



**AGENDA**  
**UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS & GLENGARRY**

**Monday, November 15, 2021, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Council Chambers, Suite 321, 26 Pitt Street, Cornwall ON**

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. Call Meeting to Order by Resolution</b>	
<b>2. Adoption of Agenda</b>	
All matters listed under Consent Agenda, are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. Should a Council member wish an alternative action from the proposed recommendation, the Council member shall request that this matter be moved to the appropriate section at this time.	
<b>3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof</b>	
<b>4. Adoption of Minutes</b>	
<b>4.1. October 18, 2021</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Delegations</b>	
<b>5.1. Mobile Crisis Response Program, Detachment Commander Marc Hemmerick, Staff Sergeant Malcolm McPherson, PC Jim Blanchette, Angel Quesnel and Ann Zeren, Cornwall Community Hospital</b>	
<b>5.2. Ronald McDonald House Charities Ottawa - Christine Hardy, Chief Executive Officer</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5.3. Natural Heritage Study - Alison McDonald, Team Lead, South Nation Conservation Authority</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>5.4. SDG's 2021 Bridge Inspections - Harold Kleywegt, Keystone Bridge Management</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>6. Action Requests</b>	
<b>6.1. Corporate Services</b>	
a. Improving Rural Education Report	52
b. SDG Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	209
<b>6.2. Financial Services</b>	
<b>6.3. Transportation</b>	
<b>6.4. Planning</b>	
a. SDG Natural Heritage Study	231
b. Affordable Housing	263

c.	<b>Request to Initiate an Official Plan Amendment – Priority Bedrock Area</b>	305
6.5.	<b>Court Services</b>	
6.6.	<b>County Library</b>	
6.7.	<b>IT Services</b>	
7.	<b>Tenders and Quotations</b>	
8.	<b>By-laws</b>	
8.1.	<b>Lease Extension Agreement – Catering2Kidz</b>	308
8.2.	<b>Speed Limit Updates – Morrisburg and Winchester</b>	312
9.	<b>Consent Agenda</b>	
9.1.	<b>Monthly Activity Summaries</b>	325
9.2.	<b>Monthly Financial Summary</b>	333
9.3.	<b>SDG Library Branch Reports</b>	334
9.4.	<b>Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Letter re: AMO Conference Delegation</b>	337
9.5.	<b>CUPE Letter re: OMERS</b>	339
10.	<b>Boards and Committees</b>	
	Council Representatives:	
	Joint Liaison Committee - Jamie MacDonald,	
	Steven Byvelds, Allan Armstrong, Bryan McGillis	
	Library Board - Lyle Warden, Tony Fraser, Frank Landry, David Smith	
	Police Services Board - Jim Wert, Bryan McGillis	
	Eastern Ontario Health Unit - Carma Williams, Kirsten Gardner	
	Glen Stor Dun Lodge – Steven Byvelds, Lyle Warden	
	Cornwall and Area Housing – David Smith, Jim Wert	
	St. Lawrence River Institute – Kirsten Gardner	
	Raisin-South Nation Source Water Protection – Carma Williams	
	Municipal Advisory, Algonquin Land Claim – Tony Fraser	
	Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network – Carma Williams	
	Regional Emergency Response Council – Carma Williams	
11.	<b>Key Information</b>	
11.1.	<b>Project Update - Morrisburg Roundabout</b>	343
11.2.	<b>Project Update - CPR Bridge Winchester</b>	345
11.3.	<b>2021 Resurfacing Program</b>	347
12.	<b>Motions and Notices of Motions</b>	
13.	<b>Petitions</b>	
14.	<b>Miscellaneous Business</b>	
15.	<b>Unfinished Business Summary</b>	



**16. Closed Session**

**16.1. Labour Relations Matters**

Pursuant to Section 239 (2) (d) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* - labour relations or employee negotiations

**16.2. HR Matter**

Pursuant to Section 239 (2) (b) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* - personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees

**17. Ratification By-law**

**17.1. By-Law No. 5325**

348

**18. Adjournment by Resolution**



## **REGULAR COUNCIL MINUTES**

**United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry**

**October 18, 2021, 9:00 a.m.**

**Council Chambers, Suite 321, 26 Pitt Street, Cornwall**

Members Present: Warden A. Armstrong, Councillors S. Byvelds, T. Fraser, K. Gardner, S. Jaworski, F. Landry, J. MacDonald, B. McGillis, D. Smith, J. Wert, C. Williams

Staff Present: CAO Simpson, Clerk Casselman, Director de Haan, Director Franklin, Director Russell, Director St-Onge, Director Young, Manager of Infrastructure Jans, Manager of Economic Development Kirkpatrick

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**1. Call Meeting to Order by Resolution**

**Resolution No. 2021-225**

**Moved by** Councillor Smith

**Seconded by** Councillor MacDonald

THAT the meeting of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry be hereby called to order.

CARRIED

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

**Resolution No. 2021-226**

**Moved by** Councillor Fraser

**Seconded by** Councillor Byvelds

THAT Council approve the agenda.

CARRIED

**3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof**

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

**4.1 September 20 & October 8, 2021**

**Resolution No. 2021-227**

**Moved by** Councillor MacDonald

**Seconded by** Councillor Fraser

THAT the minutes of the meeting, including the in-camera minutes, of the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, held September 20 and October 8, 2021, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

**5. Delegations**

**5.1 Jail Feasibility Study - Loren Christie, Managing Director, Loren Christie Solutions**

Loren Christie, Managing Director, Loren Christie Solutions, presented information on the process for the Jail Feasibility Study and acquiring Council feedback. Council agreed to schedule a meeting in the near future to provide feedback to Mr. Christie.

**5.2 River Institute - Dr. Jeff Ridal, Executive Director, Dr. Leigh McGaughey, Research Scientist, Lee Theodore, Project Coordinator Future Climate Leaders**

Dr. Jeff Ridal, Executive Director, Dr. Leigh McGaughey Research Scientist, and Lee Theodore, Project Coordinator, presented information on the River Institute and their funding request for 2022.

**5.3 Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network - Tom Manley, Executive Director**

Tom Manley, Executive Director, presented information on the Eastern Ontario Agri-Food Network and the organization's funding request for 2022.

#### **5.4 Education Review Report - Monika Ferenczy, Horizon Educational Consulting**

Monika Ferenczy, Horizon Educational Consulting, presented information on the draft Education Review Report.

Council took a brief recess at 10:40 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:53 a.m.

### **6. Action Requests**

#### **6.1 Corporate Services**

##### **a. Approval of the August Intake of Applications for the Regional Incentives Program**

##### **Resolution No. 2021-228**

**Moved by** Councillor Landry

**Seconded by** Councillor Wert

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry approves funding under the Stay, Discover, Grow, Regional Incentives Program in the total amount of \$173,181.80 for the following nine (9) projects:

1. 2685416 Ontario Inc. (O'Farrell Financial), Township of North Dundas - \$19,500
2. Ritchie Feed and Seed Inc., Township of North Dundas - \$34,000
3. Smirlholm Farms Honey, Township of North Dundas - \$9,681.80
4. Finch Laundromat, Township of North Stormont - \$25,000
5. Dentz Orchards and Berry Farm, Municipality of South Dundas - \$2,500
6. Whittaker Storage Inc., Municipality of South Dundas - \$12,500
7. Ferme Butte & Bine Farm, Township of South Glengarry - \$22,000
8. Lost Villages Brewery, Township of South Stormont - \$45,000

9. Lion Motel, Township of South Stormont - \$3,000

CARRIED

## **6.2 Financial Services**

## **6.3 Transportation**

### **a. Design of East Castor River Bridge**

#### **Resolution No. 2021-229**

**Moved by** Councillor Byvelds

**Seconded by** Councillor Landry

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry accept the proposal from Jacobs to complete the design of the East Castor River Bridge Rehabilitation for a total price of \$45,590.00 plus HST; and

THAT the Director of Transportation Services be authorized to sign all necessary documents to give effect to the contract.

CARRIED

### **b. Design of Hoople Creek Bridge**

#### **Resolution No. 2021-230**

**Moved by** Councillor MacDonald

**Seconded by** Councillor Williams

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry accept the proposal from J. L. Richards & Associates Limited to complete the design of the Hoople Creek Bridge Rehabilitation for a total price of \$42,450.25 plus HST; and

THAT the Director of Transportation Services be authorized to sign all necessary documents to give effect to the contract.

CARRIED

#### **6.4 Planning**

##### **a. SDG Growth Management Strategy Contract**

###### **Resolution No. 2021-231**

**Moved by** Councillor Byvelds

**Seconded by** Councillor Smith

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry authorizes the non-competitive procurement of professional services under Purchasing Policy 1-12 - Schedule B, Non-competitive purchasing Section 6, when compatibility with existing products is necessary or to recognize exclusive licenses or copyrights, and further

THAT Council award the contract for the SDG Growth Management Strategy to Watson and Associates Economists Limited and Re: Public Urbanism for the amount of \$95,000 plus HST.

CARRIED

#### **6.5 Court Services**

#### **6.6 County Library**

#### **6.7 IT Services**

### **7. Tenders and Quotations**

#### **7.1 Plow and Spreader Purchase**

###### **Resolution No. 2021-232**

**Moved by** Councillor Landry

**Seconded by** Councillor MacDonald

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry accept the tender from Cornwall Freightliner for one Diesel Cab & Chassis at the total price of \$134,985.00 plus HST, and

THAT Council accept the tender from Gin-Cor Industries for associated plow equipment at their submitted price of \$149,920.00 plus HST, and

THAT the Director of Transportation Services be authorized to sign all necessary documents to give effect to the contracts.

CARRIED

## **8. By-laws**

### **8.1 Procedure By-Law Updates**

#### **Resolution No. 2021-233**

**Moved by** Councillor McGillis

**Seconded by** Councillor Smith

THAT By-Law No. 5317, being a by-law to govern the proceedings of Council and its Committees, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed.

CARRIED

### **8.2 LiDAR Agreement**

#### **Resolution No. 2021-234**

**Moved by** Councillor Fraser

**Seconded by** Councillor Byvelds

THAT By-law 5318, being a By-law to enter into an agreement between the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and South Nation Conservation Authority and Raisin Region Conservation Authority to acquire airborne topographic LiDAR within SDG, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed.

CARRIED

### **8.3 Encroachment Agreement - Matilda CON 1 Lot 4**

#### **Resolution No. 2021-235**

**Moved by** Councillor Williams

**Seconded by** Councillor Landry

THAT By-law No. 5319, being a By-law for the purpose of establishing an encroachment agreement between the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and Mr. Michael Farlinger, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed.

CARRIED

#### **8.4 Lands Acquired**

##### **Resolution No. 2021-236**

**Moved by** Councillor Smith

**Seconded by** Councillor McGillis

THAT By-law 5320, being a By-law to establish land as part of a highway, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed.

CARRIED

#### **8.5 Encroachment Agreement at 11669 County Road 18**

##### **Resolution No. 2021-237**

**Moved by** Councillor MacDonald

**Seconded by** Councillor Byvelds

THAT By-law No. 5321, being a By-law for the purpose of establishing an encroachment agreement between the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and 1737814 Ontario Inc., be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed

CARRIED

#### **9. Consent Agenda**

##### **Resolution No. 2021-238**

**Moved by** Councillor Landry

**Seconded by** Councillor MacDonald

THAT all items listed under the Consent Agenda section of the Agenda be received for information purposes and filed.

CARRIED



- 9.1 Monthly Activity Summaries**
- 9.2 Monthly Financial Summary**
- 9.3 SDG Library Branch Reports**
- 9.4 Resolution re: Underfunding Eyecare - Municipality of South Dundas**

**10. Boards and Committees**

Member of Council provided updates on various board and committee activities.

**11. Key Information**

**11.1 Economic Development and Tourism - Activities Report**

Tara Kirkpatrick, Manager of Economic Development, presented an Economic Development and Tourism update. Todd Lihou, Communications Coordinator, presentation information on the proposed SDG Historic Tour.

**11.2 2021 Transportation Projects Update**

Mike Jans, Manager of Infrastructure, provided an update on 2021 Transportation projects.

**11.3 SDG Forest Annual Report**

Pat Piitz, Designated Forest Manager, South Nation Conservation, presented the SDG Forest Annual Report.

**12. Motions and Notices of Motions**

**13. Petitions**

**14. Miscellaneous Business**

**14.1 Election of Warden, 2022**

**Resolution No. 2021-239**

**Moved by** Councillor MacDonald

**Seconded by** Councillor Fraser

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry supports that the sitting Warden not vote in the election of Warden in order to prevent a tie vote and that this be a suggested best practice moving forward.

CARRIED

Clerk Casselman administered the election of Warden for 2022. Councillor Carma Williams was nominated by Councillor Fraser, seconded by Councillor Jaworski. Councillor Bryan McGillis was nominated by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Landry.

Councillor Williams and Councillor McGillis provided their remarks to Council.

Each member of Council voted by secret ballot. The votes were counted by the CAO and Clerk. The Clerk announced the Warden of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry for 2022 would be Carma Williams.

## **15. Unfinished Business Summary**

## **16. Closed Session**

### **Resolution No. 2021-240**

**Moved by** Councillor Byvelds

**Seconded by** Councillor Wert

THAT Council proceed in-camera pursuant to Section 239 (2) (f) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* – advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose: Official Plan Appeal; and

Pursuant to Section 239 (2) (c) – a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board: Purchase & Sale Matter; and

Pursuant to Section 239 (2) (b) - personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees: Performance Review for the Chief Administrative Officer.

CARRIED

**Resolution No. 2021-241**

**Moved by** Councillor MacDonald

**Seconded by** Councillor Williams

THAT Council rise from Closed Session without reporting.

**17. Ratification By-law**

**17.1 By-Law No. 5322**

**Resolution No. 2021-242**

**Moved by** Councillor Wert

**Seconded by** Councillor Landry

THAT By-Law No. 5322, being a by-law to adopt, confirm and ratify matters dealt with by resolution, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed.

CARRIED

**18. Adjournment by Resolution**

**Resolution No. 2021-243**

**Seconded by** Councillor Williams

THAT Council adjourn to the call of the Chair.

CARRIED

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Warden

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Clerk

# Louisa, Cindy, and Taylor

245 Nights of Comfort



## The Campaign for Ronald McDonald House

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry







## About us

Ronald McDonald House Charities Ottawa (RMHCO) provides critical social infrastructure for families of children seeking treatment at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). Built on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation, RMHCO is located on the CHEO campus, a mere 167 steps away from CHEO's front door, offering families the peace of mind that their loved ones are never far from reach.

## Overview

Our House eliminates the financial burden, mental health strain, and stress and uncertainty that comes with caring for a sick child. We provide essential social infrastructure such as accommodation, laundry facilities, warm meals, and daily programming for families traveling from out of town to care for their children, as well as day-programming and in-hospital support services for all families.

RMHCO was one of the original 5 Ronald McDonald Houses built in Canada in 1984 and we will be the last to grow. While CHEO's patient population has continued to grow, our size has remained the same and we are turning away too many families. This expansion will allow us to serve all families who are required to travel for CHEO for care and will eliminate a very long waitlist for our services.

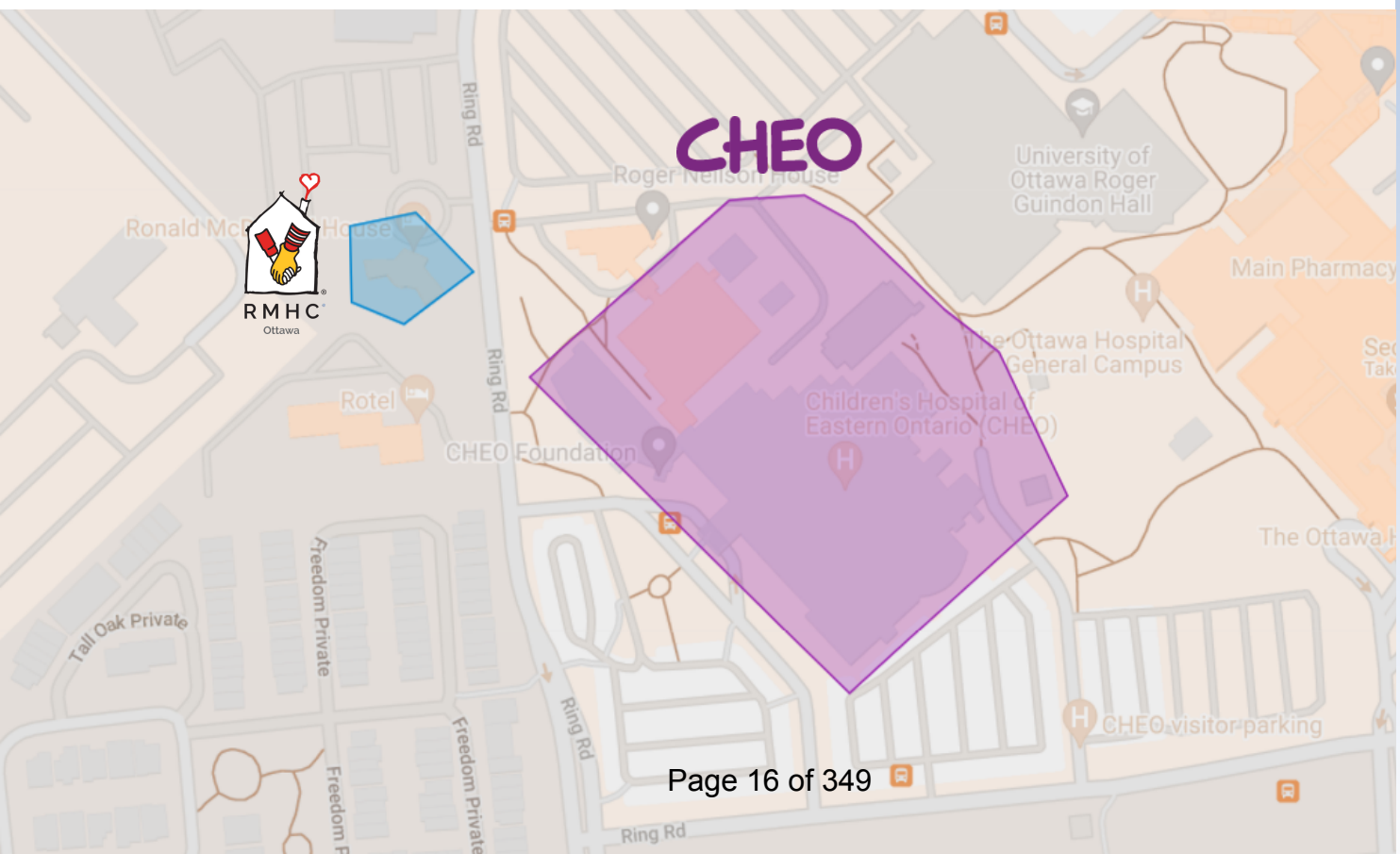
**By adding 22 bedrooms to our House, we will provide an additional 7,307 nights of comfort, equating to ~ \$2.1 million in additional family savings each year.\***

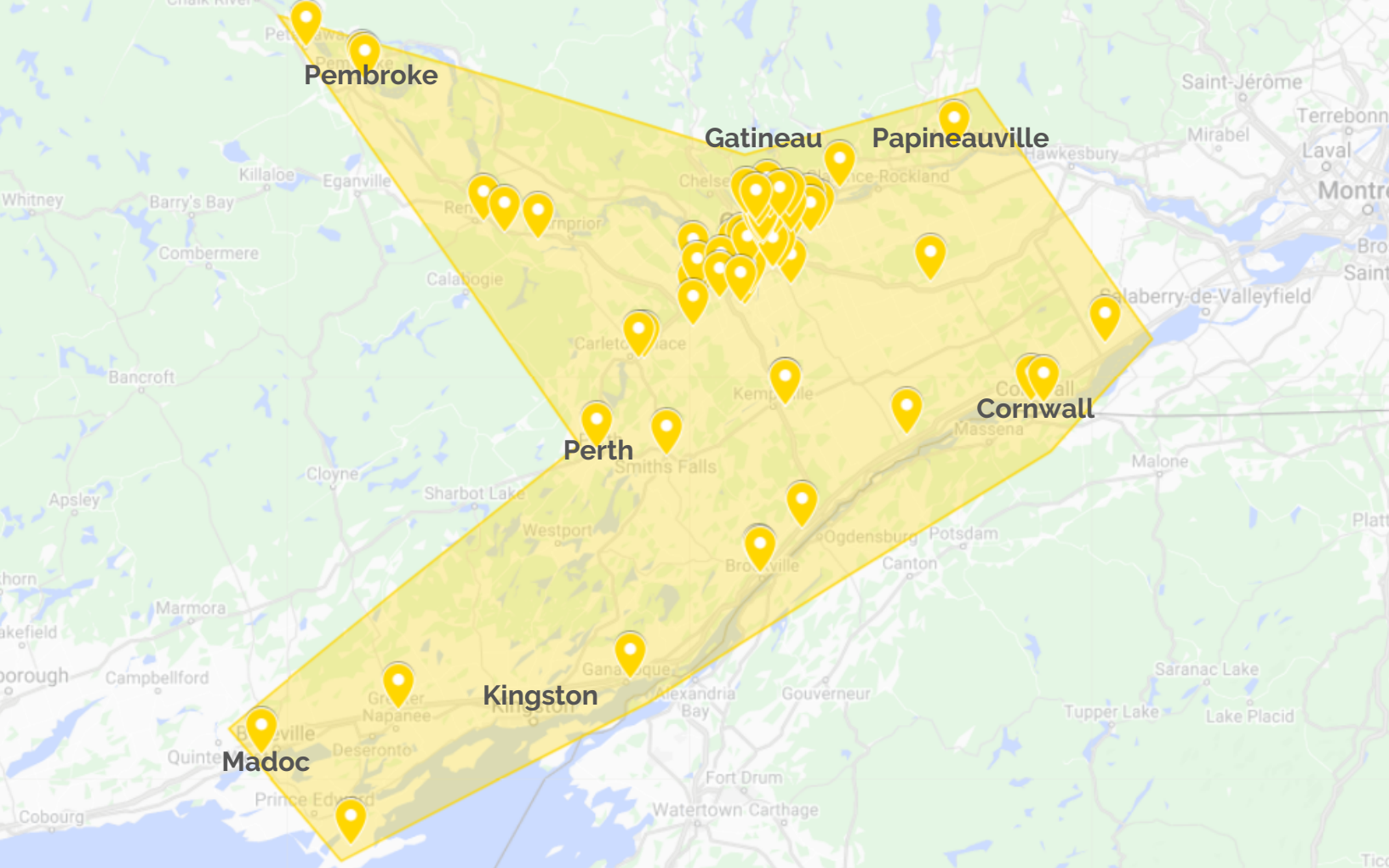
# Our House

217 families received single-visit or multiple-visit accommodation at RMHCO in 2019. Sadly, we also turned away well over 144 families due to a lack of space. Our new facility will grow by 22 rooms (22,000 square feet) accommodate 564 families per year, reducing the financial burden for all families traveling over 80 km to receive care at CHEO. CHEO depends on RMHCO to accommodate the families of patients coming from rural, northern, and Indigenous communities.

Examples of some of the communities we serve include Akwesasne, Alexandria, Brockville, Cornwall, Kirkland Lake, North Bay, Nunavut, Sudbury, Timmins, and parts of Quebec. In 2019, we welcomed families from 183 different communities.

Our only criteria is that families live a minimum of 80 km away (i.e. not a commutable distance). This is the largest minimum distance criteria of any RMH in Canada. Expanding our House will allow us to reduce this distance to support more families that live far from CHEO, this will include families from your community.





## McDonald's Canada

McDonald's restaurants across our catchment area were the first major donor to commit to this project, with a \$500,000 pledge in addition to the \$2,200,000 grant we will receive from RMHC Canada. This is over and above their annual fundraising to support our operations.

Our catchment area of McDonald's Owner/Operators spans Ontario and parts of Quebec, with support from areas all over Ottawa, and places like Cornwall, Brockville, Carleton Place, and Gatineau. There are 15 dedicated local Owner/Operators who fundraise year-round for RMHC Ottawa, with initiatives across their 71 restaurants.

McDonald's is our Founding and Forever Partner. They have supported us since the day our doors opened and their passion and enthusiasm for our mission is clear.



# Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry

RMHC Ottawa serves the patient population of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). We serve all families who are required to travel to Ottawa so their child can receive specialized medical care. Unfortunately, the demand is far greater than we can currently meet, and it is critical that we expand to address our growing waitlist.

Since our House has opened, we have served 228 families from your community for a total of 10,458 nights of comfort. Families from Alexandria, Maxville, Lancaster, and more have called our House 'home' making up 4.27% of our families in the last 37 years.

Families like the Cole family, who spent 478 nights at RMHCO while 7-year-old Jesce sought treatment for cancer. The Cole family came to our House at the beginning of the pandemic and made RMHCO their home over birthdays, holidays, and more. Sadly after 478 days at our House, the Cole family was moved to Roger Nielson House across the street, and Jesce passed away in February of 2021.





# Our Expansion

This is an \$18.9 million zero net carbon project that includes careful forecasting of the likely increases in construction costs while we plan, as well as all appropriate contingencies.

**The expansion will be approximately 25,000 square feet in size and will add 22 new bedrooms to the existing 14.**

With the completion of this net-zero project, we will be able to help an additional 347 families each year.





## Our Ask

**We are asking the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry to consider a \$250,000 gift in support of the Campaign for Ronald McDonald House.** We will work closely with you to recognize your generous gift appropriately in our new House.

Our project cost is \$18.9 million. We have raised \$5.5 million to date which includes commitments from McDonald's Canada, Ronald McDonald House Charities Canada, and our Board of Directors. We have submitted a \$9.4 million grant application to Infrastructure Canada's Green and Inclusive Community Building program in support of our net-zero project. Our road map to success is detailed below.

Gift Levels	Gifts Needed	Gift Size	Level Total	Cumulative Total
<b>GlCB Grant, if successful</b>		\$9,400,000	\$9,400,000	\$9,400,000
<b>Transformational Gifts</b>	1	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$11,900,000
	1	\$2,200,000	\$2,200,000	\$14,100,000
	2	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$16,100,000
<b>Major Gifts</b>	2	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$17,100,000
	2	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$17,600,000
	6	\$100,000	\$600,000	\$18,200,000
	<b>Many</b>	<b>Various</b>	\$700,000	\$18,900,000





## **We are a lifeline for small communities.**

The average family stays at RMHCO for 11 nights. Our House offers a cost savings of \$3,157 for these families that otherwise would have been paid out of pocket.

## **With your support..**

As leaders in a community that RMHCO has served for more than 37 years, we look forward to changing the lives of children and families alongside the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry.

# **Thank You**

**Please contact Christine Hardy, CEO at [christine@rmhottawa.com](mailto:christine@rmhottawa.com) or 613-807-6655 for more information.**





SOUTH NATION  
**CONSERVATION**  
DE LA NATION SUD

## United Counties Partner Planning: Natural Heritage Systems

November 15, 2021





# Our Local Environment; We're in it Together.



- One of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities
- Community-based watershed management
- 16 member municipalities
- 4,441 km<sup>2</sup> jurisdiction in Eastern Ontario





# Protecting People and Property: Supporting Sustainable Development



Lemieux Landslide, 1993



Ottawa River Flooding, 2017

*Through municipal agreements, we deliver:*

- Hazard Mapping (Floodplains, Landslides, Erosion and Unstable Slopes)
- Environmental Planning Reviews
- Drinking Water Source Protection
- Municipal Septic Inspection Program

*Through provincial and municipal partnerships, we:*

- Deliver Flood Forecasting and Warning and Low Water Response Programs
- Maintain Water and Erosion Control Structures (8 structures)



# Empowering Communities and Fostering Landowner Stewardship

*Through partnerships with Municipalities and Counties we work together to offer:*



In 2018, SNC planted its 3 millionth tree since 1990.

- **Tree Planting Programs**
- **Woodlot Advisory Service**
- **Clean Water Programs**

*We also work with partners to support environmental initiatives that empower our communities to make environmentally sound decisions and actions.*





# Protecting Natural Spaces and Providing Outdoor Opportunities



Cass Bridge Conservation Area in Winchester, North Dundas

*Through municipal cost-share agreements:*

- Operate 14 day-use parks and trails and 9 docks and boat launches

*Through donation and partial purchase :*

- Own 13,000 acres of community land



Forest operations support community land management.

*Through municipal cost-recovery agreement:*

- Manage 20,000 acres of SDG community forest

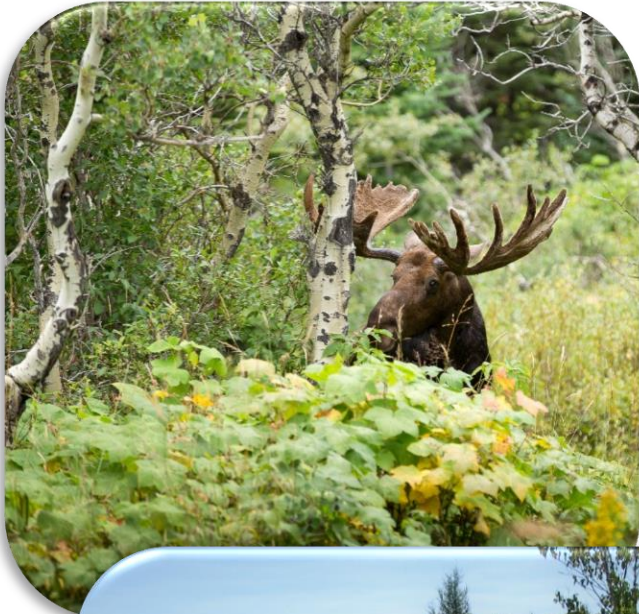




# **Partner County Planning: Natural Heritage Systems**



# What is a Natural Heritage System?



- A **Natural Heritage System (NHS)** is interconnected natural features such as forests, rivers, wetlands, and agricultural lands.
- These systems are made up of core natural areas and natural linkages
- Support wildlife movement to maintain biological diversity, natural functions, and ecosystems.



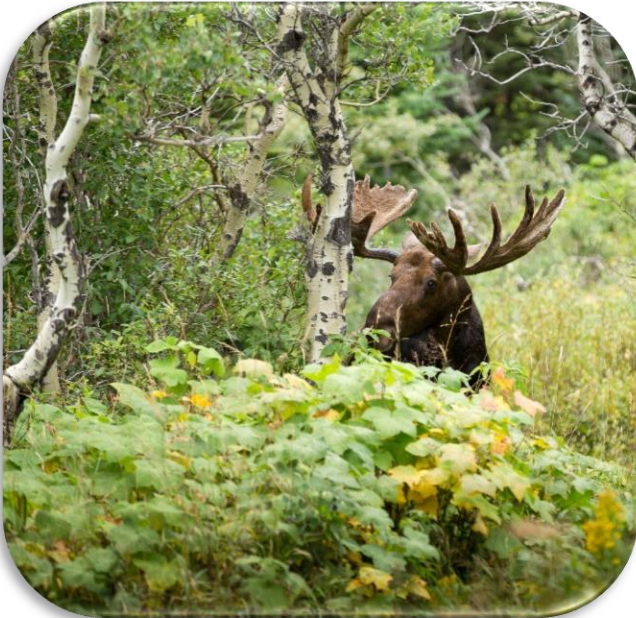
# Project Overview and Partners



## County Planning for Natural Heritage



- The County Official Plan maintains maps and policies to protect the ecological integrity of Natural Heritage Systems.
- Both Counties worked collaboratively with the Conservation Authority.
- This approach was highlighted by the Province as an excellent example of municipal collaboration.





# Fragmented vs. Connected Landscapes

## FRAGMENTED LANDSCAPE

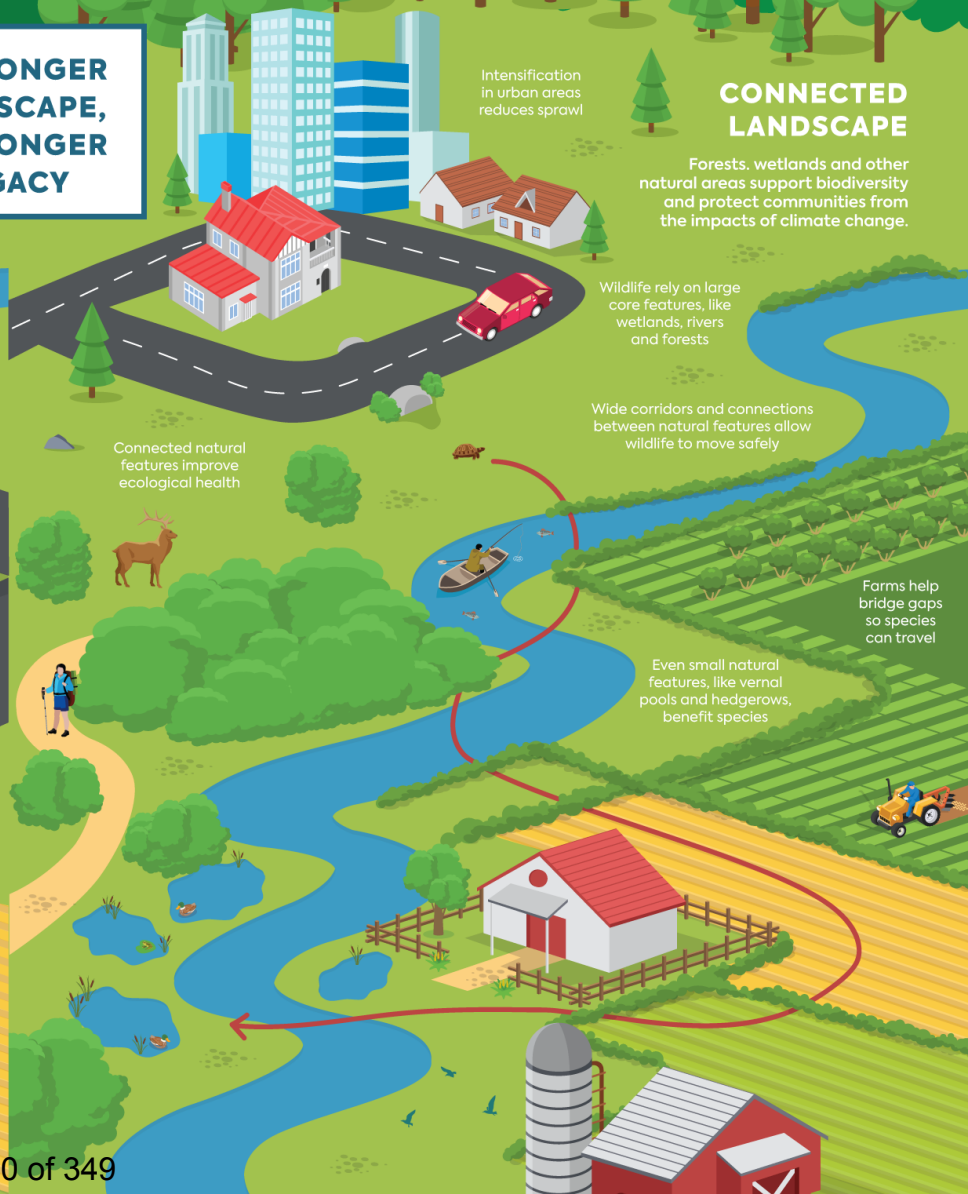
Habitat loss and fragmentation are leading causes of species decline in Southern and Eastern Ontario. Climate change is also causing a dramatic shift in the ranges of species.



## A STRONGER LANDSCAPE, A STRONGER LEGACY

## CONNECTED LANDSCAPE

Forests, wetlands and other natural areas support biodiversity and protect communities from the impacts of climate change.







# Case Study: Alice The Moose

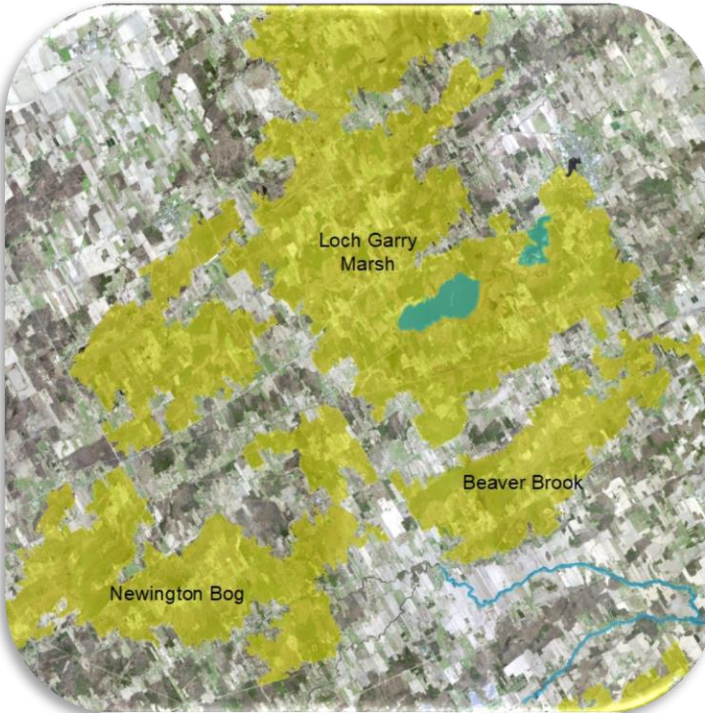


## **Study Undertaken by University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry:**

- 700-pound female moose named “Alice” collared and released by researchers into the Huntington Wildlife Forest in Newcomb, New York in 2000 and travelled for 2 years.
- She ventured north and crossed the Canada-U.S. border, swam across the St. Lawrence River, walked across Hwy. 401, and eventually made it into Algonquin Provincial Park.
- Alice’s journey spanned 570 km.



# Components of the NHS: Cores



Large natural areas



Remain naturalized



Protect biodiversity



Socially significant

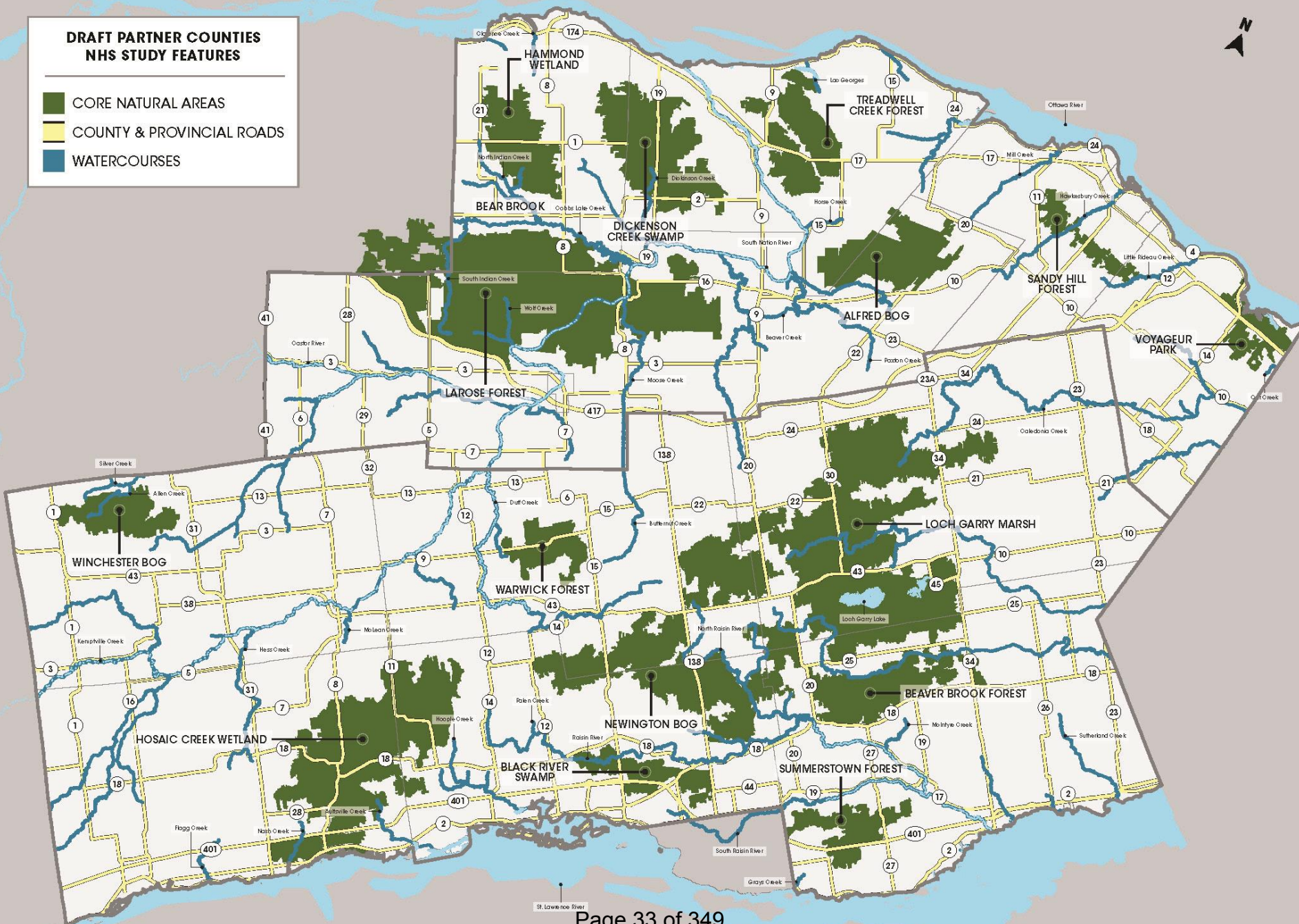


Include publicly owned lands



# DRAFT PARTNER COUNTIES NHS STUDY FEATURES

- CORE NATURAL AREAS
- COUNTY & PROVINCIAL ROADS
- WATERCOURSES





# Examples of Local Core Natural Areas



## **Loch Garry Marsh in North Glengarry**






- Provincially Significant Wetland
- 4,000 acre drainage area
- Water in Loch Garry is supplied through snowmelt and rain
- Flood prevention and stormwater retention
- Groundwater recharge
- Ensures sufficient water supply to Town of Alexandria and the Delisle River
- Osprey nesting site and other bird species
- Wildlife includes beavers, turtles, moose, fish, etc.
- Recreational opportunities provide social and economic benefits








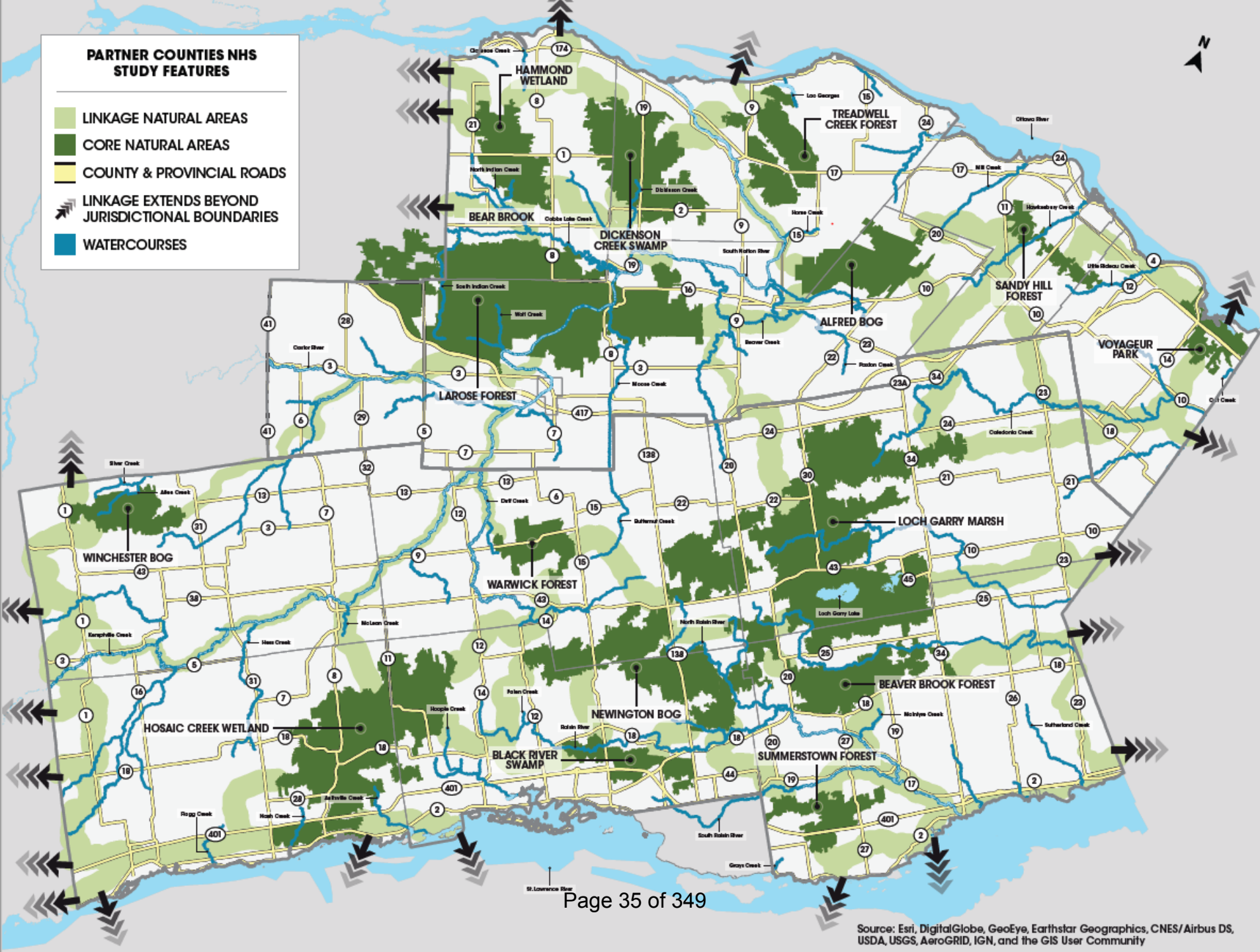


### **PARTNER COUNTIES NHS STUDY FEATURES**

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-  **LINKAGE NATURAL AREAS**
-  **CORE NATURAL AREAS**
-  **COUNTY & PROVINCIAL ROADS**
-  **LINKAGE EXTENDS BEYOND  
JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES**
-  **WATERCOURSES**

-  LINKAGE NATURAL AREAS
-  CORE NATURAL AREAS
-  COUNTY & PROVINCIAL ROADS
-  LINKAGE EXTENDS BEYOND JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES
-  WATERCOURSES





# Agriculture in the Natural Heritage System



- The NHS was mapped using approaches supported by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.
- Agricultural lands are working landscapes that provide valuable ecosystem services such as pollination, atmospheric regulation, soil retention, and wildlife habitat.
- Natural heritage policies recognize and value cooperation with private landowners to protect the environment and improve the quality of natural habitat and linkages.



