Registered) (hectares)	17.8	14.5	6.2	0.0	9.9	0.0	133.1	71.2	18.2	270.8
Total	34.3	23.0	19.7	0.0	32.5	0.0	149.8	196.7	60.0	515.9

All of the settlement areas have some potential for intensification, from a single vacant lot to larger vacant properties that will likely develop through a plan of subdivision. At a density of 40 uph for the medium density designation, 10 uph for the retirement residential designation, and 12.5 uph for the low density residential designation, approximately 2,730 units could be expected from the vacant properties in the settlements, in addition to the 200 vacant infill lots identified throughout the settlements (see **Table 2**). In addition to the potential unit yields in **Table 2**, the Innisfil Beach Road Area has further intensification potential, which warrants further consideration. The Land Budget and Municipal Comprehensive Review Discussion Paper, prepared by SGL Planning & Design, factors in unit potential along Innisfil Beach Road. It is important to note, particularly with the vacant lots, that not all of the units provided in **Table 2** may develop in the 2031 time period.

Table 2

	Alcona	Churchill	Cookstown	Fennell's Corner	Gilford	Innisfil Heights	Lefory Belle-Ewart	Sandy Cove	Stroud	Total
# of Vacant Lots (1 unit Potential)	77	3	13	1	8	0	65	25	8	200
Estimated units from vacant lots with multiple lot potential	112	106	179	0	282	0	209	1,319	522	2,730

While a more fulsome discussion on the land budget is contained within the Land Budget and Municipal Comprehensive Review Discussion Paper prepared by SGL Planning & Design, the figures in **Appendix A** and **Tables 1** and **2**, highlight the different forms and location of intensification that Innisfil can expect in the future, which includes intensification in both the stable residential areas and in Intensification areas, which are both discussed further in the next section.

4 INTENSIFICATION IN STABLE RESIDENTIAL AREAS

As is evident from the review of intensification potential, there are many opportunities for infill and intensification within the various settlements including within existing neighbourhoods. As discussed in previous sections of this report, several sections of the existing Innisfil Official Plan speak to the protection of existing neighbourhood character while encouraging infill and intensification. Given the intensification potential identified in existing residential areas, consideration should be given to strengthening the policies on protecting the character of stable residential neighbourhoods.

The existing policies provide direction on protecting neighbourhood character, in terms of building height, massing, and scale of architectural features, transition in height and densities, and consideration of impacts, such as shadowing and overlook. Some additional policies or revisions to the existing policies to also address setbacks consistent with the neighbourhood character could also be considered. In addition, specific policies relating to severances and lot frontage and lot area requirements could be added to ensure the neighbourhood character is respected when vacant lots are subdivided.

Larger sites will often be developed by plan of subdivisions which have a different potential for impact than an infill lot in an existing residential neighbourhood. Like the Designated Greenfield Areas, these sites may be developed in a built form tradition that is compact, supportive of transit and active transportation and an efficient use of land and services. This housing may be in a different form than the traditional built form in existing Innisfil neighbourhoods. Inherent in permitting this form of development is ensuring that this development form fits within the context of the broader community. For example, it would be important to encourage transition of heights and densities between these new areas and any adjacent existing homes. Maximum density, in particular, can be used to ensure that development of any larger parcel that is adjacent to, or even within, a stable residential neighbourhood, maintains the appropriate neighbourhood character or provides an appropriate transition. There is a need for a balance and detailed policy criteria to guide such development to consider proper integration into the existing community. The Implementation of policies to this effect should be considered moving forward.

Second dwelling units, self-contained dwellings unit with their own kitchen and bathroom facilities that are separate from the primary dwelling property, are currently permitted in Innisfil in single-detached, semi-detached and townhouse

units, subject to certain conditions. According to the Town of Innisfil staff report DSR-113-15, while there are many suspected second units in Innisfil, few are registered. As the town is working towards improving the feasibility of registering secondary suites, it is hoped that this form of intensification will increase within stable residential areas.