## **Policy updates will address known gaps.**

- This includes environmental impact studies, coastal wetlands, and watercourse setbacks.
- Policies will be implemented to enhance, protect, and restore the critical habitat within the NHS.
- These policies will also streamline environmental reviews to make small-scale development easier for private landowners.



# NHS Implementation in County Official Plans



## **An Official Plan Amendment is needed.**

- The proposed mapping and policy updates have been through significant public engagement.
- The NHS was reviewed by County and local municipal staff.
- The MMAH was consulted and has requested a presentation for the eastern municipal planning forum.
- An Official Plan Amendment will bring the Natural Heritage System into effect to benefit our local environment.





# Why is this Important?

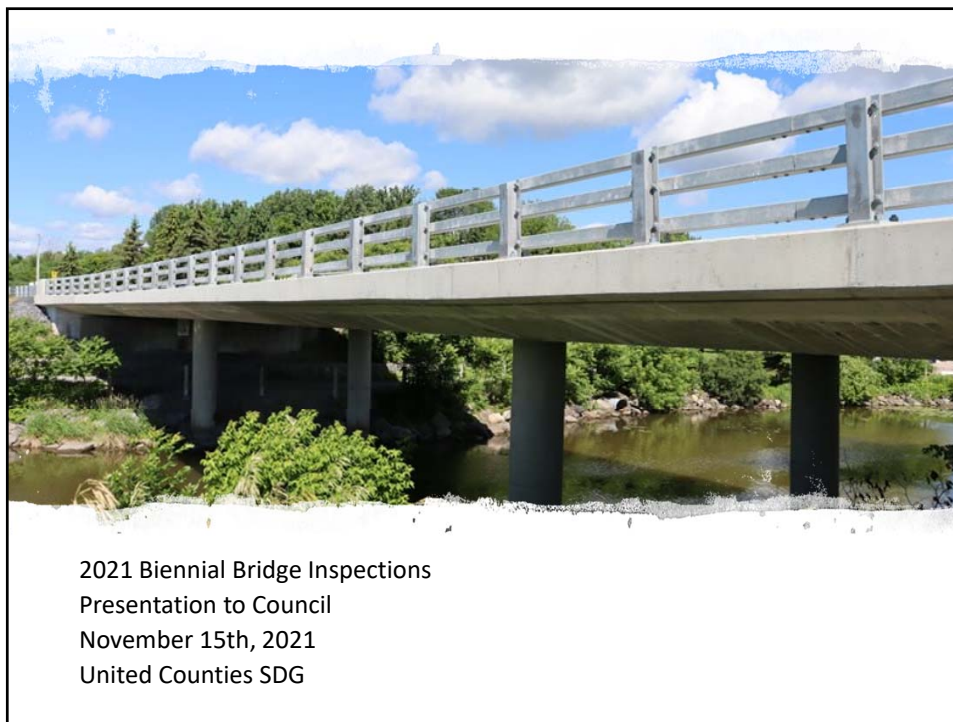


- As our landscape changes we need healthy Natural Heritage System to ensure we have a resilient landscape that can sustain our local wildlife and natural processes.
- A strong, more resilient local landscape equals a strong natural legacy and economic prosperity for future generations.

Our Local Environment, We're in it Together.



SOUTH NATION  
**CONSERVATION**  
DE LA NATION SUD



1

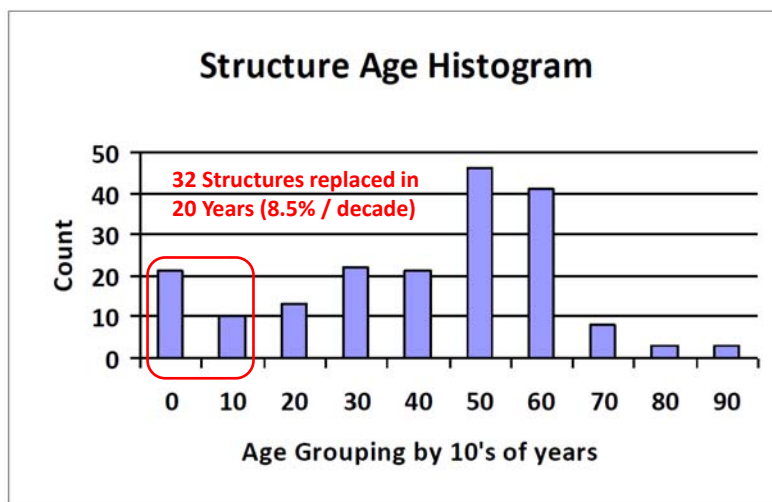
## Quick Facts

- 188 Structures
  - 72 Bridges
  - 116 Large Culverts (> 3.0m)
- \$235 Million Asset Replacement Value
- \$38 Million in Capital Needs 2022 to 2031
- 3 Bridges & 29 Culverts should be replaced by 2031
- 26 Bridges require Rehabilitation
- Culvert renewal continues to be the focus.

2

2

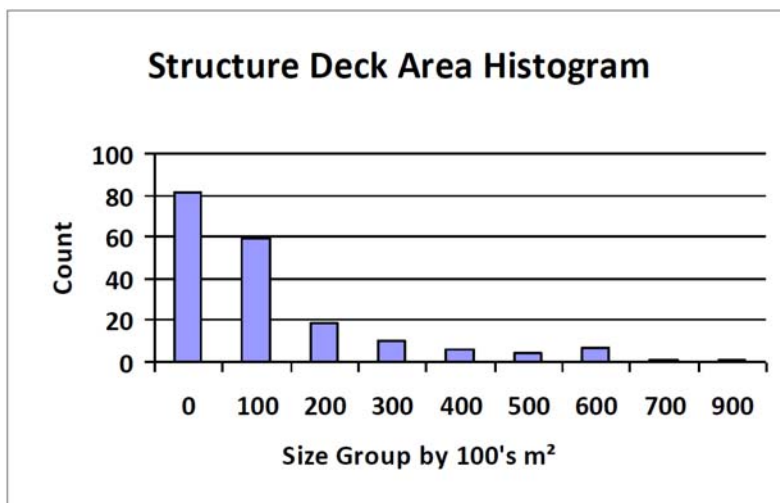
## 188 Structures Aged 1 to 96



3

3

## 33,160 m<sup>2</sup> Ranging 36 – 967 m<sup>2</sup>

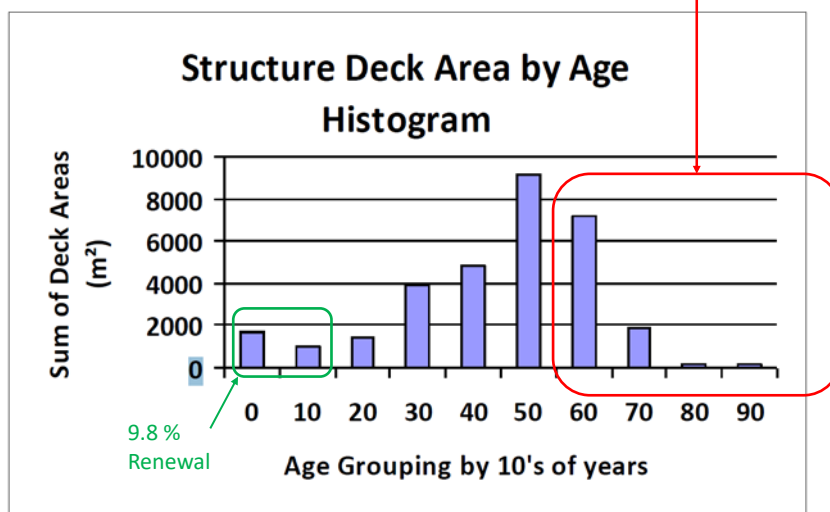


4

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## 57% of Surface Area > 50 Years Old



5

5

## Of Significance

9.8% of Inventory Area renewed in past 20 years

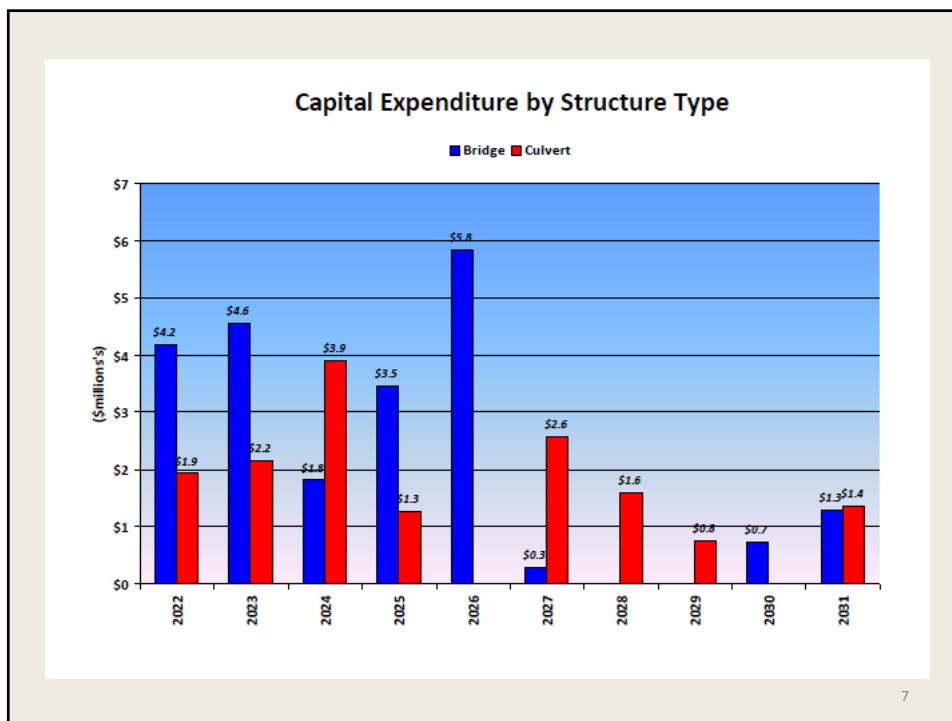
Ideally renewal should be at least 10% per decade

Long-term outlook: Increasing capital expenditures

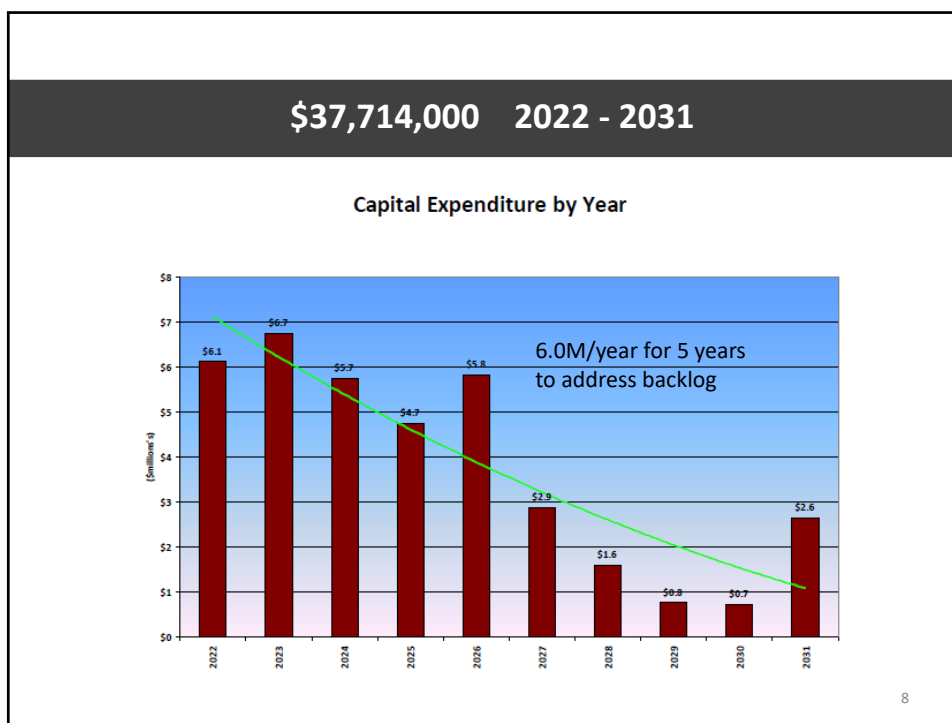
Significant investment in Preservation Capital may forestall some replacements

6

6



7



8

## Estimated Remaining Service Life (ERSL) & Replacement Value

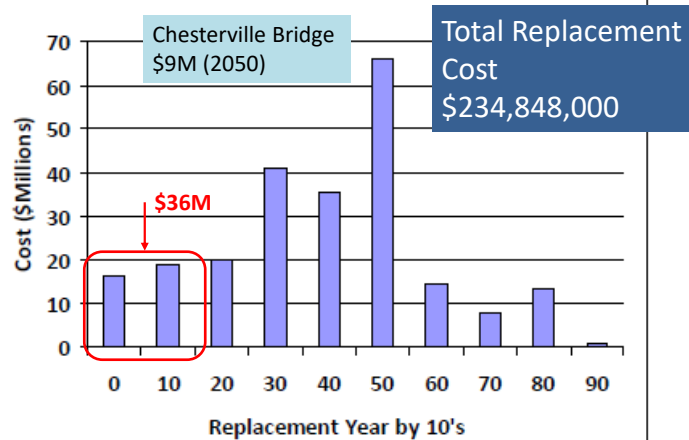
Bridge ID	Name	Estimated Remaining Service Life	Program Year	Estimated Replacement Cost
01-158	Ferguson MD	3	2024	\$495,000
03-124	Inkerman Bridge	3	2023	\$2,060,000
03-276	Black Creek MD	3	2024	\$543,000
08-090	Nash Creek Twin Culvert	3	2024	\$636,000
15-163	Wert MD	3	2024	\$335,000
43-035	Wylie Creek Culvert	3	2024	\$426,000
43-641	Morrow-Munro MD	3	2024	\$386,000
09-984	Kittle Creek Culvert	2	2023	\$345,000
12-093	Dixon Creek Culvert	2	2023	\$564,000
27-030	Fraser Creek Culvert	2	2028	\$342,000
31-197	CSP	2	2023	\$354,000
31-198	Hollister Rd. Equalizer Battery	2	2023	\$799,000
02-093	Doran's Bay Culvert	1	2022	\$501,000
20-196	Cardinal MD	1	2022	\$440,000
42-003	Eastman Creek Culvert	0	2022	\$500,000

32 Structures (mostly culverts) have less than 10 years ERSL

9

9

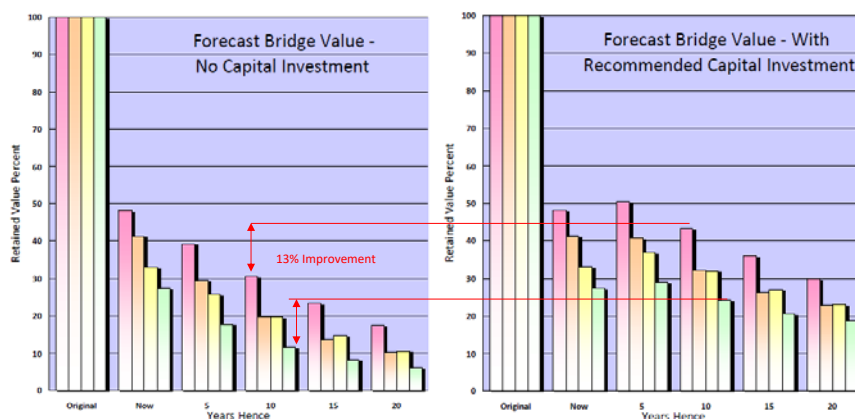
### Replacement Cost by Decade



10

10

Side-by-Side Comparison showing Improved Retained Value



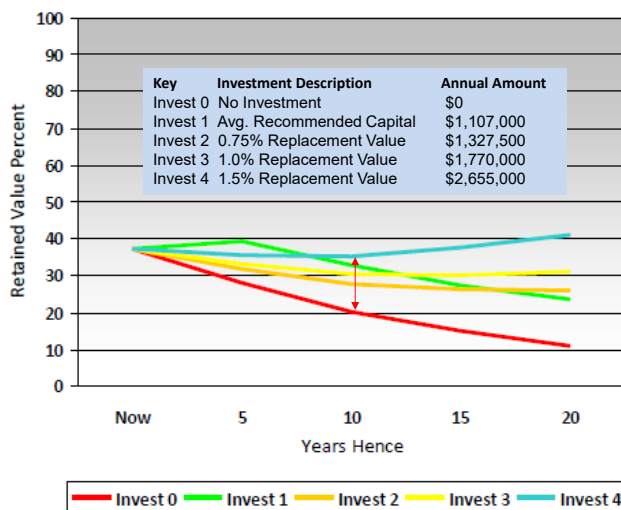
Need to continually spend \$170K / year / percent improvement on bridges  
 (\$22.1M over 10 years yields 13% improvement in retained value)

11

11

## Level of Depreciation with 5 Investment Alternatives

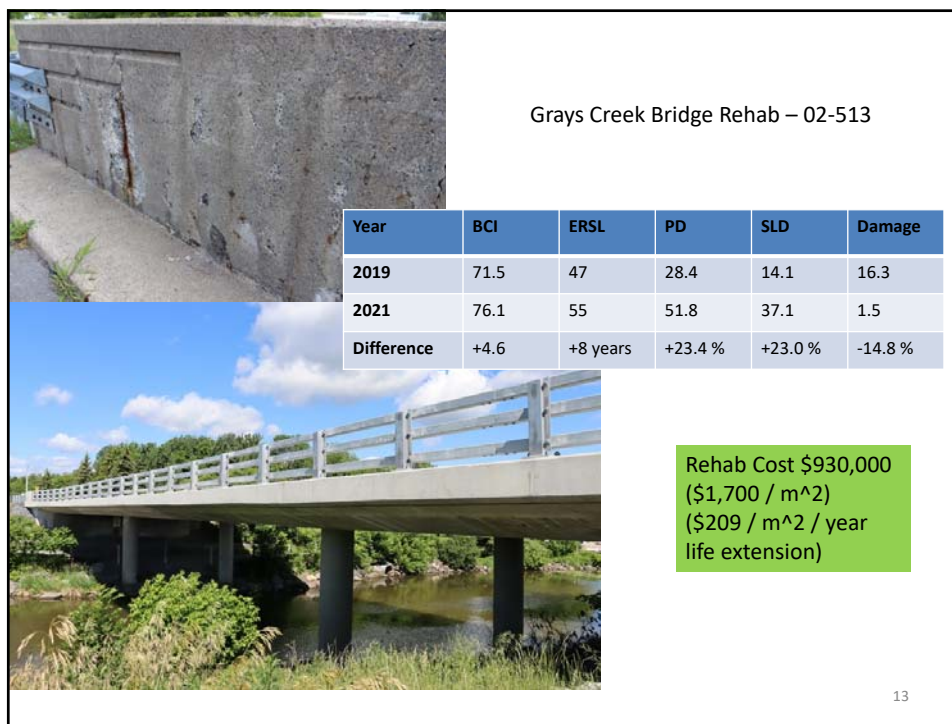
### Remaining Value of all Bridges



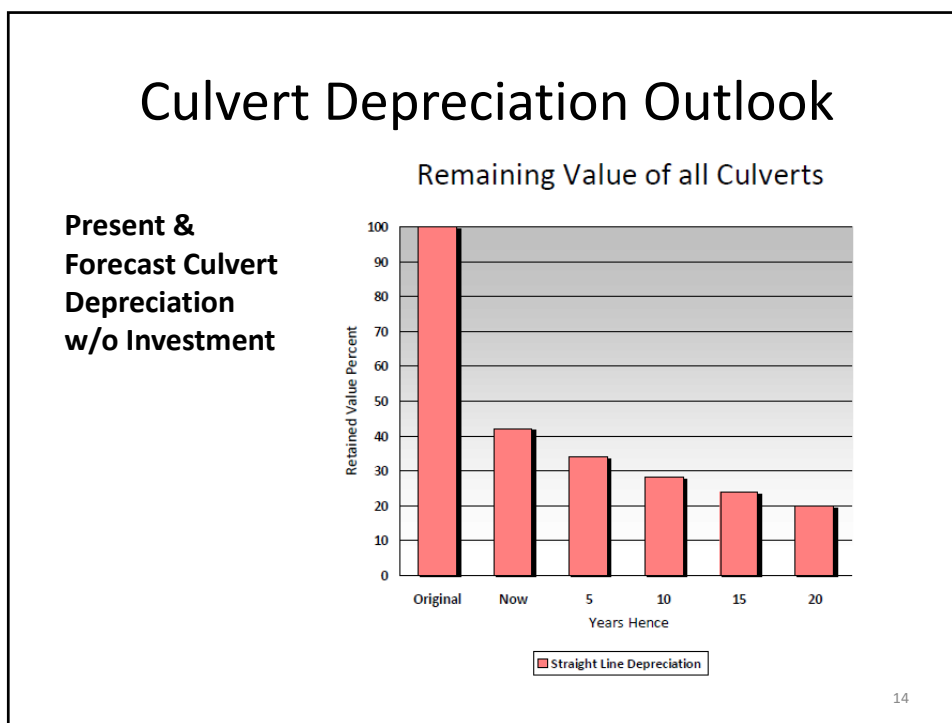
12

12

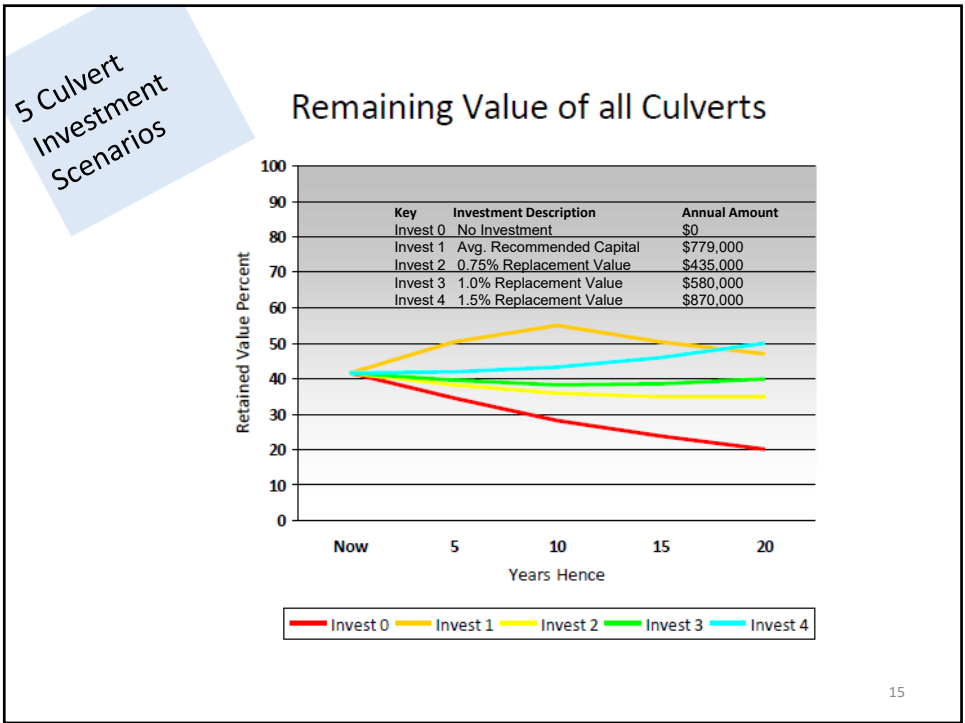




13



14



15



16



20-196 Cardinal MD (2022) \$498K

17

17



18-548 Ferguson Creek Bridge (2022) \$776K

18

## Bridge Condition Index (BCI)

BCI Range	Count 2021 (2019)	Percent 2021 (2019)	Change Count & (%)
70 - 100	97 (105)	51.6 (55.9)	-8 (-4.3%)
60 - 70	73 (68)	38.8 (36.2)	+5 (+2.6%)
50 - 60	17 (14)	9.0 (7.4)	+3 (+1.6%)
< 50	1 (1)	0.5 (.5)	0 (0%)

Ideally, 80% of structures should have BCI > 70  
**28.4% behind MTO goal**

19

19

## Summary

Catch-up Capital	Long-Term Replacement Capital	Preservation Capital
Need to spend \$6.0M / Year on Capital for structures for next 5 years (Catch-up Phase)	Need to spend ~ \$1.8M / Year on Structure Replacement alone for next 20 years	Preservation Capital will help defer Structure Replacements by extending the life of bridges

20

20



## Summary Financial Information

I T E M	Structure Replacement Value \$M	Nominal Annual Depreciat'n Rate %	Nominal Annual Depreciat'n Value \$K	Ideal Annual Capital Investment 20 Year Outlook \$K	Recom'd Annual Average Capital Next 10 Years \$K
Bridges	176.8	1.30	2,300	3,000	2,200
Culverts	58.2	1.15	630	870	1,560
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>2,930</b>	<b>3,870</b>	<b>3,760</b>

21

21

ACTION REQUEST – CAO	
<b>To:</b>	<b>Warden and Members of Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>November 15, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Improving Rural Education Report</b>

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry endorse the attached report and executive summary document “Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry” prepared by Horizon Educational Consultants.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Horizon Educational Consultants were engaged earlier in 2021 to develop a report outlining recommendations for the province and/or local school boards to improve the availability and quality of educational opportunities for students across SDG. The work of the consultant was guided by a working group of elected officials and lay appointees representing all areas of the County. The working group endorses the report and executive summary document.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In late 2019, County Council adopted a new strategic planning document. One of the pillars of the strategic plan is to advocate for conditions that allow children throughout SDG to be educated as close to their home communities as possible. As a first step, as noted earlier, a consultant was engaged after an RFP process to develop an advocacy document to highlight the challenges facing students in SDG and throughout rural Ontario, as well as be a catalyst for change through the development of recommendations to improve rural education.

Guiding the process has been a working group of elected officials and lay people, who have worked closely with the consultant and CAO throughout the entire process. Among the members of this working group are County Councillors Gardner (chair), Fraser, MacDonald, and Jaworski. There was representation from each of the 6 local SDG municipalities.

Moving forward, once the documents are endorsed, it is important that every opportunity to be taken to advocate for the recommendations to improve rural education. The working group has discussed ways to do this, including seeking a dedicated meeting with Ministry of Education officials (Minister, Deputy Minister, senior bureaucrats), developing alliances with other like-minded groups such as the Rural Schools Alliance, working with local school boards, and holding a rural schools symposium in 2022. The usual channels (delegations at major

conferences such as ROMA and AMO) will also be pursued. Plans will be developed and vetted through the working group.

#### **OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

1. Do not endorse the documents (**Not Recommended**). A great deal of work has gone into the development of the attached documents. The recommendations in the executive summary document will form the basis of the County's advocacy efforts for the foreseeable future.
2. Endorse the reports produced by Horizon Educational Consultants (**Recommended**).

#### **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

The cost of the report (approximately \$60K) was budgeted for in 2021. Going forward, there may be some small costs associated with implementing and related advocacy efforts, such as travelling to attend meetings, hosting a symposium, etc. These costs can be easily absorbed by existing departmental budgets.

#### **LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

It is hoped that that the recommendations within the document will be acted on in the future by the relevant decision makers. These changes should have positive impacts for children throughout SDG and rural Ontario.

#### **RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

This initiative aligns perfectly with *Strategic Priority No. 1 – "Rural Schools – Educating Children in Their Communities"*.


#### **OTHERS CONSULTED:**

Horizon Educational Consultants  
Education Working Group members  
School Boards (requests for information)  
Public (surveys)

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Final report and executive summary document

#### **APPROVED BY:**



T.J. Simpson, CAO

# **IMPROVING RURAL EDUCATION**

## **Executive Summary**

**AN EDUCATION PROJECT FUNDED BY  
THE UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS & GLENGARRY  
ONTARIO, CANADA**



**MONIKA FERENCZY, BA. BEd. MEd.**

Education Consultant and Assessor

Osgoode Hall certified in Education Law and  
Human Rights Law for Education Professionals

November 10, 2021



The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (“SDG”) in Ontario, Canada has a population of 66, 000 distributed over six rural municipalities. The elected body of County Council, issued a call for proposals for an education improvement project titled *Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry* counties on February 5, 2021.

The education project was one of five key priorities identified in the Council’s strategic plan 2019-2022 under the heading *Rural Schools- Educating Children in Their Communities*, in alignment with the guiding principles of: “*Our residents are our first priority, no municipality gets left behind, partnerships as essential for our success and our environmental legacy is important*”. These principles are encompassed under a Mission “*to create better communities*” and a Vision “*to be a progressive regional government*”. “*The County is committed to working with the province, local school boards, parents and other stakeholders to develop strategies that maintain the vibrancy of our rural schools*”.

The migration of people from rural communities to urban centres has been a global trend since the middle of the 20th century. Rural agricultural regions have faced limited growth and development, resulting in steadily declining school enrollment for over 40 years due, in part, to families having fewer children, overall declining birth rates in the Canadian population and resident mobility in search of employment.

Declining school enrollment is evidenced by school closures, school board amalgamations and student transportation to schools further away from a student’s place of residence. More recently, the restructuring of educational service provision, programs and student support services and the emergence of online and virtual platforms as a means to access education during the global COVID19 pandemic have given rise to new meanings for school, education and community.

The full report investigates the challenges and opportunities for educational planning in the present and into the future, by all stakeholders who benefit from quality public education services offered to students regardless of their place of residence within the province of Ontario, or by extension, any province in Canada. Strategies include local, provincial and federal initiatives and funding related options which can be engaged to prevent rural schools from closing.

The results and recommendations in the full report are intended for rural county councils to develop new educational initiatives within regional government, provincial government recognition of required support to students with a lens on equity in funding programs and services to increase best practices at school boards, and for local, provincial, national and international cooperation to enhance educational opportunities for all students.

In the province of Ontario, the restructuring of school boards in 1997 and the creation of four publicly funded school systems (English Public, English Catholic, French Public, French Catholic) has led to a continuous shift in education demographics over the last twenty years.

School board funding also underwent a major shift from municipal governments overseeing taxation rates related to education at a local level, to a process shifting it to provincial jurisdiction and centralized funding processes.

The dynamic of a four- school board system operating within a region of low population growth has created more competition for students. Aggressive public and social media marketing campaigns have been employed by some school boards to attract parents and students.

The increased interest for choice in schooling options by more involved parents and adolescent students choosing programs of interest with peers offered in different schools are also factors in the development of new solutions.

New data is required to measure the impact of these changes to inform new strategies, create new initiatives and opportunities for students; to demand compliance to existing policy, legislation and service standards for public education to maintain equity and to create new policies and changes to existing legislation where none exist, to enhance the delivery of educational programs and services.

The premise of community ownership of schools by citizens and taxpayers is also a new perspective which presumes school boards to be stewards of the schools in their operational structures but partners with the community and businesses to ensure the vitality and maintenance of each school in the context of the social fabric of each rural community.

Canada as a country relies heavily on immigration to sustain economic growth and the stability of health, education and social services. While immigration remains a federal responsibility, provincial and municipal governments can access funding from federal initiatives and programs to support local communities.

### **Barriers and obstacles**

In the context of this study a barrier is defined as a situation over which a parent or group of individuals has no direct control and is difficult to change (for example: policy, legislation, lack of data, type of building construction).

An obstacle is defined as a situation in which there is a lack of initiative, motivation, understanding and/or empathy on behalf of an entity which requires a large amount of advocacy time and energy to overcome by a group of people, but can be more easily changed than a barrier (bias, stereotypes, assumptions, beliefs, fossilized practices).

The full report aims to quantify and qualify main barriers in the maintenance of community schools and propose solutions to overcome those barriers with options and best practices that maximize local educational opportunities.

The Ontario Ministry of Education's 2006 *Equity Strategy* set the following additional expectations of the learning environment for students:

***DIVERSITY:** The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.*

***EQUITY:** A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.*

***INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:** Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.*

## **PART 1 – TRENDS AND CHALLENGES**

Prior to providing solutions, an environmental scan of existing data must be undertaken to understand trends related to student enrollment in rural areas.

Updated information was collected on the 10-year enrollment trend, capacity, utilization rate and facility condition index for all schools in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) within the four-school board context.

Challenges were raised by Council members, students, parents, grandparents and residents in SDG and were stated in the call for proposal and through online survey results conducted from May to August 2021. This information was used to aid in the research and development of solutions, by quantifying and qualifying these issues.

1. The call for proposal listed these challenges:
  - a) *Slow population growth*
  - b) *Low population density throughout the region*
  - c) *Large school boards encompassing most of Eastern Ontario*
  - d) *Four school boards competing for students*
  - e) *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) incompatible with rural Ontario realities*
  - f) *Shifting school boundaries, facilitating growth in some schools while ‘choking off’ others*
  - g) *Inequitable per pupil funding formulas that create disparities among/between boards/schools*
  - h) *Inequitable distribution of programming among schools*
  - i) *Inequitable per student transportation funding*
  - j) *Provincial and board transportation policies that enable the bussing of students long distances from their home communities*
  - k) *Funding formulas for new schools that favour larger facilities and disincentivize boards to share facilities*
  - l) *Lack of maintenance of older schools*
  - m) *Reluctance of coterminous boards to share facilities*
  - n) *Pandemic impacts, specifically remote learning*
  - o) *Reluctance of school boards to enter into community use agreements*

2. An Adult and Student Community Survey identified these additional challenges:

Challenges identified as Obstacles:

- *Same programs, courses not available at all high schools*
- *Large classes, split classes*
- *New start times, busing schedules, adolescents starting earlier than young children*
- *Incorrect facts or data used for school closures*
- *Quality of education /Arts programming and sports opportunities*
- *Mental health support to students*
- *Support to parents and consideration of families’ needs*
- *Special education, access to assessments & professionals supporting disabilities*
- *Acknowledgment & consideration of community, educator and parental input*
- *Lack of support staff, quality of French Immersion teaching*
- *Diversity of staff and students*

- *Outdated texts and curriculum (Eurocentric) contributing to sexism and racism*
- *Lack of communication from teachers*
- *Unfair boundaries*
- *Virtual learning*
- *Access to after school activities, field trips, sporting events due to busing cost*
- *Transportation to coop placements*
- *Academic and applied courses in the same class*
- *Perception of rural students headed to vocational work after graduation*

Challenges identified as Barriers:

- *Lack of internet or poor internet,*
- *Threat of school closures or school amalgamations*
- *Water quality*
- *Provincial funding formula*
- *Too many schoolboards*
- *Childcare availability*
- *Teachers' unions*
- *Accessible transit*
- *School ventilation and air quality*
- *Lack of Early Learning Centres*
- *Folding public and Catholic school boards into one school system*

Consultant identified challenges

- i. School program information hard to obtain through school board website searches for parents seeking to relocate
- ii. Lack of diversity in school board leadership
- iii. Lack of data and /or reliable data (one source only- school board data)
- iv. Municipal council members' perception of having a limited role in providing educational input
- v. Internet services (access and signal quality)
- vi. Obtaining information directly from school staff and school board personnel
- vii. Student trustees having a restricted role in feedback as key clients of educational services
- viii. School boards' perception of education monopoly over decision-making (transportation, costs, programs, school builds) business focused rather than service focused (bottom line vs client satisfaction)
- ix. Disconnect between regional employment sectors (energy, environment, manufacturing) and duplication of program offerings in Specialist High School Majors; no data on whether school boards are meeting the need for student skills training for sector employment
- x. Lack of school board policy to support decisions which are detrimental to the community (parent-initiated survey input and feedback are ignored)

Field study work and interviews were completed to develop the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), which is a tool to facilitate the key elements around which strategies, options and recommendations can be articulated. It can be viewed in the full report.



## PART 2 – PROPOSED SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

1. **Competition for students.** In areas such as SDG where there is a significant francophone population, competition for students is having a demonstrable negative impact on the quality of education and opportunities for students to be educated close to home. Students have become commodities for competing school boards. Steps to reduce/eliminate competition include:
  - a. Consolidate the current four publicly funded school systems into a new publicly funded system for each official language (English and French). By following the lead of other provinces, Ontario can improve equity of access across rural Ontario, improve the sustainability of rural schools and their communities and achieve opportunities for cost-savings province-wide.
  - b. Ban explicit advertising campaigns used by school boards to poach students from other school boards. Such campaigns represent a gross misuse of public funds.
  - c. Existing inequities in current funding models should be analyzed and addressed – students should be funded at the same level regardless of language and/or religion.
2. **Daycare availability.** The availability of daycare, either full time or before/after school programs, should be reviewed by the province. Ten-year enrolment data for SDG indicates a lack of available daycare spaces. It is noted that French language school boards are able to offer significantly more daycare spaces in their elementary schools as compared to the English language school boards.
3. **Schools as community assets.** As part of the Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) process, co-terminus boards must be mandated to review alternatives to school closures by demonstrating that other options (e.g. sharing facilities with other school boards, community groups, creating a community hub for health, social services, etc.) have been analyzed. Municipalities must be engaged in this process to ensure that current statistics and trends are available (e.g. housing starts, growth in settlement areas, etc.) and are accurately captured. Similarly, revise existing legislation to create a system where school facilities are jointly owned by school boards and municipalities to maximize the use of these public assets by community groups and local taxpayers. Increased access to existing facilities will enhance quality of life by increasing available programming and services to residents in small population centres.
4. **French Immersion programming.** In SDG, the lack of French Immersion programming is a clear determinant in whether a school thrives or closes. Some schools offer French Immersion programming, while others do not. Using metrics similar to those employed by the province in determining where to provide French language services to the public, should be considered; a review of how/where French Immersion programs are provided is warranted.
5. **Secondary School Specialized Programming.** In rural areas such as SDG, programs such as the Specialist High Skills Major, Cooperative Program, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program are very valuable and should be reviewed to remove any existing barriers (e.g. transportation) to maximize student participation.
6. **Transportation.** The Ministry of Education should adopt a provincial school transportation policy limiting ride times for students, reviewing efficiencies and sustainable transportation alternatives that align with provincial health strategies aimed at reducing childhood obesity and keeping community schools open in rural areas where students can bicycle or walk to school. It is not

uncommon for students in SDG to be bussed to schools an hour and a half from their residence twice per day. School boundaries must be included as part of this review.

7. **Internet access and technology.** Students across SDG face serious disadvantages in the area of both internet connectivity and access to at-home/in-school Information Technology (IT) resources. School boards should ensure that they are adequately supporting students and providing an equitable learning environment by furnishing IT hardware (such as laptops and tablets) to all students. With the emerging expectation that each student must complete two online courses to graduate, school boards need to better support students in the digital age by investing in ‘learning commons’ spaces which provide both a physical space and digital access for students.
8. **Transparency and Public Service.** The Ministry of Education must commit to Ontario Public Service (OPS) Standards for communication, feedback and complaint processes, by developing appropriate policies and procedures to improve parental engagement, restore trust in public education, and shift the administrative mindset and institutional culture towards public service. Students must be reprioritized and made the prime focus of education once again.
9. **Ontario Student Bill of Rights.** Adopt an Ontario Student Bill of Rights to access equitable educational opportunities, funding, transportation, and quality educational services (instruction and assessment) with teacher expertise in subject content areas.
10. **Public Engagement.** The province should develop and implement a “grassroots to government” view rather than the current top-down model for pupil funding policies, pupil accommodation review guidelines, and community partnership protocols, where parents, advocacy groups and municipalities create submissions, templates and frameworks for the Minister of Education and school boards to adopt. Doing so will create efficiencies and hasten the speed of change.

## Conclusion

It is critical that the rights of students and parents are acknowledged and respected through authentic consultative processes with school board personnel with meaningful and reciprocal exchanges and a variety of data reviewed. Consultation needs to be rooted in oral and written submissions that are shared with all parties and the public.

All policies and decisions must reflect evidence-based processes and open and transparent financial implications and explanations that are logical and meaningful to both school boards and the community within the context of a public service provision model of quality and excellence, and not a business model of cost effectiveness and bottom-line savings, at the cost of the best interests of students, families and the community.

Policy updates need to be more nimble than legislative changes which are complicated and require government and political will to influence and parliamentary process which is cumbersome and prone to significant time delays. Updates need to be evidence based with data, research, analysis and impact statements, demographic and trend information, be authentic and relevant to the target audience to which it applies.

While some federal funding in official languages education (minority and second language) does flow to the provinces, the majority of education funding is driven by taxpayers in every province.

The best solutions come from parents, teachers, residents and students in local communities as lived experience provides a source of ideas and initiatives. Collaboration with all sectors and authentic engagement will lead to better learning experiences for students and vibrant school communities in small population centres.

This Executive Summary is an abridged version of the full report which contains appendices with data, statistics, survey results, information sources and references used in the production of the report.

# **IMPROVING RURAL EDUCATION**

**AN EDUCATION PROJECT FUNDED BY  
THE UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS & GLENGARRY  
ONTARIO, CANADA**



**MONIKA FERENCZY, BA. BEd. MEd.**

Education Consultant and Assessor

Osgoode Hall certified in Education Law and  
Human Rights Law for Education Professionals

October 1, 2021



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## ABSTRACT

The migration of people from rural communities to urban centres has been a global trend since the middle of the 20th century. Rural agricultural regions have faced limited growth and development, resulting in steadily declining school enrollment for over 40 years due, in part, to families having fewer children, overall declining birth rates in the Canadian population and resident mobility in search of employment.

Declining school enrollment is evidenced by school closures, school board amalgamations and student transportation to schools further away from a student's place of residence. More recently, the restructuring of educational service provision, programs and student support services and the emergence of online and virtual platforms as a means to access education during the global COVID19 pandemic have given rise to new meanings for school, education and community.

This report investigates the challenges and opportunities for educational planning in the present and into the future, by all stakeholders who benefit from quality public education services offered to students regardless of their place of residence within the province of Ontario, or by extension, any province in Canada. Strategies include local, provincial and federal initiatives and funding related options which can be engaged to prevent rural schools from closing.

If the expression "It takes a village to raise a child" is applied to education, then all entities including municipalities, non-profit organizations, service clubs, health institutions and businesses all have a voice and a role in the development and promotion of education in their region.

The results and recommendations in this report are intended for rural county councils to develop new educational initiatives within regional government, provincial government recognition of required support to students with a lens on equity in funding programs and services to increase best practices at school boards, and for local, provincial, national and international cooperation to enhance educational opportunities for all students.

## BACKGROUND

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry ("SDG") in Ontario, Canada has a population of 66, 000 distributed over six rural municipalities. The elected body of County Council, issued a call for proposals for an education improvement project titled *Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry* counties on February 5, 2021. (**Appendix 1**)

The education project was one of five key priorities identified in the Council's strategic plan 2019-2022 under the heading *Rural Schools- Educating Children in Their Communities*, in alignment with the guiding principles of: "*Our residents are our first priority, no municipality gets left behind, partnerships as essential for our success and our environmental legacy is important*". These principles are encompassed under a Mission "*to create better communities*" and a Vision "*to be a progressive regional government*". "*The County is committed to working with the province, local school boards, parents and other stakeholders to develop strategies that maintain the vibrancy of our rural schools*".<sup>1</sup> (**Appendix 2**)

Horizon Educational Consulting was selected as the candidate agency to fulfill the project's mandate and objectives and an agreement was signed on March 18, 2021. The duration of the project was four months from April 1, 2021 to July 30, 2021.

## INTRODUCTION

Canada remains only one of a handful of countries in the world with no national education framework. Based on the constitutional right of public (sectarian) and Catholic education systems to exist since 1867 when Canada officially became a country in its own right, the shift from religious authorities overseeing schools before and after 1867 to provincial government oversight was the first major shift in the educational landscape.

The second shift occurred with the recognition of self-determining governance of French language schools provincially. In the province of Ontario, the restructuring of school boards in 1997<sup>2</sup> and the creation of four publicly funded school systems (English Public, English Catholic, French Public, French Catholic) has led to a continuous shift in education demographics over the last twenty years.

Indigenous students remain under federal jurisdiction for education as opposed to provincial jurisdiction. Changes to aboriginal self-determination and control over education are evolving, as these existed only on designated reserves. However, many indigenous students still go off reserve to pursue secondary (high school) education and to access programs and opportunities in the public education system which are not available in on-reserve schools. Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy<sup>3</sup> aims to improve equitable access to education and educational outcomes for First Nation, Inuit and Métis students.

School board funding also underwent a major shift from municipal governments overseeing taxation rates related to education at a local level, to a process shifting it to provincial jurisdiction and centralized funding processes.

The dynamic of a four- school board system operating within a region of low population growth has created more competition for students. Aggressive public and social media marketing campaigns have been employed by some school boards to attract parents and students.

The increased interest for choice in schooling options by more involved parents and adolescent students choosing programs of interest with peers offered in different schools are also factors in the development of new solutions.

New data is required to measure the impact of these changes to inform new strategies, create new initiatives and opportunities for students; to demand compliance to existing policy, legislation and service standards for public education to maintain equity and to create new policies and changes to existing legislation where none exist, to enhance the delivery of educational programs and services.

The premise of community ownership of schools by citizens and taxpayers is also a new perspective which presumes school boards to be stewards of the schools in their operational structures but partners with the community and businesses to ensure the vitality and maintenance of each school in the context of the social fabric of each rural community.

Declining enrollment in the school system in Ontario has been a characteristic trend since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century due to Canadian families having fewer children<sup>4</sup>. Canada is a country with a consistently declining birth rate which is the reason why the country relies heavily on immigration to sustain economic growth and the stability of health, education and social services. While immigration remains a federal responsibility, provincial and municipal governments can access funding from federal initiatives and programs to support local communities.

## STATEMENT ON CONSULTANT'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The ideas, solutions, options, strategies and recommendations in this report are strictly the intellectual property of this consultant and may not be used without permission and proper source citing to this report to maintain integrity to the original concept and the articulation of these ideas. Any other idea proposed which is not original to this Consultant is credited within the endnotes of the report.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

The field work undertaken to complete this study included the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Mohawk, Haudenosaunee (St. Lawrence Iroquois) and Huron-Wendat<sup>5</sup>. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties. This report honours the people and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

## DEFINITIONS

Defining urban and rural areas and understanding geographical context is essential when speaking to issues related to access to education, quality education, educational opportunity and transportation.

Statistics Canada revised its definition of urban and rural designations in a new departmental standard which became effective in January 2017:

*The Population Centre and Rural Area Classification 2016 provides standard names and codes for Canada's population centres (POPCTRs) and rural area (RA). A classification variant provides the standard names and codes for POPCTRs and RA by province and territory.*

*...The term 'population centre' replaced the term 'urban area'. A population centre was defined as an area with a population of at least 1,000 and a density of 400 or more people per square kilometre. All areas outside population centres continued to be defined as rural area.*

*Secondly, population centres were divided into three groups based on the size of their population to reflect the existence of an urban-rural continuum:*

- *small population centres, with a population of between 1,000 and 29,999*
- *medium population centres, with a population of between 30,000 and 99,999*
- *large urban population centres, consisting of a population of 100,000 and over.*

*While other classifications were possible, the intent of this set was to provide users with a basic starting point to better understand the dynamic landscape of Canada.*

*Users of the former urban area concept are still able to continue with their longitudinal analysis using population centres.*

*These changes were meant to improve interpretation of Statistics Canada data and help users in the study of the Canadian urban-rural landscape and its issues.*

*In 2016, two new criteria were added to the delineation rules for population centres: the use of a secondary population density threshold as well as employment density.<sup>6</sup>*

When applying these standards to communities within the six municipalities, only one community meets criteria for a medium population centre (Cornwall: 47,000). All others are considered small population centres.

**Access to education** is the ability of a student to attend a physical school building or other virtual learning environment, obtain instructional and assessment services, obtain support services related to learning and enter into a reciprocal engagement of teaching and personal feedback on learning from an accredited\* teacher in Ontario, whether this access is through in person instruction, remote synchronous contact (teacher and student can communicate in real time with video chat or via phone) or asynchronous online contact (teacher and student communicate in writing).

**Quality education** must incorporate the following factors:

- students being taught by accredited teachers in Ontario, having the proper qualification to teach in the appropriate division (primary, junior, intermediate and senior)
- teachers having sufficient training to meet the needs of a student within their role and area of responsibility
- teachers having expertise and experience in their subject matter to enhance the quality of the pedagogical service offered to students
- additional qualifications and professional development undertaken by the teacher to offer additional knowledge to students in a subject matter or skill set defines high quality
- teachers offering students educational opportunities which extend beyond the instructional core curriculum and designated learning setting (classroom, lab, school) to further internalize the learning and mastery of the subject, skills, concept or knowledge for the student.
- Teachers who exemplify the standards and ethics of the profession and engage in a continuous professional learning framework as articulated by the Ontario College of Teachers (the regulatory body of the teaching profession in the province of Ontario)<sup>7</sup>.

*\*Every teacher employed by a publicly funded school board employer in Ontario must be licensed to teach by the Ontario College of Teachers, the regulatory body of the teaching profession in Ontario, with their name and qualifications appearing on the public registry at [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca)*

**Educational opportunity** is any circumstance which offers a qualitative or quantitative measure of learning benefit to a student regardless of age or grade. Examples of such opportunities include extra-curricular activities, clubs, programs, services, field trips, exchanges, community volunteer work, travel, internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, training, paid work or unpaid co-op placements (student job placements with employers for school learning credit).



## Barriers and obstacles

In the context of this study a barrier is defined as a situation over which a parent or group of individuals has no direct control and is difficult to change (for example: policy, legislation, lack of data, type of building construction).

An obstacle is defined as a situation in which there is a lack of initiative, motivation, understanding and/or empathy on behalf of an entity which requires a large amount of advocacy time and energy to overcome by a group of people, but can be more easily changed than a barrier (bias, stereotypes, assumptions, beliefs, fossilized practices).

This report aims to quantify and qualify main barriers in the maintenance of community schools and propose solutions to overcome those barriers with options and best practices that maximize local educational opportunities.

The Ontario Ministry of Education's 2006 *Equity Strategy*<sup>8</sup> set the following additional expectations of the learning environment for students which will also be referenced in this report:

*DIVERSITY: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.*

*EQUITY: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.*

*INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected. (page 8)*

## METHODOLOGY

### Research

- i. Literature review on rural school closings (provincial, national, international perspectives)
- ii. Media articles related to school closings in Ontario and other Canadian provinces
- iii. Key data & statistics (Statistics Canada Census, Open Source government data, school board data)
- iv. Internet research
- v. Academic portal (Concordia, Western, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, ResearchGate, Fraser Institute)
- vi. Parent advocacy groups' submissions
- vii. Municipal government and association submissions to the provincial government
- viii. Policy and legislative review of Education sector documents

#### Interviews with

- ix. SDG Education Working Group members in four meetings and follow-up calls
- x. Parents, educators, community members, academic contacts
- xi. Parent advocacy group contacts
- xii. SDG residents
- xiii. Horizon clients with children attending schools in SDG
- xiv. Local media sources and realtors

#### Field Study

- xv. Ground study via key routes to school sites (external only due to COVID restrictions)
- xvi. Aerial study to view transportation arteries and population density
- xvii. Contacting school and school board personnel
- xviii. Contacting Ontario Ministry of Education personnel
- xix. Attending English school boards' virtual Community Planning & Partnerships consultation virtual presentation
- xx. Attending virtual professional development conference sessions in education law, human rights and international rights of the child

#### Data Collection & Analysis

- xxi. Online adult surveys and student surveys disseminated to the communities in SDG
- xxii. Key school board website information
- xxiii. Immigration and tourism information
- xxiv. Analysis of key school board websites for program offerings and policies
- xxv. Analysis of municipalities' individual and collective websites

The mixed quantitative and qualitative method of research resulted in the proposal of ideas, options, solutions and recommendations in this report.

### **PART 1 – TRENDS AND CHALLENGES**

Prior to providing solutions, an environmental scan of existing data must be undertaken to understand trends related to student enrollment in rural areas.

Updated information was collected on the 10-year enrollment trend, capacity, utilization rate and facility condition index for all schools in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) within the four-school board context. This information is in **Appendix 3**.

Identifying challenges and issues raised by Council members, students, parents, grandparents and residents in SDG were provided through the call for proposal and through online survey results conducted from May to August 2021. This information was used to aid in the research and development of solutions, by quantifying and qualifying these issues.

1. The call for proposal listed these challenges:

- a) *Slow population growth*
- b) *Low population density throughout the region*
- c) *Large school boards encompassing most of Eastern Ontario*
- d) *Four school boards competing for students*
- e) *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) incompatible with rural Ontario realities*
- f) *Shifting school boundaries, facilitating growth in some schools while 'choking off' others*
- g) *Inequitable per pupil funding formulas that create disparities among/between boards/schools*
- h) *Inequitable distribution of programming among schools*
- i) *Inequitable per student transportation funding*
- j) *Provincial and board transportation policies that enable the bussing of students long distances from their home communities*
- k) *Funding formulas for new schools that favour larger facilities and disincentivize boards to share facilities*
- l) *Lack of maintenance of older schools*
- m) *Reluctance of coterminous boards to share facilities*
- n) *Pandemic impacts, specifically remote learning*
- o) *Reluctance of school boards to enter into community use agreements*

It also stated ***“County Council determined that the current educational model with the region is inefficient and does not generally serve children well, taking many of them out of home communities”*** (Appendix 1, page 2).

2. The Community Survey Results in Appendix 7 identified these challenges:

Challenges identified as Obstacles:

- *Same programs, courses not available at all high schools*
- *Large classes, split classes*
- *New start times, busing schedules, adolescents starting earlier than young children*
- *Incorrect facts or data used for school closures*
- *Quality of education /Arts programming and sports opportunities*
- *Mental health support to students*
- *Support to parents and consideration of families' needs*
- *Special education, access to assessments & professionals supporting disabilities*
- *Acknowledgment & consideration of community, educator and parental input*
- *Lack of support staff, quality of French Immersion teaching*
- *Diversity of staff and students*
- *Outdated texts and curriculum (Eurocentric) contributing to sexism and racism*
- *Lack of communication from teachers*
- *Unfair boundaries*
- *Virtual learning*
- *Access to after school activities, field trips, sporting events due to busing cost*
- *Transportation to coop placements*
- *Academic and applied courses in the same class*
- *Perception of rural students headed to vocational work after graduation*

### Challenges identified as Barriers:

- *Lack of internet or poor internet,*
- *Threat of school closures or school amalgamations*
- *Water quality*
- *Provincial funding formula*
- *Too many schoolboards*
- *Childcare availability*
- *Teachers' unions*
- *Accessible transit*
- *School ventilation and air quality*
- *Lack of Early Learning Centres*
- *Folding public and Catholic school boards into one school system*

### Consultant identified challenges

- i. School program information hard to obtain through school board website searches for parents seeking to relocate
- ii. Lack of diversity in school board leadership
- iii. Lack of data and /or reliable data (one source only- school board data)
- iv. Municipal council members' perception of having a limited role in providing educational input
- v. Internet services -access and signal quality
- vi. Obtaining information directly from school staff and school board personnel
- vii. Student trustees having a restricted role in feedback as key clients of educational services
- viii. School boards' perception of education monopoly over decision-making (transportation, costs, programs, school builds) business focused rather than service focused (bottom line vs client satisfaction)
- ix. Disconnect between regional employment sectors (energy, environment, manufacturing) and duplication of program offerings in Specialist High School Majors; no data on whether school boards are meeting the need for student skills training for sector employment
- x. Lack of school board policy to support decisions which are detrimental to the community (parent-initiated survey input and feedback are ignored)

### **Rural Schools SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)**

Field study work and interviews were completed to develop the SWOT analysis, which is a tool to facilitate the key elements around which strategies, options and recommendations can be articulated.

They are not intended to be prioritized in the way they are presented in the chart below since these are starting points for planning and follow-up action.

Strengths can be used for encouraging population relocation, while weaknesses are signalled as calls to action.

Threats are areas the Ontario Ministry of Education must address to diminish the threat.

Opportunities are offered as strategies for further solutions.

## SWOT Analysis of Rural Schools

### Strengths

Green space (forests/ conservation areas)

Outdoor recreation opportunities

Quality of life (low density, close to nature)

Lower housing & property costs

Lower taxes

No visible pollution

Good road infrastructure

Historically significant communities (National Historic sites and provincial heritage plaques)

Less turnover in teaching staff in rural areas because staff live and work in local school catchment areas (more invested in students)

Smaller schools add greater social emotional value to learning (teachers know all students and build rapport over the years)

### Opportunities

Tourism to attract population migration

Immigration and refugee populations data and resettlement to increase student population

Economic Immigrants to invest in rural communities

Increasing municipal role in educational opportunities and initiatives

Business sector supporting educational opportunities

### Weaknesses

Visibility of school information to the public

School board websites not designed within a public service framework (accessibility, ease of navigation, finding information promptly through the search function, accessing a person when making inquiries)

Limited housing units (rental, sale, temporary)

Lack of data from school boards to support community partnerships and school profile information

Lack of student voice

Conservation areas as key educational settings

Provincially and federally funded initiatives in education not highlighted on school board websites (programs, services, employment)

Initiating collaboration & connections with school boards for student learning opportunities

### Threats

Low birth rate, declining enrollment

School board competition for a fixed pool of students (aggressive social media and advertising campaigns by French language school boards)

Inadequate internet infrastructure

Perception of rural schools as low performing and therefore low priority

Lack of EarlyON Child Care Centres

Lack of Ministry oversight of school boards through inspections (inequity with private



COVID pandemic relocations

Exploring alternate data sources from other agencies (child protection, health units, social services, hospitals, youth justice) as they also intersect with school boards

schools which require inspections to operate and public schools which are not inspected but are funded through taxpayers)

Municipalities collect taxes for education but do not share ownership of school buildings which are solely under school board ownership and operations

Parent advocacy efforts are the only means leading to change

Education perceived by school board managers as a business, not as a public service

## PART 2 – PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

### 1.a) Slow population growth

Source: 2016 Statistics Census data<sup>9</sup>

### b) Low population density throughout the region

Source: 2016 Statistics Census data

Type of challenge: Barrier

#### Proposed Solutions:

Low birth rate resulting in declining school enrollment

#### Increase population migration to rural areas through inter-Ministerial collaboration

- International students
- Economic immigrants
- Immigrants & Refugees
- Tourism
- Urban resident relocation post COVID

*“Ultimately, declining enrolment contributes to diminishing educational services and resources across the English-language school sector, impacting in particular what small schools can provide.”<sup>10</sup>*

*“It is important to understand the enrolment numbers within the context of a declining school age population, which obviously has an impact on school enrolment. The number of Canadians aged 5 to 17 declined 6.6 percent between 2000 and 2015. Every province except Alberta (growth of 11.6 percent) recorded a decline in their school-aged population over this period”.<sup>11</sup>*

**1.c) Large school boards encompassing most of Eastern Ontario**

**d) Four school boards competing for students**

Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB), Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO), *Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est de l'Ontario*, (French Catholic- CSDCEO) *Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario* (French Public- CEPEO)

Type of challenge: Barrier

Legislation enshrined rights (section 23, Charter of Rights and Freedoms for Minority Language Education Rights)

Constitutional right to exist for Catholic school boards (1867) and funding for Catholic school boards in Ontario (*Education Act*);

Constitutional Law legal review required for compliance with United Nations Decision on Discrimination in funding Catholic Schools in Ontario<sup>15</sup>

**1.e) Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) incompatible with rural Ontario realities**

Source: *Fewer School Boards Act, 1997*<sup>12</sup>

Media articles:

<http://www.oneschoolsystem.org/>

Source: examples of advertising and promotion to students and parents to attract students to French language school boards (**Appendix 4**)

Federal government funding protocols: Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP)<sup>13</sup>

*Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023*<sup>14</sup>

**Proposed Solutions to Correct Inequity:**

- **Ontario provincial government to table and adopt new legislation to have one publicly funded system for each official language (English/French) to follow the model used in Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia; move to partial funding only as an interim measure such as Manitoba and British Columbia until compliance is achieved with United Nations Court decision confirming Canada's discrimination regarding funding of Catholic schools**
- **Ministry of Education memorandum to direct school boards to only inform communities regarding school registration but ban advertising campaign practices with the intent of poaching students from English language boards using taxpayer funds**

Source: *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines Ontario Ministry of Education 2016\**, (revised 2018)<sup>16</sup>

**g) Inequitable per pupil funding formulas that create disparities among/between boards/schools**

Source: *Ontario Ministry of Education Technical Paper 2021-2022*<sup>17</sup>

**i) Inequitable per student transportation funding**

***\*\*No transportation policies exist at the provincial level to accompany funding, as confirmed by Ministry of Education staff***<sup>18</sup>

**j) Provincial\*\* and board transportation policies that enable the bussing of students over long distances to access schools**

Type of challenge: Barrier

**Proposed Solutions:**

Lack of accountability framework from the Ministry for school boards to develop equitable transportation policies, public feedback opportunities and consider hardships for families and students in revising policy

- **Ministry of Education to adopt flexible funding formula based on community needs as submitted to school boards and forwarded to the Ministry of Education by parents, community groups and municipalities**
- **Ministry of Education to adopt a Grassroots to Government model of consultation through school boards with Ministry approval of funding directly to municipalities and school boards based on submissions outlining needs**
- **Enshrine transportation as a student right to access education for students in rural areas and adopt transportation policies at the Ministerial level which reflect local realities and ensure transparency and accountability**
- **School boards and the Ministry of Education to respect data and evidence provided by parents, community groups and municipalities to support efficiencies and equity and implement evidence-based efficiencies.**

\* A summary of changes made to the 2018 version prepared by the advocacy group Community Schools Alliance is presented below. No further changes are imminent at the time of writing of this report.

- “1. Initial Staff Report to have at least 3 options including status quo instead of “one or more”*
- 2. Initial Staff Report to follow ministry-approved template (under development)*
- 3. Each option in Initial Staff Report to address 4 impacts:*
- *Student programming*
  - *Student well-being*
  - *School board resources*
  - *Local community*
- 4. “Impact on the local community” to include consideration of local economy if at least one school eligible for RNEF [Rural Northern Education Funding]*
- 5. Minimum number of public meetings increased from 2 to 3*
- 6. Final Staff Report must include secondary school student feedback*
- 7. Extra public meeting within 20 business days if new school closure introduced in Final Staff Report*
- 8. Within 5 days of trustee approval of review, notices sent to Head of affected councils and CAO [County Administrative Officer] with invitation to meeting*
- 9. Minimum time between first and final of 3 or more public meetings increased from 40 to 60 business days*
- 10. Modified review prohibited if one or more schools in review qualify for RNEF*
- 11. New section to describe Administrative Review process and conditions”<sup>19</sup>*

**1. f) Shifting school boundaries, facilitating growth in some schools while ‘choking off’ others**

Source: Open Source enrollment data (2011-2021); Pupil Accommodation Review reports from school boards; parent anecdotal accounts; survey results

**h) Inequitable distribution of programming among schools**

Source: parent anecdotal accounts, review of school site and program offering via school and school board websites; review of school board policies on transportation and local student transportation consortium information, survey results

**j) Provincial and board transportation policies that enable the bussing of students long distances from their home communities**

Type of challenge: Obstacle

**Proposed Solution: Ministry of Education to draft and provincial government to enact a Student Bill of Rights to access equitable learning opportunities in their own community (similar to a Patient’s Bill of Rights in the Health care sector)**

School board decision-making is restricted to one source of data to fit messaging to elected trustees; public and parent input not

used to revise proposals, public delegations to school boards are denied, school board senior administration and elected trustees do not visit school site locations to better understand community challenges prior to report drafting and final decision-making, information disseminated to the public is embedded in school board websites, consultation is information sharing in nature and not authentic reciprocal engagement

Greater choice of schools and programs available in the community for parents and students to choose from in a four- school board context

Parent volunteer and elected officials' capacity cannot keep pace with advocacy needs and the constant demands of monitoring school board activity and reports.

**1.k) Funding formulas for new schools that favour larger facilities and disincentivize boards to share facilities**

Source: anecdotal accounts, Infrastructure investments by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Education Facilities Partnership Guideline<sup>20</sup>

**l) Lack of maintenance of older schools**

Source: school board School Information Profiles (SIP)<sup>21</sup> which indicate facility condition index, current capacity and utilization rates

**m) Reluctance of coterminous boards to share facilities**

Source: Ministry of Education Facilities Partnership Guideline, anecdotal comments

**n) Reluctance of school boards to enter into community use agreements**

Type of challenge: Obstacle & Barrier

**Proposed Solution:**

Changing the mindset that education is not a business with a bottom line that requires cost efficiencies (one size fits all and macro economics) but a public service with value for money investment in students and service to clients and the community;

- **Amend legislation to joint ownership and management of schools by municipalities and school boards**
- **School boards to manage operations of schools during school day hours and municipalities to manage school**



organizational mindset and school board identity and brand

The barrier is the ownership of schools by school boards as assets; taxpayer funded assets should have shared responsibility with municipalities

#### **1.n) Pandemic impacts, specifically remote learning**

Type of challenge: obstacle

Internet service provision in rural areas  
Lack of social interaction necessary for learning for students leading to disengagement from learning

Quality of learning is diminished (contact time with a teacher and minimal support services)

**buildings before and after school hours, weekends and holidays**

- **Education to be viewed as a public service and not a business and public assets shared with the community as funded by taxpayers**

Source: Toronto Sick Kids' Hospital study on the state of mental health of students during the COVID19 pandemic<sup>22</sup>

#### **Proposed Solution:**

- **Improving internet access and quality to be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education incorporated through Ontario Infrastructure projects**  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-ontario>

## **2.2 Quantifying and qualifying the issues identified as challenges**

Quantifying challenges requires data collection and analysis in order to challenge single sourced information and data produced by school boards to justify decision making. Establishing such a database relies on gathering information from alternate sources such as the health sector, social services, justice, business, service providers and municipalities. Collaboration with all sectors is essential to producing a holistic impact statement on the adverse effects of school board decision making within current practices which negatively impact students, parents and communities.

Ontario's *Education Act* and the Ontario Ministry of Education have limited compliance frameworks for school board transparency and accountability and the Ministry has a hands-off approach to school board operations, as these entities are corporations or agents of the Ministry. A 2015 report from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario reviewed oversight and funding issues in a value for money audit

[https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en17/v1\\_308en17.pdf](https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en17/v1_308en17.pdf) .

The Ontario Ministry of Education is the only Ministry which does not display an Ontario public service commitment statement on its website. Complaints by parents are often rerouted back to school boards which have no formal complaint mechanisms. School boards are also not obligated to track data, particularly for information most useful to parents and the community. Thus, there is no impetus to respect public service standards to clients (parents and students).

The *Education Act* contains permissive language (“may”, “should”, “could”) in regulations with limited scope for compliance (“will”, “shall”, “must”). Reporting to the Ministry is an expectation, as is compliance with policy and regulation. However, there are no penalties, consequences or repercussions to school boards if these are not followed. School board senior administration do not face personal disciplinary, pecuniary or legal action for poor decisions with negative outcomes for students.

Performance measures within school boards are not common practice yet. Legal action and human rights tribunal application proceedings have brought changes to some practices and policies within school boards and realigned some administrative behaviour, however at great personal cost to parents and taxpayers who fund legal defenses of school boards while parents pay out of pocket.<sup>23</sup>

These processes also take an inordinate amount of time and rarely positively impact a student once the process is completed after 5-10 years of litigation.

While the Minister of Education has oversight of school boards in principle, active intervention is engaged only when public outcry occurs, often revealing dysfunctional school board governance, abuses of power by school board administrators (student suspensions, expulsions, issuing trespass letters to parents who advocate on behalf of their child) and most recently, school board legal action against parents for exposing racism<sup>24</sup>.

Increased media news articles provide the qualitative evidence of challenges faced by parents and students in making school boards more transparent and accountable. Efforts to communicate with school board staff or seek public data and information are often met with no response, a dismissive response or a refusal to provide the information. Responses to such requests are often scripted replicas offered by each school board acting in solidarity with one another. **Appendix 6** provides evidence of this practice in the pursuit of specific school profile data requested from school boards within the context of this research report.

Data collection for quantitative analysis for this report was provided through online student and adult surveys and qualitative analysis was obtained through lived experiences of parents through phone interviews and survey comment sections. **Appendix 7** highlights the survey results.

### 2.3 Goals and Next Steps to Consultant Identified Challenges

- i. School program information hard to obtain through school board website searches for parents seeking to relocate (**GOAL: improve information dissemination practices NEXT STEP: inspect all school board websites for accessibility, search functions by parent interest criteria (contact information for staff, programs in schools) and navigation features.**
- ii. Lack of diversity in school board leadership (**GOAL: improve hiring practices NEXT STEP: outsource administrative hires to external human resource agencies using equity and diversity principles, geographic proximity, experience and expertise as key criteria encouraging mobility within the sector and urban /rural relocations.**
- iii. Lack of data and /or reliable data (one source only- school board data) (**GOAL: improve information sharing practices between sectors. NEXT STEP: mandate school boards to**

- use research and data collection best practices to reflect multiple perspectives on data used for decision-making.
- iv. Municipal council members' perceived limited role in providing educational input (**GOAL: establish a link from citizens to school boards to communicate community interests. NEXT STEP: establish an education committee or education liaison person on municipal councils**)
  - v. Internet services -access and signal quality (**GOAL: Ministry of Education to assume responsibility to align with online learning access. NEXT STEP: create budget line**)
  - vi. Obtaining information directly from school staff and school board personnel (**GOAL: eliminate gate-keeping practices at school boards and increase accountability. NEXT STEP: Ministry of Education to mandate school board compliance with the Ontario Public Service Standard for Communication, Feedback & Complaint processes**)
  - vii. Student trustees having a restricted role in feedback as key clients of educational services (**GOAL: give students a voice as primary clients of educational services. NEXT STEP: Change the voting age in Ontario to 16 years of age to allow voting rights for student trustees in school board decision-making (to align with the minimum age for driving).**)
  - viii. School boards' perception of education monopoly over decision-making (transportation, costs, programs, school builds) business focused rather than service focused (bottom line vs client satisfaction) (**GOAL: change school board mindset from a publicly funded private corporation with complete autonomy to a client services mindset. NEXT STEP: remove the word "business" from Ministry of Education and school board positions, operational division name, policy documents and financial statements**)
  - ix. Disconnect between regional employment sectors and program offerings in Specialist High School Majors and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs; no data on whether school boards are meeting the need for student skills training for local sector employment. (**GOAL: improve volunteer, co-op education placements and youth employment opportunities to keep students employed locally. NEXT STEP: local business associations to work in conjunction with school boards, students, parents and residents to align school- based SHSM and OYAP programs with local business and economic initiatives to support existing and developing employment sectors. Create intermunicipal student exchanges with different school board partners for students to explore out of area employment sectors of personal interest.**)
  - x. Lack of school board policy to support decisions which are detrimental to the community (parent-initiated survey input and feedback are ignored) (**GOAL: improved transparency and accountability to the community. NEXT STEP: school boards and Ministry of Education to adopt practices aligned with Ontario Public Standards in Communication, Feedback and Complaints processes.**)

Solutions to survey identified challenges are embedded in the above information.

## **2.4 Priorities identified through meetings with the Education Working group**

### **a) Transportation**

In 2017 the Ministry of Education released a discussion paper on improving student transportation. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/discussion-paper-new-vision-student-transportation#section-0> . Wellness and Equity formed part of the topics addressed. Submissions were made by various groups. One example was related to access to French Immersion programs in small population centres. The submission from Canadian Parents for French Ontario can be found in **Appendix 9**.

A 2015 report from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario reviewed oversight and funding issues related to transportation

[https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en17/v1\\_308en17.pdf](https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en17/v1_308en17.pdf)

A follow-up on how school boards and consortiums implemented some recommendations from the report is found in **Appendix 10**.

**A review of how local school boards implemented changes by the Ministry of Education is required to see how the right of a student to attend a school more accessible to their home, as a right articulated under the Education Act, Part II, School attendance paragraph 35 is aligned with local school board transportation policies. (Appendix 11)**

**A Child's Right based approach to school transportation (currently it is considered a privilege) and the community advocacy incorporating United Nations Human Rights High Commission policy on the 17 sustainable development goals<sup>25</sup> into domestic legislation is a necessary first step in addressing these issues locally. However provincial legislative changes are required.**

### **b) Programming**

#### **French Immersion**

Funding for French Immersion programs per student are based on a minimum 50% of the day spent in English and 50% of the day spent in French language instruction (150 minutes of the 300 minutes total instructional day). Schools in which this model is implemented are called “dual track” schools. Funding is the same regardless whether school boards increase the French language instructional hours in the program or not. <https://on.cpf.ca/files/2021/05/Tab-8-Hours-of-French-Instruction-and-Funding-Graphs-Elementary-2021-2022.pdf>

French Immersion program growth in Ontario is on par with French language school growth in enrollment at the elementary school level. Participation rates in French Immersion programs in the UCDSB and CSDBE0 are at 39% and 40% respectively, one of the highest in the province. <https://on.cpf.ca/files/Tab-1B-EFI-of-French-Daily-by-Board-JK-12-Total-FI-Enrolment-by-Board-2018-2019.pdf>

**More Ministry funding for French Immersion can be accessed by school boards by having more school sites designated dual track French Immersion program sites in rural areas.**

**Dual track schools are currently viable schools in small population areas as indicated by enrollment data over the last 10 years for SDG. In addition, schools having child care sites with French Immersion programs are the most viable elementary schools. (Appendix 3)**

### **International languages**

The Ministry of Education provides additional funding to elementary and secondary students who wish to learn a language other than English or French.

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/International\\_Languages\\_en.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/International_Languages_en.pdf)

**These languages can be those of family ancestry or other additional languages for students in high school interested in Specialist High School Majors in Arts & Culture, Tourism, Hospitality or Business. The programs can be offered after school or on weekends.**

Culturally inclusive language learning may strengthen community identity and heritage (for example Scottish Gaelic, Dutch, German origins in SDG)<sup>26</sup> and is inclusive and equitable to refugee and immigrant families who wish to maintain their language and culture (Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, Filipino, Mandarin). Often, these families arrive in Canada already knowing more than one language (other than French or English) and want their children to access learning in both official languages as well as maintain their own language<sup>27</sup>.

**English as a second language (ESL) funding is available concurrently to French as a Second Language (FSL) funding as they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, a student who recently arrived in Canada in French Immersion receiving ESL support and being transported to school generates the most amount of funding to a school per student, above the base student funding model<sup>28</sup>.**

### **Native Languages & Indigenous Culture**

Funding is available for school boards for native languages and students can study a native language in elementary schools and secondary school which can be substituted for French or can be in addition to French<sup>29</sup>.

Indigenous culture awareness has been infused in all subject areas of the elementary and secondary school curriculum in Ontario<sup>30</sup>.

Survey results indicated some interest in this area as the proximity of the Aknesasne first nation territory and students who self-identify with languages in the Audenosaunee (Iroquois), Mohawk, Haudenosaunee (St Lawrence Iroquois) and Huron-Wendat languages.

**Indigenous programs are a means for school boards to access additional funding from federal and provincial funding sources and provide enhanced learning opportunity for all students in rural areas, especially those of aboriginal ancestry, but also those who wish to access aboriginal language and culture under the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion framework.**



### **Specialist High School Major (SHSM)**

**In reviewing school and school boards websites, more work needs to be done to improve the visibility, relevance to students and surrounding economy and exploring partnerships with businesses for co-op student placements with SHSM programs.**

A gap analysis is needed to find out which SHSM programs should be placed in which high schools with a review or realignment to follow. More information on SHSM and its importance is found in Appendix 8.

### **Special Education**

**Survey results indicate the highest demand for programming is meeting the needs of students with learning challenges (Appendix 7) and this funding needs to be monitored for equitable distribution by school boards to all students who require additional support for learning.**

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code<sup>31</sup> students with special needs have a right to support which meets their needs so that they have equitable opportunities for academic success as their peers.

School boards have a duty to accommodate these students “to the point of undue hardship” which is a very high threshold that is rarely met by school boards.

Vigilance and monitoring by parents are essential to ensure these students are accessing adequate program support, regardless of the language of instruction (students in French Immersion have equal rights to support as those in the English program).

It is also essential that students be formally identified as students with special needs through the Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) process of the *Education Act*, to ensure that school boards meet their obligations in the duty to accommodate, which does not just entail the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student<sup>32</sup>.

Informing parents of their rights and students’ rights is key to ongoing monitoring.

### **Virtual learning**

**Survey results conducted for this report indicate that students aged 12 and over prefer in person learning by far (Appendix 7). Toronto’s Sick Kids’ Hospital study on mental health also reiterated the importance of in person learning for all students but younger students in particular<sup>33</sup>. While a very small number of students found virtual learning experiences positive, publicly available data shows that virtual learning for most students was a negative experience and it must never be the default delivery model of instruction in Ontario schools.**

**The COVID19 pandemic clearly illustrated the need for more access to virtual learning opportunities for students in small population centres where internet services and or family income to access internet services did not permit a positive learning experience.**

*Horizon Educational Consulting, 2021*

*www.horizoned.ca*

While the government of Ontario has announced that virtual learning options will remain for elementary and secondary students<sup>34</sup>, this model of instructional delivery should be reserved for exceptional cases where students are unable to attend school due to medical reasons or severe anxiety related to learning in schools, generally related to sensory processing disorders which are exacerbated in school learning environments.

**Above all, school boards must provide home instruction to students unable to attend school in person and/or virtual learning equipment and internet facilitation devices if their families cannot afford the service in their home. Survey results indicate that the Ministry of Education should fund equipment and internet for virtual learning, particularly since the government has indicated two credits are to be earned through virtual learning by students prior to graduation.<sup>35</sup>**

### **Offering synchronous virtual learning for courses at a different high school**

**Survey results once again indicated that the UCDSB school board decision to change school start times earlier for high school students and later for elementary students on the premise of offering equitable access to synchronous online learning** (teachers livestreaming lessons to students via video) for high school students to access courses available at other high schools simultaneously, requires further review. It was also stated that another reason was to provide high school students access to part-time employment after school with an earlier dismissal time. This reason **was not substantiated by student survey results. (Appendix 7)**

While the principle of enabling simultaneous courses at another learning site appears equitable, **the rationale for the earlier school start time for adolescents has ignored education research which indicates that this age group is more engaged with learning later in the morning and thus they should start later rather than earlier. The same research concluded that younger children learned best with an earlier start time to school.**<sup>36</sup>

No consultation occurred with parents or students and email feedback and survey results by parents submitted to school boards on the topic of the hardship to families with finding childcare when older siblings are no longer available in the morning to mind younger brothers or sisters and put them on the bus or take the bus with them, has been largely ignored. **Finding child care in small population centres is also far more limited than in larger population centres and presents an additional obstacle and inequity for families in SDG.**

Cost cutting reasons cited by the school board for the bell time changes without publishing the savings in detailed financials is questioned. There is no evidence of cost savings if two busses would now go to a family's home instead of one previously in some communities for siblings in both elementary and secondary with different start times (parent anecdote). **The lack of transparency in school board decision-making has downloaded a new cost to families for child care while dismissing student and parent feedback on the consequences these decisions have for families and communities. (Appendix 7)**

### c) Equity

In order to study school board decision and policy making, a study of the 2013 policy for Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) PPM 119<sup>37</sup> emanating from Ministry of Education's *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2006* and its implementation through to 2012 was undertaken with a view to explore how many policies were updated to comply with this new directive.

Highlights of the policy are presented in **Appendix 12** and starting points indicated below for further action.

**First, equity must not be confused with equality. The latter indicates sameness for every person but equity means every person gets what he or she needs to be able to access, perform or acquire what everyone else can.**

Second, the following principles from the Strategy must drive all policy review at school boards.

*Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy:*

- *is a foundation of excellence;*
- *meets individual needs;*
- *identifies and eliminates barriers;*
- *promotes a sense of belonging;*
- *involves the broad community;*
- *builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives;*
- *is demonstrated throughout the system*<sup>38</sup>.

An example of equity is allowing international students to study in Ontario schools and obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. However, in order to achieve that academic goal, they are supported through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes upon arrival until their language skills allow them to fully participate in all other subject classes.

International students pay tuition to local school boards in the same amount as what school boards receive in funding for local students, since school boards are not for profit corporations under provincial government and cannot charge more for tuition fees.

**However, more international students generate extra funding to a local school and benefit the students attending from the community. More funding brings more staffing allocations which in turn can offer more extra-curricular activities for all students (clubs, sports teams, trips) that are not funded by the Ministry of Education and are undertaken by teaching personnel as a professional courtesy and personal interest in enhancing the student experience at school.**

**Investing effort in attracting international students to rural community schools is a direct investment to local students and the community at large, as these students have disposable**

**income from their families abroad. International students also bring diversity and inclusion to small population schools and students can experience reciprocal perspectives on locales, customs, language and cultures<sup>39</sup>.**

**An example of inequity is a school not offering French Immersion or not offering day care or before/after school care on site.**

Examples of local inequities in SDG schools are documented in Appendix 13.

**Inequitable practices at school boards include policies not revised to reflect EDI principles, parent or student feedback not considered, student trustees unable to vote on school board decisions, community consultation which is information dissemination only, and lack of community use of schools.**

**Of particular note is that the *Strategy* includes language indicating school board compliance expectations (“*School boards will...*”). It is an expectation that all school board policy should be reviewed with an equity lens and compliance with the strategy. EDI principles should drive all policy review.**

The application of equity principles to provincial policies and guidelines such as the Ministry’s *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines* and the *Community Planning and Partnerships Guidelines* are outlined at the end of this report.

#### **d) Health & Wellness**

The health and wellness of students came to the forefront in the last two school years due to the imposed restrictions caused by the COVID19 pandemic which closed schools for extended periods of time and forced students into online learning platforms. Neither teachers were prepared to teach, nor students were prepared to learn, or equipped to use, this mode of instructional delivery.

**The pandemic did allow simultaneous research to be engaged and Toronto’s Sick Kids Hospital tracked data from children and youth from March 2020 to June 2021<sup>40</sup>. Ontario saw the longest school closure period and the data has revealed the negative impact on student learning and student well-being.**

**Testimonials from teachers and parents indicated there was very little mental health support for students while schooling abruptly opened and closed on short notice and pivoted to virtual learning.**

While the Ministry of Education allocated further funding for mental health supports for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022<sup>41</sup> school years, very little support was experienced by students.

In addition to lack of in-person schooling, many students were unable to pursue extra-curricular activity at school or in the community. This loss has added to the diminished physical and mental health of students as evidenced by survey anecdotal results in the comments section.

**The student survey results in Appendix 7 indicated they prefer to walk or bike to school (81.82%) and go to school close to home, which supports a provincial health strategy to reduce childhood obesity<sup>42</sup>.**

Transportation travel times by school bus which is the mode of transportation to school for 73.16% of students in SDG according to survey results, negatively impacts physical health and mental health as travel for some students was up to 2 hours per day (anecdotal comments).

This significant loss of time made engaging in extra-curricular activity nearly impossible and reduced the quality of life for both the student and the family. Changing bell times announced for implementation in September 2021 by the UCDSB school board has caused additional hardship to families who are all travelling to work or school at different times, eroding quality of time together as a family for 5 days out of 7 days of the week.

**School board decisions made without the best interest of students in mind contribute to diminished physical and mental well being of children and youth.**

**The Ministry of Education must engage in research to establish the causal link between how local school boards complied with the 2006 Equity Strategy and the 2013 EDI policy and its impact on the current mental health of students.**

One can hypothesize that school boards who complied and implemented all of the strategies were better prepared in supporting student when COVID19 restrictions came into force as they would have had organizational capacity and direction to support students. Where policies and practices were already in place, students may have fared better in coping with pandemic restrictions and virtual learning.

**Poorly implemented or limited implementation of the strategy and policy may have created more mental health issues for students in certain school boards. Parents did provide testimonials that mental health support staff had been removed from schools prior to the start of the pandemic.**

**It would be expected that the Ministry of Education with its branch dedicated to Health and well-being would capture this nexus between boards and policy implementation and better serviced students. (Appendix 14)**

**Not implementing the 2006 Equity Strategy by 2012 and not being compliant with the 2013 EDI policy may have contributed to increased mental health and deteriorating wellness for students up until the pandemic (bullying issues, exclusion of special needs students, suspensions) and the lack of services throughout the pandemic;**

Critical questions related to equity and mental health supports remain:

- are mental health nurses allocated to all schools, including small population schools?
- did a lack of mental health support lead to greater suffering for students during the pandemic?

- does data from local health units show correlation between agency statistics and lower student mental health in local conditions and poverty?

#### e) Sharing of space between co-terminus school boards

**This difficulty resides in the branding and identity which each school board assigns to its image. While it may have been a practice for two different school boards to engage in shared space in the past, it may be harder to achieve within the current climate of greater competition between school boards for students.**

The *Education Act* permits different school boards to use a school building as a shared space and for students to access schooling in a school closest to home (see Appendix 11), however the complexities of shared space by two different school boards to deliver educational services requires more research and data to capture successes and challenges of these arrangements. **The difficulty in obtaining this information from school boards is a barrier to dealing with this issue.**

**Alternatively, recommendations on how to optimize unused space in an under-capacity school building by other education related professionals (speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, mental health professionals, child care providers) is a more viable option to maximizing building function and enhancing services to students and the community.**

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board Dedicated Space pilot project (First Ave PS) allowing private therapists into schools to provide ABA therapy to students with Autism is one such precedent setting initiative which has been very well received by parents.

#### SUMMARY

**It is critical that the rights of students and parents are acknowledged and respected through authentic consultative processes with school board personnel with meaningful and reciprocal exchanges and a variety of data reviewed. Consultation needs to be reciprocal exchanges of oral and written submissions that are shared with all parties and the public.**

All policies and decisions must reflect evidence-based processes and open and transparent financial implications and explanations that are logical and meaningful to both school boards and the community within the context of a public service provision model of quality and excellence, and not a business model of cost effectiveness and bottom-line savings, at the cost of the best interests of students, families and the community.

**Policy updates need to be more nimble** than legislative changes which are complicated and require government and political will to influence and parliamentary process which is cumbersome and prone to significant time delays. **Updates need to be evidence based with data, research, analysis and impact statements, demographic and trend information, be authentic and relevant to the target audience to which it applies.**



**The “best interest of the child” is the new guide for creating policy and in policy review, by standards set in the international community incorporating the United Nations International Rights of the Child<sup>43</sup>** and supported by the continued work of the University of Ottawa Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory on the Rights of the Child <https://droitcivil.uottawa.ca/interdisciplinary-research-laboratory-rights-child/> .

**Changing organizational mindset and behaviour in school board practice is an obstacle that requires continued advocacy efforts to deconstruct perceptual or real bias, stereotypes, fossilized practices and approaches to decision-making and information dissemination to parents and the community.**

New meanings for school, education and community engagement are evolving, so school boards must understand that it is not just parents and students as clients who are engaged, but that the parent community is supported by the business community, service clubs, non-profit organizations, local media and key community leaders.

**Engaging the student voice to promote educational objectives is key to success in changing school board practices.** Using precedent situations from other regions in Ontario such as students voicing disagreement with ‘quadesters’ and having the Toronto District School board reverse its decision for September 2021, due to student voices is strategically significant advocacy<sup>44</sup>.

Similarly, the reversal of school board decisions on closing two rural schools in the Thames Valley District School Board in 2018 through community advocacy is also precedent setting<sup>45</sup>

Advocacy must have a multipronged approach locally and provincially with multiple stakeholders to be most effective.

**Empowering parents with accurate information, data, research and successful initiatives in other communities shifts the paradigm from “asking” school boards to demanding more appropriate resolution and improved services for students.**

Finally, urban out migration caused by COVID19 pandemic restrictions and citizens searching for greater space and quality of life options presents a unique opportunity for SDG communities to capitalize on new residents adding their voice to advocacy to ensure their children get what they received in urban school, within their new communities. Reasons for population migration include less costly housing, more space, less pollution, quality of life, less congestion, traffic, green space and smaller schools.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT**

Ontario’s *Education Act* is revised on an as-needed basis and does not undergo systemic review in a cyclical manner. Regulations that are outdated or do not align with new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion principles must be reviewed and updated.