5 INTENSIFICATION AREAS

As discussed in the policy review, the Core Commercial Area designations are identified as areas where intensification is to be encouraged. Since Alcona is identified as a Primary Settlement Area, the Core Commercial Area of Innisfil Beach Road should be recognized as an Intensification Area where intensification should specifically be encouraged.

The existing Official Plan currently provides the following policies for the Core Commercial Areas:

- Mixed residential/commercial uses should be permitted and encouraged with a maximum height of 7 storeys;
- Height in excess of 7 storeys shall require a site specific amendment or be set out in a Secondary Plan;
- The minimum density for mixed-use development shall be 60 units; and
- Mixed residential/commercial buildings shall provide a transition in heights and densities adjacent to Residential Low Density Areas, including increased setbacks, and the use of a 45% angular plane from the property line of adjacent low density housing. Such buildings should be brought up to the street in which they front but be stepped back from the front wall above the 3 storeys.

The Alcona Secondary Plan policies also clarify that the residential component of the mixed use building must be above the first floor.

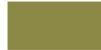
In both the parent Official Plan and in the Alcona Secondary Plan, existing policies speak to encouraging development in the area, in a walkable, compact, attractive manner. The existing policies generally encourage development in the Innisfil Beach Road area, but there is an opportunity to further strengthen these policies. Since the last Official Plan designated this area as a mixed use area permitting 7 stories, there has been no residential intensification at that level. Thus, more consideration of how this form of development could be encouraged may be needed. Also, the function for this area is not only residential intensification, but also commercial intensification, in order to create a vibrant main street. In order to achieve these two objectives, there may need to be a focus in some areas for predominantly commercial intensification and in other areas predominantly residential intensification, in order to get the vibrancy established. Thus, the Official Plan review may need to consider where to focus the commercial intensification and where to focus the higher density residential intensification in the Core Commercial area.

There is also an opportunity to revisit the policies that address the boundary between the Core Commercial area and the adjacent low-density residential area. Given that the Core Commercial areas permits up to 7 stories and the abutting residential is generally buildings one or two storeys high, there is an opportunity to create some transition areas behind the Core Commercial area, where greater densities and/or heights are permitted, to form a more fluid transition between the Core Commercial area and adjacent residential areas.

Besides the Core Commercial area, other intensification areas and corridors could be considered. These other intensification corridors could include along St Johns Road and 25th Side Road in Alcona, at the southwest corner of Lockhart Road and 25th Side Road in Sandy Cove and along Ewart Street in Lefroy.

Sandy Cove



-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)

0 250 500 1,000 Meters





-  Built Boundary
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)
-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered

0 250 500 1,000 1,500 Meters





-  Built Boundary
-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered

0 250 500 Meters



Innisfil Heights

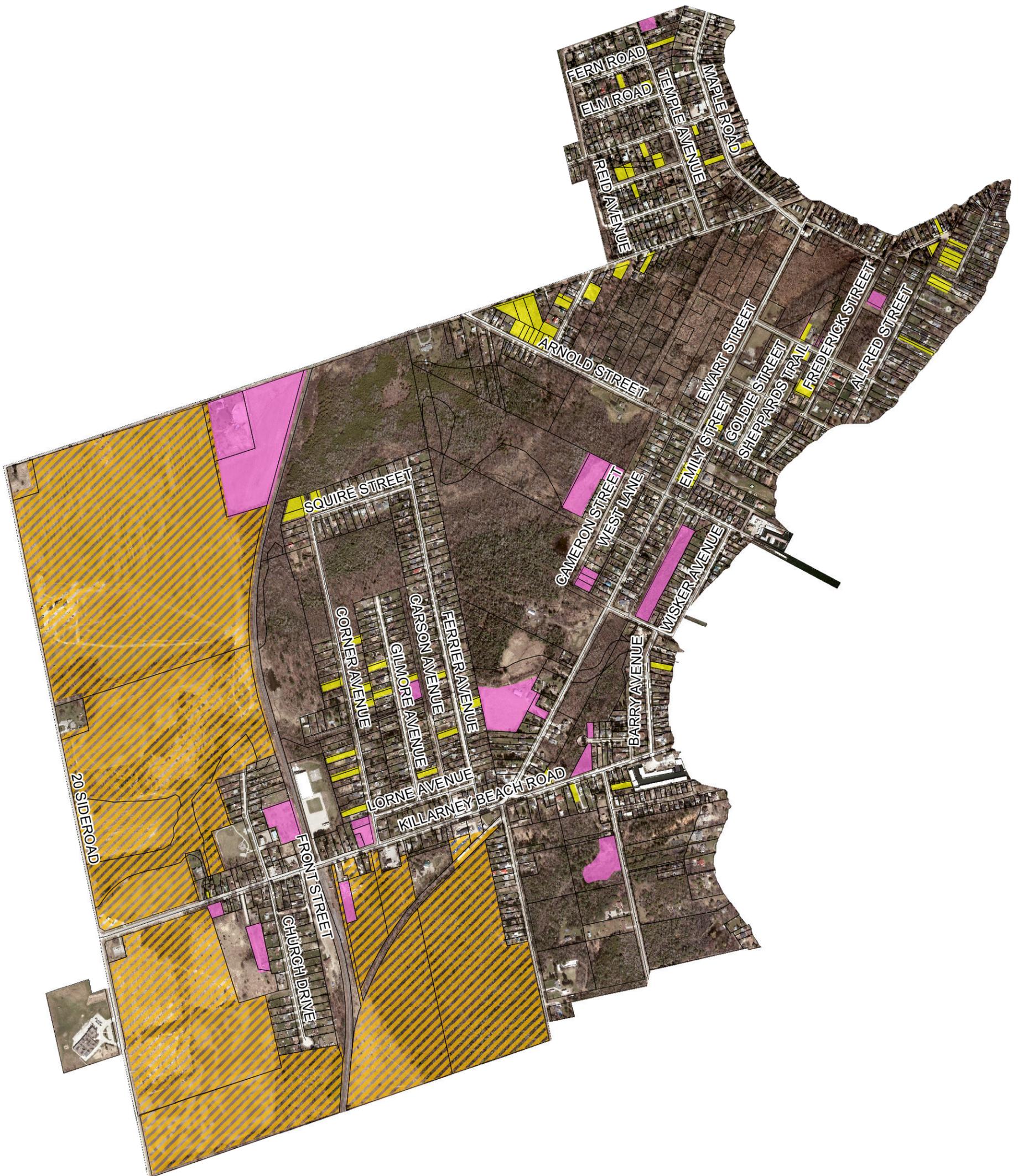


-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)