The Purpose of the Education Act and its regulations are:

## *PURPOSE*

### ***Strong public education system***

*0.1 (1) A strong public education system is the foundation of a prosperous, caring and civil society. 2009, c. 25, s. 1.*

### ***Purpose of education***

*(2) The purpose of education is to provide students with the opportunity to realize their potential and develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, caring citizens who contribute to their society. 2009, c. 25, s. 1.*

### ***Partners in education sector***

*(3) All partners in the education sector, including the Minister, the Ministry and the boards, have a role to play in enhancing student achievement and well-being, closing gaps in student achievement and maintaining confidence in the province's publicly funded education systems. 2009, c. 25, s. 1.*

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e02#BK0>

The lack of Ministry oversight in school board compliance to policies and regulations as noted in reports by the Office of the Ontario Auditor General<sup>46</sup> has led to parents, the public and municipalities sounding the alarm in lack of transparency in information sharing, collaboration and consultation practices at school boards. The lack of openness and accountability goes against the public mandate of public service and maintaining Ontario Public Service Standards<sup>47</sup>.

While the *Act* confirms education as a public service,

### ***Ministry continued***

*2 (1) The ministry of the public service known in English as the Ministry of Education and Training and in French as ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation is continued. 1997, c. 31, s. 3.*

**Most school boards do not acknowledge, recognize or subscribe to the Ontario Public Service Standards which applies to corporations, agents and third-party consultants to the Ministry<sup>48</sup>, as they ascribe themselves corporate status separate from the Ministry's identity. In doing so, their organizational behavior adopts a business-like corporate stance, engaging with the public as publicly funded private corporations.**

**As indicated earlier in this report, the Ministry of Education is the only Ontario Ministry that does not post a public statement of commitment to these Standards on its website. Having school boards conform to standards that the oversight branch of government does not commit to, is a significant obstacle, particularly when a major component of these Standards is communication and feedback processes on services.**

- 1. Recognizing partnerships that are articulated in Ministry policy but not in the *Act* itself is another example of educational dissonance subject to further gap analysis:**

- a) Protocol for partnerships with external agencies  
[https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/SpecialEducationPlan/SpecEdPlanDoc/21\\_Protocol\\_for\\_Partnerships\\_with\\_External\\_Agencies\\_PPM149\\_rev.pdf](https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/SpecialEducationPlan/SpecEdPlanDoc/21_Protocol_for_Partnerships_with_External_Agencies_PPM149_rev.pdf)  
 Protocol for partnerships with Parents as partners in education  
[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/FS\\_PE\\_PolicyEn.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/FS_PE_PolicyEn.pdf)
- b) Community partners in bullying prevention

*“8. Communications and Outreach Strategies*

*To support a whole-school approach, boards must actively communicate their policies and guidelines on bullying prevention and intervention to principals, teachers, and other school staff; students; parents; their Special Education Advisory Committee; school councils; and school bus operators and drivers. Boards should also provide this information to their Parent Involvement Committee, their Indigenous Education Advisory Council, and other appropriate community partners.”*

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.pdf>

2. **A further example of a gap is the funding of technology versus textbooks, which are now largely out of use. While assistive technology for students with special needs (Special Equipment Allocation) is funded by a specific envelope of funding, more broad-based technology for all students, including access to technology is not a feature in regulations.**

The Ministry had to compensate during the pivot to remote learning through the COVID19 pandemic by ensuring students had access to a laptop. Despite this effort, internet access was still a significant obstacle for many students and families with multiple children in participating in remote learning. Survey results quantify this obstacle and indicate public opinion that the Ministry of Education should be responsible for this aspect of educational learning. (Appendix 6)

School sites should be repeater sites for enhanced internet capacity in small population areas and this requires collaboration and effort between municipalities, service providers and school boards to ensure better services for residents and students. **Internet service and laptop provision should be a provincial budget line for school boards if remote learning is implemented with mandatory credits assigned to it for high school graduation, which is a correlated commitment required for students to achieve this requirement.**

3. Collaboration between municipalities and school boards must be mandated by a Ministry policy, however, human behaviour dictates the success or failure of such initiatives. Engagement in collaboration is best obtained by repeated invitation to any interested individual within school board personnel since senior administration, school principals and teachers are often overwhelmed with meeting obligations. Public calls for this participation within the community and students is much more fruitful in obtaining an

interested individual. Informing parents and the community of school board consultations in the community is best taken on by municipalities with identified staff or committees with whom school boards feel more obligated to contact for initial notification.

4. Transparency and accountability are compellable since taxpayers fund educational services provided by school boards. Working with professional auditors in the community and the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario to continue signalling concerns at local and provincial levels by questioning school board data and fiscal assumptions is necessary and joining forces with other advocacy groups locally and provincially strengthens messaging and calls for action. Information sharing between groups makes advocacy more effective. Board delegations by such groups cannot be refused by school boards under the public service standard of feedback mechanisms.
5. Conducting bias reviews for school board policies (or lack thereof) of programs, transportation and school closures provides data for provincial corrective action. Information has power to change when it is corroborated from different sources and helps remove educational dissonance in policy and practices at school boards.
6. Insisting on research-backed staff proposals must be undertaken and reports challenged if no references to such background information has not been completed. Such reports should be qualified as void in status if not substantiated by policy or research or students/parent testimonials or data (survey). Lack of active research being used by school boards when it is supported by the Education Act and institutions such as the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, as well as many other universities Ontario and Ministry funded grants to do research in school boards, must be brought to the attention of the Minister of Education.
7. **Addressing delays in revisions to government initiatives such as the Rural Education Strategy, Community Planning & Partnership Guidelines and the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines requires a flipped approach where grassroots advocates prepare the desired template or model with recommendations for government to adopt.** A flipped model ensures that a local perspective is captured, or a shared challenge across many communities is addressed in a manner that most impacts the community and its students.

Presenting the Ministry with solutions from a grassroots approach to change policies which is not top-down Ministry directed (waiting for a template that never comes) or government directed (no action near elections) but community directed, with ministerial response to proposals (faster timeline, not dependent on elections and govt priorities as students wait for solutions) is more efficient and enables a response to proposed solutions.

8. Alignment of all Ministry of Education policies to the Equity Diversity and Inclusion principles must be verified by an audit requested of the Ontario Auditor General.
9. A Child's Right based approach to schools and community incorporating International Human Rights Commission policy into domestic legislation for the Ministry of Education to revise is vital to restore faith in the public education system.
10. Union interference through collective agreements which deter from the students' best interest (staff turnover due to absence, illness, leaves, timetables, preparation time, subject expertise) must be addressed with those organizations by the Minister of Education.
11. Increasing the role and importance of the student voice and the Ontario Association of Student Trustees as partners to municipalities, not sidelined or ignored (token student trustees with no voice, include voting rights for student trustees in school board meetings, and including them in municipal youth advisory roles).

## CONCLUSION

The literature review for this study revealed interesting options used in other countries however international solutions do not work locally primarily because of how education is structured under provincial authority with no national framework for education.

While some federal funding in official languages education (minority and second language) does flow to the provinces, the majority of education funding is driven by taxpayers in every province.

The best solutions come from parents, teachers, residents and students in local communities as lived experience provides a source of ideas and solutions.

For this reason, a template is provided which outlines a simplified 'grassroots to government' model for public communication and consultation with school boards as agents and service providers of the Ministry of Education.

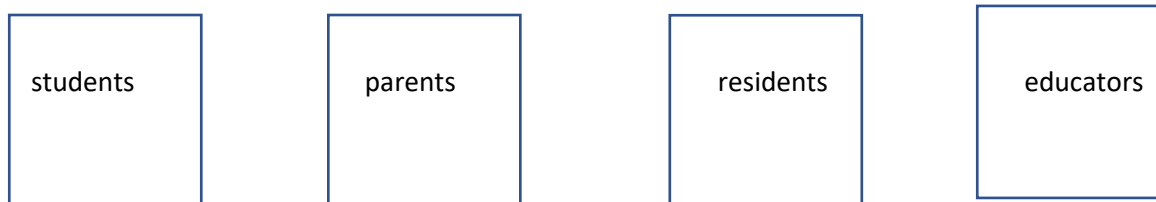
## A SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION ON A PROVINCIAL RURAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

### GRASSROOTS TO GOVERNMENT MODEL

1. **STEP 1 – SCHOOL BOARD NOTIFIES COMMUNITY OF A CHALLENGE  
OR  
COMMUNITY NOTIFIES SCHOOL BOARD OF A CHALLENGE**

*(NOTIFICATION OCCURS THROUGH WEBSITES, MEDIA, SOCIAL MEDIA, DIRECT  
EMAILS, DELEGATIONS, COMMUNITY NETWORK)*

2. **STEP 2 – EITHER PARTY SEEKS FEEDBACK FROM EACH GROUP**



- timelines are advertised at time of notification, subject to the severity and urgency of the challenge
- sample timelines could be 2 weeks to 4 weeks for notification, 3-6 weeks for feedback
- feedback includes written submission, video presentation, survey data, written testimonials, in person meeting, site visits

3. **STEP 3 –ALL FEEDBACK IS CATALOGUED, DOCUMENTED AND PUBLISHED ON  
SCHOOL BOARD / MUNICIPALITY WEBSITES OR VIRTUAL DEDICATED SPACE  
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC FOR REVIEW**

- sample timelines for review should be 4 weeks

4. **STEP 4 –SECOND FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY WITH RESEARCH, LEGAL REVIEW,  
POLICY IMPLICATION REVIEW, IMPACTS OF DECISION, EQUITY & BIAS  
REVIEW**
5. **STEP 5 –STAFF REPORT / COMMUNITY REPORT**
6. **REVIEW OF INITIAL REPORT**
7. **VETTING OF INITIAL REPORT BY OTHER PARTY**
8. **DECISION ON SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGE**
9. **PROPOSED CHANGES COMMUNICATED**
10. **PROPOSED CHANGES ADOPTED, POLICY REVISED OR REMAINS STATUS QUO**

**RESULTS FORWARDED TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION**



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> SDG Strategic Plan, pages 1-2 (in Appendix 2)

<sup>2</sup> *Fewer School Boards Act, 1997*

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education, *Indigenous Education Strategy*

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada 2016 Census for Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry

<sup>5</sup> Haudenosaunee – This name refers to the Iroquois Confederacy comprising of these Nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora. *Traditional Territory Acknowledgments in Ontario*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Population Centre and Rural Area Classification 2016*

<sup>7</sup> Ontario College of Teachers *Professional Standards*

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education 2006 *Equity Strategy* (page 8)

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada 2016 Census for Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry

<sup>10</sup> Education Research Brief no.1 – *The Decline of Enrollment in Quebec's English Language School Sector* (Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network)

<sup>11</sup> Fraser Institute Report *Where Our Students Are Educated, Measuring Student Enrollment in Canada*, 2017(page 5)

<sup>12</sup> *Fewer School Boards Act, 1997*

<sup>13</sup> *Protocol for Agreements for Minority Language Education and Second Language Instruction 2019-2020 to 2022-2023 between the Government of Canada and the Provinces and Territories* – Council of Ministers of Education

<sup>14</sup> Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in our Future

<sup>15</sup> United Nations World Court decision declaring funding of Catholic schools in Ontario as discriminatory

<sup>16</sup> Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines 2016 and revised guideline 2018

<sup>17</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. *Technical Paper 2020-2021*, page 118.

<sup>18</sup> Email with Ontario Ministry of Education staff July 9, 2021 confirming there are no provincial Ministry policies related to transportation funding

<sup>19</sup> Community Schools Alliance Power point presentation to Ontario Small Urban Municipalities 2018 conference (slides 8-12)

<sup>20</sup> Ontario Infrastructure projects/construction of new schools [and](#) Ministry of Education *Facilities Partnership Guideline*

<sup>21</sup> School Information Profiles (SIP) from UCDSB and CDSBEO and Open Source government data

<sup>22</sup> Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital *Sick Kids Releases new research on how COVID-19 pandemic has impacted child and youth mental, physical health*

<sup>23</sup> CBC News French public school board <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/parents-lawsuit-against-school-board-alleges-racism-falsified-report-cards-1.6078805> CBC News York Region District School Board <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/york-school-board-lawsuit-1.5134169>

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<sup>25</sup> United Nations Human Rights High Commission policy on the 17 sustainable development goals

<sup>26</sup> Statistics Canada 206 Census for SDG – cultural origins and languages spoken and most spoken immigrant languages in SDG

<sup>27</sup> CBC News <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/newcomers-to-canada-enrolling-children-in-french-immersion-1.1396457> ; Canadian Parents for French submissions to the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages

- <sup>28</sup> 2021-2022 Technical Paper, Ontario Ministry of Education funding allocations  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/2122/2021-22-technical-paper.pdf>
- <sup>29</sup> Native language funding, 2021-2022 Technical Paper, Ontario Ministry of Education
- <sup>30</sup> *First Nations, Inuit & Métis Studies Curriculum*. Ontario Ministry of Education
- <sup>31</sup> Education as a service under the Ontario Human Rights Code
- <sup>32</sup> *Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to grade 12 Policy and Resource Guide (section D – IPRC process and section E -IEP)*
- <sup>33</sup> Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital *Sick Kids Releases new research on how COVID-19 pandemic has impacted child and youth mental, physical health*
- <sup>34</sup> Ontario school boards must offer virtual learning in 2021-2022 <https://www.cp24.com/news/ontario-boards-must-offer-virtual-learning-as-option-for-entire-2021-22-school-year-ford-gov-t-says-1.5413676?cache=frpwuptdsnzlvp%3FclipId%3D89750%3Fot%3DAjaxLayout>
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- <sup>36</sup> Later start time for high school students in some school boards (Thunder Bay, Toronto, London)  
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- <sup>37</sup> Ministry of Education. Policy and Program Memorandum 119 (2013) *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools*
- <sup>38</sup> Ministry of Education, 2006 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy
- <sup>39</sup> *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada 2017 update*. Government of Canada
- <sup>40</sup> Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital *Sick Kids Releases new research on how COVID-19 pandemic has impacted child and youth mental, physical health*
- <sup>41</sup> Ministry of Education May 4, 2021 Memorandum to School boards on allocations for mental health support for students
- <sup>42</sup> Reducing Childhood Obesity in Ontario, provincial and federal strategy documents
- <sup>43</sup> Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory on the Rights of the Child, University of Ottawa
- <sup>44</sup> CBC Toronto students fighting 'quadmesters' <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/some-high-school-students-calling-to-scrap-quadmesters-1.6027636> <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/toronto-star/20210617/281543703877757>
- <sup>45</sup> Thames Valley District School Board Reverses school closing decisions <https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/our-board/EPAR01-school-closures-reconsidered.aspx>
- <sup>46</sup> Office of the Ontario Auditor General report on Ministry funding and school board oversight  
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- <sup>47</sup> Ontario Public Service Standards
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TVDSB Letter to Minister Lecce on rural schools November 19, 2020 <https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/our-board/resources/Documents/Trustees/Letters/Rural-Education-Task-Force-2020-Nov-19.pdf>

Immigration backlog [https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/08/01/canada-faces-a-staggering-immigration-backlog-with-the-border-reopening-and-applicants-anxious-to-get-here-how-should-ottawa-prioritize.html?source=newsletter&utm\\_content=a09&utm\\_source=ts\\_nl&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_email=CB4524CC985A903ABCB6EF5A4AD565DE&utm\\_campaign=tmh\\_65368](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/08/01/canada-faces-a-staggering-immigration-backlog-with-the-border-reopening-and-applicants-anxious-to-get-here-how-should-ottawa-prioritize.html?source=newsletter&utm_content=a09&utm_source=ts_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=CB4524CC985A903ABCB6EF5A4AD565DE&utm_campaign=tmh_65368)

## **Funding**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html>

International languages MEO <https://ce.ycdsb.ca/program/international-languages/>

<https://ocdsb.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=55478&pageId=214038>

[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/International\\_Languages\\_en.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/International_Languages_en.pdf)

International Education [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/international\\_education.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/international_education.html)

## **French Immersion program funding**

<https://on.cpf.ca/files/2021/05/Tab-7A-FSL-Funding-2021-2022.pdf>

## **allocations to each English language school board**

<https://on.cpf.ca/files/Tab-7B-FSL-Allocation-to-School-Boards-2017-2018.pdf>

## **Draft parent survey (contains questions related to the four pillars identified as priorities)**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c7g-D1DdmId\\_wcgz8INoUONRJGbDZ6tznOspSDHt1jU/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c7g-D1DdmId_wcgz8INoUONRJGbDZ6tznOspSDHt1jU/edit?usp=sharing)

Waterloo DSB School size and configuration policy <https://www.wrdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/4022-School-Size-and-Configuration.pdf>

CDSBEO /UCDSB CPP presentation June 16, 2021 [https://www.cdsbeo.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/\\_CPP-Meeting\\_CDSBEO-and-UCDSB\\_June16-21\\_FINAL-updated-June-28-21.pdf](https://www.cdsbeo.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/_CPP-Meeting_CDSBEO-and-UCDSB_June16-21_FINAL-updated-June-28-21.pdf)

Toronto District School Board Capital Priority projects for funding approval will be during the 2021 year [https://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/default/ARC\\_helpful\\_info\\_docs/1.%20Intro%20and%20Context%20P20201029%20LTPAS%20V3.1%202029.pdf](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/default/ARC_helpful_info_docs/1.%20Intro%20and%20Context%20P20201029%20LTPAS%20V3.1%202029.pdf)

HWDSB Finance & Facilities Committee 2021 <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/meetings/Finance-and-Facilities-Committee-Agenda-1619095745.pdf>

Education Facts -statistics <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationfacts.html>

### **Community Use of Schools policy by board**

UCDSB <https://go.boarddocs.com/can/ucdsb/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=BHNKVV5356BD> user agreement <https://go.boarddocs.com/can/ucdsb/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=B75HVV4A5C66>

CDSBEO [http://cdsbeo-1.azurewebsites.net/policies/F4-2\\_Community\\_Use.pdf](http://cdsbeo-1.azurewebsites.net/policies/F4-2_Community_Use.pdf)

CEPEO [https://cepeo.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/INS12\\_LocationLocaux.pdf](https://cepeo.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/INS12_LocationLocaux.pdf)

### **Legal case involving school board and municipality**

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onca/doc/2021/2021onca544/2021onca544.html> school board and municipality litigation regarding services and sharing of assets and benefits

### **Statistics on international students and trends**

[https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/07/29/canadas-international-students-are-becoming-less-diverse-heres-why-ottawa-says-thats-a-problem.html?source=newsletter&utm\\_content=a13&utm\\_source=ts\\_nl&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_email=CB4524CC985A903ABCB6EF5A4AD565DE&utm\\_campaign=tmh\\_64833](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/07/29/canadas-international-students-are-becoming-less-diverse-heres-why-ottawa-says-thats-a-problem.html?source=newsletter&utm_content=a13&utm_source=ts_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=CB4524CC985A903ABCB6EF5A4AD565DE&utm_campaign=tmh_64833)

They left the Philippines for temporary work. How this small Manitoba town became home <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/07/24/they-left-the-philippines-for-temporary-work-how-this-small-manitoba-town-became-home.html>

United Nations Rights of the Child <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association - School Board Trustee Guideline [https://www.ocsta.on.ca/ocsta/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OESC\\_Good\\_Governance\\_Guide\\_OCSTA\\_mar4.pdf](https://www.ocsta.on.ca/ocsta/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OESC_Good_Governance_Guide_OCSTA_mar4.pdf)

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1 – SDG Call for Proposal**

**APPENDIX 2 – SDG Strategic Plan 2019-2022**

**APPENDIX 3 – School Profile Information (SIP) for schools in SDG for four school boards**

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**APPENDIX 5 - Sample role for a Municipal Education Liaison Person and sample mandate of a Municipal Education Committee**

**APPENDIX 6 – School board personnel responses to initial inquiry for SIP information**

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**APPENDIX 9 – Transportation submission to Ministry of Education by Canadian Parents for French Ontario on access to French Immersion programs**

**APPENDIX 10 – Auditor General of Ontario follow-up report on implementation of school transportation recommendations by school boards**

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## ***Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry***

**ISSUED:** February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**CLOSING DATE AND TIME:** Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 @ 1:00 p.m.

**CLOSING LOCATION:** United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry  
26 Pitt Street, Suite 323  
Cornwall, On, K6J 3P2



# Part A: Scope of Work

## Project Summary

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry ('SDG' or the 'County') is seeking Proposals from qualified Consultants to **develop a report quantifying/qualifying the main barriers to the maintenance of community schools within our region, and to propose solutions for overcoming those barriers.** There is a substantial body of literature confirming why educating children in or near their home communities is important, particularly from a social capital point of view. The intent of this report is therefore not to confirm what we already know, but rather to propose tangible policy solutions to make rural education in our region better.

Completing the report will require research as well as communication/consultation with local school boards, the province through the Ministry of Education, as well as stakeholders including parents, local municipalities and advocacy groups. **The document produced by the successful Consultant will be used by County officials as a tool to widely advocate for improvements in the education system in our region.**

## Background/Project Description

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is the easternmost County in Ontario, comprised of 6 local municipalities stretching from the Quebec border in the east to Iroquois in the west, and from the City of Ottawa in the north to the United States border in the south. Our upper-tier municipality is home to about 66,000 residents and is served by 4 publicly funded school boards – English public, English separate, French public, and French separate.

The existence of 4 school boards within our geographic area is a dynamic that has a significant impact on where children from our region are educated. **The successful Consultant must therefore consider this dynamic as part of their review however these school boards legally exist, and Consultants should develop their recommendations within the 4-board context.**

As part of the development of a new Strategic Plan in late 2019, County Council determined that the current educational model within our region is inefficient and does not generally serve our children well, taking many of them out of their home communities. The impacts (loss of social capital, negative economic impacts to rural communities, etc.) are well documented. To that end, Council determined that **"Rural Schools – Educating Children in Their Communities"** would be one of its 4 Strategic Priorities:

*While education is not within the purview of municipal government in Ontario, Council believes that the County and its constituent local municipalities have a significant and vital role to play in ensuring that our children are educated as close to home as possible. School closures not only have devastating impacts on children, but entire communities. Further, schools are the backbone of many of our communities. Smaller, rural schools provide a safe, welcoming place in which to educate children.*

*The County is committed to working with the province, local school boards, parents, and other stakeholders to develop strategies that maintain the vibrancy of our rural schools. Council*

*believes that all school boards must work together and collaborate with other stakeholder groups including municipalities, to develop local solutions and best practices that maximize local educational opportunities for our children.*

It is essential that all Proposals submitted **clearly demonstrate** knowledge of/experience with:

- Literature concerning rural education issues, not only in Ontario but nationally and internationally – lessons learned, and models/strategies developed in other jurisdictions that could be adapted and/or replicated in our region.
- Current or past initiatives of the province of Ontario specific to rural education.
- The multitude of players involved in the delivery of education in Ontario, including the province through the Ministry of Education, local school boards, children, parents, and advocacy groups such as the Community Schools Alliance. It will be critical that the successful Consultant can access the right individuals to obtain the necessary information/data that will be required to successfully complete this assignment.
- Working knowledge of Ontario's significant education policies/procedures including, but not necessarily limited to:
  - Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG)
  - Shared space approaches and policies, both with coterminous boards and external user groups
  - Provincial and local board transportation policies and funding models
  - Funding models applicable to different school boards (e.g., English vs. French boards)
  - Other significant policies that impact rural education in SDG
- Experience with similar projects in the education sector, particularly Ontario.

In the context of education in the SDG region, **the following have been identified as challenges/issues.** Research will be required to quantify/qualify these issues to aid in the development of solutions. The list below is expansive and is provided for context only, as some are more significant than others.

- Slow population growth
- Low population density throughout the region
- Large school boards encompassing most of Eastern Ontario
- Four school boards competing for students
- Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) incompatible with rural Ontario realities
- Shifting school boundaries, facilitating growth in some schools while 'choking off' others
- Inequitable per pupil funding formulas that create disparities among/between boards/schools
- Inequitable distribution of programming among schools (e.g., French immersion programs, available sports programming, etc.)
- Inequitable per student transportation funding
- Provincial and board transportation policies that enable the bussing of students long distances from their home communities
- Funding formulas for new schools that favour larger facilities and disincentivize boards to share facilities
- Lack of maintenance of older schools
- Reluctance of coterminous boards to share facilities

- Pandemic impacts, specifically remote learning
- Reluctance of school boards to enter into community use agreements

As part of this assignment, the successful Consultant will also **complete an inventory of existing school inventory within SDG**, as below. This information will help inform the solutions presented in the report.

- List of all active schools in SDG by board, complete with grades offered
- List of schools where daycare, before and after school care, office space, leased space, or adult learning is offered, including details
- 10 years of enrolment data for each school
- Facility condition index of each school
- Current capacity and utilization rates

### **Inquiries**

**Please refer inquiries to:**

Mr. Timothy Simpson, Chief Administrative Officer

26 Pitt Street

Cornwall, Ontario K6J 3P2

**Phone** 613-932-1515 x 1202

**Email** [tsimpson@sdgcounties.ca](mailto:tsimpson@sdgcounties.ca)

### **Rejection of Proposals**

The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals received as a result of this request and to cancel this solicitation at any time prior to the execution of a contract.

### **Incurring Costs**

The County is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by Consultants in the preparation or submission of their Proposals or for attendance at any meetings related to this Request for Proposal prior to the issuance of a contract.

### **Response Date**

To be considered, Proposals **must be emailed** to the individual listed above and received on or before **Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m., marked 'Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry'**. Late submissions will not be accepted and will be returned to the sender unopened. **Due to the pandemic, Proposals will only be accepted electronically.**

### **Consultant Responsibilities**

Each Proposal must be signed by the individual representative(s) of the Consultant who has contracting authority. That individual will be the sole point of contact regarding contractual matters.

### **Proposals**

Proposals must be submitted electronically to Mr. Simpson as follows:

- 'Main Proposal' as a separate PDF attachment
- 'Financial Proposal - Appendix A' as a separate PDF attachment

The Main Proposal must include the following, and **be no longer than ten (10) pages in total length**:

- Two (2) professional references.
- An introduction detailing the Consultant's understanding of the project objectives and scope.
- A description of the Consultant's approach and details of the project.
- A summary of recent involvement with similar projects and the name, title, and telephone number of a reference for each of the projects listed - minimum 2.

The first ranked Proposal, having acceptable terms and conditions, will be recommended for award. If approved by County Council, the County will notify the successful Consultant in writing of the acceptance of its Proposal. The successful Consultant shall be bound to execute an agreement with the County within fourteen (14) days of being notified of approval.

### **Negotiations**

If a Proposal does not precisely and/or entirely meet the requirements of this Request for Proposal, the County reserves the right to enter negotiations with the selected Consultant(s) to arrive at a mutually satisfactory arrangement with respect to any modifications to the Proposal.

### **Written Agreement**

A written Agreement shall be executed by the successful Consultant and the County. The final terms and conditions of the Agreement will be negotiated between the successful Consultant and the County, and will include such items as payment schedule, scheduling of work, milestones, and completion date.

### **Standard Terms and Conditions**

While undertaking any work, the selected Consultant must adhere to all relevant Provincial/Federal legislation/regulations.

The Consultant shall not transfer responsibility to meet their contractual obligations to a third party without the consent, in writing, from the County.

The Consultant shall respect the confidentiality of the information collected or made available during the assignment.

The Consultant must certify that they have appropriate Health & Safety Policies in place and follow the requirements of Ontario Regulation 297/13 made under the OHSA.

The lowest cost, or any Proposal may not necessarily be accepted. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals. The County, when evaluating the Proposals, will take into consideration related experience, proposed methodology, managerial capabilities, qualifications of the Consultant, and cost. In addition, the County reserves the following rights:

- To waive irregularities and informalities at its discretion.
- To negotiate or discuss the technical and financial content of the successful Proposal.

### **Insurance/Indemnity Requirements**

The successful bidder shall indemnify and hold United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry, its employees, agents, etc., harmless from and against any liability, loss, claims, demands, costs and expenses, including reasonable legal fees, occasioned wholly or in part by any negligence or acts or omissions whether willful or otherwise by the bidder, its agents, officers, employees or other persons for whom the bidder is legally responsible.

**Prior to commencing any work hereunder, the successful Consultant must provide proof of insurance satisfactory to the County.**

A valid Ontario WSIB Clearance Certificate covering all employees of the Consultant is required prior to the commencement of any work.

### **Clarification or Inquiries**

Any clarifications or inquiries shall be sought from the County prior to the submission of the Proposal, no later than **Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.** Answers to all inquiries will be provided via written addendum to all Consultants who have received a copy of the documents. The response will be provided in a manner which will not identify who has requested the clarification. Amendments/clarifications/addendums to this request for Proposal shall take precedence over the portion which has been amended and shall be considered part of the contract.

### **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, *Ontarians With Disabilities Act***

It is the Consultant's responsibility to ensure that they and all sub-consultants hired under this contract are in full compliance with Section 7 of Ontario Regulation 191/11, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as may be amended from time to time.

### **Treatment of Information**

The information submitted in response to this request for Proposal will be treated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*. The information collected will be used solely for the purposes stated in this request.

If the Consultant believes that any part of its bid reveals any trade secret, intellectual property, scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information or any other similar secret right of information belonging to the Bidder, the information **must be clearly marked as 'Confidential'**.

Any requests for access to submissions will be subject to a formal review based on MFIPPA requirements prior to the release of third-party information.

### **Project Upset Amount**

The upset amount for this project shall be \$60,000 exclusive of HST. Proposals exceeding this amount will not be considered.

## Part B: Proposal Evaluation

### **Validity of Proposal**

The Proposal shall remain valid for a term of sixty (60) days after the Proposal due date.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Each consultant shall submit a Proposal which outlines their understanding of the Scope of Work of the project and shall address the criteria noted below. The County may elect to interview one or more of the respondents to further evaluate their experience, ability or understanding of the proposed work. Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on a consensus approach and a recommendation made to County Council based on the Proposal which attains the highest score from the evaluation criteria listed below.

County Council has final authority for the award of the work.

Proposals will be evaluated as follows:

### **Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

Category	Points Available
Consultant Experience	15
Consultant Qualifications	5
Proposed Methodology	50
Financial (Envelope 2)	30
<b>Total Available Points</b>	<b>100</b>

#### ***Consultant Experience with similar projects (15 points)***

*The Consultant shall provide a summary of similar projects which they have completed including references for the work.*

#### ***Consultant Qualifications (5 points)***

*The Consultant will provide curriculum vitae for key team members who will be working on this project, demonstrating the necessary experience to successfully complete the work.*

#### ***Proposed Methodology (50 points)***

*The Consultant will describe in detail their proposed approach to this assignment.*

#### ***Financial Proposal (30 points)***

*In a separate attachment, clearly labeled 'Financial Proposal – Appendix A', the Consultant shall provide the total contract price to complete the work, HST shown separately. Full points will be awarded to the lowest cost Proposal meeting all project requirements and other Proposals will be awarded points based on the following formula:*

$$1 - \frac{(nx - n1)}{n1} \times 30$$



Where:

*$n_x$  is the dollar value of the proposed fee*

*$n_1$  is the dollar value of the lowest proposed fee*

# APPENDIX A: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

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Proposal Price

*The undersigned agrees to complete the project as detailed in the submitted Proposal for the following price:*

**Total Price to Complete the Project (Excluding HST)**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Firm

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

_____ Name and Signature of Person Signing for the Firm	_____ Position
--	-------------------

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

## The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Strategic Plan

### *Mission, Vision, Principles, and Priorities*

**Mission:** *To create better communities*

**Vision:** *To be a progressive regional government*

#### ***Guiding Principles***

Over the coming four-year term, Council will consider the following guiding principles to shape and inform decision-making and the implementation of its strategic priorities.

**1. Our residents are our first priority**

We are driven to provide quality services and to enhance the lives of our residents. The County is committed to finding efficiencies, enhancing communication, and developing our infrastructure to enrich the lives of those who reside within our borders.

**2. No municipality gets left behind**

The County embraces a 'community benefit model'. This model promotes the idea that as a regional government, the County has the unique ability to overcome local disparities based on geography and/or tax base/tax assessment in order to provide equitable services across the entire region. We are committed to improving services and finding solutions that serve the broader needs of the entire County. We creatively explore new ways to develop regional strategies that will sustain and build a more cohesive region – always ensuring that 'no municipality gets left behind'.

**3. Partnerships as essential for our success**

The County will continue to strengthen its longstanding relationships with municipal partners, other levels of government, and community organizations through open communication and the sharing of ideas and assets. We aim to collaborate appropriately in order to achieve the best results for our 65,000 residents.

**4. Our environmental legacy is important**

We are aware that many of our operations and lines of business have a significant environmental footprint. When considering the implementation of any strategic priorities, we will subscribe to the principles of long-term sustainability, mitigating the impact of climate change, and environmental stewardship.

## ***Strategic Priorities***

### ***1. Service Delivery – A Smarter Approach***

The County relies on a variety of municipal, quasi-municipal, and non-municipal partners to deliver an array of essential services to its 65,000 residents. These services range from land ambulance and policing to the management of County forests. At this time, opportunities exist for the County, its local municipalities, and the City of Cornwall to explore delivering services on a truly regional basis. Council is cognizant of the fact that many stakeholders are involved in service delivery, requiring commitment and support beyond the County to affect meaningful change.

For those services delivered to County residents by the City of Cornwall, Council is committed to working with the City to develop a new shared services framework, one that reflects the spirit of true partnership. Council will also work with local SDG municipalities on several initiatives to bring efficiencies to operations, including waste management, information technology, radio communications, tourism/economic development, as well as shared land use planning and engineering services. These efforts will result in better, more accessible, and more equitable services that enhance the quality of life of our communities.

### ***2. Rural Schools – Educating Children in Their Communities***

While education is not within the purview of municipal government in Ontario, Council believes that the County and its constituent local municipalities have a significant and vital role to play in ensuring that our children are educated as close to home as possible. School closures not only have devastating impacts on children, but entire communities. Further, schools are the backbone of many of our communities. Smaller, rural schools provide a safe, welcoming place in which to educate children.

The County is committed to working with the province, local school boards, parents, and other stakeholders to develop strategies that maintain the vibrancy of our rural schools. Council believes that all school boards must work together and collaborate with other stakeholder groups including municipalities, to develop local solutions and best practices that maximize local educational opportunities for our children.

### ***3. Leveraging Partnerships to Improve Healthcare – Supporting Equitable Access***

While health care is generally not the responsibility of local government, the County recognizes that it has a distinct role to play in enhancing the delivery and funding of long-term care, land ambulance services, and public health. Inequalities related to access to health care currently exist in our County, due in part to a shortage of physicians in rural areas. Further, due to the growing number of seniors in our region, we need to ensure affordable, quality local long-term care spaces are available to those in need. These challenges are not unique to our County but exist throughout most of rural Ontario.

The County will advocate for and support provincial initiatives that create better patient outcomes, such as implementing measures that reduce emergency room wait times or paramedic offload times. At the local level, Council will explore physician recruitment options with other regional partners, with the goal of providing greater access to local health care services. Additionally, Council will examine partnership opportunities that increase the quality and/or quantity of long-term care beds within our County.

#### **4. Community Sustainability – A Place Where You Want to Be**

Rural communities across Ontario and Canada continue to struggle to maintain the vibrancy of their communities in the face of an aging and sometimes declining population. Council will take direct action to create the conditions necessary to support vibrant and sustainable communities. Council will also advocate for a livable and thriving community and partner strategically with others to ensure accessible, high quality services for residents.

In areas such as access to high speed broadband (fixed and mobile) and natural gas, the County will continue its longstanding efforts to bring and maintain these crucial services to and for our residents. Further, the County will continue to work with and through the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus on these files as well as others which are important to the rural residents of Eastern Ontario including affordable housing, youth retention, and building a skilled labour force.

#### **5. Communication – The Foundation of Success**

It is vital that the County effectively communicate with its residents and stakeholders. The ever-evolving nature of communication demands that the County explore new and innovative ways to ensure that it is communicating in a clear and timely manner while providing the public with appropriate platforms to engage with and provide feedback to the County.

To enhance its external and internal communication capabilities, Council will explore various options, including the expanded use of social media and digital platforms and human resources.

## Appendix A: Deliverables for Strategic Priorities

<b>Deliverables for Strategic Priorities</b>	
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	Seek a new, fairer shared services agreement with the City of Cornwall
	Work towards developing a regional waste management strategy including the County, its local municipalities, and the City of Cornwall
	Provide high quality land use planning services to SDG local municipalities
	Explore the possibility of a common radio communications platform
<b>Rural Schools</b>	Seek to build better relationships with local school boards and with parents of students
	Advocate for the development of a rural education strategy
	Participate in a provincial feasibility study to enhance rural education
<b>Healthcare Partnerships</b>	Support EOWC initiatives around health such as reducing EMS offload times
	Explore options to better support long term care for SDG residents
	Explore partnerships with other municipalities and organizations concerning physician recruitment
<b>Community Sustainability</b>	Support EOWC and others on improving fixed and wireless broadband throughout SDG
	Advocate for natural gas expansion throughout SDG with Enbridge and other private and public entities
	Continued emphasis on active transportation (cycling, trails, etc.) and the development of quality infrastructure
<b>Communications</b>	Revamp SDG website - possibly in concert with local municipalities
	Enhance staffing resources to more effectively communicate externally and internally
	Expand social media presence and reach



school board	school	ID number	2020-2021*	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	grades	programs	OTG capacity	utilization rate	facility condition	index
B66311 CEPEO Alexandria	Rose des vents**	383392	539	525	515	483	481	465	449	439	410	415	JK-6	FFL/IB	information not provided by school board		3% (2017) 0% (2017) 4%(2017)	
	Terre des jeunes	383376	120	120	120	122	116	148	147	157	159	171	JK-6	FFL				
	l'Heritage-secondaire	907464	122	195	135	143	127	41	117	111	110	103	gr9-12	FFL/IB/Health/Environment				
	l'Heritage-intermediaire	302864	59	65	95	103	83	82	62	61	62	60	gr7-8	FFL/IB				
B67326 CSDCEO Moose Creek	Elda Rouleau (Alexandria)	753297	195	230	215	230	231	289	285	299	283	290	JK-6	FFL/Spanish after school	information not provided by school board		13%(2017) 39% (2017) 26% (2017) 38%(2017)	
	La Source	725668	127	130	125	117	96	97	102	129	130	123	JK-6	FFL				
	Marie-Tanguay	861367	379	400	385	409	411	394	391	377	368	359	JK-6	FFL/Spanish after school				
	Notre Dame	737208	314	310	310	313	298	282	283	141	138	128	JK-6	FFL/Spanish after school				
Crysler	Notre-dame-du-rosaire	707465	134	125	115	93	84	79	73	68	65	64	JK-6	FFL	FFL/Ottawa67hockey academy/Impact Montreal Soccer Academy	19% (2017)	29%(2017)	19% (2017)
Long Sault	Sainte-Lucie	699373	n/a	250	255	248	223	233	237	240	228	183	JK-6	FFL/weekly art-tech-sport program				
North Lancaster	L'ange-Guardien	860443	160	175	180	174	184	236	242	244	248	183	JK-6	FFL/Hockey Academy/Construction/Health/Social Justice				
	La Citadelle	725684	400	360	380	372	401	418	457	497	513	514	gr9-12	FFL/Hockey Academy/Construction/Health/Social Justice				
Alexandria	El catholique Citadelle	723592	234	240	210	194	198	204	217	210	225	252	gr-7-8	FFL	FFL/Information Techno/Communications(new for 2021-2022)	5% (2017)		
	Le Relais	752908	135	140	160	180	183	187	181	182	209	234	gr9-12	FFL/Information Techno/Communications(new for 2021-2022)				
	EC IntermediairePavAlex	718815	90	85	85	81	83	0	0	0	0	0	gr-7-8	FFL				
B67172 CDSBEO																		
St. Raphaels Ingleside	Bishop Macdonnell	689610 (351)***	368	345	305	257	255	234	220	213	187	208	JK-6	dual track EFI	411	85.40%	63%(2017) 5%(2017)	
	Holy Trinity	715190	644	530	520	536	535	523	537	502	501	532	gr7-12	dual track FI/agriculture, health & wellness, arts & culture				
	Holy Trinity Intermediate	821553	n/a	135	150	183	197	201	168	158	166	165	gr7-8	dual track FI				
	Iona Academy	696269 (169)	158	175	170	177	193	194	188	212	241	251	JK-8	EFI				
St. Andrew's West	Our Lady of Good Counsel	741361	236	255	225	209	197	131	131	123	119	129	JK-8	EFI	314	54%	19%(2017) 51.10% (2017) 49%(2017) 19%(2017)	
	Sacred Heart	759040	422	425	375	216	219	233	236	222	222	268	JK-6	dual track EFI				
	St.Andrew's	769312 (200)	204	205	205	221	197	208	228	215	239	254	JK-8	English				
	St.Anne	771651	239	245	260	359	371	339	331	345	356	352	JK-6	dual track EFI				
Alexandria	St.Finnan's	806102 (127)	130	115	125	126	137	127	142	146	144	147	JK-6	JK-SK Extended, dual track FI 1-6	274	46.40%	16%(2017) 10%(2017) 3%(2017) 7%(2017)	
Chesterville	St.Mary Catholic	828980 (221)	215	205	185	170	158	162	169	220	168	150	JK-6	JK-SK Immersion, dual track FI 1-6				
Morrisburg	St.Mary-St.Cecilia	830283	254	245	240	234	228	209	202	197	201	201	JK-8	English				
	St.Matthew Catholic HS	726176 (163)	102	110	115	120	119	111	120	113	102	95	gr9-12	English/construction, hospitality & tourism				
	St. Matthew intermediate	765428	51	50	30	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	gr7-8	English	994	93.90%	26%(2017)	
	St. Joseph Catholic HS	806277	933	710	695	726	753	757	750	783	875	661	gr9-12	dual track FI/transportation,business				
	St. Joseph intermediate	n/a	n/a										gr7-8	dual track FI				
	St. Peter	844713	189	180	200	138	138	146	146	163	158	176	JK-6	dual track FI				
B66192 UCDSB																		
bussed from Alexandria	Chesterville PS	106283 (188)**	180	185	170	180	145	134	120	121	130	138	JK-6	dual track EFI/ daycare/before & after school care	179	105% (2017)	37% (2017) 28% (2017) 47% (2017) 16% (2017)	
	Iroquois PS	278149	296	325	340	329	318	321	333	297	283	279	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	Laggan PS	303429 (187)	188	190	180	164	175	163	170	176	186	174	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	LongueSault PS	320498 (253)	251	250	270	264	266	270	261	235	209	190	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	Maxville PS	349259	83	95	110	106	116	118	119	122	125	132	JK-6	English	348	24%(2019)	34% (2017) 33% (2017) 38% (2017) 16% (2017)	
	Morrisburg PS	374474 (148)	149	150	150	133	142	146	144	151	171	186	JK-6	English/daycare/before & after school care				
	Nationview PS	382825 (251)	255	235	225	217	204	207	186	198	214	240	JK-6	dual track EFI/daycare/before & after school care				
	North Stormont PS	47180 (102)	100	95	95	81	82	67	72	79	90	113	JK-6	English/before & after school				
	Rothwell-Osnabruck PS	492957 (126)	121	130	135	156	236	233	237	269	278	311	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care	363	35%(2019)	22% (2017)	
	Rothwell-Osnabruck DHS	932973	0	0	0	0	103	129	143	150	177	174	gr7-12	n/a school closed in 2017				
	Roxmore PS	28851	255	255	245	232	238	229	234	252	241	225	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	Williamstown PS	609285	349	355	370	379	342	344	318	323	306	297	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	Winchester PS	613150 (336)	331	385	410	421	436	420	419	386	353	311	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care	389	86%(2019)	20%(2017) 32%(2017) 22% (2017) 0% (2017)	
	Viscount Alexander	578444 (421)	423	455	450	436	439	432	392	386	363	387	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	Eamer's Corners	157376 (467)	462	455	440	424	398	429	423	419	399	363	JK-6	dual track EFI/before & after school care				
	Central PS	94846 (461)	467	480	465	451	431	464	437	449	497	523	JK-6	dual track EFI/daycare				
	Bridgewood PS	247005 (470)	488	485	500	521	510	0	0	0	0	0	JK-6	EFI/before & after school child care	579	81%(2019)	0%(2017)	
	Char-Lan DHS	897876 (325)	252	225	220	216	227	238	259	265	264	255	gr9-12	FI/Health & Wellness, agriculture indicated on UCDSB website				
	Char-Lan Intermediate	262508	103	105	100	92	88	88	97	85	91	107	gr7-8	FI				
	Glengarry DHS	913219 (283)	191	220	235	236	265	257	261	299	295	319	gr9-12	FI/hospitality/transportation-agriculture,health indicated on UCDSB				
	Glengarry - Intermediate	174498	78	70	65	72	80	95	92	78	70	68	gr7-8	FI	933	30%(2019)	42%(2017)	
	North Dundas Intermedia	153822	172	160	145	132	146	160	162	153	166	181	gr7-8	FI				
	North Dundas DHS	929590 (451)	278	290	300	311	309	320	354	379	434	489	gr9-12	FI/agriculture H& W indicated on UCDSB website				
	Seaway Intermediate	517782	121	135	140	129	113	122	125	139	145	134	gr7-8	FI				
	Seaway DHS	918415 (375)	271	240	260	277	274	285	299	293	298	329	gr9-12	FI/agriculture, construction, transportation,health indicated on UCDSB	682	55%(2019)	48%(2017)	
	Tagwi intermediate	91610	230	210	195	196	181	168	138	159	163	154	gr7-8	FI				
	Tagwi	94664855 (664)	431	425	415	430	335	333	346	345	367	415	gr9-12	FI/agriculture,arts&culture,construction, health indicated on UCDSB				
	St. Lawrence intermediate!	540056	205	220	205	186	161	154	174	164	172	175	gr7-8	FI				
	St.Lawrence SS	944670 (604)	380	385	390	377	395	357	322	366	394	322	gr9-12	Health & Wellness , hospitality & tourism	770	78%(2019)	4%(2017)	
	T.R. Leger Adult & Altern	945072	n/a	945	910	948	1091	1222	1367	1353	1464	1740	gr9-12	Hospitality & Tourism				
	Cornwall Collegiate intern	477957	204	200	200	177	160	184	186	251	259	236	gr7-8	FI				
	Cornwall Collegiate	908210 (720)	503	550	530	542	566	605	641	622	636	738	gr9-12	FI/arts&culture, hospitality&tourism, health &wellness				
occupies space in other school sites																		
															1346	53%(2019)	48%(2017)	

\*figures were obtained by calling each school; figures for all other years were obtained through Open Source data

\*\*schools in blue font are located in Cornwall and are presented for comparison purposes

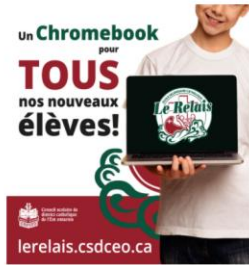
\*\*\*number in brackets as reported on the School Information Profile (SIP) as at October 31, 2020

bolded school names are secondary/ high schools

Capacity, enrolment, utilization rate, facility condition index

Chromebook 1:1 Un Chromebook pour tous nos nouveaux élèves

L'École secondaire catholique Le Relais (ESC Le Relais) est fière d'annoncer que chacun de ses nouveaux élèves inscrits en 7<sup>e</sup> ou 9<sup>e</sup> année pour l'année scolaire 2021-2022 recevra un ordinateur portable Chromebook.



Même avant la pandémie de la COVID-19, l'apprentissage en ligne était une composante importante de la réussite des élèves à l'école. Afin de s'assurer que tous les élèves peuvent développer les compétences du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle, le programme Chromebook 1:1 fera en sorte que tous les élèves auront leur propre ordinateur portable, et ce, dès leur entrée à l'ESC Le Relais jusqu'au moment de leur remise de diplôme.

« Nos élèves vivent au quotidien des moments pédagogiques qui ciblent le développement des compétences globales et l'intégration de la pédagogie numérique avec un personnel accueillant, dynamique, engagé, compétent et dévoué. Nous accompagnons nos élèves à devenir des citoyens numériques responsables avec de bonnes habiletés et habitudes de travail, qu'ils soient outillés, compétitifs et prêts à relever les défis qui les attendent sur le marché du travail ou dans un milieu d'études postsecondaires. Au Relais, j'embarque! », de partager Mme Lyne St-Denis, direction.

L'École secondaire catholique Le Relais d'Alexandria est une tradition d'excellence dans notre communauté depuis 1997. En plus d'être une ÉcoÉcole, elle offre à plus de 240 élèves, de la 7<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année, des programmes novateurs en sports, métiers/techno et arts/culture. L'école catholique est une tradition d'excellence pour la réussite des élèves, affichant le plus haut taux de diplomation de notre région depuis plusieurs années.

- 30 -

Pour plus de renseignements :  
Lyne St-Denis, direction  
613 525-3315

Date d'émission : le 6 mai 2021

## Appendix 7 – Survey Results

### 1. Adult Survey

An adult survey was created to obtain input from parents, grandparents and residents of SDG on school related concerns. The online survey was live from June 14, 2021 to August 16, 2021 (63 days).

The full survey results can be viewed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-LRXG2ZNY9/>

#### **Summary:**

Total responses: 448

Estimated time to complete: 3 minutes 40 seconds

Estimated completion rate: 73%

Highest number of responses in one day: 286 (July 19, 2021)

- 35% of families have children across multiple grades with an even distribution of children in high school (17%), grades 1-3 (16%) grades 4-6 (13%) with the smallest enrollment in JK/SK (9%) and grades 7-8 (8%)
- 43% of parents feel somewhat informed of day-to-day learning activities in the classroom, 38% feel well informed and 18% do not feel well informed
- 52% of parents feel well informed of school-based activities and news, 34% feel somewhat well informed and 13% do not feel well informed
- 40% of parents do not feel well informed by the school board of decisions, events, reports related to schools and learning or Ministry of Education directives; 34% feel somewhat well informed and 25% feel well informed
- 70% of children and grandchildren in a family attend one school, 24 % attend two or more schools in the same school board and 8% of students attend two or more schools in different school boards
- 74% of children are bussed to school on yellow school bus transportation, 14% are driven and 10% walk or bike to school
- Bus ride times to school are evenly split at 56% for rides of 5-9 minutes, 10-20 minutes and 21-35 minutes in length each way; 20% of students ride the bus for 36-46 minutes and 13% ride the bus for 47-75 minutes each way
- 53% of adult respondents agreed that the Ministry of Education should ensure that students have access to technology learning devices and adequate internet and 28 % of adult respondents indicated that school boards should be responsible for providing these tools
- 54% of adult respondents stated that internet access is a barrier to learning for children, youth and adults in the community, while 26% of adult respondents indicated it was somewhat of a barrier

- 29% of parents want Special Education services as the most important program for students to access, followed by French Immersion (27%) and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (13%), High School Specialist Major programs (9%) and experiential learning opportunities (8%)
- 74% of adult respondents agreed that school buildings should serve more than one purpose in the community

#### Sample Barriers listed

- Lack of internet or poor internet,
- Threat of school closures or school amalgamations
- Water quality
- Provincial funding formula
- Too many school boards
- Childcare availability
- Teachers' unions
- Accessible transit
- School ventilation and air quality
- Lack of Early learning centres
- Folding public and Catholic school boards into one school system

#### Sample Obstacles listed

- Same programs, courses not available at all high schools
- Large classes, split classes
- New start times, busing schedules, adolescents starting earlier than young children
- Incorrect facts or data used for school closures
- Quality of education
- Mental health support to students
- Support to parents and consideration of families' needs
- Special education and expertise, access to assessments & professionals supporting disabilities
- Acknowledgment & consideration of community, educator and parental input
- Lack of support staff, quality of French Immersion teaching
- Diversity of staff and students
- Outdated texts and curriculum (Eurocentric) contributing to sexism and racism
- Lack of communication from teachers
- Unfair boundaries
- Virtual learning
- Access to after school activities, field trips, sporting events due to busing cost
- Transportation to coop placements
- Academic and applied courses in the same class
- Perception of rural students headed to vocational work after graduation
- Arts programming and sports opportunities

## Sample Additional Comments

- Teacher availability
- Thanks for this opportunity to participate
- Toronto based mentality and decision making
- Thank you for initiating this project. It often feels like education choices are decided from the top down. It is nice that you are thinking about what is important to citizens.
- Removing programming from schools and communities
- Thank you for considering the struggles of living and parenting in South Glengarry
- Thank you for doing this
- Freelance work, self-employment and small business start-up operations would be beneficial to students
- Will have a huge job restoring the faith in this community
- Offer parent workshops
- Trustees are out of touch with actual families that are going to schools
- Thank you for all you do for our students and schools. Your commitment to save Char-Lan and your continued work is appreciated . Thank you
- I LOVE that someone is actually asking these important questions and trying to make a difference! I wish you nothing but the best
- Lack of school board transparency and accountability
- We need efficiency that isn't cutting services to students
- Rural schools viewed as inferior
- Thank you for all your hard work
- Relatable curriculum to students' lives
- Merge the SDG library and the Cornwall public library, a split service in the region is a waste of money
- More outdoor learning opportunities for young children (field school, forest school)
- More parent surveys like this should happen . Thank you for your consideration
- Schools are not a business
- More accessibility for homeschooling families
- Education of children should never be political
- Collection of constituent data as is happening here is a good starting point

## 2. Student Survey

A student survey was created to obtain input from students aged 12 and over and recent graduates of SDG schools on school experiences. The online survey was live from April 26, 2021 to August 6, 2021 (100 days).

The full survey results can be viewed at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-ZQWBJ5NY9/>

### **Summary:**

Total responses: 46

Estimated time to complete: 6 minutes

Estimated completion rate: 66%

Highest number of responses in one day: 22 (July 19, 2021)

- 34% of students responding were 16-17 years old, 24% were 14-15 years old, 20% were 18 years or over and 21% were 12-13 years old
- 56% were female responders and 44% were male
- 80% of students responding indicated a preference for in-person learning, 15% for a hybrid model and 4 % indicating a preference for virtual learning
- Student priorities at school in order of importance were: academics, sports, socializing with friends, getting work experience and extra-curricular activities
- 63% of students get to school by yellow school bus, 13% by driving, 10% being driven, 10% walking or cycling, 2% by other (ATV, scooter, snowmobile, motorcycle)
- Student respondents chose the highest preference for going to school close to home as the best scenario and then choosing the shortest travel time to longest travel time
- Students most preferred attending a medium size high school (251-499 students) followed by a small sized high school (100-250 students) and lastly attending a large high school (500-1000 students); some students would like to attend one school for most courses but access another school for some courses and a few students stated that school size did not matter
- The preferred amenities around the school for students in order of priority were: recreation facilities, fast food takeout services, parks & green space, specialty facilities (workout, training or specialty gyms, aerobics, dance or yoga studios)
- Programs of importance to students in order of priority were: 26% French Immersion and High School specialist Majors, 21% experiential learning, 8% equally for Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs and Other (STEM courses, 3D modelling, coding, music & arts)

Additional Comments (not altered for grammar and spelling from original survey comments)

- The bus time change is too early
- Being at a small school is great in terms of student/teacher relations but severely limits courses options and timetable setup in comparison to large schools. We also miss out on trips such as Europe trip, the NYC trip that has now been removed and even camping
- Love my small school
- I like a smaller high school because you know everyone and its less crowded
- I like my small rural school better than a larger high school because I have more opportunities to be a part of school teams and or clubs; I know many of the students and staff; it isn't crowded or packed; there is not a lot of walking between classes and locker is closer to my friends' lockers
- I would really like to have access to in class courses like calculus
- I don't like the new times for school I liked it better before with more sleep
- Online was difficult. seems silly to have so many schools in area. Should just be a local school with all courses offered
- Difficult year online

- Bus ride too long; marker should be replaced with teachers since Marker rarely if ever respond to an issue and mark takes forever to return (if I'm taking math , I need to know if I'm doing it right or wrong before I do half the course with it)
- Bring back clubs and after school programs. technology and computers at an earlier age Robotics studies. After school arts programs
- French Immersion in a rural setting that I'm comfortable with
- UCDSB school are very far behind CDSBEO schools. I wish I had gone there because they have more classes and better sports teams.
- I went to Tagwi so something else other than tims everyday would be nice





Monika F &lt;monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com&gt;

## Request for facilities information by school / Demande de données sur les installations par école

9 messages

Monika F &lt;monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com&gt;

Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 1:14 PM

To: jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca, plant@cdsbeo.on.ca, bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca, Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>, martin.lavigne@csdceo.org

Hello Mr. Hobbs & Ms. Norton,

In the context of a rural education strategy project study, kindly provide the following information for each school in your school board which is located in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry:

- current facility condition of each school building
- current capacity of each school building
- current utilization rate of the school building
- details pertaining to any leased space in the school building (daycare/before & after school program/community program/adult education/other use of space)

Kindly provide this information by Friday June 18, 2021 to this email address.  
Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

-----  
Bonjour M. Vachon et M. Lavigne,

Dans le contexte d'un projet qui étudie la demande croissante pour l'éducation en langue française dans les régions rurales des comtés de Stormont Dundas Glengarry, veuillez fournir les données suivantes pour chaque école située dans cette région :

- l'indice de l'état des installations de l'école
- le taux de capacité de chaque école
- le taux d'utilisation de chaque école
- des détails sur les espaces loués qui sont présentement occupés dans l'école par une garderie/service de garde avant/après l'école, programme d'enseignement aux adultes, ou autre espace loué ou utilisé par la communauté)

Veuillez faire parvenir ces renseignements à ce courriel pour le vendredi 18 juin 2021.  
Merci pour votre précieuse collaboration

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd  
Education Consultant & Assessor  
Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law  
Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation  
www.horizoned.ca  
613-612-6842

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Hobbs, Jeremy &lt;jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca&gt;

Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 1:45 PM

To: Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>, "plant@cdsbeo.on.ca" <plant@cdsbeo.on.ca>, "bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca" <bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>, Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>, "martin.lavigne@csdceo.org" <martin.lavigne@csdceo.org>

Ms. Ferenczy,

As you can appreciate, it is an extraordinarily busy time of year for us in what is itself an extraordinary year. It would be highly unusual for us to go to the considerable effort to assemble this data without a greater understanding of how it will be used, or even – in light of this perfunctory form letter – a better sense of the legitimacy of the request.

If you'd like to discuss your request further, please contact my assistant by phone through the main switchboard of the Upper Canada District School Board and she will schedule 15 minutes over the next few weeks when I can gain a better understanding of your requirements, what you are trying to achieve and how we may benefit from your work.

Thank you

Jeremy Hobbs

Executive Superintendent of Business

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**Monika F** <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 14, 2021 at 3:34 PM

To: "Hobbs, Jeremy" <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>

Cc: "plant@cdsbeo.on.ca" <plant@cdsbeo.on.ca>, "bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca" <bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>, Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>, "martin.lavigne@csdceo.org" <martin.lavigne@csdceo.org>

Hello Mr. Hobbs,

Thank you for your prompt response to my query and I am copying all respondents as you have done as well, to provide further information and clarification.

The facilities information requested for schools in Stormont dundas & Glengarry is in the context of an SDG Council funded project to enhance rural education for students:

<https://www.standard-freeholder.com/news/local-news/future-advocacy-document-will-promote-rural-education-in-sdg>  
<https://www.cornwallseawaynews.com/2021/03/20/sdg-hires-education-consultant/>

My understanding from Ministry of Education officials is that facilities information is part of Open Source data and the Ministry has directed me to request this information directly from each school board. In addition, Tim Mills, a member of the education project working group, provided your name and indicated you would be very helpful in providing such information for the project.

I did reach out to your assistant to schedule a call however she stated that your first availability would be at the end of August and this information is required right now. Since this data is regularly collected, I am confident that it is available and accessible to one of your staff who could then forward it to me.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Best regards,

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd  
Education Consultant & Assessor  
Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law  
Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation  
[www.horizoned.ca](http://www.horizoned.ca)  
613-612-6842

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---

**Hobbs, Jeremy** <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>

Mon, Jun 14, 2021 at 3:42 PM

To: Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Cc: "plant@cdsbeo.on.ca" <plant@cdsbeo.on.ca>, "bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca" <bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>, Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>, "martin.lavigne@csdceo.org" <martin.lavigne@csdceo.org>

Hi Monika,

Thanks again for the email. Based upon your earlier description of your needs, it would seem that the information for our Board is currently available publicly through our website at the following address [http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/families/ucdsb\\_schools/school\\_information\\_profiles](http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/families/ucdsb_schools/school_information_profiles) along with a lot more data about our individual schools that may be of use.

If you require further information or in a different format, again, please feel free to work with Kristi Carter to find a date at which we can discuss your requirements so I can determine the resources that would be required to assemble it.

Thanks

Jeremy

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**Monika F** <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 22, 2021 at 2:44 PM

To: "Hobbs, Jeremy" <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>

Thank you Jeremy, much appreciated.

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd  
Education Consultant & Assessor  
Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law &  
Human Rights for Education Professionals  
Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation  
[www.horizoned.ca](http://www.horizoned.ca)  
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[Quoted text hidden]

**Monika F** <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 22, 2021 at 2:49 PM

Cc: "plant@cdsbeo.on.ca" <plant@cdsbeo.on.ca>, "bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca" <bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>

Hello Ms. Norton,

Having participated in the presentation on the CPPG meeting last week which I found very helpful, could you kindly provide me with the link to the individual school profiles for the CDSBEO as Jeremy has above in his email for the UCDSB, so that I may obtain the data for some of the remaining schools not listed in the PPT presentation.

Many thanks,

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd  
Education Consultant & Assessor  
Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law &  
Human Rights for Education Professionals  
Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation  
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[Quoted text hidden]

**Monika F** <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 22, 2021 at 2:54 PM

Cc: Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>, "martin.lavigne@csdceo.org" <martin.lavigne@csdceo.org>

Bonjour M. Vachon et M. Lavigne,

Pourriez-vous me fournir le lien pour les renseignements individuels pour chaque école selon leur profil tel que M. Jeremy Hobbs a fourni pour le conseil UCDSB ci-haut.

**CEPEO -**

B66311 CEPEO	Rose des vents	383392
Alexandria	Terre des jeunes	383376
	<b>I'Heritage-secondaire</b>	907464
	<b>I'Heritage-intermediaire</b>	302864

**CSDCEO -**

B67326 CSDCEO	Elda Rouleau (Alexandria)	753297
	La Source (Moose Creek)	725668
	Marie-Tanguay	861367
	Notre Dame	737208
Crysler	Notre-dame-du-rosaire	707465
Long Sault	Sainte-Lucie	699373
North Lancaster	L'ange-Gardien	860443
	<b>La Citadelle</b>	725684
	<b>El catholique Citadelle</b>	723592
Alexandria	<b>Le Relais</b>	752908
	EC IntermediairePavAlex	718815

Merci pour votre précieuse collaboration.

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[Quoted text hidden]

Wed, Jun 23, 2021 at 7:37 AM

Cc: "Hobbs, Jeremy" <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>, plant@cdsbeo.on.ca, Bonnie Norton <bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>, Martin Lavigne <martin.lavigne@csdceo.org>

Le Conseil (CEPEO) accuse la réception de votre demande de précision en lien avec ses installations scolaires et le « projet qui étudie la demande croissante pour l'éducation en langue française dans les régions rurales des comtés (sic) de Stormont Dundas Glengarry ». Le Conseil n'est pas au courant de cette étude, de l'identité de l'entité qui la pilote ou de l'objectif visé par celle-ci.

Ayant pris connaissance de votre demande et compte tenu de l'absence de précisions, de la nature générale et de l'envergure de votre demande, le contexte et des exigences de la situation actuelle, le Conseil n'est pas en mesure d'y donner suite faute de ressources. Malgré cette pénurie de ressources, il ne semble avoir aucun motif juridique à l'appui de votre demande.

Nous vous suggérons d'adresser votre demande au ministère de l'Éducation ou de faire une demande dans le cadre de la loi sur l'accès à l'information.

[Quoted text hidden]

**Stéphane Vachon**  
Surintendant des affaires  
T (613) 742-8960 poste 3803  
Téléc (613) 742-1012

## CEPEO créateur d'opportunités



Le CEPEO vous invite à penser à l'environnement en considérant l'impact écologique relié à l'impression du présent courriel. Merci.

Le présent courriel contient des renseignements destinés uniquement à l'entité nommée dans le message.

8/17/2021

Gmail - Request for facilities information by school / Demande de données sur les installations par école

Si la personne qui lit ce message n'est ni celle à qui le message est destiné ni celle qui est responsable de le livrer au destinataire prévu, vous êtes formellement avisé qu'il est strictement interdit de lire, divulguer, distribuer ou copier ce message. Si vous avez reçu ce message par erreur, veuillez nous en informer par retour de courriel et supprimer le message original.

Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario  
2445, boulevard St-Laurent | Ottawa (Ontario) K1G 6C3  
613-742-8960 | 1 888 33 CEPEO | <https://cepeo.on.ca>

**Bonnie Norton** <Bonnie.Norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>

Wed, Jun 23, 2021 at 7:59 AM

To: Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Cc: "jeremy.hobbs" <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>, "Stephane Vachon (stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca)" <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>, "martin.lavigne@csdceo.org" <martin.lavigne@csdceo.org>

Good morning Ms. Ferenczy,

We acknowledge receipt of your request. The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario is not aware of the "rural education strategy project study" cited in your request. Your correspondence is devoid of any particulars regarding the project.

Consequently, after due consideration of the general nature, content, breadth, and all exigencies of the request, the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario must decline. First, it only has the resources to meet its current operational needs. Second, even if it did benefit from such supplementary resources, there is no apparent legal obligation to collect or provide the data that you are seeking. We do not have the software that UCDSB is using.

We recommend that you communicate with the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Take care,

**Bonnie Norton, CPA, CGA**

Associate Director of Education & Treasurer

Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario

Box 2222, 2755 Highway 43

Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0

(613)714-6425 (Direct)

(613)714-6380 (Admin Assistant, Stephanie Keyes)



*"Be Holy, Joy Springs from a Loving Heart"*

**From:** Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 22, 2021 2:49 PM

**Cc:** Plant Operations <plant@cdsbeo.on.ca>; Bonnie Norton <Bonnie.Norton@cdsbeo.on.ca>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Request for facilities information by school / Demande de données sur les installations par école

### Caution

This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and have verified their email address and know the content is safe.

Hello Ms. Norton,

Having participated in the presentation on the CPPG meeting last week which I found very helpful, could you kindly provide me with the link to the individual school profiles for the CDSBEO as Jeremy has above in his email for the UCDSB , so that I may obtain the data for some of the remaining schools not listed in the PPT presentation.

Many thanks,

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd

Education Consultant & Assessor

Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law &

Human Rights for Education Professionals

Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation

[www.horizoned.ca](http://www.horizoned.ca)

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On Mon, Jun 14, 2021 at 3:42 PM Hobbs, Jeremy <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca> wrote:

Hi Monika,

Thanks again for the email. Based upon your earlier description of your needs, it would seem that the information for our Board is currently available publicly through our website at the following address [http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/families/ucdsb\\_schools/school\\_information\\_profiles](http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/families/ucdsb_schools/school_information_profiles) along with a lot more data about our individual schools that may be of use.

If you require further information or in a different format, again, please feel free to work with Kristi Carter to find a date at which we can discuss your requirements so I can determine the resources that would be required to assemble it.

Thanks

Jeremy

---

**From:** Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

**Sent:** June 14, 2021 3:35 PM

**To:** Hobbs, Jeremy <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>

**Cc:** plant@cdsbeo.on.ca; bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca; Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>; martin.lavigne@csdceo.org

**Subject:** Re: Request for facilities information by school / Demande de données sur les installations par école

Hello Mr. Hobbs,

Thank you for your prompt response to my query and I am copying all respondents as you have done as well, to provide further information and clarification.

The facilities information requested for schools in Stormont dundas & Glengarry is in the context of an SDG Council funded project to enhance rural education for students:

<https://www.standard-freeholder.com/news/local-news/future-advocacy-document-will-promote-rural-education-in-sdg>

<https://www.cornwallseawaynews.com/2021/03/20/sdg-hires-education-consultant/>

My understanding from Ministry of Education officials is that facilities information is part of Open Source data and the Ministry has directed me to request this information directly from each school board. In addition, Tim Mills, a member of the education project working group, provided your name and indicated you would be very helpful in providing such information for the project.

I did reach out to your assistant to schedule a call however she stated that your first availability would be at the end of August and this information is required right now. Since this data is regularly collected, I am confident that it is available and accessible to one of your staff who could then forward it to me.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Best regards,

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd

Education Consultant & Assessor

Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law

Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation

www.horizoned.ca

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On Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 1:45 PM Hobbs, Jeremy <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca> wrote:

Ms. Ferenczy,

As you can appreciate, it is an extraordinarily busy time of year for us in what is itself an extraordinary year. It would be highly unusual for us to go to the considerable effort to assemble this data without a greater understanding of how it will be used, or even – in light of this perfunctory form letter – a better sense of the legitimacy of the request.

If you'd like to discuss your request further, please contact my assistant by phone through the main switchboard of the Upper Canada District School Board and she will schedule 15 minutes over the next few weeks when I can gain a better understanding of your requirements, what you are trying to achieve and how we may benefit from your work.

Thank you

Jeremy Hobbs

Executive Superintendent of Business

---

**From:** Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

**Sent:** June 9, 2021 1:15 PM

**To:** Hobbs, Jeremy <jeremy.hobbs@ucdsb.on.ca>; plant@cdsbeo.on.ca; bonnie.norton@cdsbeo.on.ca; Stéphane Vachon <stephane.vachon@cepeo.on.ca>; martin.lavigne@csdceo.org

**Subject:** Request for facilities information by school / Demande de données sur les installations par école

Hello Mr. Hobbs & Ms. Norton,

[Quoted text hidden]

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Monika F <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

## Demande de renseignements

2 messages

**Monika F** <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 12:34 PM

To: [francois.turpin@csdceo.on.ca](mailto:francois.turpin@csdceo.on.ca), [courriel@csdceo.org](mailto:courriel@csdceo.org)

Bonjour Monsieur Turpin,

Cette demande a été envoyée à Martin Lavigne à plusieurs reprises sans avoir eu de réponse et je vous achemine cette demande pour recevoir les informations sans délai.

Dans le contexte d'un projet qui étudie la demande croissante pour l'éducation en langue française dans les régions rurales des comtés de Stormont, Dundas et Glengarry,

(référence:

<https://www.standard-freeholder.com/news/local-news/future-advocacy-document-will-promote-rural-education-in-sdg>  
<https://www.cornwallseawaynews.com/2021/03/20/sdg-hires-education-consultant/> )

pourriez-vous me fournir les informations suivantes pour les écoles identifiées ci-bas :

- l'indice de l'état des installations de l'école
- le taux de capacité de chaque école
- le taux d'utilisation de chaque école
- des détails sur les espaces loués qui sont présentement occupés dans l'école par une garderie/service de garde avant/après l'école, programme d'enseignement aux adultes, ou autre espace loué ou utilisé par la communauté)

B67326 CSDCEO	Elda Rouleau (Alexandria)	753297
	La Source (Moose Creek)	725668
	Marie-Tanguay	861367
	Notre Dame	737208
Crysler	Notre-dame-du-rosaie	707465
Long Sault	Sainte-Lucie	699373
North Lancaster	L'ange-Guardien	860443
	La Citadelle	725684
	El catholique Citadelle	723592
Alexandria	Le Relais	752908
	EC IntermediairePavAlex	718815

Je vous remercie pour votre précieuse collaboration .

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, mes salutations distinguées.

Monika Ferenczy, BA, BEd., MEd  
Education Consultant & Assessor  
Osgoode Hall Certified in Education Law &  
Human Rights for Education Professionals  
Horizon Educational Consulting/ Conseillers en éducation  
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---

**François Turpin** <francois.turpin@csdceo.org>

Sat, Jul 24, 2021 at 9:55 AM

To: monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com

Cc: Eugénie Congi <eugenie.congi@csdceo.org>, Marie Claude Dicaire <marie.claude.dicaire@csdceo.org>, Martin Lavigne <lavima@csdceo.org>

Bonjour madame Ferenczy,

Merci de l'information, mais je n'ai aucune idée de cette requête. Vous pouvez suivre le processus de demande d'accès à l'information en bonne et due forme comme la loi le prévoit. Je ne sais pas quelle organisation vous représentez et certaines données ne peuvent pas être partagées aussi facilement que vous les croyez. Finalement, nous n'avons aucune idée à quoi servira votre étude et nous n'avons jamais été consultés bien que cette recherche vienne nous affecter directement.

Merci également de votre compréhension

François Turpin  
Directeur de l'éducation  
CSDCEO  
875, chemin de comté 17  
L'Orignal (Ontario) K0B 1K0  
téléphone: (613) 675-4691

---

De : **Monika F** <monika.in.ottawa@gmail.com>

Date: mar. 20 juil. 2021 à 12:34

Subject: Demande de renseignements

To: <francois.turpin@csdceo.on.ca>, <courriel@csdceo.org>

[Quoted text hidden]

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## Appendix 7 – Survey Results

### 1. Adult Survey

An adult survey was created to obtain input from parents, grandparents and residents of SDG on school related concerns. The online survey was live from June 14, 2021 to August 16, 2021 (63 days).

The full survey results can be viewed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-LRXG2ZNY9/>

#### **Summary:**

Total responses: 448

Estimated time to complete: 3 minutes 40 seconds

Estimated completion rate: 73%

Highest number of responses in one day: 286 (July 19, 2021)

- 35% of families have children across multiple grades with an even distribution of children in high school (17%), grades 1-3 (16%) grades 4-6 (13%) with the smallest enrollment in JK/SK (9%) and grades 7-8 (8%)
- 43% of parents feel somewhat informed of day-to-day learning activities in the classroom, 38% feel well informed and 18% do not feel well informed
- 52% of parents feel well informed of school-based activities and news, 34% feel somewhat well informed and 13% do not feel well informed
- 40% of parents do not feel well informed by the school board of decisions, events, reports related to schools and learning or Ministry of Education directives; 34% feel somewhat well informed and 25% feel well informed
- 70% of children and grandchildren in a family attend one school, 24 % attend two or more schools in the same school board and 8% of students attend two or more schools in different school boards
- 74% of children are bussed to school on yellow school bus transportation, 14% are driven and 10% walk or bike to school
- Bus ride times to school are evenly split at 56% for rides of 5-9 minutes, 10-20 minutes and 21-35 minutes in length each way; 20% of students ride the bus for 36-46 minutes and 13% ride the bus for 47-75 minutes each way
- 53% of adult respondents agreed that the Ministry of Education should ensure that students have access to technology learning devices and adequate internet and 28 % of adult respondents indicated that school boards should be responsible for providing these tools
- 54% of adult respondents stated that internet access is a barrier to learning for children, youth and adults in the community, while 26% of adult respondents indicated it was somewhat of a barrier

- 29% of parents want Special Education services as the most important program for students to access, followed by French Immersion (27%) and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (13%), High School Specialist Major programs (9%) and experiential learning opportunities (8%)
- 74% of adult respondents agreed that school buildings should serve more than one purpose in the community

#### Sample Barriers listed

- Lack of internet or poor internet,
- Threat of school closures or school amalgamations
- Water quality
- Provincial funding formula
- Too many school boards
- Childcare availability
- Teachers' unions
- Accessible transit
- School ventilation and air quality
- Lack of Early learning centres
- Folding public and Catholic school boards into one school system

#### Sample Obstacles listed

- Same programs, courses not available at all high schools
- Large classes, split classes
- New start times, busing schedules, adolescents starting earlier than young children
- Incorrect facts or data used for school closures
- Quality of education
- Mental health support to students
- Support to parents and consideration of families' needs
- Special education and expertise, access to assessments & professionals supporting disabilities
- Acknowledgment & consideration of community, educator and parental input
- Lack of support staff, quality of French Immersion teaching
- Diversity of staff and students
- Outdated texts and curriculum (Eurocentric) contributing to sexism and racism
- Lack of communication from teachers
- Unfair boundaries
- Virtual learning
- Access to after school activities, field trips, sporting events due to busing cost
- Transportation to coop placements
- Academic and applied courses in the same class
- Perception of rural students headed to vocational work after graduation
- Arts programming and sports opportunities



## Sample Additional Comments

- Teacher availability
- Thanks for this opportunity to participate
- Toronto based mentality and decision making
- Thank you for initiating this project. It often feels like education choices are decided from the top down. It is nice that you are thinking about what is important to citizens.
- Removing programming from schools and communities
- Thank you for considering the struggles of living and parenting in South Glengarry
- Thank you for doing this
- Freelance work, self-employment and small business start-up operations would be beneficial to students
- Will have a huge job restoring the faith in this community
- Offer parent workshops
- Trustees are out of touch with actual families that are going to schools
- Thank you for all you do for our students and schools. Your commitment to save Char-Lan and your continued work is appreciated . Thank you
- I LOVE that someone is actually asking these important questions and trying to make a difference! I wish you nothing but the best
- Lack of school board transparency and accountability
- We need efficiency that isn't cutting services to students
- Rural schools viewed as inferior
- Thank you for all your hard work
- Relatable curriculum to students' lives
- Merge the SDG library and the Cornwall public library, a split service in the region is a waste of money
- More outdoor learning opportunities for young children (field school, forest school)
- More parent surveys like this should happen . Thank you for your consideration
- Schools are not a business
- More accessibility for homeschooling families
- Education of children should never be political
- Collection of constituent data as is happening here is a good starting point

## 2. Student Survey

A student survey was created to obtain input from students aged 12 and over and recent graduates of SDG schools on school experiences. The online survey was live from April 26, 2021 to August 6, 2021 (100 days).

The full survey results can be viewed at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-ZQWBJ5NY9/>

### **Summary:**

Total responses: 46

Estimated time to complete: 6 minutes

Estimated completion rate: 66%

Highest number of responses in one day: 22 (July 19, 2021)

- 34% of students responding were 16-17 years old, 24% were 14-15 years old, 20% were 18 years or over and 21% were 12-13 years old
- 56% were female responders and 44% were male
- 80% of students responding indicated a preference for in-person learning, 15% for a hybrid model and 4 % indicating a preference for virtual learning
- Student priorities at school in order of importance were: academics, sports, socializing with friends, getting work experience and extra-curricular activities
- 63% of students get to school by yellow school bus, 13% by driving, 10% being driven, 10% walking or cycling, 2% by other (ATV, scooter, snowmobile, motorcycle)
- Student respondents chose the highest preference for going to school close to home as the best scenario and then choosing the shortest travel time to longest travel time
- Students most preferred attending a medium size high school (251-499 students) followed by a small sized high school (100-250 students) and lastly attending a large high school (500-1000 students); some students would like to attend one school for most courses but access another school for some courses and a few students stated that school size did not matter
- The preferred amenities around the school for students in order of priority were: recreation facilities, fast food takeout services, parks & green space, specialty facilities (workout, training or specialty gyms, aerobics, dance or yoga studios)
- Programs of importance to students in order of priority were: 26% French Immersion and High School specialist Majors, 21% experiential learning, 8% equally for Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs and Other (STEM courses, 3D modelling, coding, music & arts)

Additional Comments (not altered for grammar and spelling from original survey comments)

- The bus time change is too early
- Being at a small school is great in terms of student/teacher relations but severely limits courses options and timetable setup in comparison to large schools. We also miss out on trips such as Europe trip, the NYC trip that has now been removed and even camping
- Love my small school
- I like a smaller high school because you know everyone and its less crowded
- I like my small rural school better than a larger high school because I have more opportunities to be a part of school teams and or clubs; I know many of the students and staff; it isn't crowded or packed; there is not a lot of walking between classes and locker is closer to my friends' lockers
- I would really like to have access to in class courses like calculus
- I don't like the new times for school I liked it better before with more sleep
- Online was difficult. seems silly to have so many schools in area. Should just be a local school with all courses offered
- Difficult year online

- Bus ride too long; marker should be replaced with teachers since Marker rarely if ever respond to an issue and mark takes forever to return (if I'm taking math , I need to know if I'm doing it right or wrong before I do half the course with it)
- Bring back clubs and after school programs. technology and computers at an earlier age Robotics studies. After school arts programs
- French Immersion in a rural setting that I'm comfortable with
- UCDSB school are very far behind CDSBEO schools. I wish I had gone there because they have more classes and better sports teams.
- I went to Tagwi so something else other than tims everyday would be nice

## Appendix 8 – Specialist High School Majors (SMHS) - Courses focused towards a career

Program explanation <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.html>

- A3. Sectors: *(Click on each heading for the explanation of courses offered under the sector)*
  - [Agriculture](#)
  - [Arts and Culture](#)
  - [Aviation and Aerospace](#)
  - [Business](#)
  - [Construction](#)
  - [Energy](#)
  - [Environment](#)
  - [Food Processing](#)
  - [Forestry](#)
  - [Health and Wellness](#)
  - [Horticulture and Landscaping](#)
  - [Hospitality and Tourism](#)
  - [Information and Communications Technology](#)
  - [Justice, Community Safety, and Emergency Services](#)
  - [Manufacturing](#)
  - [Mining](#)
  - [Non-profit](#)
  - [Sports](#)
  - [Transportation](#)

### Local considerations

1. Students, parents and local business should decide which programs should be offered at which school in conjunction with opportunities in the local area for volunteer hours, co-op placements for students and student part-time employment.
2. Communities, service clubs and local councils could facilitate opportunities for students wanting to access in person a SMHS program to board with a local family Monday to Friday if they don't want remote virtual course access and travel distance is too great.
3. Student exchanges between geographically distant school boards for SMHS programs should be facilitated so that students can experience rural schools and rural life for one or two semesters to participate in an SMHS program that is not available in their area or vice versa (for example : Toronto students access agriculture in SDG and SDG students experience aviation and aerospace in Toronto).



March 12, 2018

Attention:

Joan Green and Michel Paulin, Co-leads  
[ST.newvision@ontario.ca](mailto:ST.newvision@ontario.ca)

From:

Canadian Parents for French Ontario  
2055 Dundas St. East. Suite 103  
Mississauga, Ontario. L4X 1M2  
Tel: 905-366-1012  
Betty Gormley, Executive Director,  
[bgormley@on.cpf.ca](mailto:bgormley@on.cpf.ca)

**Re: A New Vision for Student Transportation in Ontario**

Thank you for this opportunity to help create a new vision for transportation for Ontario students that is safe, responsive, equitable, and accountable.

Contents:

Recommendation of Canadian Parents for French Ontario – page 2  
About French Immersion/Extended French Programs in Ontario – page 2  
Ontario's Goals: Framework for French as a Second Language (FSL) Programs in Ontario Schools (2013)  
Ontario's Commitment: Federal-Provincial Official Languages in Education Program (2013-2018)  
About Canadian Parents for French – page 3

Responsiveness-service levels – page 4  
Equity – accessibility – page 7  
Safety and well-being-safe and respectful transportation environment – page 9  
Accountability – quality assurance – page 12

Comparison Charts of English, French Immersion, Extended French Service Levels – page 14

**Recommendation:**

In support of equity, inclusion and student achievement in French as a Second Language programs, Canadian Parents for French Ontario recommends that the Ministry of Education:

Develop and enforce a province wide transportation policy that is inclusive of students in French Immersion/Extended programs and gives clear guidelines:

- On walking distances, pick up locations, time limit and distance that any student may be expected to ride a bus or commute on public transit
- On integration of before/after school care and shared custody with transportation services based on need identified by parents
- To ensure that transportation is available at NO COST to students or their parents/guardians

A lack of a vehicle, adult to drive and/or financial means should not be a barrier to participation in French immersion/extended programs which are publicly funded education programs. All students with 2 home addresses and a before/after school address should be accommodated with transportation including students in French immersion/extended programs.

**About French Immersion/Extended Programs in Ontario:**

French Immersion/Extended programs are Official Language Programs supported through the Official Languages Act, The Official Languages in Education Agreements between the Governments of Canada and Ontario and the Ministry of Education Technical Paper, Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools and Curriculum.

French immersion/extended enrolment: **245 818** (13% of English Board enrolment) \*

Number of Boards offering French immersion/extended: **54** (with 98% of English Board enrolment) \*

Number of immersion students being transported: **124 052** (15% of total transported) +

\* 2015-16 ONSYS data, most recent release from EDU

+2015-16 Ministry of Education Student Transportation Survey unaudited data. NB: data does not specify extended and often, Boards may report extended and immersion together.

**Extended French Programs:** French is the language of instruction for 25-49% of the school day. Extended French programs generally start in Grade 4, 5 or 7. For Grades 9-12, extended students do at least 7 out of 30 credits in French. Boards decide locations, program configuration and starting grade. Curriculum begins in Grade 4.

**French Immersion Programs:** French is the language of instruction 50-100% of the school day. Most French immersion programs start in JK, SK or Grade 1. For Grades 9-12, immersion students do at least 10 out of 30 credits in French. Boards decide locations, program configuration and starting grade. Curriculum begins in Grade 1, as it does for the regular English program. Early full French immersion starting in kindergarten is considered the optimal approach to developing French proficiency and educators follow the Ministry Kindergarten Program 2016, “play-based learning in a culture of inquiry”

#### **Ontario’s Goals: Framework for French as a Second Language (FSL) Programs in Ontario Schools (2013)**

1. Increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL.
2. Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation.
3. Increase student, educator, parent, and community engagement in FSL.

#### **Ontario’s Commitment: Federal-Provincial Official Languages in Education Program (2013-2018)**

Provide every student with the opportunity to study FSL and to track and improve:

- student performance-acquisition of measurable second-language skills
- provision of programs
- student participation-recruitment and retention to secondary graduation
- enriched school environment
- support of educational staff and research

**About Canadian Parents for French:** Canadian Parents for French (CPF) was founded in 1977 with the assistance of Canada’s first Official Languages Commissioner. More than 25 000 volunteer parent and stakeholder members across Canada promote and support opportunities for young people to learn French. CPF is the very proud recipient of the Commissioner of Official Languages 2016 Award of Excellence in recognition of outstanding contribution to linguistic duality in Canada.

CPF Ontario serves on the Minister of Education’s Provincial French as a Second Language Working Group and has consulted with the Ministry on the development of all of the current FSL policy and curriculum documents.

CPF Ontario has created and implemented many projects supported by Canadian Heritage and the Ministry of Education, including “O Canada” school performances, Pathways to Bilingual Success Conferences for students, parent webinars in support of parents and their children in FSL programs and our web data base [www.frenchstreet.ca](http://www.frenchstreet.ca) and our annual French public speaking contest, Concours d’Art Oratoire. Information for parents, data and research on FSL education are shared via our public websites [cpf.ca](http://cpf.ca), [on.cpf.ca](http://on.cpf.ca), facebook and twitter.



## **Responsiveness-service levels**

### **1. *Do you think that Ontario students are well-served in the current system?***

Some students are well-served but others are not. Some French immersion/extended students receive transportation support using the same parameters as those used for students attending English programs and some French immersion/extended students receive no support at all.

Ontario School Board transportation policies vary considerably for distances that define provision of transportation (yellow bus or transit tickets), for transfers allowed on transit, for walking distances to bus pick-up points and for time allowed on a bus.

Many parents of students in JK-5/6 who want to access before/after school programs have to forgo yellow bus transportation and transport their own children.

### **2. *Which aspects of service are working well to help support students in achieving excellence?***

If transportation is provided on the same basis for French immersion/extended students, as English program students, students are served as well (or as badly) as the general student population. This occurs when a yellow bus is provided for JK-5/6 students whether that school is an English one or a French immersion/extended one and similarly, for grades 7-12 whether it is yellow bus or transit.

### **3. *What's not working?***

Students cannot achieve excellence in French immersion/extended programs if they can't get there.

Policies vary across Ontario and even within consortia (see charts page 14-18):

Waterloo Region DSB and Waterloo Catholic DSB do not provide transportation to immersion.

Toronto Catholic DSB does not provide transportation to immersion unless funds are available. They have been in a deficit in their transportation budget since 2000. Their co-terminus board, Toronto DSB provides transportation to all SK-12 students based on the same distance parameters as the English program.

Peel DSB provides yellow bus to Grade 1-8 immersion students, but no transportation for secondary immersion students unless they are in Caledon. Secondary students in English get transportation. Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB does not provide transportation for immersion.

Upper Grand DSB provides transportation to immersion based on the same parameters as the English program and took care, over 40 years ago, when starting immersion in the rural areas to choose locations which had nearby secondary schools. This meant elementary immersion students could get on an existing bus run as enrolment grew.

Lakehead DSB and Thunder Bay Catholic DSB provide transportation based on the same parameters as the English program.

Students need to arrive at school ready to learn. A young child who falls asleep on the bus or has a toilet accident is not ready to learn. Long bus rides are very hard on students, particularly younger students and their classmates.

Students need access to extra-curricular activities to support their learning in French and other subjects, social and physical development. Long commutes, whether on a yellow bus or on transit, limit opportunities for all students. Early and late bus runs are done in some boards but not across the province.

School bus routes can change from year to year and this becomes difficult to manage, especially where parents who share custody are on two different routes.

Parents can face insurmountable barriers in accessing both transportation and before/after school care.