0 250 500 1,000 Meters



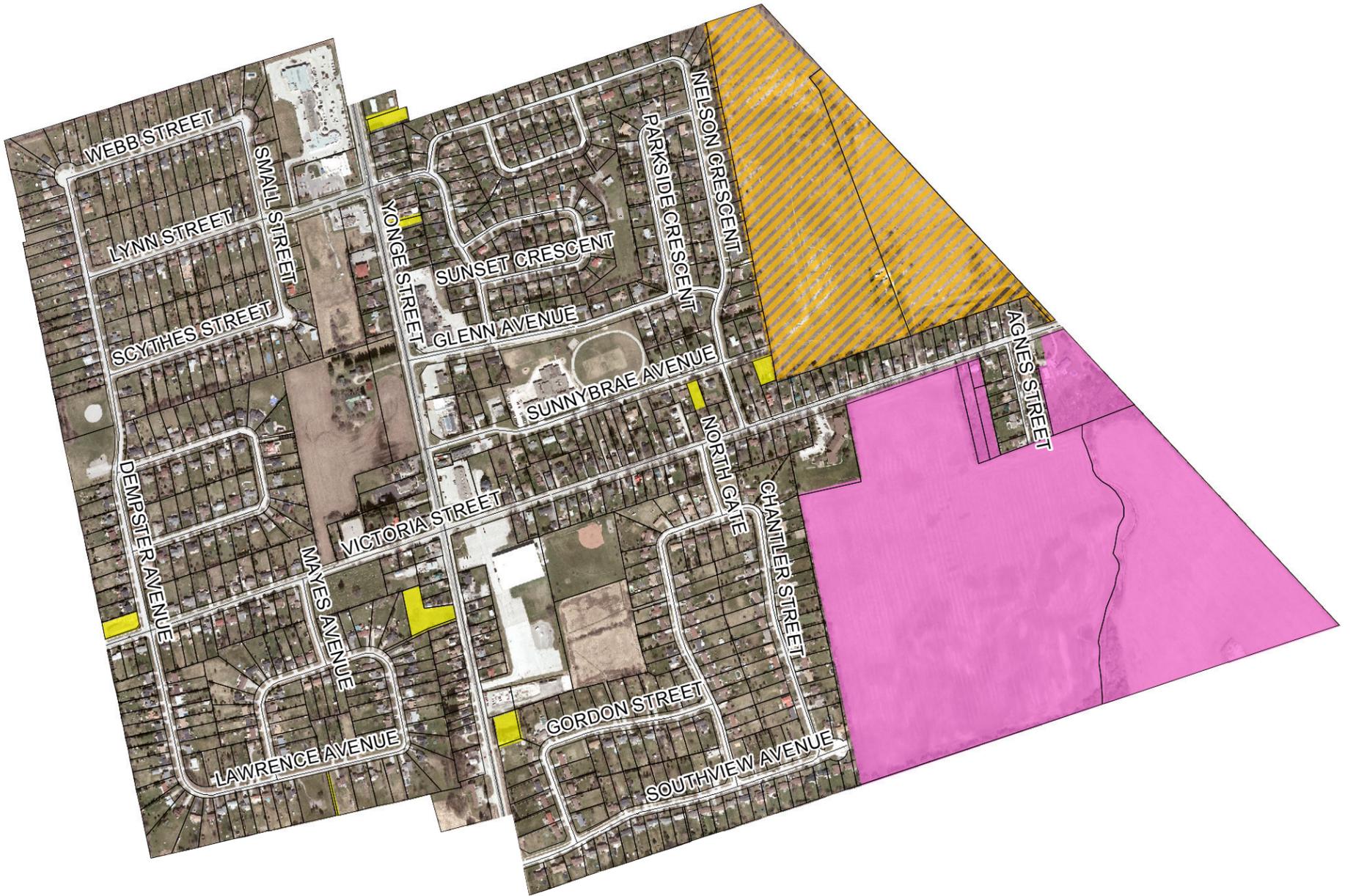
Lefroy - Belle Ewart



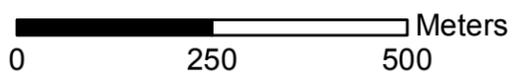
-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)