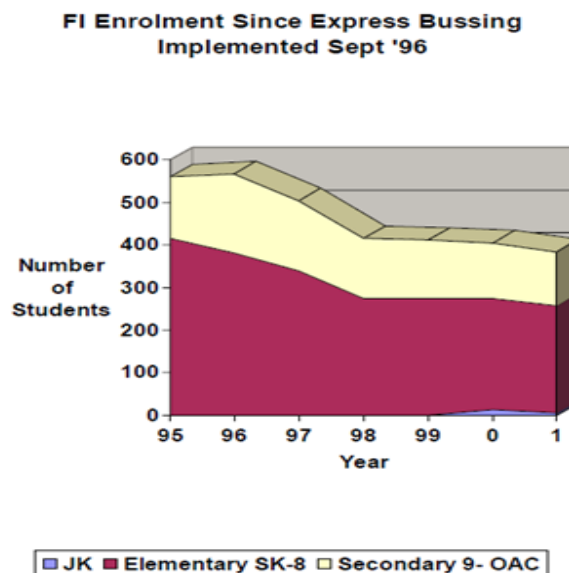
In the Toronto DSB, French immersion/extended bus pick up points are usually at the English home school that is within walking distance of the child's home. Parents may only access before/after school care at the school their child attends; i.e., the French immersion/extended school. Bus runs are set to arrive when school starts which means if you need to be at work earlier or stay later, you have to transport your child to and from the French immersion/extended school for before/after school care, assuming a spot is available.

Even if your bus pick up is at your English home school, you cannot access before/after school programs there. A few pre-amalgamation bus runs do go to non-TDSB daycare sites but it is rare while other boards do have daycare pick-ups; such as WCDSB, TBCDSB. Daycares must maintain the staff-child ratio at all times and meeting a bus is a challenge to organize. There is significant resistance to changing procedures to meet the needs of French immersion/extended students on the bus whether it is by adjusting bus schedules to ease parent burden and making access rules for daycare align with both bussing and immersion.

The logistics of the yellow bus service can negatively impact parent's, mostly women's, ability to seek and hold paid jobs, particularly in rural areas. Different pick-up/drop off locations and times for elementary and secondary and the total time parents are going back and forth and waiting for 2 buses can easily consume 1- 2 hours of a work day.

Reducing transportation service reduces enrolment in French immersion/extended and destabilizes strong programs. When Trillium Lakelands DSB examined their French immersion transportation in 2001, they found that a 1995 move to "Express Bussing" (which was not express at all and meant bus stops that were even further from students' homes) resulted in a marked drop in enrolment.

Transportation was the only factor that had changed. When, the board made a correction to improve service and access to French immersion, enrolment did increase in elementary. However, secondary enrolment continued to decline for a number of years and recovery to a robust secondary program took years.



*Bus Them and They Will Come*, Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) Trillium Lakelands Chapter  
Presentation to TLDSB French Immersion Review Committee 2001/02

Page 10, Kawartha Lakes This Week, Friday, May 31, 2002. www.kawarthalakesthisweek.com

## New routes expected to boost enrolment

**ARIEL WHITE  
THIS WEEK**

In a move to get students moving into French immersion, the public school board has approved a plan to share busing services with its Catholic counterpart.

The Trillium Lakelands District School Board authorized the sharing of transportation services for 245 of its students and 1,128 students from the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic

District School Board.

According to a report from the superintendent who oversees transportation, the plan could save the public board \$45,000 in transportation costs.

"When we approached them (the Catholic board) they were very receptive and eager to come up with a sharing arrangement that was mutually beneficial to both of us," says Jim Bradley.

The plan is a result of a review conducted in March of this year, surveying all aspects of the current French immersion program.

In the course of the review it was revealed the program was suffering from lack of good transportation.

"The transportation routes as they existed were hindering the growth of the program," says Jim Bradley.

At the elementary level French Immersion is offered to students from across the City of Kawartha Lakes at Lindsay's Leslie Frost

Public School.

Currently there is a system of so-called express bus routes.

These pick up children on major routes, but some families had to drive students just to reach the express bus stop. These distances, according to the board's report on transportation "far exceeds" the board's walking distances.

The number of students enrolled in French immersion has dropped since the introduction of the express bus system. In 1995 there were 337 students in French immersion in kindergarten, through Grade 6 and this year there are 193.

BJ Mailloux-Brown is the principal at Leslie Frost school.

Ms Mailloux-Brown was on the original review committee that looked into the French immersion program and she is happy about the prospect of better busing.

"It's certainly very exciting that this is taking place," she says.

"Our children must have the same accessibility as the other students."

She noted that on June 6 at 7 p.m., the school is hosting a meeting for parents to learn about the busing changes.

Ms Mailloux-Brown wants to get the word out to prospective students and their families in the hopes of boosting enrolment for the fall.

"The transportation piece has been a barrier for some parents," she says.

The plan is only now feasible because of the new Catholic high school in Lindsay, St. Thomas Aquinas and the larger volume of students it brings to Lindsay.

Students will be brought into Lindsay to St. Thomas, then will take a transfer bus to Leslie Frost school.

The cost of the service will also cover the wages of educational assistants used to supervise this transfer.

### **Equity – accessibility**

**1. *Do you think that all Ontario students are receiving the transportation services that they need?***

No. French immersion/extended students are not receiving the transportation services they need in every board across the province.

**2. *Does the student transportation system adequately take into account the diverse needs of different types of students?***

No. Transportation policies that exclude French immersion/extended students as a group mean that only children who live within walking distance or have parents with a car and a flexible work schedule can attend. This disadvantages children with single parents, with parents who work shift work and with parents who do not have the financial resources to own a reliable, available vehicle. French immersion programs began where demand was concentrated, often many years ago in established neighborhoods or urban centres. Newcomer and rural areas have fewer programs and without transportation, face an enormous barrier to participation.

When transportation is eliminated or reduced it has a direct impact on student achievement in French, enrolment, retention and in turn the course selection, retention, graduation rates and in turn the viability and sustainability of French immersion/extended programs.

**3. *Do you have any specific examples of situations that show that there is an equity issue that needs to be addressed?***

#### ***Gaps***

Boards that have French immersion/extended transportation on the same basis as English programs include TDSB, UGDSB, LDSB, TBCDSB, OCDSB, OCSB. Boards that do not have French immersion/extended transportation on the same basis as English include PDSB, DPCDB, WRDSB, WCDSB. (see charts p. 14-18). The gaps in the provision of transportation for French immersion/extended create a province-wide equity issue and undermine the achievement of Ontario, Canada and student/parent goals in French as a Second Language.

#### ***Financial Cost***

School boards that require that students pay for transit, whether it is public transit or private, in order to be able to access French immersion/extended, a publicly funded Official Language education program, place a financial barrier in front of them and their parents. For example, the Peel DSB secondary French immersion/extended students are not eligible for transportation. Those beyond the distance parameter

for walking are expected to pay out of pocket for transit in all areas of the Board while a yellow bus is provided for all students in the English program and immersion students in Caledon.

***Before/ after School Care***

*My child asked to be in French immersion when she was in JK. She loved it in SK and I was able to access the before/after school care at the immersion school. But, in grade 1, there was no room in the before/after school care. I looked for another spot in our area and the only one I could find was at our local English school. The school bus did not pick up there and they would not budge. I am on my own and I had to be able to commute downtown to work. In the end, I had to move my daughter out of immersion and back to the English school to access the daycare so I could work.*

*– Etobicoke mom as told to CPF Ontario*

## Safety and well-being-safe and respectful transportation environment

1. ***Do you believe that Ontario is doing enough to support the safety and well-being of students, staff and drivers?***

No.

2. ***What improvements could be made to safety and well-being for students as they are being transported to and from school?***

Make the safety and well-being of students and their families the focal point of transportation policies regardless of English/French program by:

- limiting time on the bus and/or public transit,
- reduce walking distances,
- establishing and monitoring safety standards for pick-up points,
- provide and reinstate driveway pick-up where safety and access issues warrant,
- paying for transit for students who meet distance thresholds but do not get yellow buses,
- integrating transportation and before/after school care, shared custody.

3. ***Do you have any specific examples of situations where safety and well-being is being compromised? What is the biggest risk to safety and well-being?***

Many Ontario boards cover urban, suburban and rural areas and yet, board transportation policies do not always differentiate between student needs in these environments. The time involved impacts student well-being and the safety issues are a constant worry for parents, including French immersion/extended parents.

*I lost bus access for my French immersion kids in 2016 when it was determined that kindergarten students within .08 km of the school were no longer eligible for buses and the walking distance for all students was upped to 1.6 km. Instead my children were expected to walk on one of the most travelled roads in the village with no sidewalks and no crossing guards. In winter, snow banks are not considered an obstacle by our board, so the kids are actually forced to walk down the middle of the road. I can apply for empty seats for my kids, but the bus stop is further from my house than the school.*

– Ottawa area Mom

*My child walks to the local French immersion school which is SK to Grade 5. The school for Grade 6-8 is 11.7 km away. There used to be extra seats available on the school bus for Grade 6 but getting one is not guaranteed. At our Board, Grade 6 students and up are expected to take transit but the trip is going to be a bus, a subway ride, and another bus. We love immersion but the commute is not appealing and I worry about safety on transit and the very busy road without a crossing guard that my child will have to cross. If we had a school bus until the end of Grade 8, it would be much better.*

*– Toronto parent*

*We live on a farm half an hour south of Lindsay. When my oldest child started French immersion, I was a single mother with a young child and an unreliable vehicle. The bus would pick up him up at the end of our drive. I could see the bus coming down the road and send him out to meet it. It was safe. He was safe and protected from extreme cold weather, storms, traffic. I was able to focus on my farm work. The bus ride was 45 minutes each way and took both elementary and high school children. The young students sat behind the driver and the older ones escorted to and from the bus. There were 26 busses at the school in the morning and a few cars.*

*By the time he was in grade three, he had an hour and a half ride each way. The board had gone to double bussing and pick up points. Like my neighbours, we drove to a pick-up point at the intersection of a busy arterial road and our rural side road and a train crossing. No sidewalk, no light, and the speed limit - 80 km/h - a suggestion. Hundreds of us sat in our idling cars all over the region trying to stay warm and dry, waiting with our babies and preschoolers strapped in their car seats for the school bus while heavy dump trucks, snowplows and traffic went flying by at 100 km/h. It was dangerous and nerve wracking for all of us. The changes meant many more families in their cars either on the side of the road or at the school and considerably fewer busses at the school in the morning.*

*By the time my youngest started school, four years later, the bus ride was two hours each way...a four-year-old on the bus for four hours a day. After weeks of heated discussions with the school board, the ride was reduced by adding a second bus, but it was still over an hour each way and they arrived late every day.*

*When my son started high school, we went through the same ritual for two different bus times an hour apart. We had to be at the stop 10 minutes before bus time, sometimes waiting for twenty minutes or more for late buses or we would miss the pick up or drop off.... Four trips a day for a half hour each time, an hour apart.*

*Both my children were in bus accidents. One was never reported to the school until I drove by and saw my child's bus in the ditch with a hole in the side. The students had been transferred to*



*another bus and dropped off at school with no word to the school administration. My other child's bus was rear ended on a very cold day on an icy bridge. We were called to go pick them up. The children had to wait in the bus with the engine turned off while the driver waited for the OPP and parents to pick the children up.*

*My youngest graduated 3 years ago, but the situation is no better for families in my rural area today. The bus rides are longer, the pick-up points are further away and more dangerous than they were for mine. It is not conducive to learning readiness or good health. It is not good for the environment and it takes away work time for the parents*

*– Trillium Lakelands (Kawartha Lakes) Mom*

**4. How can we enhance safety and well-being in the transportation environment to ensure that it supports students' preparedness for learning during the school day?**

Ensure students arrive on time, safely, rested and ready to learn by developing clear provincially led criteria and policy for:

- Transportation for French immersion/extended programs for every JK-12 student in the programs at every school board on an equal basis to the transportation provided to English programs.
- Safe pick up/drop off points and provision for driveway pick-up/drop off where safety standards cannot be met
- Safe walking routes
- Walking distances
- Maximum time on the yellow bus
- Maximum time of commute on public transit
- No cost to students, family, guardians
- Non-transferable dedicated funding
- Reporting, auditing, compliance

## **Accountability – quality assurance**

### ***1. Do you believe that we are receiving good value for the money spent on student transportation?***

Generally, yes. Many efficiencies and innovations have been implemented over the years but they are often at the expense of students. The funding is mostly based on historical funding not current realities. And, Boards can use the funds for other expenses. One size does not fit all – geography, availability of public transit, proximity to school, population density all factor into transportation models.

### ***3. When it comes to delivering responsive, equitable, and safe student transportation, what roles and/or responsibilities do you feel Ontario, school boards and transportation providers should have?***

School board transportation is a form of public transportation that is as important to public education as the teacher and the building. It is essential in meeting our Official Languages goals for French immersion/extended students.

Without school board provided and paid for transportation access to public education is compromised. School board transportation should pick up and deliver all children safely, ready to learn in both the regular English and French immersion/extended programs. Transportation needs to be safe and inclusive. The responsibility for the safe transportation of the students begins at the pick-up/drop off points, not just when the child boards the bus.

Currently, the province provides funding but it is a school board decision as to whether they provide transportation at all and with what parameters. Routes, pick up points and eligibility are set by the board in consultation with the school bus companies and the consortiums and are not always based on the needs of students and families.

The Ministry of Education needs to take the lead by developing clear criteria and policy for:

- Transportation for French immersion/extended programs for every JK-12 student in the programs at every school board on an equal basis to the transportation provided to English programs.
- Safe pick up/drop off points and provision for driveway pick-up/drop off where safety standards cannot be met
- Safe walking routes
- Walking distances
- Maximum time on the yellow bus
- Maximum time of commute on public transit

- No cost to students, family, guardians
- Non- transferable dedicated funding
- Reporting, auditing, compliance

School boards need to:

- acknowledge the frustration of the public and the obligation to provide equitable access to public education
- adjust service to current realities of before/after school care and shared custody arrangements
- Seek and include parent input in transportation decision making

Transportation providers, including school bus companies and public transportation, need to:

- provide detailed meaningful input into the discussion on safety, routes, service levels and costs of providing safe, reliable, equitable transportation to publicly funded education.

## ***2. What changes would create a more accountable and transparent transportation system?***

Adequate funding needs to be provided to meet improvements in service standards in urban, suburban and rural areas. The current funding is transferable, is not based on criteria or need, and there is no accountability.

Require accounting and public reporting on the following costs, service, efficiency and results:

- Locations of pick up, including driveway pick-ups/drop offs where safety or accessibility standards cannot be met
- Times of pick up/drop off
- Time on yellow bus, time on public transit
- Walking routes
- Walking distances
- # students transported
- # of students who commute on public transit
- Costs of public transit commutes
- Cost of school bus transportation
- # Late buses
- # Road and weather condition reports
- #Accidents
- Equity in transportation

‘Achieving Excellence’ says that ensuring equity means that “all children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with **access** to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.” The Ministry of Education in partnership with school boards, and transportation providers can provide better, safer, equitable transportation for our children.

TDSB-TCDSB Consortium Service for English, French Immersion, Extended French

	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Secondary	
TDSB-English	Yellow Bus- 1.6 km							Transit tickets-3.2 km*			Transit tickets-4.8 km	
TDSB-FI	n/a	Yellow Bus- 1.6 km						Transit tickets-3.2 km*			Transit tickets-4.8 km	
TDSB-Ext	n/a					Yellow Bus- 1.6 km		Transit tickets-3.2 km*			Transit tickets-4.8 km	
TCDSB-English	Yellow Bus-1.5 km										None	
TCDSB-FI		None										None
TCDSB-Ext	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Transit tickets*	Transit tickets*	Transit tickets*	Transit tickets*	None	

Notes: TCDSB allows for transportation for FI from SK-8 in their policy at the same distance level as English. However, there is a caveat that this is only when funding is available. Since 2000 transportation budget has been in deficit, so no FI students are transported unless they have some kind of hardship as assessed by the principal. JK is now the starting point. Anomaly in TCDSB transportation policy – TTC tickets are provided for extended students but not immersion students.

\*TTC-Toronto Transit tickets are now free to age 12. Thus, ticket provision does not begin until age 13.

PDSB – DBCDSB-UGDSB - Dufferin-Wellington County Consortium Service for English, French Immersion, Extended French

	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Secondary
PDSB-English	Yellow Bus- 1.0 km			Yellow Bus -1.6 km			Yellow Bus – 2.0 km				Yellow Bus – 3.8 km
PDSB-FI	n/a	n/a	Yellow Bus- 1.0 km	Yellow Bus -1.6 km			Yellow Bus – 2.0 km				None
PDSB-Ext	n/a								Yellow Bus – 2.0 km		None
DPCDSB-English	Yellow Bus-1.0 km			Yellow Bus-1.6 km		Yellow Bus-1.6 – 2.0 km depending on consortium					Yellow Bus-3.2 km where no public transit
DPCDSB-FI	n/a	n/a	None								None
DPCDSB-Ext	n/a						None				None
UGDSB-English	Yellow Bus -1.6 km								Yellow Bus-3.2 km		Yellow Bus-3.8 km
UGDSB-FI	Yellow Bus -1.6 km								Yellow Bus-3.2 km		Yellow Bus-3.8 km
UGDSB-Ext	n/a										

Notes: PDSB Walk to bus stop: Kindergarten students 0.4 km; Grade 1 – 6 students 0.8 km; Grade 7 – 12 students 1.2 km

UGDSB Walk to bus stop: JK-grade 3 students 0.8 km; Grade 4-12 students 1.2 km

UGDSB Maximum time on bus, where possible: JK-Grade students 45 minutes; Grade 7-12 students 60 minutes

OCDSB-OCSB Consortium Service for English, French Immersion, Extended French

	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Secondary
OCDSB-English	n/a		Yellow Bus-1.6 km								Transit or Yellow Bus 3.2 km
OCDSB-FI	Yellow Bus- 0.8 km		Yellow Bus- 1.6 km								
OCDSB-Ext	n/a										
OCSB-English	n/a		n/a			Yellow Bus-1.6 km				Transit or Yellow Bus 3.2 km	
OCSB-FI	Yellow Bus-0.8 km		n/a			Yellow Bus-1.6 km					
OCSB-Ext	n/a		Yellow Bus-1.6 km			n/a					

Notes: At OCDSB, every JK/SK student is in FI. Program can be English or FI in Grade 1. They also have Middle French Immersion in Grade 4.

OCSB, JK/SK the program is FI, Grade 1-3 it is Extended, Grade 4 on it can be FI or English. All of the programs are at the home school.

WRDSB - WCDSB Consortium Service for English, French Immersion, Extended French

	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Secondary
WRDSB-English	Yellow Bus-0.8 km		Yellow Bus-1.6 km								Transit or Yellow Bus 3.2 km
WRDSB-FI	n/a		None								None
WRDSB-Ext	n/a										
WCDSB-English	Yellow Bus-0.8 km					Yellow Bus- 1.6 km					Transit or Yellow Bus 3.2 km
WCDSB-FI	n/a		None								None
WCDSB-Ext	n/a										

Notes: WRDSB and WCDSB will transport to French immersion if it is at your neighbourhood school and you meet the distance criteria. If your neighbourhood school does not have French immersion, parents are responsible for transporting their children to French immersion.

WCDSB: rural areas, they have laneway pickups or .5 km bus pick-up point; travel time limited to 1 hour; daycare pickups; no courtesy transportation; walk to bus (JK/SK 0.5 km, G1-8 1 km, G9-12 1.6 km)



LDSB-TBCDSB Consortium Service for English, French Immersion, Extended French

	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Secondary
LDSB-English	0.4 km		0.8 km			1.6 km			1.6 km Transit or yellow bus		1.6 km Transit or yellow bus
LDSB-FI	n/a	0.4 km	0.8 km			1.6 km			1.6 km Transit or yellow bus		1.6 km Transit or yellow bus
LDSB-Ext	n/a										
TBCDSB-English	0.4 km		0.8 km			1.6 km			1.6 km Transit or yellow bus		1.6 km Transit or yellow bus
TBCDSB-FI		0.4 km	0.8 km			1.6 km			1.6 km Transit or yellow bus		1.6 km Transit or yellow bus
TBCDSB-Ext	n/a										

Notes:

TBCDSB: Policy 704 “transportation may be provided from up to two permanent pick-up points, and to one permanent drop-off point, within scheduled routes, to and from the student’s designated home school.” Consortium policy: [https://www.ststb.ca/application/files/2114/8958/7457/STS-ELG-003\\_Alternate\\_Address\\_Requests.pdf](https://www.ststb.ca/application/files/2114/8958/7457/STS-ELG-003_Alternate_Address_Requests.pdf)

Consortium includes the French board, Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales

## Chapter 3

Ministry of Education

### Section 3.13

# Student Transportation

## 1.0 Background

### 1.1 Overview

In the 2013/14 school year, over 830,000 Ontario students were transported daily to and from publicly funded schools on approximately 19,000 school vehicles such as school buses, vans and cars. Almost all student transportation in Ontario is provided through contracts with school bus operators, and more than 70% of the children transported were in kindergarten or elementary school.

All school boards in the province provide some level of transportation services to elementary students, and most provide service to secondary students. *The Education Act* (Act) does not explicitly require school boards to provide transportation services. However, section 21 (2)(c) of the Act excuses a child from attending school if transportation is not provided by a school board and there is no school situated within the following distances from the child's residence:

- 1.6 kilometres for children under 7 years of age;
- 3.2 kilometres for children aged 7 to less than 10 years of age; and
- 4.8 kilometres for children over 10 years of age.

School boards base their students' eligibility for transportation services to a large extent on the distance from home to school. **Figure 1** shows the number of students transported in 2013/14, the last year for which data is available, by type of program or need.

**Figure 1: Number of Students Transported, Broken Down by Type of Program or Need, 2013/14**

Source of data: Ministry of Education, Student Transportation Survey for 2013/14

Type of Program or Need	#	%
<b>Students without special needs</b>		
General programs (students meet distance eligibility criteria)	570,014	68.3
Special programs – French Immersion	114,210	13.7
Special programs – other (eg., gifted, arts, music, technical)	18,720	2.2
Hazard (not eligible based on distance but hazardous walk for age/grade)	55,626	6.7
Courtesy (not eligible based on distance but empty seats are available)	33,323	4.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>791,893</b>	
Students with special needs	39,798	4.8
Other (Section 23 schools and provincial schools*)	2,538	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>834,229</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Section 23 schools are correctional and custodial facilities. Provincial schools are operated by the Ministry of Education and provide education for students who are deaf or blind, or have severe learning disabilities.

## 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities in Providing Student Transportation

Figure 2 illustrates the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in transporting Ontario students to and from school.

### 1.2.1 Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (Ministry) provides funding to school boards through the Student Transportation Grant. It also conducts an annual survey of school boards on student transportation services across the province. The survey is completed and its results are provided to the Ministry by the transportation consortia. According to the Ministry, the survey is intended to support policy development by the Ministry and decision-making by school boards and consortia.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Ministry used external consultants to conduct initial effectiveness and efficiency reviews on the operations of transportation consortia in four areas: consortium management; development and implementation of policies and practices; routing and technology; and contract management. It used the overall rating as the basis for determining adjustments to transportation funding for boards that run a deficit in their transportation spending. The Ministry will conduct a follow-up review if the consortium that requests a review can demonstrate significant progress in implementing the recommendations made in the initial review.

### 1.2.2 School Boards

There are 72 school boards in the province. The Ministry of Education gives school boards autonomy and authority for student transportation. The boards are responsible for overall decisions related to providing student transportation, including establishing policies and eligibility criteria.

### 1.2.3 Transportation Consortia

There are 33 transportation consortia in the province. A transportation consortium is an organization formed by two to five school boards operating in the same geographical area (such as public, Catholic, French or English boards). To limit costs and increase efficiency in student transportation, the Ministry of Education in the 2006/07 school year asked all school boards to begin consolidating transportation functions into consortia that would provide services to boards in the same geographical areas; a few boards had already formed consortia at that time. At the time of our audit, all school boards, except one northern French Catholic board, were part of a consortium. Seventeen school boards are in more than one consortium because of overlapping boundaries. Consortia are responsible for:

- administering transportation policies of member school boards;
- planning transportation services (designing routes; identifying eligible students; determining student pickup and drop-off locations and times; managing student information needed by school bus operators);
- contracting with school bus operators to provide student transportation services;
- managing contracts with school bus operators, including monitoring service performance; and
- performing audits on school bus operators to ensure compliance with legislation and regulations, and with their contracts.

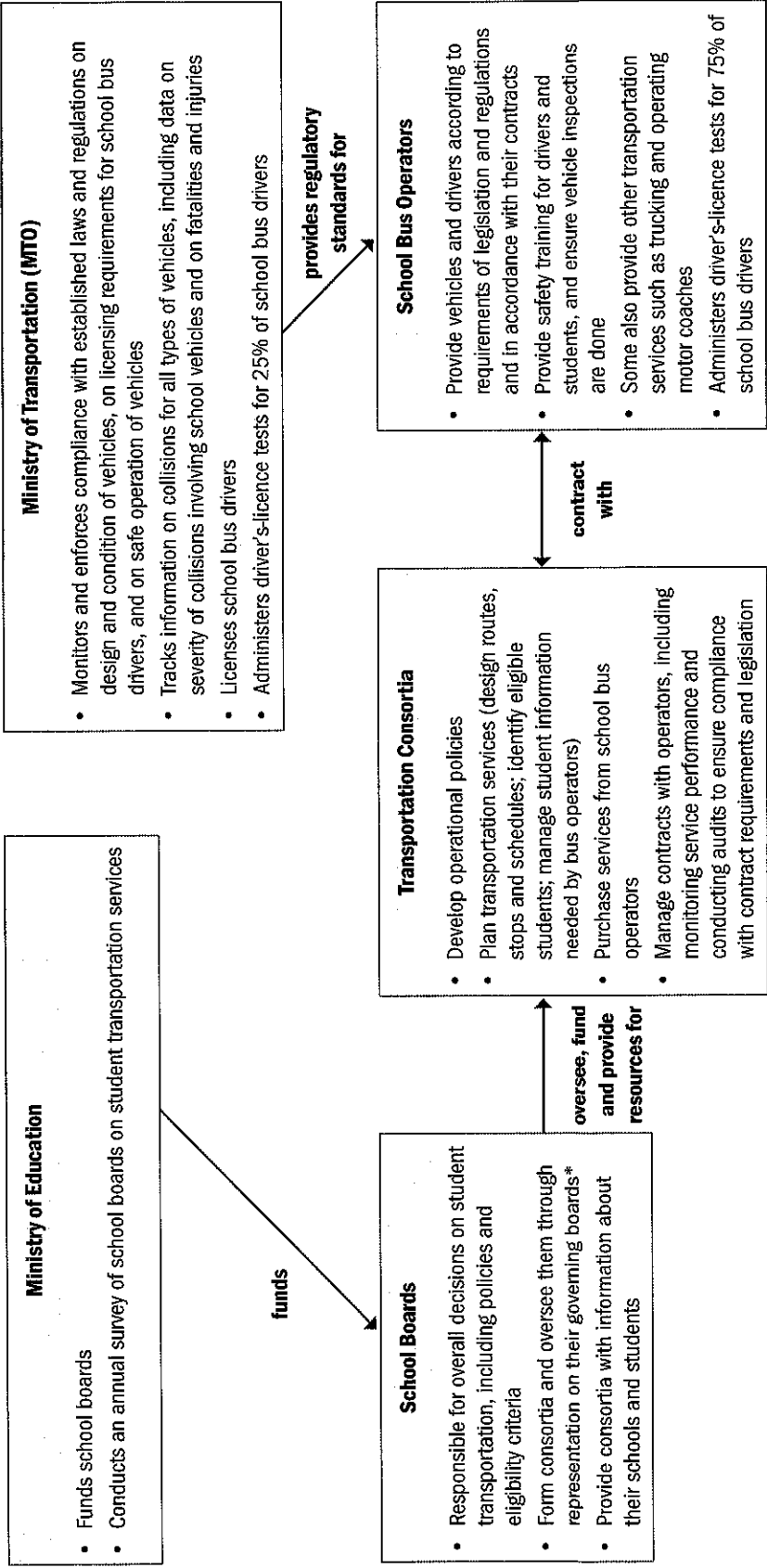
School boards are represented on the consortia's governing boards to provide oversight, and they provide consortia with key information about their schools and students (such as name, age, address and special needs).

### 1.2.4 School Bus Operators

There are more than 200 school bus operators in the province providing publicly funded student transportation services. School bus operators are

Figure 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Parties Involved in Ontario Student Transportation

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario



\* One school board is not part of a consortium and manages transportation services directly.

contracted by consortia to transport students. They are responsible for ensuring their vehicles and drivers meet requirements set out in legislation and regulations (such as having semi-annual vehicle inspections for mechanical fitness and maintaining drivers' daily log books, which record hours of service, breaks taken and mileage driven), and for complying with provisions set out in their contracts (such as providing safety training for drivers and students, and conducting background checks for drivers).

In the 2012/13 school year (the most recent year that this information was compiled), 19 school bus operators were each paid at least \$5 million for transporting students attending publicly funded schools. Two of these operators received 40% of the total of about \$760 million paid to all operators for home-to-school transportation.

### 1.2.5 Ministry of Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) enforces federal and provincial laws and regulations that relate to the design and mechanical condition of vehicles, licensing requirements for school bus drivers and the safe operation of vehicles.

MTO has about 90 people employed in the Carrier Safety and Enforcement Branch in St. Catharines. These staff promote the safe operation of commercial vehicles in Ontario. This includes monitoring compliance with legislation for all types of vehicles, not just school vehicles. In addition, some of the approximately 250 enforcement officers located across the province conduct safety inspections of commercial vehicles (including school buses), conduct audits at the premises of commercial operators (including school bus operators) and investigate privately owned Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations, which inspect commercial and non-commercial vehicles (including school vehicles) for mechanical fitness.

## 1.3 Funding and Expenditures for Student Transportation

For the 2013/14 school year, the most recent year for which this information has been finalized, transportation grants to school boards totalled \$867 million, or about 4% of the \$21 billion of total operating funding available to school boards. Transportation grants are estimated to be \$880 million for the 2014/15 school year, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: School Board Funding, Actual Transportation Expenditures and Number of Students Transported, 2008/09–2014/15**

Source of data: Ministry of Education, Education Financial Information System, and Student Transportation Survey

School Year	Total School Board Operating Grant (\$ million)	Transportation Grant (\$ million)	Transportation Grant as a % of Total Operating Grants	Actual Transportation Expenditures* (\$ million)	Students Transported (#)
2008/09	18,892	816.0	4.3	815.2	817,918
2009/10	19,537	827.6	4.2	825.7	818,189
2010/11	20,271	839.8	4.1	840.6	824,024
2011/12	20,985	852.5	4.1	858.1	823,462
2012/13	20,967	850.0	4.1	852.9	833,685
2013/14	20,768	866.6	4.2	861.7	834,229
2014/15 estimate	22,449	880.0	3.9	Not yet available	Not yet available

\* When actual expenditures exceed grants received, school boards whose consortia have an effectiveness and efficiency review rating of moderate and above will receive, in whole or in part, additional funding to cover the shortfall in the year of review. This effectively resets the transportation funding in subsequent years. Otherwise, school boards have to make up the shortfall from other program areas.

**Figure 4: Breakdown of Student Transportation Expenditures, 2013/14**

Source of data: Ministry of Education, Student Transportation Survey for 2013/14

Expenditure	%
Contracted school vehicle services*	94
Consortium management	4
Student safety training and other	2
	<b>100</b>

\* Includes the cost of using taxis and public transit, which is covered by school boards.

Grants to school boards, including the student transportation grant, are calculated in accordance with regulation, and are initially based on budgets/estimates submitted by school boards in June for the upcoming school year (September to August). Grant amounts are revised in December when updated financial and enrolment information is received. The grant amount is finalized after school boards submit audited financial statements the following November.

As seen in Figure 4, over 90% of expenditures on student transportation are payments primarily to contracted bus operators. The remaining expenditures are for consortium management, student safety training and other costs. However, according to the Ministry of Education, school boards are free to use any portion of the transportation grant for non-transportation-related items such as classroom expenses (for example, textbooks) or non-classroom expenses (for example, school office supplies or administrative costs). Most other education funding components are also administered by the Ministry in a similar fashion.

## 2.0 Audit Objectives and Scope

The objectives of our audit were to assess whether effective systems and procedures were in place to safely and efficiently transport elementary and sec-

ondary school students; ensure the level of service across the province is equitable and based on need; and measure and report on performance in this regard.

Audit work was primarily conducted at three transportation consortia and the Ministry of Transportation, and to a lesser extent at school boards and the Ministry of Education. At the consortia, we reviewed their transportation planning, including the eligibility criteria applied; bus utilization; safety provisions included in contracts with school bus operators; training of students on riding the bus safely; oversight practices for ensuring operators maintain their vehicles and hire and train competent drivers; and whether collisions are tracked and analyzed. As well, we looked at the process used by consortia to develop efficient and safe routes. We also reviewed procurement practices used to acquire their current transportation services. The three consortia we visited were from two different regions and administered transportation services for a total of nine school boards. In the 2013/14 school year, these consortia accounted for almost 20% of student transportation costs incurred and students transported in the province, as shown in Figure 5.

We also sent a survey to the remaining 30 consortia across the province on key issues we identified during our consortium visits. All consortia responded to our survey.

At the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), we reviewed the frequency of ministry inspections of school buses, audits of school bus operators and investigations of privately owned Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations that conduct semi-annual mechanical inspections of school vehicles which carry six or more children. As well, we gained an understanding of the school bus driver licensing process, and assessed whether safety performance data, tracked by MTO (through its Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration System—CVOR) and relied upon by consortia, is accurate and up to date.

**Figure 5: Details on Transportation Consortia Selected for Audit**

Source of data: Ministry of Education

				Students Transported, 2013/14	Actual Transportation Costs, 2013/14 (\$ million)
Consortia Visited	School Boards in Consortium	Type of Area Served	Jurisdictions in Area Served		
Toronto Student Transportation Group	Toronto District School Board ..... Toronto Catholic District School Board	Urban	Toronto	54,600	81.6
Student Transportation of Peel Region	Peel District School Board ..... Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board	Predominantly urban with some rural areas	Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon	64,000	54.4
Sudbury Student Services Consortium	Rainbow District School Board ..... Conseil scolaire du district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario ..... Sudbury Catholic District School Board ..... Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario ..... Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board <sup>1</sup>	Predominantly rural with some urban areas	Greater Sudbury, Espanola, Manitoulin	21,300	26.5
Total				139,900 <sup>2</sup>	162.5

1. Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board is not a member of the Sudbury Student Services Consortium but it contracts services from the consortium.

2. This represents 17% of the total 834,229 students transported province-wide in 2013/14.

3. This represents 19% of the total \$861.7 million in actual transportation costs province-wide in 2013/14.

At the school boards, we met with senior school board management and select school board trustees to discuss their oversight of the consortia.

At the Ministry of Education, we reviewed the adequacy of the effectiveness and efficiency reviews of consortia and the basis for funding student transportation services. We also reviewed information obtained from the Ministry's annual transportation surveys of school boards.

We also met with members of the Transportation Committee of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials, whose members include consortium management; representatives from the Ontario School Bus Association and the Independent School Bus Operators Association, which advocate on behalf of school bus operators; and representatives from a union that represents almost 1,800 school bus drivers.

We also met with Colin Campbell, a retired Justice of the Ontario Superior Court, who in October 2014 was contracted by the Education Minister to chair an expert panel to identify best practices and explore options for acquiring student transportation services (other than requests for proposals for competitive procurement) that are in compliance with government procurement directives. At the time we were drafting this report, the review panel had not yet issued its report.

### 3.0 Summary

School vehicles are generally considered to be a safe mode of transportation based on the number of collisions in relation to the number of passengers



transported and kilometres travelled. The Ministry of Transportation reported that over the last five years, school vehicles have been involved in 5,600 collisions that have resulted in property damage, personal injuries and fatalities. Overall, in Ontario the risk of personal injury from collisions involving school vehicles is lower than for other types of vehicles, and the risk of fatalities is similar to that for all other types of vehicles. However, in 2013, the latest year for which information is available, Ontario's school vehicles were involved in more collisions proportionately than automobiles and trucks but fewer than other types of buses, based on total number of vehicles by type. Specifically, 12% of school buses were involved in collisions, compared to 4% of automobiles, 2% of trucks and 16% of other buses. The police determined that the school bus driver was at fault in 40% of the cases; the bus driver was not at fault in 54% of cases and in 6% of cases the cause of the collision could not be determined.

Only limited information is being tracked by consortia on incidents impacting children such as late buses and mechanical breakdowns of vehicles. With the limited information available to us during our audit, we noted an increase in such incidents between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Nevertheless, the potential of risk to students being transported makes it important that the Ministry of Education, school boards and transportation consortia, and the Ministry of Transportation continue to consider and minimize risk factors in three key areas that impact the safe transport of students: bus driver competence, vehicle condition and student behaviour. Based on our audit we concluded that better oversight of bus operators and their drivers, better processes for ensuring the safe operation of school vehicles, better training for students in bus safety, and better tracking and analysis of collisions and incidents may even further reduce risks to students.

### Safe Transport of Students

The following are some of our key observations regarding the safe transport of students:

- **Better oversight and monitoring needed to ensure school bus driver competence.** Although there is a rigorous process for licensing school bus drivers and renewing their licences every five years, we noted weakness in the consortia's oversight processes to determine if drivers were competent. Consortia we visited normally gave bus operators advance notice of all operational reviews, and one consortium let school bus operators select the driver files to be reviewed. Part of the review included route audits to verify that bus drivers follow the planned route, stop at all assigned stops and perform their duties safely. We noted that route audits were infrequent and, in the case of one consortium, ineffective, as the driver was aware of the audit because the assessor would ride along on the bus as opposed to following the bus without the driver knowing. When the reviews did uncover issues such as some drivers not having the required criminal-record screening checks, only one of the three consortia we visited was reasonably diligent in ensuring that the operators rectified the problems noted.
- **Improvements needed in ensuring school vehicles are in good condition.** Contracts with school bus operators stipulate the maximum and average age permitted for a school bus. Our review at the three consortia we visited noted that most vehicles were under the maximum age of 12 years, but each consortium had operators using at least one type of vehicle that exceeded the average age requirement (typically seven years). We noted that the process used by consortia to determine if school vehicles were in good condition was weak. Only two consortia visually inspected the condition of school buses, and they selected for inspection only a small number of those buses that were on site on the day

- of the inspection. Similarly, the Ministry of Transportation's inspection process for school vehicles needs improvement. We noted that it was not targeting those vehicles most at risk for safety violations, performing inspections on a timely basis, or ensuring that defects noted during inspection were fixed.
- **Ministry of Transportation not aware of all school buses on the road.** The number of school vehicles recorded in the Ministry of Transportation's bus inspection tracking system was less than the number of school vehicles contracted by transportation consortia. In the 2013/14 Ministry of Education survey, the consortia reported to the Ministry of Education that they had contracted about 19,000 school vehicles from operators; the system, however, lists only about 16,000. The number of school vehicles in the system should be much higher than the number contracted by consortia because it should also include school vehicles used by private schools and other organizations.
  - **Little oversight of school bus operators that are allowed to certify their own buses for mechanical fitness.** The Ministry of Transportation allows licensed privately operated Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations, including those operated by school bus operators, to conduct semi-annual mechanical inspections of school buses and certify them. The Ministry of Transportation provides little oversight of these stations to ensure they conduct thorough inspections. We found that over the last five years only 12 stations belonging to school bus operators had been inspected by the Ministry of Transportation.
  - **The Ministry of Education has not mandated a bus safety training requirement for students riding school buses.** It is up to each consortium to determine whether or not it will offer bus safety programs to its students, and which programs to offer. Only 16 of 33 consortia in the province had made general

school bus safety training mandatory, and only five had mandatory orientation for new riders.

- **Many consortia were not collecting their own information on collisions and incidents involving school vehicles to identify problems and take corrective action.** Only four of 33 consortia were able to provide us with statistics on all the categories of incidents that we requested, and only half were able to provide us with complete information on collisions. Incidents include buses breaking down or dropping students off at the wrong stop, student injuries and behaviour issues, and other problems. The Ministry of Education has not set any guidelines for the reporting of school vehicle collisions and incidents among consortia, to enable analysis of their causes and to develop strategies to prevent them in the future.

### Efficient Transportation of Students

Our audit noted differences in how transportation consortia operated and managed student busing services—for example, in the degree to which they employed efficiency strategies, in the level of service provided and in costs per student transported. We noted that the ability of a consortium to efficiently and effectively manage transportation services is impacted by the level of authority delegated to it by the school boards it serves, and the willingness of school boards to work co-operatively and integrate services. Although consortia have implemented efficiency measures to varying degrees to improve the efficiency of school transportation services and, in turn reduce costs, they could be doing more.

Our key observations regarding the efficient delivery of service, the level of service provided, funding and procurement practices are as follows:

- **Funding for school transportation is not based on need.** Instead, it is based on each board's 1997 spending level, with annual adjustments for enrolment and inflation, and

other minor adjustments such as fuel costs and safety initiatives. The Ministry of Education's funding formula does not take into account local factors that can significantly influence transportation costs, such as enrolment density, geography, the availability of public transit, the number of students with special needs, and hazards on the route. In 2004, the Ministry began testing a new funding formula based on need. However, due to significant pushback, especially from boards that expected to get less, the Ministry abandoned the new funding model and continued with the status quo.

- **School busing is not available on an equal basis to students across the province.** There are significant differences in student eligibility for busing services across the province. For example, three boards do not provide busing services to secondary students who do not have special needs. The percentage of students for whom consortia have arranged school transportation varies significantly between boards, from 10% to 87%. This results from differences in geography, student population density and availability of public transit, but the boards' differing eligibility criteria are also a factor. We noted that eligibility criteria for busing even varied among school boards served by the same consortium and among schools within the same board. Ontario has no provincial eligibility standard for busing, and, as a result, school boards can determine which groups of students they will provide transportation for and spend their funding on.
- **Although the cost of transporting students varies widely among school boards, the Ministry of Education has not followed up with the boards to determine if these variances are justified.** The average cost to transport a student without special needs, based on the Ministry's 2013/14 student transportation survey, was \$740, with a range

between boards of \$365 to \$1,680. The average cost to transport a student with special needs was \$4,650, with a range between boards of \$1,045 to \$11,205. A significant portion of this disparity is due to differences in geography, student population density and other local factors. But the Ministry has not determined if the disparity is also partly due to inefficiencies in providing busing services such as, not optimizing route planning software and co-ordinating common days off between school boards.

- **Reliable bus utilization data is not available.** In general, consortia did not have reliable bus utilization statistics because they did not typically track the number of riders. In addition, each consortium set its own capacity for a bus and used different methods to calculate the utilization rate. Consortia usually based the number of buses needed on the number of students eligible for busing. However, head counts that drivers performed on three consecutive days at one consortium we visited showed that only about 70% of the students it had planned would use school transportation were actually using the service. This may indicate that the consortium had excess capacity and was incurring unnecessary costs.
- **Consortia are contracting for more bus services than they actually need.** Two of the consortia we visited were using their buses less than the time negotiated in their contracts with bus operators. For example, one consortium had negotiated a base rate for three hours a day for its large buses, but we found that it used about two-thirds of these buses for two hours or less each day. The consortium could save money if it contracted fewer buses and used them for additional trips.
- **Only about 50% of the consortia in the province had competitively procured their current transportation services.** The last time one consortium we visited had

competitively procured busing services was in 2006. We reviewed the latest competitive procurement process followed by each of the three consortia we visited and noted that, although all had evaluated qualitative factors, only two consortia based their selection decision on both quality and price. One consortium had selected school bus operators entirely on price. The two that considered both qualitative factors and price weighed qualitative criteria at 65% and criteria related to price at 35%, which is in line with best practice information we received from Supply Chain Ontario (the government's procurement experts). We would have expected all three consortia to allocate high marks to safety-related criteria. But we noted that the weighting of safety criteria varied significantly among the three consortia, ranging from a high of 65% to a low of 26% of the total qualitative score.

This report contains 15 recommendations, consisting of 31 actions, to address the findings noted during this audit.

#### OVERALL RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Elementary and secondary education in Ontario is governed by the *Education Act*, which states that school boards are self-governing bodies. They are responsible for developing programs and policies, including those for transportation, that meet their local needs. The Ministry will encourage and support the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Transportation sub-committee to address these issues at a provincial level.

#### OVERALL RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

The Ministry of Transportation appreciates the insights and recommendations of the Auditor General and is strongly committed to continu-

ously improving the safety of all commercial vehicles operating in Ontario, including school buses and other school-purpose vehicles.

The Ministry believes that its school bus inspection program is among the most comprehensive and stringent in North America, and the recommendations from this report will help build on the improvements and initiatives that are already under way.

## 4.0 Detailed Audit Observations

### 4.1 Oversight Processes for Safety Can be Improved

School vehicles are generally considered to be a safe mode of transportation, as compared to other vehicles, based on the number of collisions in relation to the number of passengers transported and kilometres travelled. Even so, over the years school vehicles have been involved in collisions that have resulted in student fatalities, injuries and property damage.