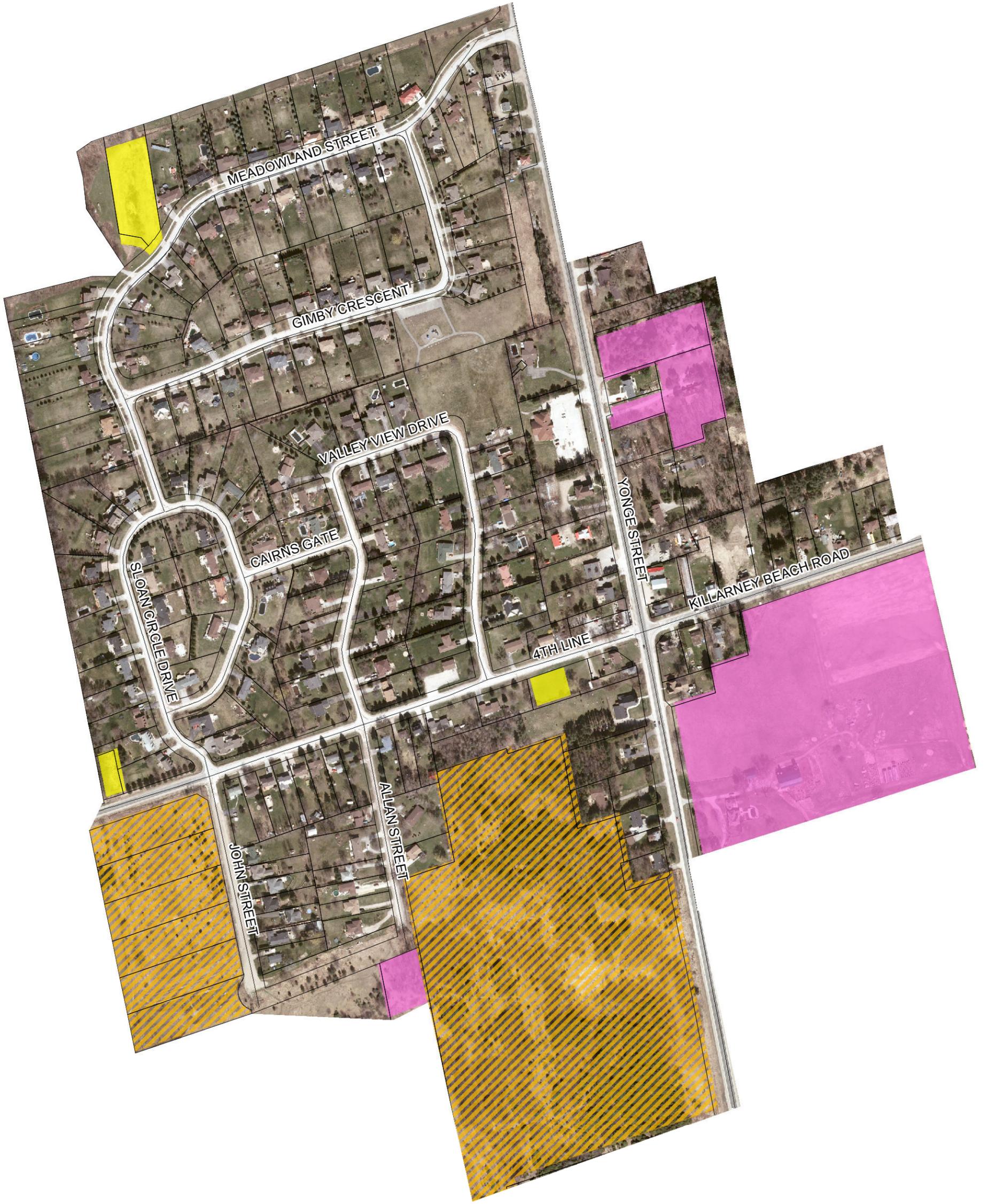
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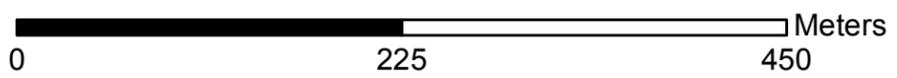


-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)





-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)



Fennell's Corners



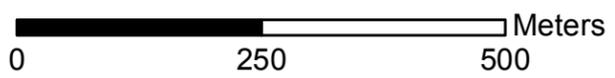
-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Rural Intensification
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)

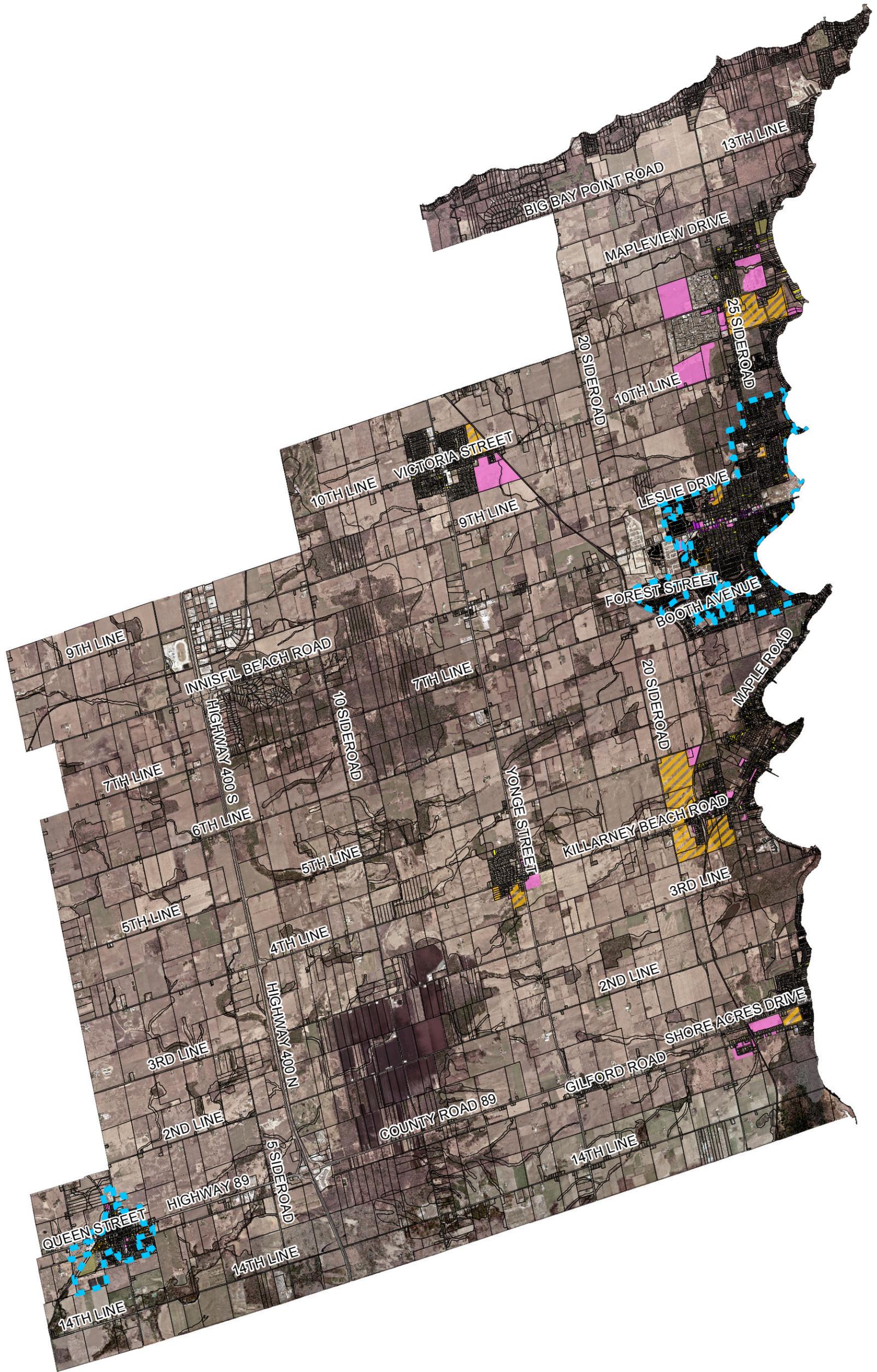
0 180 360 Meters





- Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
- Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
- Rural Intensification
- Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered
- Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)





-  Built Boundary
-  Vacant Lot (Multiple Unit Potential)
-  Rural Intensification
-  Vacant Infill lot (1 unit potential)
-  Potential Intensification Site along Innisfil Beach Road
-  Draft Plan of Subdivision - In Progress or Registered

 Meters
 0 250 500 750 1000 1250 1500 1750 2000