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) reports on collisions for all types of vehicles, including school vehicles, based on police reports. In its Ontario Road Safety Annual Report, MTO reports collisions that result in a fatality or injury, or where the damage to property is \$1,000 or more. We reviewed collision data involving school vehicles during school days from September to June inclusively, for the latest five-year period for which information was available (2008/09–2012/13). As shown in **Figure 6**, the number of collisions involving school vehicles has been relatively constant over the last four years. The risk of collisions resulting in death is 0.2%, which is similar to that for all vehicle types combined. However, the risk of collisions resulting in personal injury is comparatively lower at 14% for school vehicles compared to 23% for all vehicle types combined. Over the same period, school bus drivers were found to be at fault in about

**Figure 6: Collisions on School Days Involving School Vehicles**

Source of data: Ministry of Transportation

	Severity of Collision*						Total Collisions	
	Fatalities		Personal Injury		Property Damage			
School Year	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2008/09	7	0.6	185	14.3	1,100	85.1	1,292	100
2009/10	2	0.2	154	14.5	903	85.3	1,059	100
2010/11	—	0.0	162	14.0	992	86.0	1,154	100
2011/12	3	0.3	154	15.3	848	84.4	1,005	100
2012/13	2	0.2	150	13.5	956	86.3	1,108	100
Total	14		805		4,799		5,618	
5-Year Average	3	0.2	161	14.3	960	85.4	1,124	100

\* Any collision that resulted in more than one category of severity (e.g., Personal Injury and Property Damage) is recorded once in the most severe category (e.g., Personal Injury).

40% of these cases. This is slightly better than the at-fault rate of about 45% for drivers of all other vehicles. In 2013, the latest year for which information is available, Ontario's school vehicles were involved in more collisions proportionately than automobiles and trucks but fewer than other types of buses, based on total number of vehicles by type. Specifically, 12% of school buses were involved in collisions, compared to 4% of automobiles, 2% of trucks and 16% for other buses.

Transporting students safely is influenced by three key factors, discussed below:

- bus driver competence;
- vehicle condition; and
- student behaviour.

#### 4.1.1 Driver Competence and Vehicle Condition

Both the transportation consortia and the Ministry of Transportation play a role in ensuring proper vehicle condition and driver competence in order to minimize risks in transporting students.

##### Transportation Consortia

Transportation consortia contract with school bus operators that provide student busing services. The consortia conduct annual operational reviews on

operators to confirm driver competence, vehicle safety, and compliance with contract requirements. To help ensure driver competence, consortia verify that drivers have valid licences, have had a criminal record check, meet training requirements, and do not exceed the legislated maximum hours on the road. They also follow drivers on a route to see if they are following the route correctly and obeying consortium safety policies when picking up and dropping off students.

To help ensure vehicle safety, consortia test a sample of school vehicles to see if they have undergone the required preventative maintenance checks, pre-trip inspections (where the driver checks the vehicle prior to each trip) and semi-annual mechanical inspections. Their contracts with school bus operators contain vehicle age requirements.

##### School Bus Driver Credentials and Training

In general, a school bus driver requires a licence (class B or E) in addition to a G class driver's licence. A driver must have successfully completed a knowledge test, road test, vision test, criminal record check and the school bus driver improvement course, and submitted a medical report. Applicants also must not have accumulated more than six demerit points.

Licences for school bus drivers are renewed every five years. The renewal process requires drivers to complete a vision and knowledge test and submit a medical report. Drivers aged 46–64 must submit more frequent medical reports, every three years, and drivers 65 years and older must submit a medical report every year.

#### **Unable to Correlate the Impact of School Bus Driver Turnover with Safety**

We were told by transportation consortia, school bus operators and a union representing school bus drivers about their concerns over the increase in driver turnover over the years. These groups felt that driver continuity and familiarity with the route and the students on the bus is critical to student safety. We reviewed the turnover rates provided by all school bus operators servicing the three consortia we visited and noted that they ranged from 14% to 27% in 2013/14. We compared these rates to different indicators of safety at the consortia, such as accidents and incidents on the bus, and did not find a correlation. However, as noted in **Section 4.1.4**, information on incidents and collisions is not well tracked in general and may not be reliable for this potentially useful comparison.

#### **Some Bus Operators Use Buses That Are Older Than Their Contracts Require**

Maintenance costs and safety concerns increase as vehicles get older. In order to reduce the risk of using unsafe vehicles, the consortia we visited included requirements in their contracts with bus operators outlining the maximum age permitted for school vehicles used to transport students, as well as the vehicles' average age. We reviewed a number of contracts at the three consortia and noted that they usually stipulated a maximum age of 12 years and an average age of seven years for the bus type and per operator. Our review noted that most vehicles were under the maximum age, but at each consortium we identified operators using at least one type of vehicle that exceeded the average age requirement. Specifically, one-third of the operators at one consortium we visited and all the operators

at another consortium have at least one type of bus that exceeded the average age.

#### **Weaknesses in Operational Reviews of Bus Operators Conducted by Consortia**

We had a number of concerns with the annual operational reviews conducted by the three transportation consortia we visited. Overall, the consortia we visited selected a very small number of drivers and vehicles from each contracted school bus operator for annual review.

In evaluating driver competence, the consortia normally gave bus operators advance notice of all operational reviews, and one consortium let operators select which drivers' files were to be reviewed. Because these practices allow bus operators to prepare for their review, their performance on that day may not be typical of their usual practices. This raises doubts about the reliability of the reviews. The consortia also performed route audits to verify that bus drivers follow the planned route, stop at all assigned stops and perform their duties safely. However, they conducted these route audits infrequently, with one consortium conducting them only as a result of complaints it received. Auditing practices were also inconsistent, with one consortium's assessor riding on the bus so that the driver was aware of the audit. This consortium told us that it periodically used the GPS software on buses to verify drivers' compliance in following the established bus route and activating the vehicle's safety mechanisms (such as alternating lights and stop arms). However, the extent of this activity was not tracked.

When the operational reviews did uncover issues such as some drivers not having the required vulnerable sector screening checks, drivers' first aid training being out of date or driver abstracts (official Ontario driver performance records) missing from files, only one of the three consortia we visited regularly followed up to ensure that these were rectified. Another consortium followed up on only some issues. At the third consortium, poor documentation made it difficult to assess whether

problems had been appropriately rectified by the operator.

When it came to evaluating vehicle safety, only two consortia visually inspected the condition of buses as part of the operational review, in addition to checking maintenance and inspection records. The buses selected for inspection, however, might not have been representative of the buses actually in use. This is because the sample chosen was not based on the total population of buses, but rather on the vehicles that were present at the operator's premises at the time of the review.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

The transportation consortia in conjunction with school boards should:

- develop and conduct consistent and effective oversight processes for school bus operators to confirm their compliance with contract and legal requirements for driver competence and vehicle condition; and
- track the rate of bus driver turnover, along with accidents and incidents such as dropping students at the wrong stop, to help determine if there is a link between driver turnover and safety risks, and if action is needed.

## TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIA RESPONSE

All three consortia were in agreement with this recommendation. The consortia stated that successful implementation would best be achieved through the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Transportation subcommittee. This would allow for input and discussion by all consortia, and enable the development of uniform processes across the province for the effective oversight of school bus operators and for tracking the relationship between bus driver turnover and accidents and incidents.

## Ministry of Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has a number of roles in enforcing driver competence and vehicle safety. MTO issues licences to school bus drivers and is to enforce school bus operators' compliance with federal and provincial legislation and regulations for the safe operation of vehicles. It administers a safety monitoring and intervention program for commercial vehicle operators (including school bus operators) by assigning each a safety rating based on their record of traffic infractions, collisions, inspections, and the results of facility audits; and by monitoring these ratings. It undertakes facility audits at the offices of school bus operators to assess whether the operator has controls in place that ensure that:

- drivers are properly qualified and are complying with the maximum hours of driving requirements; and
- vehicles are in good condition.

To determine vehicle safety and compliance with legislation and highway safety standards, MTO conducts physical safety inspections of school buses and their drivers at various locations, including terminals where the vehicles are kept by bus operators. During facility audits at operators' offices, it checks documentation to determine whether vehicles are being properly maintained and have been formally inspected twice a year. As well, MTO investigates complaints regarding privately operated Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations, which certify school vehicles for mechanical fitness.

## Effectiveness of School Bus Driver Improvement Program Not Monitored

In 2008, the Ministry of Transportation implemented a new School Bus Driver Improvement Program as a requirement of obtaining a school bus driver's licence under the *Highway Traffic Act*. However, it was up to each school bus operator or third party that was approved to provide this course to develop and deliver the course in conformity with standards set by MTO. Although required to do so, the Ministry has not monitored the delivery of the course, nor has it reviewed the effectiveness



of the program to determine whether it has made an impact on safety in the industry. Since that time, our review of police at-fault collision statistics has indicated little or no improvement in bus driver performance. Consistently, for each year from 2008/09 to 2012/13, for collisions involving school vehicles, the police determined that the school bus driver was at fault in about 40% of cases. For the remaining collisions, either the bus driver was not at fault (54% of cases) or the cause of the collision could not be determined (6% of cases).

## RECOMMENDATION 2

To help promote good practices and safe driving by drivers of school vehicles, the Ministry of Transportation should monitor the delivery of the School Bus Driver Improvement Program and review its effectiveness.

### MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION RESPONSE

The Ministry is currently reviewing the auditing and oversight regime for all driver-training-related programs, including the School Bus Driver Improvement Program, and is establishing an audit framework to provide for its effective monitoring.

#### Improvements Needed to the Commercial Vehicle Operators' Registration (CVOR) Program

MTO's Commercial Vehicle Operators' Registration program, or CVOR, tracks the on-road performance of school buses and other buses and trucks. It assigns points for drivers' traffic violation convictions, collisions, results of vehicle inspections and audits by MTO at the operator's place of business. The points assigned are compared against distance travelled and fleet size to determine a school bus operator's safety rating. A poor rating may result in a warning letter from MTO, an audit on the operator's operations, an interview or removal of the operator's right to operate in Ontario. Our concerns with MTO's CVOR program as it affects school buses were as follows.

Safety ratings of school bus operators were not always up to date. We reviewed a number of safety violations and found that information provided by the courts (convictions) or the police (collision statistics) took a considerable time to appear in the rating. Half of the convictions took at least 83 days, and half of the collisions took at least 105 days to appear in the rating. We also found that when a traffic violation is challenged in court it is not entered into the operator's rating unless the person is convicted; sometimes it took more than 300 days from the date of the violation before it appeared in the rating. Similarly, we noted that in some cases it took about two years for an accident to appear in the rating. This is a concern, as operators' safety ratings take violations into account for only 24 months following the date they occur. Therefore, the time lag between the date the violation occurred and the date it is considered in the rating shortens the time the violation appears on the safety rating, and in turn could delay or prevent any needed intervention by MTO.

Because operators self-report the distances their buses are driven, there is a risk they can manipulate the numbers to obtain a more favourable safety rating. An operator's safety rating improves with the number of vehicles and kilometres driven. This information, however, is not verified by MTO. A 2013 consultant's study on the effectiveness of the CVOR program recommended that MTO consider implementing measures to verify the number of vehicles and kilometres travelled reported by operators.

CVOR safety ratings are of limited use to transportation consortia in helping them assess the safety record of locally contracted school bus operators. The rating consolidates safety information for all of an operator's locations and for all of its commercial vehicles of every type, including vehicles not used for transporting students. Numbers and types of violations can vary by location, as each location may be operated independently, and different types of vehicles have different levels of risk. The consortia we visited informed us that they

need better safety information on the school buses in their own locations.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

In order for the Commercial Vehicle Operators' Registration program (CVOR) to effectively track the on-road performance of school buses and trigger ministry intervention when school bus operators' ratings reach unacceptable levels, the Ministry of Transportation should:

- ensure that safety infractions are updated in the CVOR in a timely manner and that these are reflected in the operator's safety rating for the full 24 months from the time the infraction is input into the system;
- ensure that information in the CVOR is easy to interpret and provides safety information on local terminals of school bus operators; and
- consider ways to verify the accuracy of self-reported information on the number of vehicles in the operators' fleets and the number of kilometres driven.

#### MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with the Auditor General that the timely tracking of safety factors is an important tool for the provision of safe school vehicles.

The Ministry of Transportation's Carrier Safety Program is aligned with the National Safety Code Standards, a set of nationally agreed-upon standards covering a number of vehicle- and driver-related areas. The CVOR program is based on National Safety Code Standard 7 – Carrier Profile, which establishes the standards across Canada for convictions, collisions and Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance inspections as the elements to be monitored and measured on a carrier's profile. This standard mandates that the "offence date" of the infraction is the date on which an infraction should be

noted on the record. An offence cannot be noted on the record until there is a conviction. While the Ministry recognizes that use of the offence date can result in delays in getting the infraction on record, collisions are getting on record more quickly now that police services have access to the "e-collision" program. Please note, though, that any necessary further investigation undertaken before the collision is submitted could pose delays. Ontario will continue to raise the concern with data entry delays with its national safety partners to see if there is a willingness to review the National Safety Code Standard, including reflecting events in the CVOR rating for a full 24 months. Changing Ontario standards in isolation would result in a lack of alignment across provinces and states.

The Ministry is also currently modernizing its driver, vehicle and carrier information technology systems to streamline processes and meet demands for more efficient and accessible services. The new Registration and Licensing System of Ontario will include revisions to the layout and format of the CVOR abstract to make it easier to understand a carrier's safety performance record.

The suggestion to provide safety information by terminal is challenging, as safety ratings and facility audits are operator-based in alignment with National Safety Code Standards. Also, operators move vehicles among their terminals to meet operational needs. Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (or enforcement) inspections performed at local terminals are the only terminal-based information available. The Ministry of Transportation is committed to working with the Ministry of Education, School Boards and Transportation Consortia to improve information sharing in this regard.

The Ministry already verifies some self-reported information during facility audits, and is also looking at additional ways to verify the accuracy of self-reported information. For example, future revisions to our systems may

enable utilizing odometer readings captured as part of the required semi-annual inspection.

#### Few School Bus Operator Facilities Are Audited

The Ministry of Transportation does not audit or inspect all school bus operators' facilities on a regular basis. As noted earlier, facility audits at operators' offices examine safety management controls for both driver competence and vehicle safety. They include checks of records of preventive maintenance, pre-trip inspection of buses, drivers' logs, licences and training. Facility audits may be triggered when an operator's safety rating in the CVOR (described earlier) reaches a significant level—for example, because of collisions, convictions and violations found in vehicle inspections. They can also be done when complaints are received or if an operator volunteers for an audit to improve its safety record. Because the threshold for audits is set for all commercial vehicles, few school bus operators reach the threshold for audit. Therefore, even though MTO follows its policy in regard to facility audits, the policy is of limited usefulness in helping increase the safety of school transportation. In the past five years, MTO has conducted only 24 facility audits on 19 school bus operators.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

To help increase the safety of school transportation, the Ministry of Transportation should consider changing the threshold that triggers a facility audit for school bus operators.

#### MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION RESPONSE

The CVOR program is intended to take action with those operators identified at the highest risk of being or becoming unsafe. School bus operators are rarely subjected to a facility audit, as this is a very safe industry that doesn't often reach the predetermined threshold level to trigger a facility audit. However, the Ministry will do further analyses and establish an interven-

tion protocol specific to school bus operators based on the operator's safety performance.

#### Improvement Needed in Inspections of School Vehicles by the Ministry of Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation conducts safety inspections on all types of commercial vehicles on a regular basis, including the approximately 19,000 school vehicles with six or more seats that are used by school bus operators to transport students. Inspections may be known in advance or may be unannounced, and are conducted by MTO inspection officers, or sometimes by police officers with special training. A sample of school buses at each location used by an operator (referred to as a terminal) is chosen for inspection. In 2014, MTO officers inspected about 2,355 school vehicles. Our concerns with MTO's inspection process for school buses were as follows:

- **Inspections not timely.** We reviewed a number of school bus inspections and noted that more than 90% were not completed within the time frames stipulated by MTO's risk-based inspection approach. The average delay was almost three months, and the longest delay almost a year and a half.
- **Lack of evidence that required repairs were made.** During an inspection, when a violation or serious infraction (that is, a violation that takes the vehicle off the road) is noted, either the bus operator fixes it on the spot and the inspector verifies the fix and signs off on it, or the inspector issues a repair verification order that requires the operator to make the repair within 14 days and submit receipts to the inspector. However, in two-thirds of our sample of inspections with violations or serious infractions, there was no documented evidence that repairs had been made or that a repair verification order was issued as required.
- **Coverage of inspections incomplete.** We noted that over the past five years, MTO conducted 14,000 inspections on only 8,500 individual school vehicles—indicating that

many of these buses had been inspected multiple times over this period, some more than five times, while many had not been inspected at all. MTO inspectors generally inspected vehicles that were at the operator's terminal at the time, rather than selecting their sample from the total number of buses in the operator's fleet at that terminal. Also, MTO's policy requires that 40% of the sample of buses to be inspected should consist of newer buses (up to five years old) and 60% should consist of higher-risk older buses (more than five years old). Our review of a sample of inspections found that over 30% of inspections included more new buses than required and fewer older ones. For example, in one case where MTO was to inspect a sample of three new and five old buses, it actually inspected eight new buses.

#### The Ministry of Transportation's Bus Inspection Tracking System Not Complete or Accurate

Ministry of Transportation inspectors use the Bus Inspection Tracking System (system) to select operators' terminals (locations where buses are kept) for inspections of school vehicles. However, the information in the system is not always current. The system contains information on the location of terminals, the number of school vehicles by size, vehicles' last and next inspection date, and issues found during inspections at each terminal—but there is no mechanism for operators to inform MTO when terminals shut down and new ones open, the number of buses at a terminal changes, or a bus moves to a different terminal. Information in the system is updated only if the inspector becomes aware of changes during the year or after conducting an inspection. To illustrate:

- The number of school vehicles recorded in the system was less than the number of school vehicles contracted by transportation consortia. In the 2013/14 Ministry of Education (Ministry) survey, the consortia reported to the Ministry that they had contracted about 19,000 school vehicles from operators; the

system, however, lists only about 16,000. The number of school vehicles in the system should be much higher than the number contracted by consortia, because it should also include school vehicles used by private schools and other organizations.

- The system contained inaccurate information on the location of operator terminals. We requested information from a sample of operators on the number of terminals they operated and compared this information to what was in MTO's system. In nearly 50% of our sample, the information differed. Either the location of terminals was different or the terminal was not listed in the system. If the terminal was not listed in the system, it would likely not be inspected.

### RECOMMENDATION 5

To increase the effectiveness of its safety inspections of school buses at operators' terminals, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) should:

- update and maintain its Bus Inspection Tracking System with complete and accurate information on the location of operators' terminals and school vehicles at each terminal;
- have inspectors focus on school buses considered to be high risk and those that have not been inspected recently;
- complete safety inspections of school buses within the time frames stipulated by MTO's risk-based inspection approach; and
- obtain evidence that violations or infractions noted during school bus inspections are rectified in a timely manner by a school bus operator.

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The Ministry is currently modernizing its driver, vehicle and carrier information technology systems to streamline processes and meet demands for more efficient and accessible services. Future

revisions to the Registration and Licensing System of Ontario will enhance our ability to track and monitor the bus inspection program.

The Ministry acknowledges the Auditor General's concern and will undertake a review of its Bus Terminal Inspection protocol to ensure enforcement resources are targeting higher-risk school buses.

The Ministry of Transportation is also in discussions with the Ministry of Education, school boards and transportation consortia to determine how we can obtain more accurate information on the location of operators' terminals and school vehicles at each terminal.

The Ministry has taken steps to complete inspections that were overdue at the time of the audit. In light of the Auditor General's recommendations, the Ministry will also review its current policies and procedures and make any necessary changes to ensure they are effective and align with road safety objectives. It will also reaffirm expectations with field staff.

#### Limited Ministry of Transportation Oversight of Privately Operated Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations Responsible for Certifying the Safety of School Vehicles

The *Highway Traffic Act* requires school vehicles used for transporting six or more persons to have annual and semi-annual mechanical inspections at licensed privately operated Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations (MVISs). The Ministry of Transportation provides little oversight of MVISs to ensure that they conduct thorough inspections before certifying school vehicles. This oversight is especially important, since many school bus operators are licensed by MTO to have their own MVIS, which they can use to conduct the required inspections on their own fleet of vehicles. The Ministry investigates these stations only when complaints are made by the public or issues are noted by inspectors in the district offices. Over the last five years, only 12 stations where school bus operators were inspecting their own buses have been investigated. These investigations found some stations operating

without a licence, and questioned the effectiveness of the mechanical inspections performed at other stations.

We also found that MTO has very little assurance that all school vehicles are undergoing the required annual and semi-annual mechanical inspections. Following an inspection, there is no requirement for the MVISs to report to MTO.

### RECOMMENDATION 6

To ensure that Motor Vehicle Inspection Stations (MVISs) are conducting effective mechanical inspections, the Ministry of Transportation should:

- devise a strategy that enables it to conduct risk-based reviews of MVISs, especially those that are run by school bus operators licensed to inspect their own school vehicles; and
- require the MVIS to submit its results of annual and semi-annual inspections for tracking in situations where concerns are identified, as confirmation that its school vehicles have undergone the necessary mechanical inspection.

### MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees that improvements can be made to Ontario's MVIS program. The *Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, 2015*, includes enabling provisions that allow for changes to the program that are expected to considerably improve program standards through automated or electronic delivery of inspection certificates and enhanced monitoring and sanctioning capacity.

As the Ministry works to define the business requirements for the transformed MVIS program, consideration will be given to effectively tracking annual and semi-annual inspections.

### 4.1.2 Improvements in Information Sharing Are Needed

There is no protocol for information sharing between the Ministry of Transportation, school boards, transportation consortia and the Ministry of Education, nor does the Ministry of Education receive or request reports or specific information regarding school bus safety from these other participants. Sharing such information is needed to ensure that each participant is aware of any issues uncovered by the others regarding bus operators and the safety of their operations, so that appropriate action can be taken to improve the safety of student transportation services.

Within the education sector, we found that there is good collaboration and sharing of information and best practices among the management of different consortia, mainly through a subcommittee of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials. At times school board and Ministry of Education staff also attend these meetings. Also, consortium managers often conduct their own surveys as needed and share information on various issues, such as policies on bus cancellation due to inclement weather and transportation for special programs.

#### RECOMMENDATION 7

The Ministry of Transportation, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, school boards and transportation consortia, should develop a protocol to share information on the results of their inspections and audits of school bus operators and motor vehicle inspection stations, and collision information. This will help facilitate timely action to enforce the safety of school transportation services throughout the province.

#### MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION RESPONSE

The Ministry of Transportation recognizes that there are challenges to directly sharing all

inspection results, audits and other events with school boards and transportation consortia, since a single bus operator may serve multiple school boards or consortia and may also have vehicles unrelated to the transportation of children. Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Transportation is committed to working with the Ministry of Education, school boards and transportation consortia to improve information-sharing in this regard.

CVOR abstracts for all commercial vehicle operators, including school bus operators, that summarize a carrier's performance over a 24-month period are available to members of the public (including school boards and consortia) on the Ministry's website. A more detailed abstract is available only to carriers and contains details of the carrier's safety performance, with a chronological record of all events entered onto the carrier's record during the past five years. The new Registration and Licensing System of Ontario will include revisions to the layout and format of CVOR abstracts to make them easier to read and understand, and make it easier to assess a carrier's safety performance record.

The Ministry of Transportation encourages school boards and transportation consortia to request copies of these abstracts as part of their transportation contracts.

### 4.1.3 Student Safety

#### Consortia Set Their Own Safety Policies for Students and Bus Drivers

All three transportation consortia we visited provide their bus operators with their policies regarding the safe transport of students. These policies varied at each consortium and included things such as picking up students on the right side of the road and not having bus stops on high-traffic roads.

With regard to student behaviour on the buses, the three consortia have policies in place that delegate the responsibility of dealing with behavioural

issues to the principals of the schools they serve. They see the time students spend on a school bus as an extension of the school day. Bus drivers are to inform the principal of behavioural issues requiring the principal's attention, and it is then up to the principal to determine the appropriate course of action. In addition, only two of the consortia have a policy document, "Responsibilities of the Students," which outlines expectations of appropriate behaviour on the bus and warns that the privilege of being bused to school may be lost if a student acts in an unsafe or inappropriate manner. Only one consortium requires its schools to obtain a sign-off on this policy by the students and parents.

#### **Safety Information and Training for Students on School Buses Varies across the Province**

Each consortium decides whether or not it will offer school bus safety programs to its students, which programs it will offer and what information, if any, it will provide. The Ministry of Education has not mandated any training or information to be provided. We noted variations at the three consortia we visited, both in the information and programs offered to students and whether the programs were mandatory or voluntary. Specifically:

- Each consortium provided its own materials to schools to distribute to students on general bus safety (such as getting on and off the bus and how to behave on the bus) as well as information for parents of new riders on how to prepare them to ride the bus.
- Two consortia offered general school bus safety training for elementary students every year, although only one made it mandatory. In the consortium where it was up to individual schools to decide whether or not to take advantage of the training, only 12% of the students had taken school bus safety training.
- All three consortia offered a voluntary orientation program for new riders every year. Two of the three did not track the number of students that had taken the orientation; in the third consortium, only 30% of new riders had taken the orientation.

- School bus evacuation training conducted by the operator was mandatory every year in all three consortia. However, only one consortium received any assurance from the operator, listing schools and dates, that the training had actually taken place. The other two could not confirm to us when this training had taken place.

We noted in the responses to our survey that training offered to students and its uptake also varied in the other 30 consortia. Only 15 of the remaining 30 consortia had made general school bus safety training mandatory, and only five had mandatory orientation for new riders. Approximately half of the consortia where these training programs were voluntary tracked the uptake of the training. Uptake for general school bus safety training averaged about 60%, and orientation for new riders averaged about 45%.

#### **Protocol for Meeting Young Students at the Bus Stop Varies across the Province**

School boards and consortia have adopted a safety protocol that requires a parent or a designated adult to meet younger children at the bus stop after school. These young students have an identifier, usually on their backpack, and are to wait on the bus until their parent or other adult is located. In the consortia we visited and from a survey undertaken by the Ontario Association of School Business Officials, we found that the grades of students who must be met at the stop varied across the province, from kindergarten to Grade 3.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

To improve student transportation safety, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with school boards and transportation consortia, should:

- develop consistent safety policies for the safe transport of students and for dealing with behavioural issues on the bus;
- identify or develop mandatory training programs and standard information packages



for students on school bus safety, and ensure that this training is delivered consistently to all students across the province; and

- determine which grades should be met at the bus stop by an adult, and develop a standardized process for this across the province.

#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESPONSE

School boards are self-governing bodies and retain the right and responsibility to determine their own policies and procedures, including the development, approval and implementation of all transportation policies. The Ministry will, however, encourage and support the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Transportation subcommittee to address these issues at a provincial level.

### 4.1.4 Incidents and Collisions

The Ministry of Education (Ministry) funds student transportation through the school boards and summarizes the results of its annual student transportation survey from the information provided by the consortia. However, the Ministry takes a mostly hands-off approach when it comes to safety. For example, the Ministry has not set any guidelines on the reporting of collisions and incidents among the consortia to enable analysis of their causes, and to identify and compare best practices in order for this information to be used in developing strategies to prevent future collisions and incidents. The result is inconsistent tracking and analysis of collisions and incidents, and gaps in information by the consortia.

#### Consortia Need to Better Track and Analyze Collision Data

The three consortia we visited required their contracted bus operators to report to them on all collisions involving school vehicles. However, only two of the consortia tracked and analyzed this information to identify trends such as the cause of accidents or operators with a high number of accidents. Only one consortium used this information

to improve the safety of its contracted services, such as requiring contractors to provide specific training for drivers or making changes to existing routes.

Collision reporting also varied in the remaining 30 consortia. In our survey, we asked these consortia to provide us with the number of collisions involving school vehicles within their jurisdictions for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years and to specify those that resulted in a student fatality or injury, or in damage to property. Only 50% were able to provide us with more fulsome information for both school years.

#### Incidents Involving School Vehicles Are Not Tracked and Analyzed Consistently across the Province

The tracking of incidents is not consistent among the consortia. These include such occurrences as buses breaking down, not arriving at stops on time or dropping students off at the wrong stop, or student injuries on buses and student behaviour issues such as fighting (see **Appendix**).

We asked all 33 consortia for the number of such incidents involving school vehicles for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years. Three consortia were unable to provide us with statistics on any incidents, and a number of others were only able to provide us with statistics on late vehicles or mechanical breakdowns, stating that other incidents were not tracked. Only four of the 33 consortia that we either surveyed or visited were able to provide us with statistics on all the categories of incidents that we requested for both school years. **Figure 7** is a summary of the incidents that were recorded and reported to us for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years by the three consortia we visited and the 30 we surveyed that tracked such information.

### RECOMMENDATION 9

The Ministry of Education should set formal guidelines on the reporting of school vehicle collisions and incidents among the transportation consortia to enable comparison and analysis of their causes and facilitate the identification of issues and best practices of consortia for the

**Figure 7: Incidents on School Vehicles Broken Down by Type, 2012/13 and 2013/14**

Source of data: Survey of transportation consortia conducted by the Office of the Auditor General

Type of Incident	2012/13		2013/14	
	Number Reported*	% of Consortia that Provided Incidents Data	Number Reported*	% of Consortia that Provided Incidents Data
Student dropped off at wrong stop	44	30	43	42
Student not met by parent or guardian	294	39	2,883	61
Student lost	19	36	29	45
Bus late	27,203	58	44,771	70
Mechanical breakdown	5,141	48	8,085	70
Fights/bad behaviour	965	33	1,214	52
Other (eg., student injuries, medical emergency, boarded wrong bus, bullying)	976	30	866	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,642</b>		<b>57,891</b>	

\* The number reported is for only the consortia that provided incidents information to us. Appendix 1 identifies which consortia reported that they tracked incidents, and the types of incidents they tracked.

purpose of developing strategies to mitigate these in the future.

#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees to work with school boards and transportation consortia to develop standardized definitions, and expand the collection of school-vehicle collisions and incidents information through the annual student transportation survey.

## 4.2 Eligibility for Busing Varies Significantly across the Province

Each school board can make its own decisions about the transportation services it will provide and about which students are eligible for busing. This leads to significant differences in the level of transportation services provided and creates unequal access for students. Across the province, about 40% of students use school transportation. However, among school boards the percentage varies significantly, from 10% to 87%. While a significant portion of this disparity may be due to differences in geography, student population density and the availability of public transit, differing eligibility

**Figure 8: Range in Distances Between Home and School Set by Ontario School Boards for Students to be Eligible for School Transportation, 2013/2014**

Source of data: Ministry of Education, Student Transportation Survey for 2013/14

Grade	Distance (km)		
	Minimum	Maximum	Median
JK	0	1.6	0.8
SK	0	1.6	0.8
1	0.8	1.6	1.2
2	0.8	2.4	1.2
3	0.8	2.4	1.2
4	1.0	2.4	1.6
5	1.0	2.4	1.6
6	1.0	3.2	1.6
7	1.0	3.2	1.6
8	1.0	3.5	1.6
9-12	1.6	4.8	3.2

criteria for busing among boards also contribute to this variation.

Figure 8 shows that eligibility criteria, based on home-to-school walking distances, vary significantly by grade in school boards across the province. We noted that eligibility criteria for busing varied among consortia, among school boards in the same consortium and sometimes among schools

within the same school board. To illustrate, in the 2013/14 school year, 36% of consortia had school boards with different eligibility criteria, and 15% of school boards had schools with different eligibility criteria. In addition, we noted that three school boards in the province did not provide any bus transportation to their secondary students (Grades 9 to 12), except for students with special needs. Included in this group was one of the school boards we visited, which told us its policy was due to a lack of funding.

We were also informed by the boards we visited that public and Catholic boards serving the same area tend to compete for students in order to increase the per pupil funding they receive from the Ministry of Education, and busing is one of the means that the boards use to attract students.

We researched other jurisdictions in Canada and found that four provinces had standardized their eligibility criteria. Manitoba sets the walking distance for eligibility at 1.6 kilometres, Alberta and New Brunswick set it at 2.4 kilometres, and Nova Scotia sets it at 3.6 kilometres for students in all grades.

### RECOMMENDATION 10

The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with school boards, should set standards on eligibility for transportation services, especially home-to-school walking distances for students, to promote greater consistency in transportation services across school boards within the province.

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESPONSE

The Ministry will explore the impacts of this recommendation on funding at a provincial level and take the recommendation into consideration accordingly.

## 4.3 Funding Formula Needs Updating

### 4.3.1 Funding for Transportation Services Is Not Based on Need

Funding for school transportation in each board is not based on need, such as how dispersed students and schools are, and the number of students with special needs. Instead, it is based on a historical amount—each board's 1997 spending level with some annual adjustments for enrolment and inflation, and other minor adjustments (such as for fuel costs and safety initiatives). Generally, a school board is informed of its funding and then sets priorities and makes decisions about transportation service to be provided accordingly. We noted the following concerns with respect to the province's current method of funding school transportation services:

- Transportation grants to school boards do not have to be spent on transportation. There are no minimum eligibility or service requirements designed to provide a basic or core level of service, and boards can determine which services they want to provide and spend their funding on. We found that school boards were spending close to, or even more than, the grant received on transportation services, but making choices that have resulted in significant differences in service levels across the province. For example, at one consortium we visited, we noted that a school board had recently decreased its walking distance for service eligibility for specific grades because it had excess funding. At another consortium, one school board began offering transportation services to its French Immersion students when it had a surplus of funds, while another board within the same consortium did not provide these services.
- There is a risk that the Ministry is funding deficits for transportation services resulting from some boards' overly generous eligibility policies. Since 2006, the Ministry has

contracted with a consulting firm to conduct effectiveness and efficiency reviews of school transportation services. Depending on a consortium's overall rating (high, moderate-high, moderate, moderate-low, low), the Ministry would fund all, part or none of the transportation services deficit of a board within the consortium. Specifically, if the overall rating for a consortium is "moderate" or above, the Ministry will cover 60–100% of any shortfall in funding. Below a "moderate" rating the Ministry will not cover any of the shortfall. At the time of our audit, 25 of the 33 consortia had a rating of "moderate" or above. Deficits totalling over \$40 million have been funded since the reviews were initiated. Without province-wide ministry guidelines on student eligibility, the deficit funded by the Ministry could be the result of a board's overly generous eligibility policies—which the review does not consider.

- Not all factors that significantly influence a school board's transportation costs are reflected in the Ministry's funding formula. Although some of the adjustments to the funding model over the years have been due to increases in enrolment, this is not the primary factor influencing a board's transportation costs or needs. We were informed by the consortia we visited that decreasing enrolment can actually increase transportation costs, because if a school closes, students must be transported farther to attend the next closest school. More important influences on transportation needs that are not taken into account in the Ministry's current funding formula are local factors such as enrolment density, geography, the availability of public transit, the number of students with special needs, and hazards such as busy streets or highways.
- Over the last 10 years, the Ministry of Education has provided targeted funding for specific initiatives such as safety programs and wage

enhancements for school bus drivers, but has not verified that the funds were spent for the intended purpose. The Ministry told us that it communicated its expectation to school boards on how these funds were to be used, but it does not have any reporting mechanisms with school boards to verify that the funds were actually spent as intended.

In 2004, the Ministry began testing a new funding formula based on need that would have resulted in some boards receiving less and others more. However, due to significant pushback, especially from the boards that expected to get less, the Ministry abandoned the new funding model and continued with the status quo.

#### 4.3.2 Savings from Forming Consortia Have Not Been Measured

School boards formed consortia to deliver transportation services as part of the reforms the Ministry introduced in the 2006/07 school year. Although these reforms were aimed at achieving cost efficiencies and savings, the Ministry did not set any benchmarks with regard to the efficiencies or savings school boards should achieve. It has not undertaken an analysis since the consortia began operating. Only one of the three consortia we visited had tracked whether there was a change in the number of buses its boards use; and in this case there was a decrease. None of the consortia we visited had information on its boards' transportation costs before the consortium's formation to determine whether any savings were achieved. However, from 2006/07 to 2013/14, both the funding provided and school board expenditures on transportation have increased by about 4% after being adjusted for inflation, while the number of students transported has remained stable.

#### RECOMMENDATION 11

After implementing standardized eligibility criteria, we recommend that the Ministry of Education (Ministry) should:

- revisit its current funding formula. The formula needs to reflect school boards' local transportation needs based on the number of eligible riders and consortia utilization of buses, and taking into consideration factors such as geography, availability of public transit and the number of students needing transportation services (due to distance, special needs, special programs or road hazards); and
- implement an updated funding formula ensuring that any targeted funding for specific initiatives is spent for the purposes intended.

The Ministry will continue to examine the current funding formula in relation to the changing local transportation needs of school boards. The Ministry has been implementing student transportation reforms (for example, creation of consortia, and effectiveness and efficiency reviews) to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of transportation service delivery. Through the effectiveness and efficiency reviews, appropriate adjustments have been made to transportation funding.

## 4.4 Opportunities Exist for Efficiency Gains

Based on the results of the Ministry of Education's 2013/14 student transportation survey, the average cost to transport a student without special needs was \$740, with a range between boards of \$365 to \$1,680. The average cost to transport a special needs student was \$4,650, with a range between boards of \$1,045 to \$11,205. A significant portion of this disparity could be due to differences in geography, student population density and other local factors or differences in eligibility criteria. However, the Ministry has not followed up with the boards to determine if such significant variances

in costs per student are due to these reasons or to inefficiencies in providing transportation services.

There are several initiatives that consortia could undertake to further maximize the occupancy on vehicle runs in order to reduce costs. These include collecting and using accurate student information and information on actual ridership to plan services; fully utilizing route planning software; staggering bell times; sharing routes between boards; and instituting common days off between boards. Our audit noted that these initiatives have been implemented to varying degrees in the consortia that we visited, but more opportunities may exist. The following subsections discuss this in greater detail.

### 4.4.1 The Right Information Is Not Always Used in Planning Student Transportation Services

Consortia usually determine the number of buses needed using the number of students who are eligible for transportation rather than the actual number of students riding the buses. Many students may be eligible for busing but for one reason or another may not be using the service on a regular basis. For example, at one consortium where the drivers performed a head count of riders for three consecutive days, only about 70% of the students that it had planned would use school transportation were actually using the service. Often, parents of eligible students do not inform the consortia that they do not need school transportation, either because they do not know they should notify the consortia or because they want to keep a place open in case they need it periodically.

Two of the three consortia we visited did not have good procedures to identify the actual number of eligible students who were riding the buses. However, the third consortium undertook a rigorous process over the summer months to identify which eligible students required transportation services. This consortium used radio ads, pamphlets and robocalls to inform parents that they needed to notify the consortium by late summer whether they

planned to use school bus services. In cases where the parents failed to contact the consortium and the consortium was unable to contact the parents, the child would be removed from the bus service for the first two weeks of school, and then indefinitely. This consortium was able to confirm with the majority of its eligible students whether or not they needed the service, and it planned the busing accordingly. It also required students to use the bus a minimum two days per week. We found that about 90% of the students whom this consortium had made arrangements to transport were actually using the service.

Also, all three consortia we visited were to varying degrees not utilizing the most up-to-date information on students (such as students changing addresses, changing schools or leaving the board) when arranging busing services. For example, when one consortium compared its information on students twice during the year to information the boards had, it found that about 400 students for whom it had arranged busing in the 2014/15 school year did not need the service because they had moved, changed schools or left the board completely.

#### **4.4.2 Route Planning Software Is Not Consistently Used by Consortia**

According to the survey we conducted, 40% of the consortia were not using the route optimization function in the route planning software. The route optimization function can serve as a useful starting point in mapping the most efficient routes, even though the suggested routes may have to be manually adjusted based on knowledge of the local area (for example, construction or traffic volume).

At the consortia we visited, we found that the route optimization function in the software was not being used for special needs students. One of the three consortia we visited used the function annually to assist in optimizing all of its routes for non-special needs students, and one used it for only some routes. The third consortium did not use the function for route planning purposes, but used it

every four years to determine cost sharing between boards. For the most part, this consortium carried forward its routes from year to year until it became aware of problems (such as overcrowding on buses and unneeded stops) from either the driver or the school.

#### **4.4.3 More Sharing of Buses Is Required**

Boards within some consortia are sharing buses but improvement is needed. In our 2000 audit of pupil transportation grants we recommended that school boards serving the same area integrate their transportation services. We noted that, although buses are being shared to a certain extent, students from different boards seldom ride together on the same bus. Based on the ministry survey results for 2013/14, 36% of consortia reported that their boards were sharing buses for at least half of the routes. However, only 18% of consortia indicated that students from different boards rode together on the bus for at least half the trips the buses made.

We also noted that the French boards operating in the same area were not part of two of the three consortia we visited. The third consortium served all the boards in its area. A recent study commissioned by the Ministry indicated that \$1.7 million could be saved annually by having a French board join an existing consortium.

#### **4.4.4 School Start and End Times Are Not Always Staggered**

School start and end times are not always staggered to let buses make more than one trip in both mornings and afternoons. By staggering school start and end times, consortia can reduce the number of buses needed. One consortium we visited increased the efficiency of its service by deciding the start times for schools in its area, while another regularly suggested start and end times that were normally accepted by the schools. However, in the area served by the third consortium, the school boards decided their start and end times; nearly 70% of

the schools' start times and almost 60% of the end times were bunched within 30 minutes, significantly limiting the consortium's ability to have the same buses make multiple trips.

#### 4.4.5 School Boards Are Not Fully Co-ordinating Common Days Off

A fairly simple way to reduce the need for school transportation is for boards within a consortium to co-ordinate professional activity days and school holidays, and to also have common school year start and end dates. In response to our survey, 40% of the consortia indicated that boards within their area had common days off at the elementary and secondary school level. Similarly, the school boards within two of the consortia we visited were not co-ordinating all their days off for elementary schools and secondary schools, while the third consortium had fully co-ordinated days off. For the consortia where the days off were not coordinated, one consortia estimated savings of \$525,000 for three days that were not co-ordinated between its school boards, while the other could not estimate the savings. We estimated the savings could be up to \$370,000 per day, which represents the consortia's daily operating costs for student transportation.

#### 4.4.6 Bus Utilization Rates Are Not Being Captured

Both the seating capacity and the utilization rate (number of students riding as a percentage of seating capacity) of buses are determined differently by consortia, as there is no provincial standard for either one. Although the Ministry does not collect information on the utilization rates of buses across the province, we requested this information as part of our survey and noted that the rates reported by consortia ranged from 50% to 230%.

These statistics are not reliable, primarily for three reasons. First, as noted earlier, consortia generally did not have very good information on the actual number of students riding their buses.

Second, seating capacity depends on the age and size of students who will be on the bus. Because each consortium sets its own capacity, we noted variations at the consortia visited (for example, one consortium assigned a maximum of 46 secondary students to a large bus while another assigned 55). And third, consortia used different methods to calculate the utilization rate, comparing either the average number of students transported for each trip or the total number of students transported for all trips to the seating capacity.

The lack of any provincial guidelines or reporting of bus utilization rates makes it difficult to compare consortia across the province, in order to see where improvements are needed and to link utilization to the funding for student transportation.

#### 4.4.7 Consortia Are Contracting for More School Bus Service Than Actually Needed

The consortia we visited negotiated different payment structures in their bus contracts. One consortium's payment structure was based on the amount of time buses were used; the other two based theirs on a combination of time and kilometres travelled.

We reviewed the actual use of the buses at the three consortia and found that although one had negotiated a base rate strictly based on time (three hours a day), all of its large buses, which comprised about a quarter of the consortium's fleet, were being used for less than the contracted hours. In fact, it used about two-thirds of its larger buses for two hours or less each day. Similarly, another consortium was contracting buses based on time and distance travelled, and one-third of its buses were significantly underutilized based on the contracted hours. If these consortia contracted fewer buses and used them on additional runs they could save money.

### RECOMMENDATION 12

In order to increase the efficiency of school transportation services and in turn decrease costs, transportation consortia should:

- track and monitor utilization by using the most relevant and accurate information available in planning student transportation services, including actual ridership;
- evaluate the benefits of parents of students who are eligible to use school board–provided transportation services being required to opt in or out of using transportation services;
- use route optimization software where feasible as a starting point in mapping the most efficient routes to transport students;
- increase sharing of school buses among boards and transporting students from different boards on the same bus;
- stagger school start and end times where possible to reduce the number of buses needed, by allowing them to be used on more than one run;
- reduce the need for transportation services by co-ordinating common days off; and
- only contract for services that are required.

#### TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIA RESPONSE

All three consortia were in agreement with this recommendation. The consortia stated that successful implementation would best be achieved through the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Transportation subcommittee. This would allow for input and discussion by all consortia to identify best practices in delivering transportation services more efficiently (such as, increased sharing of school buses between boards and students from different boards, co-ordinating common days off, utilizing route optimization software more fully, staggering school start and end times, contracting only for services needed based on actual ridership) and enable the development of uniform processes and practices across the province.

#### RECOMMENDATION 13

The Ministry of Education should set standards for the optimal utilization of school vehicles for school boards and transportation consortia, and provide guidance to them in calculating utilization rates.

#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESPONSE

The Ministry will encourage and support the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Transportation subcommittee to address this issue at a provincial level, taking into consideration that the utilization of school vehicles and determination of an acceptable range of utilization rates must recognize the diversity of school boards across the province.

#### 4.4.8 Better Co-ordination and Integration of Student Transportation Services Needed

From our audit work, we noted that the ability of a consortium to efficiently and effectively manage transportation services depends on the level of authority delegated to it by the school boards it serves, and the willingness of school boards to work co-operatively and integrate services and policies to serve the common interests of all the boards in the consortium (such as harmonizing eligibility criteria, sharing bus routes and having common days off)—as opposed to the particular interests of the individual boards. Specifically, consortia with the authority to establish eligibility criteria and employ efficiency measures uniformly across their entire service area were more likely to employ best practices to their fullest potential.

The Ministry of Education has also recognized this, and in its effectiveness and efficiency reviews provides higher ratings to a consortium that has, for example, a well-defined governance and organizational structure with clear roles and responsibilities, and an oversight committee that focuses only on high-level decisions. This structure helps ensure that a consortium's mandate remains consistent



despite changes in board members and trustees. The Ministry does not specify a governance and organizational structure. However, the consortia that receive high ratings in their effectiveness and efficiency reviews are normally incorporated as separate legal entities (although three unincorporated consortia have also received a high overall rating).

Two of the consortia we visited each operated as a cohesive unit that made decisions for the good of the consortium and all the boards it serves, while the third consortium generally operated in a manner that looked at the best interests of each board individually. A 2011 effectiveness and efficiency review commissioned by the Ministry stated that the member boards of this third consortium continued to maintain involvement in student transportation services to the extent that each board still set its own transportation policies and managed parents' and principals' requests for exceptions to policies. We noted that these practices still existed at the time of our audit. Furthermore, eligibility criteria were not harmonized between the boards it served and many inefficient practices previously noted in this section were present to a greater degree. The review went on to note that for the governance committee to play a meaningful role in the oversight of the consortium, it needed to have an appropriate delegation of authority from member boards, and that the boards and consortium should further define their roles and delegated authority.

#### RECOMMENDATION 14

The Ministry of Education should clarify the roles and responsibilities of school boards and consortia in setting eligibility and employing efficiency measures.

#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESPONSE

The Ministry has actively reinforced and encouraged best business practices since 2006 through the effectiveness and efficiency reviews. School boards are self-governing bodies and are responsible for making their own decisions.

## 4.5 Procurement of Student Transportation Services Needs Improvement

### 4.5.1 Only Half of Consortia Acquired Student Transportation Services through a Competitive Procurement Process

The *Broader Public Sector (BPS) Accountability Act, 2010* and its related directive require all broader public sector organizations receiving \$10 million or more in government funding to use competitive procurement for contracts greater than \$100,000. Given the level of funding they receive for student transportation, all school boards are subject to this requirement. The effectiveness and efficiency reviews commissioned by the Ministry of Education also previously identified the need for all school boards to transition to a competitive procurement process for transportation services.

In April 2011 the government issued the BPS procurement directive, which required broader public sector entities to acquire publicly funded goods and services through a competitive process that is fair, open and transparent. At the time the directive was issued, about 30% of consortia were competitively procuring their school bus transportation services, while about 70% were acquiring these services by negotiating prices with their existing bus operators. Many of the operators that were negotiating prices were strongly opposed to participating in a competitive procurement process, and in response the government gave school boards a six-month voluntary exemption (until December 31, 2011) from competitive procurement for transportation services. At the same time, the Ministry of Education launched a task force (composed of representatives from the Ministry, school boards, transportation consortia and bus associations, as well as a procurement adviser) whose mandate was to review processes used to procure student transportation, paying specific attention to their openness, fairness, accountability and value for money. The task force did not deliver on its mandate, and in March 2012 the Ministry instructed all school

boards to move forward with competitive procurement. Several operators, concerned with the impact that competitive procurement would have on their business, decided to take the school boards and the Ministry to court. At the time of our audit, these court challenges were still pending. By 2013/14 only about 50% of the transportation consortia in the province had competitively procured the transportation services they were using at that time.

In October 2014, the Education Minister announced an independent review to explore options other than requests for proposals (RFPs) for competitive procurement of student transportation services that would still be in compliance with the BPS procurement directive. At the time of our audit, the review had been completed but a report had not yet been finalized and issued.

#### 4.5.2 Evaluation of Contractors Is Not Consistent among Consortia

Two of the three consortia we visited followed a competitive procurement process in 2009 and 2013, respectively, for acquiring current student transportation services from school bus operators. The third consortium last selected its operators competitively in 2006, and since August 2014 has been granting them one-year extensions while awaiting the outcome of the cases before the courts.

We reviewed the latest RFP issued by each of the three consortia to acquire transportation services, and noted that two of the three consortia weighted qualitative criteria (several of which pertain to safety) at 65% and criteria related to price at 35%. One of these two consortia required a minimum score on quality to move on to the pricing stage. This weighting of quality against price is in line with information we received from the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Supply Chain Ontario, which informed us that the split between quality and price scoring for the acquisition of services is generally about 60%–70% for the quality component and 30%–40% for pricing.

The third consortium reviewed qualitative factors, but based the selection of its bus operators on price alone, allowing all bidders who submitted complete proposals to progress to the price comparison stage irrespective of their qualitative scores. We noted that two bidders with the lowest qualitative scores, who were providing services to the consortium at the time of the competition, were awarded new contracts even though two other bidders had considerably higher qualitative scores.

The qualitative criteria used to evaluate proposals differed in all three RFPs. For example, in the area of student safety programs, one consortium allocated points for having general safety programs in place; another allocated points for having evacuation training programs; while the third did not allocate any points for student safety. We grouped like criteria based on the key factors for transporting students safely and identified the weightings assigned by each of the consortia, as shown in **Figure 9**. We would have expected all three consortia to allocate high marks to the criteria related to safety—such as driver training, the operators' CVOR and accident history, fleet maintenance and management, and student safety programs offered. However, the weighting of these criteria varied significantly among the three consortia that we visited, ranging from a high of 65% to a low of 26% of the total qualitative score.

In December 2008, the Ministry of Education released a resource package including procurement guidelines, an RFP template for the procurement of bus operators and a contract template, but made its use by the boards optional. The RFP template suggested criteria for evaluating the operators on the quality of their services. Many of these qualitative criteria spoke to safety, and the template also included suggested weightings for the criteria. However, the template did not indicate what portion of the score should be assigned to quality as opposed to price, nor did it recommend a minimum score for qualitative criteria that successful competitors had to attain.

Figure 9: Weighting of the Qualitative Criteria (Safety and Other) Used to Evaluate School Bus Operator Proposals

Source of data: Consortium Request-for-proposals submissions

	% Assigned for Qualitative Criteria		
	Consortium 1	Consortium 2	Consortium 3
Driver education, safety and retention	5	25	20
Accident and CVOR history	5	15	5
Fleet maintenance and management	11	10	30
Student safety programs	5	0	10
<b>Subtotal 1—Safety</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>65</b>
Administration	21	45	30
Other	53	5	5
<b>Subtotal 2—Other</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### RECOMMENDATION 15

The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the school boards and transportation consortia, should develop standard criteria for evaluating the submissions of school bus operators in procuring student transportation services. The criteria should appropriately consider the operators' ability to safely transport students.

#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESPONSE

Student safety is our priority. The Ministry agrees to support school boards and consortia in reviewing this recommendation.

## Appendix—Types of Incidents Tracked by Transportation Consortia, 2012/13 and 2013/14

Source of data: Survey of transportation consortia conducted by the Office of the Auditor General except where otherwise indicated

Consortium	Student Dropped Off at Wrong Stop		Student Not Met by Parent		Student Lost		Bus Late		Mechanical Breakdown		Fights/Bad Behaviour		Other (e.g., Student Injuries, Med. Emergency, Boarded Wrong Bus, Bullying)	
	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14
1 Algoma & Huron-Superior Transportation Services									✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services											✓	✓	✓	✓
3 Consortium de transport scolaire de l'Est														
4 Consortium de transport scolaire d'Ottawa					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 Durham Student Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 East of Thunder Bay Transportation Consortium	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 Halton Student Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9 Huron-Perth Student Transportation Services	✓	✓			✓	✓							✓	✓
10 Niagara Student Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11 Nipissing-Parry Sound Student Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 North East Tri-Board Student Transportation														
13 Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14 Ottawa Student Transportation Authority														
15 Rainy River District Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium			✓	✓										

Consortium	Student Dropped Off at Wrong Stop		Student Not Met by Parent		Student Lost		Bus Late		Mechanical Breakdown		Fights/Bad Behaviour		Other (e.g., Student Injuries, Med. Emergency, Boarded Wrong Bus, Bullying)	
	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14
17 Service de transport Francobus							✓	✓	✓	✓				
18 Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
19 Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services			✓	✓										
20 Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario			✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	
21 Student Transportation of Peel Region*					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
22 Student Transportation Service Consortium of Grey Bruce							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
23 Student Transportation Services of Brant Haldimand Norfolk							✓	✓						
24 Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
25 Student Transportation Services of Thunder Bay	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
26 Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region Inc.			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
27 Student Transportation Services of York Region	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
28 Sudbury Student Services Consortium*			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
29 Toronto Transportation Group*			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
30 Tri-Board Student Transportation Services							✓	✓	✓	✓				
31 Trillium Lakelands District School Board							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
32 Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
33 Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Total # of consortia reporting they tracked the incident type</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>% of total consortia</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>

\* Data obtained from visits to the consortium.

## Appendix 5

### **Sample role for a Municipal Education Liaison Person and sample mandate of a Municipal Education Committee**

#### **Municipal Education Liaison Person**

Purpose of the Role: to allocate human resources to build database information for effective advocacy of municipal council on educational matters with local school boards; to act as a municipal liaison person with students, parents, residents, businesses, service groups, council committees and school boards in receiving feedback and coordinating consultation and meetings.

Candidate profile: a fluently bilingual person familiar with the education sector and knowledge of school board practices and policy; attention to detail, collaborative, resourceful, excellent communication skills

#### Sample job description

- work in tandem with the Social Development Council of Cornwall in establishing a Youth Advisory Committee for Cornwall and one for SDG County
- take proactive steps to schedule consultation meetings with all four school boards in the fall and spring of each year to present database information
- recruit potential candidates to run as trustees as part of the Education Committee's mandate and build a succession plan;
- invite student trustees to these meetings
- Increase student engagement in municipal education initiatives and opportunities (tourism, information technology, surveys, conservation, volunteering, hosting)
- Increase child care capacity at every school and identify unused space for education professionals to offer services (speech language pathology, occupational therapy, ABA therapy for students with autism)
- Work with economic development staff to attract more professional practices and education related professionals to SDG communities (occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech language therapists, doctors, dentists, orthodontists, optometrists, tutoring services, autism therapy service providers, child care providers) and for use of space in elementary schools
- Attend meetings of each school board and review meeting minutes to keep municipal committees apprised of school board initiatives and pending changes/decisions/consultations
- Organize delegations to school board meetings
- Keep residents and parents informed of school board decisions of importance
- Support the work of the Education Committee
- Solicit businesses to offer students with co-op opportunities
- work with volunteers and service groups to enhance educational opportunities
- create new educational opportunities (video projects celebrating rural schools)
- help promote and recruit families to host international students

## **Municipal Education Committee**

Purpose of the Committee: Since trustees are inaccessible to parents, municipal councillors have to become the lead representatives of the parent voice before school boards as elected officials reflecting the needs of their constituents; as a progressive municipal government become a precedent setting example of municipal commitment to local education issues.

### Sample action items the Committee would undertake:

- Engage in active advocacy (writing submissions to school boards), delegations to meetings to reverse 2016 school closing decisions, bell time changes etc.
  - Demand that each school board strike a Rural Education Task Force as a multi-board endeavour modelled on the work of the Thames Valley DSB task force working with the Community Schools Alliance (CSA); the rural task force works within school boards and the Education committee works as an external task force in the community)
  - Align and share advocacy efforts with the CSA regarding political advocacy with the Ministry of Education
  - Place evidence of the work of the committee online and publish submissions to school boards for parents and the public to view
  - Allow parents, students and residents participation on the Committee
  - Review data being collected in the advocacy database by the Education Liaison person
  - Hire a part-time Education Liaison person to SDG Council until the position evolves to fulltime based on possible other funding sources to support the position s
  - Draft policies to support educational and learning initiatives within the counties
  - Draft policies for school boards to review
  - Help draft the Rural Education Strategy with CSA to present to the Ministry of Education
  - Schedule two meetings per year with school board planning staff (October and March prior to reporting deadlines for school boards to the Ministry of Education (October 31 & March 31)
  - Create /support a youth advisory committee or council for Cornwall and one for the counties of SDG where participant students have voting rights
  - Build on the assumption that communities have the expertise to inform the Ministry and not accept centralized decision- making regarding school closures
  - Consider an associate membership to Canadian Parents for French Ontario
- 
- Draft a municipal advocacy plan for education and improving rural schools
  - Provide Impact Assessments of closing schools in communities (repurposed St. Bernard School in Finch village by the South Nation Conservation Authority
  - Review school closures in every generation of parents (2006,2009) (2016-17)
  - Model duty of care and service to the community as publicly elected officials with transparent communication and publication of initiatives
  - Demand that the Ministry of Education conduct bias reviews in education
  - Liaise with the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario and Office of the Ombudsman
-

**Date of Issue:** April 22, 2013**Effective:** Until revoked or modified**Subject:** DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EQUITY AND  
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS**Application:** Directors of Education  
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities  
Superintendents  
Principals of Elementary Schools  
Principals of Secondary Schools  
Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools**Reference:** This memorandum replaces Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools”, June 24, 2009.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ontario’s publicly funded education system supports and reflects the democratic values of fairness, equity, and respect for all. Recognizing the importance of education, the Ontario government has established three core priorities:

- high levels of student achievement
- reduced gaps in student achievement
- increased public confidence in publicly funded education

An equitable, inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving these core priorities, and is recognized internationally as critical to delivering a high-quality education for all learners. “Equity and excellence go hand in hand. ... In a truly equitable system, factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic status do not prevent students from achieving ambitious outcomes. Our experience shows that barriers can be removed when all education partners create the conditions needed for success.”<sup>1</sup>

Providing a high-quality education for all is a key means of fostering social cohesion based on an inclusive society where diversity is affirmed within a framework of common values that promote the well-being of all citizens. Ontarians share a belief in the need to develop students’ character and to prepare students for their role in society as engaged, productive, and responsible citizens. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

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1. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2008), p. 8.



On April 6, 2009, the Minister of Education released *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (hereafter referred to as “the strategy”). This document sets out a vision for an equitable and inclusive education system. The action plan contained in the document focuses on respecting diversity, promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' learning, growth, and contribution to society. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards<sup>2</sup> on the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies to support student achievement and well-being. Our schools need to help students develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, and caring citizens who can contribute to both a strong economy and a cohesive society.

## BACKGROUND

The ministry has issued several policy/program memoranda to support equity, student achievement, and positive school climates, including Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119, “Development and Implementation of School Board Policies on Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity”, July 13, 1993.<sup>3</sup> When No. 119 (1993) was issued, many boards focused on creating learning environments that respected the cultures of all students. The antiracism and ethnocultural policies contained in No. 119 (1993) went “beyond a broad focus on multiculturalism and race relations”<sup>4</sup> to focus on identifying and changing institutional policies and procedures, as well as individual behaviours and practices that may be racist in their impact. No. 119 (1993) sought to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to live in an increasingly diverse world, appreciate diversity, and reject discriminatory behaviours and attitudes. Several boards have expanded these antiracism and ethnocultural policies into more inclusive equity policies that address a broader range of discriminatory factors.

In addition, it is now recognized that such factors as race, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender, and class can intersect to create additional barriers for some students. Many organizations, including the United Nations, are recognizing the compounding impact of such intersections on discrimination. Ministry and board policies, therefore, should also take intersecting factors into account.

Although much has been done – and continues to be done – to build the publicly funded education system's capacity to foster equity and inclusiveness in boards and schools, evidence indicates that some

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2. In this memorandum, *school board(s)* and *board(s)* refer to district school boards and school authorities.

3. Others include Policy/Program Memoranda No. 108, “Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”, January 12, 1989; No. 127, “The Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement”, October 13, 2004; No. 128, “The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct”, December 5, 2012; No. 144, “Bullying Prevention and Intervention”, December 5, 2012; and No. 145, “Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour”, December 5, 2012. Sections 27–29 (“Religion in Schools”) of Regulation 298 replaced No. 112, “Education about Religion in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools”, December 6, 1990.

4. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1993), p. 7.

groups of students continue to encounter discriminatory barriers to learning. Recent research shows that students who feel connected to teachers, to other students, and to the school itself do better academically.<sup>5</sup>

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) broadened the scope of No. 119 (1993) to take into account a wide range of equity factors, as well as all of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other similar considerations. No. 119 (2009) fully supported and expanded on the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity that were outlined in No. 119 (1993), and did not reflect a weakened or reduced commitment to antiracism or ethnocultural equity. By promoting a system-wide approach to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers, it has helped to ensure that all students feel welcomed and accepted in school life.

This memorandum brings No. 119 (2009) up to date so that it is in accordance with amendments to the Education Act; that is, school boards are now required to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy. This memorandum also updates No. 119 (2009) to reflect the fact that gender identity and gender expression are dimensions of diversity under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR BOARDS

All publicly funded school boards are required to develop, implement, and monitor an equity and inclusive education policy that includes a religious accommodation guideline, in accordance with the requirements set out in this memorandum and the strategy, and that complies with relevant legislation, including amendments to the Education Act.<sup>6</sup>

The strategy is designed to promote fundamental human rights as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with which school boards are already required to comply, subject to subsection 93(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867, and section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Boards must comply with all other aspects of the Education Act and regulations made under the act, including Ontario Regulation 181/98, which pertains to students with special education needs.<sup>7</sup> Boards must also comply with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001), and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), as applicable. Other relevant legislation, such as the Youth Criminal Justice Act, must be referenced where appropriate. In addition, boards should refer to *English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007*; *Ontario's Aménagement linguistique Policy for French-Language Education, 2005*;<sup>8</sup> and *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy*

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5. D. Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York, NY: Bantam, 2006).

6. Paragraph 8(1)(29.1) of the Education Act gives the Minister of Education the authority to require all school boards to develop and implement an equity and inclusive education policy, and, if required by the Minister, to submit the policy to the Minister and implement changes to the policy as directed by the Minister.

7. Ontario Regulation 181/98, "Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils", requires school boards to consider placement of students with special education needs into regular classrooms before considering alternative placements.

8. Boards should also refer to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 148, "Policies Governing Admission to French-Language Schools in Ontario", April 22, 2009; and *L'admission, l'accueil et l'accompagnement des élèves dans les écoles de langue française de l'Ontario – Énoncé de politique et directives, 2009*.

*Framework, 2007.* They should also consult with their legal counsel and Freedom of Information coordinators to ensure that they are fulfilling all their legal responsibilities.

The equity and inclusive education policy of a board must address the eight areas of focus outlined in this memorandum, and must include a guideline on religious accommodation and an implementation plan. During the cyclical process of reviewing and revising their policies, boards will take steps to align all their other policies and procedures (e.g., on safe and accepting schools, student discipline, staff hiring and development) with their equity and inclusive education policy. This process will help to ensure that the principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all aspects of board and school operations.

School board policies must be comprehensive and must cover the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The code prohibits discrimination on any of the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, disability, creed (e.g., religion), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, family status, and marital status. Boards may also address related issues resulting from the intersection of the dimensions of diversity that can also act as a systemic barrier to student learning.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Equity and inclusive education policies and implementation plans will be consistent with the guiding principles and goals set out in the strategy, with the requirements in this memorandum, and with the revised ministry document entitled *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, 2013* (hereafter referred to as “the guidelines”). These three documents should be used together when boards are reviewing and/or developing and implementing their equity and inclusive education policy, and when conducting their cyclical reviews of all their other policies.

When reviewing or developing their equity and inclusive education policy, boards are expected to consult widely with students, parents,<sup>9</sup> principals, teachers and other staff, school councils, their Special Education Advisory Committee, their Parent Involvement Committee and other committees (e.g., Diversity Committee; First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee), federations and unions, service organizations, and community partners in order to reflect the diversity of the community.

Boards have flexibility to adapt their equity and inclusive education policy to take into account local needs and circumstances.

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9. In this memorandum, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

## Areas of Focus

The three goals of the equity and inclusive education strategy are as follows:

- *shared and committed leadership* by the ministry, boards, and schools to eliminate discrimination through the identification and removal of biases and barriers
- *equity and inclusive education policies and practices* to support positive learning environments that are respectful and welcoming to all
- *accountability and transparency* with ongoing progress demonstrated and communicated to the ministry and the community

In order to achieve these goals, each school board policy on equity and inclusive education will cover the following eight areas of focus.

### ***1. Board policies, programs, guidelines, and practices***

Through cyclical policy reviews, boards will embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all their other policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, so that an equity and inclusive education focus is an integral part of every board's operations and permeates everything that happens in its schools.

Boards should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. The board's work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board's work force should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board's jurisdiction.

### ***2. Shared and committed leadership***

Board and school leaders must be responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities. Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School boards and schools are expected to provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning. Specifically, boards will identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources.

In accordance with the principles of the ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective board and school leaders promote the development of collaborative environments in which participants share a commitment to equity and inclusive education principles and practices. This collaborative approach includes and supports the active engagement of students, parents, federations and unions, colleges and universities, service organizations, and other community partners.

### ***3. School–community relationships***

Schools and boards will continue building their capacity – with the active engagement of parents and school community partners – to create and sustain a positive school climate that supports student achievement and well-being. Each board and its schools should review the structures of existing committees and partnerships to help ensure that they reflect the principles of equity and inclusive education. Boards should expand upon their outreach efforts in order to foster new partnerships that engage a cross-section of diverse students, parents, staff, community members, and various organizations, including business groups (e.g., business education councils). Boards are encouraged to draw upon the expertise of their partners to explore innovative ways of sharing resources that can help them meet the diverse needs of their students and provide new and relevant learning opportunities. Strong, positive, and respectful relationships are necessary to effect real change so that all students can reach their potential regardless of personal circumstances.

### ***4. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices***

Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff, and welcome in their learning environment. To this end, boards and their schools will use inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of all students and the learning pathways that they are taking. Schools must provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, and culture of the school. Also, since schools have a pivotal role in developing the work force of tomorrow, students should be able to see themselves represented in the teaching, administrative, and support staff employed at the school.

Boards are expected to draw upon strategies that have been shown by the evidence to support student success and reduce achievement gaps. These include reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices to identify and eliminate stereotypes, discriminatory biases, and systemic barriers. For example, schools could make use of differentiated instruction, which takes into account the backgrounds and experiences of students in order to respond to their individual interests, aptitudes, and learning needs.

In order to help ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable and lead to improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies outlined in the assessment and evaluation section of the curriculum policy documents. Assessment tasks should be designed to ensure consistency of standards, and any discriminatory biases in the way students' work is assessed and evaluated should be identified and addressed.

### ***5. Religious accommodation***

School board policies on religious accommodation must be in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the requirements stated in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools", and in sections 27–29 ("Religion in Schools") of Regulation 298. As part of their equity and inclusive education policy and implementation plan,

boards will include a religious accommodation guideline in keeping with the Ontario Human Rights Code, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of creed (e.g., religion) and imposes a duty to accommodate.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, boards are expected to take appropriate steps to provide religious accommodation for students and staff.

#### ***6. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment***

Board policies on equity and inclusive education are designed to foster a positive school climate that is free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. A positive and inclusive school climate is one where all members of the school community feel safe, included, welcomed, and accepted. The principles of equity and inclusive education support a whole-school approach to foster positive student behaviour. These principles must also be applied in progressive discipline, particularly when it is necessary to take into account mitigating and other factors.<sup>11</sup> When relationships are founded on mutual respect, a culture of respect becomes the norm. Boards will also put procedures in place that will enable students and staff to report incidents of discrimination and harassment safely, and that will enable boards to respond in a timely manner.

Regular school and board monitoring of school climate is essential. Monitoring through school climate surveys, as outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, “Bullying Prevention and Intervention”, can help identify inappropriate behaviours, barriers, or issues that should be addressed. Boards are therefore expected to incorporate questions on equity and inclusive education in their school climate surveys. Boards must require schools to conduct anonymous school climate surveys of their students and staff and the parents of their students at least once every two years, in accordance with subsection 169.1(2.1) of the Education Act.

#### ***7. Professional learning***

Professional learning activities must be ongoing, evidence-based, and focused on positive outcomes. Boards will therefore provide opportunities for teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff, administrators, and trustees to participate in training on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence, and will provide information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education. Boards are also encouraged to draw upon existing expertise within their own organization, other boards, and their own community partners and agencies. Changing individual and collective behaviour, as well as organizational and institutional practices, will help to ensure that the education system is free from discrimination.

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10. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the duty to accommodate requires accommodation to the point of undue hardship. For further details, see Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances* (1996), available at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).

11. Ontario Regulation 472/07, “Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils”, identifies mitigating factors and other factors that must be taken into account in individual cases.



### ***8. Accountability and transparency***

Ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of a board's goals and progress will increase transparency and public confidence in the board and its schools. It is expected that boards will post their equity and inclusive education policy on their website.

Board and school improvement plans, within the context of a board's strategic multi-year plan, will take into consideration the board's equity and inclusive education policy. The plans should focus on identifying and removing any barriers to student learning in order to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and responsive school climate.

Each board will post the Director of Education's annual report on its website, which will inform the ministry and the local community about the progress the board has made in meeting its strategic objectives in the previous school year and the action the board is taking in those strategic priority areas where goals are not being met.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The ministry recognizes that school boards are at different stages in the implementation of an equity and inclusive education policy. The ministry expects boards to demonstrate continuous improvement, so that progress is evident on an annual basis towards the goal of embedding the equity and inclusive education policy into all operations of the board.

Implementation plans will:

- contain clearly stated annual objectives and measurable outcomes at both the board and school levels;
- reflect consultation with community partners, and show evidence of active and ongoing partnerships with students, parents, and diverse communities;
- contain indicators for measuring and evaluating progress.

## **RESOURCES**

To support boards in developing, implementing, and monitoring their policy on equity and inclusive education, the ministry is providing practical strategies, advice, and templates in the guidelines. The ministry will also review and conduct research on promising practices in equity and inclusive education, and will disseminate this information to boards.

## APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are included for the purposes of this policy/program memorandum only.

**Diversity:** The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

**Equity:** A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

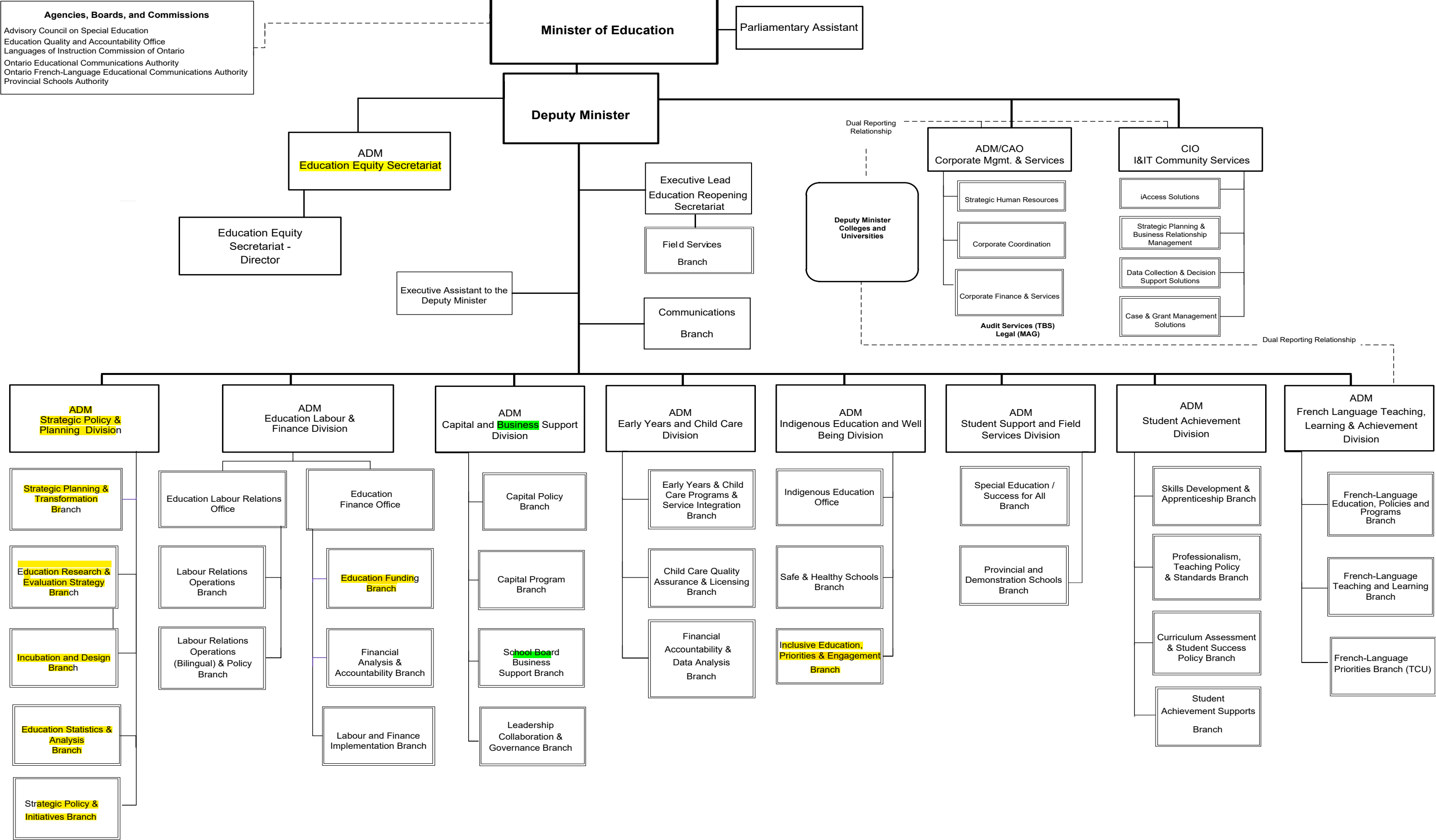
**Inclusive Education:** Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.



<b>se</b>	<b>school (where)</b>	<b>example (what)</b>	<b>(who) was impacted</b>
2020-2021	2019 Cornwall	move to CEPEO	high school student
	UCDSB	technology	family of 5 children
06-05-2021	CSDCEO	Free Chromebook	new gr7 & 9 students
2020-2021	all of SDG?	internet access	students & Families
since 2017	South Stormont	no high school	secondary students
2020-2021	English school boards	technology budgets	students learning at home
since 2018	all SDG	French board ads	all SDG communities
various	all high school	GLS course	grade 9 & Spec Ed
current & past	all high schools	how HS courses funded	HS students
current & past	all high schools	school sports teams	HS students
current & past	school boards	Geofutures pilot project	students & educators
past years	elementary	playground equipment	service clubs
current	all schools	mental health nurses	students
sept 2021	all schools	bell time changes	students
current	SDG	school with no FI	students
current	SDG	school with no child care	families
current	SDG	no Catholic HS in SDG	HS students
current	Williamstown	no library	students
current	South Stormont	no high school	HS students

<b>(how) was he/she/they impacted</b>	<b>(why) do you think this inequity occurred?</b>	<b>source</b>
no access	no IB program offered in English Catholic board	Horizon client
1 device provided by school board	not enough devices	Stephanie
French Catholic board only	English boards do not offer same	Stephanie
cannot access synchronious classes	internet services not funded by Ministry	Joyce
Ingleside busineses,co-op, PTjobs	no study of econmic impact of HS students	Jennifer
could not access learning	no Ministry policy on tech thus no funding envelop	Joyce
advertising in English	no Ministry policy on school board advertising	Tim S/Stephanie
offered after school, online or insumr	purpose of the course not understood	Sean/Monika
loss of course choice	outdated funding formula; incorrect premise	Monika
can't switch school boards	OFSAA rules	Jennifer
no response	school boards dont disseminate info	Carilyne
paid for it on board property	playgrounds not funded like school gyms MEO	Stephanie
suffered in the pandemic & before	MH health funding not accessed by boards	parents
new child care cost to parents	lack of feedback considered by school boards	parents
lack of opportunity no equity of accesssschool board decision on FI palcement		data
hardship, distance, cost	lack of policy and equit policy application	data
distance , travel, out of community	no ditance policy for transportation	data
no library in community schools	misapporpriation of funds for consturctuion	parents
travel to Tagwi or Cornwall for schoolclsoing of a JK-12 school		data/ parents

Ministry of Education  
Ministry Organization Chart



ACTION REQUEST – Corporate Services	
<b>To:</b>	<b>Warden and Members of Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>November 15, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>SDG Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</b>

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry adopt the SDG Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2026, as presented.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) outlines the requirement for municipalities to establish, maintain and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to outline the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities by providing for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the Province.

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines our approach to being an inclusive and accessible service provider and workplace. The SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee met on October 27, 2021, to review and discuss the plan. The Committee is recommending that Council adopt the plan, as presented.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is based upon requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Under AODA, all municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare Multi-Year Accessibility Plans. The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. The standards are contained in one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, also known as the IASR. Currently, the IASR contains standards in the following five (5) areas:

1. Customer Service;
2. Information and Communications;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and
5. Design of Public Spaces.

The SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee met to review and discuss the draft plan. The committee is recommending that Council adopt the plan, as presented. In order to ensure that the targets established to address the removal of barriers are completed, annual reviews of the plan will be conducted by County staff and the SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Appendix 'A' of the plan includes the County's plan with respect to requirements under the *Ontarians with Disability Act*, the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) and the Human Rights Code and will be updated as needed. Appendix 'B' summarizes the results of the review of the municipal facilities undertaken by municipal staff. Appendix 'B' will be reviewed and amended when reviews of additional facilities are completed, work is undertaken, or additional information regarding the implementation of the Built Environment regulations are obtained.

**OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

1. The plan is mandated by provincial legislation. The only possible option would be to revise the plan to include a specific project or accomplishment.

**FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

The targets set for completion in 2022 have a minimal financial impact. Other targets include staff time which will not have a direct impact on the budget.

**LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

None

**OTHERS CONSULTED:**

County CAO and Directors  
SDG Accessibility Advisory Committee

**ATTACHMENTS:**

SDG Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2026

**RECOMMENDED BY:**



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**Kimberley Casselman**  
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

**APPROVED BY:**



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**T.J. Simpson, CAO**



**UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND  
GLENGARRY**

**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan  
2021-2026**

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## **Mission Statement**

"The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is committed to providing services in a manner that provides equal opportunity to all residents and visitors accessing and using municipal services within the responsibility of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. The County Accessibility Plan is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede such equal opportunity."

## **Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

Improving accessibility is important for all residents of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. It is not only important, but it is the right thing to do given that 1.85 million Ontarians or over 15% of Ontario's population has a disability, including more than 40% of people over the age of 65. This number will only increase as the population ages.

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to facilities and services for people with disabilities.
- The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans.
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.

## **Definition of Persons with Disabilities**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 defines persons with disabilities in the following manner, which is the same definition used in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

A “disability” is:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, includes, but is not limited to:
  - diabetes mellitus;
  - epilepsy;
  - a brain injury;
  - any degree of paralysis;
  - amputation;
  - lack of physical co-ordination;
  - blindness or visual impediment;
  - deafness or hearing impediment;
  - muteness or speech impediment; or
  - physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) A mental disorder; or

- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

## **Accessibility Legislation**

### **The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025 by creating, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people living with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. The AODA will be discussed in greater detail throughout this plan.

### **The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code**

The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) work together to promote equality and accessibility. The Code states that people living with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live and receive services, and that their needs must be accommodated.

Under the Code, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry has a legal obligation to accommodate any person with a disability regardless of whether they are an employee, volunteer, resident or visitor. The duty to accommodate means that wherever unequal treatment or discrimination exists, it must be remedied unless the remedy would cause undue hardship. The Code has primacy over the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act legislation.

### **Federal Accessibility Legislation – Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81)**

On June 20, 2018 the Federal Government introduced Bill C-81 the Accessible Canada Act: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada. The Act’s stated purpose is to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction. Under this legislation, organizations under federal jurisdiction will be required to follow accessibility regulations, develop accessibility plans and will be required to establish processes for receiving and dealing with feedback about their accessibility plan and barriers that a person may have encountered in dealing with the organization.

Although this legislation does not directly impact municipal operations, it does highlight the Government's commitment to improve accessibility for all Canadians in all levels of government.

### **Jurisdiction of the Plan**

The Plan referred to in this document is under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Corporation of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, facilitated by the Corporate Services Department. The Municipal contact is the Director of Corporate Services/Clerk with contact information provided below:

United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry  
26 Pitt Street  
Cornwall, Ontario K6H 3P2

Telephone: 613-932-1515  
Email: [info@sdgcounties.ca](mailto:info@sdgcounties.ca)  
Website: [sdgcounties.ca](http://sdgcounties.ca)

### **Executive Summary**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) outlines the requirement for municipalities to establish, maintain and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to outline the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities by providing for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the Province.

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines our approach to being an inclusive and accessible service provider and workplace.

This Multi-Year Plan is based upon requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Under AODA, all municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare Multi-Year Accessibility Plans. The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. The standards are contained in one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, also known as the IASR. Currently, the IASR contains standards in the following five (5) areas:

1. Customer Service;
2. Information and Communications;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and
5. Design of Public Spaces.

This Multi-Year Plan will only examine customer service; information and communications and employment. Transportation will be excluded as the County does not provide transportation services and the only public space is the County Administration Building which is covered in Appendix B.

In accordance with the AODA, all County facilities will be compliant with the relevant requirements by 2025.

The Accessibility Standards produced by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is as follows:

### **Integrated Accessibility Standards (Regulation 191/11)**

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11, entitled, "Integrated Accessibility Standards" (Regulation), came into force on July 1, 2011. This Regulation establishes accessibility standards for Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Design of Public Spaces and Transportation. As noted earlier, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces is not applicable to the County and is not included in this plan.

Some of the requirements are: developing policies to ensure that our communication is accessible to people with disabilities; ensuring we are able to provide information in a format that considers an individual's disability; ensuring that our website is compliant with applicable standards; and developing policies on ensuring potential employees with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations during the recruitment phase.

### **Customer Service**

The requirements set out under the Customer Service Standard applies to all organizations in Ontario that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties that has at least one employee in Ontario. These standards address business practices and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

The County will continue to focus on providing policy, training support and continue to improve services and programs to meet these regulations.

### **Information and Communications**

Information and communications are a large part of the County's daily business. It is because of this that it is so important to ensure that information and communications are created and presented in a way that considers accessibility.

The County will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites and print communications materials as well as face-to-face interactions. The County is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities. The County will make reasonable efforts based upon the needs of the community and upon request within budgetary and time constraints. For the purposes of this policy reasonable efforts by the County shall be based on the frequency of indications for needs of service, the availability of the service requested, the relative cost compared to the overall Municipal budget, best practices recognized by similar rural municipalities and Provincial regulation.

## **Employment**

The requirements set out under the Employment Standard apply to paid employees. Through this Standard, employers are mandated to provide for accessibility throughout the entire employment cycle. Incorporating accessibility into all facets of the employment process benefits everyone by broadening the talent pool and assisting employers in supporting and maintaining a skilled workforce.

## **Identifying, Removing and Preventing Barriers**

A “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

People with disabilities may face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, at work, at school, in parks, in recreational facilities, in the streets, in theatres, in stores and restaurants and in municipalities.

The following are examples of types of barriers that may exist in the County:

### **Barrier Type**

### **Examples**

#### **Architectural**

A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter or lack of ramps or ramps with improper grade for access.

#### **Attitudinal**

A recreation program which can inadvertently discriminate and/or discourages persons with disabilities from participating.

<b>Communication</b>	A Professor who talks loudly when addressing a person with a hearing disability or lack of sensitivity training for front counter Staff to identify persons with disabilities.
<b>Informational</b>	Typefaces that are too small to be read by persons with low vision.
<b>Physical</b>	A door knob that cannot be operated by any person with limited upper mobility.
<b>Policy / Practice</b>	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that persons with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly. Lack of Human Resources policy with respect to hiring persons with disabilities.
<b>Technological</b>	Information on a municipal website, which cannot be accessed by a person who is blind who has reading software for a computer.

### **Monitoring Process**

In order to ensure that the targets established to address the removal of barriers are completed, annual reviews will be conducted by Municipal staff.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry shall be for a 5-year period. It is anticipated that the Plan will be updated annually. Any outstanding and new issues will be brought forward prior to the annual Budget review.

Appendix 'A' includes the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Plan with respect to requirements under the Ontarians with Disability Act, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and the Human Rights Code and will be updated as needed.

Appendix 'B' summarizes the results of the review of the municipal facilities undertaken by municipal staff. Appendix 'B' will be reviewed and amended when reviews of additional facilities are completed, work is undertaken or additional information regarding the implementation of the Built Environment regulations is obtained.

## **Appendix "A" Multi-Year Plan**

### **Customer Service**

<b>PROGRESS</b>		<b>TIME FRAME</b>
1.	Accessible Customer Service Policy	Completed
2.	Established policies, practices and procedures that govern accessibility, including policies in Personnel Policy, Fire Evacuation Manual, Purchasing Policy, and Accessible Customer Service Policy.	Completed/ Ongoing
3.	Communicating with a person in a way that respects their disability	Ongoing
4.	Allowing people with disabilities to bring their support person or service animal with them	Completed/ Ongoing
5.	Develop and update accessibility plans annually to ensure good accessible planning	Ongoing
<b>FUTURE ACTIVITIES</b>		
1.	Review of Fees and Charges By-law; no charge for support person, pursuant to Customer Service Policy	Completed Annually
2.	Update training program accessible training for staff, Council and volunteers on how to serve people with disabilities. Include staff training on the IASR and the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.	Ongoing
3.	Review policies to ensure up to date and for compliance.	Ongoing
4.	Review Accessible Customer Service Policy	1-3 years

### **Information and Communication**

<b>PROGRESS</b>		<b>TIME FRAME</b>
1.	Communication and Information Policy, which includes timely manner to provide information in accessible format, at no extra cost, consult with person making request, and	Completed



	notify public of the availability of accessible format and communication support.	
2.	Accessible Feedback process.	Completed
3.	Prepare Emergency Procedures, plans or public safety information and make available to public in accessible format.	Completed
4.	Inclusion of information regarding AODA and disability issues in orientation information prepared for Council	Completed/ Ongoing
5.	Public Library provided more collections in accessible formats.	Completed/ Ongoing
6.	Visual and audio recording of Council meetings to provide greater accessibility to meetings	Completed/ Ongoing
7.	Website redesign in accordance with WCAG 2.1 and meets accessibility standards – County and Library Websites	Completed
<b>FUTURE ACTIVITIES</b>		
1.	Review Communication and Information Policy	1-3 years
2.	Reviewing current processes to receive feedback from the public.	Ongoing
3.	Review current processes on how public can request an alternate format.	Ongoing
4.	Additional staff training for forms of social media, i.e. Facebook and Twitter when posting was also provided	Ongoing
5.	Develop a training strategy to ensure that staff has the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials	Ongoing

## Employment

<b>PROGRESS</b>		<b>TIME FRAME</b>
1.	Orientation for new staff includes Accessible Customer Service training	Ongoing

2.	Staff Education on Accessible Customer Service Policy and Communication and Information Policy	Ongoing
3.	Workplace Emergency Information – safety zones were created for individuals with disabilities. Regular drills on evacuation are completed annually. Personnel policy also includes process for staff to request and prepare an individual emergency response plan.	Completed/ Ongoing
4.	Adopted revised personnel policy to include accessible employment policies which includes provision for communication in an accessible format and employment related accommodation if required. (Section 1.4)	Completed
5.	Ensure job advertisements specify that accommodation is available for job applicants with disabilities, if applicable.	Completed/ Ongoing
6.	Revised Personnel Policy to include policy on accessible recruitment and selection. (Section 4.2.1c, 5.1)	Completed
7.	Offer letter includes notification of policy for accommodation if required.	Completed/ Ongoing
8.	Revised Personnel Policy includes policy on employee accommodation plans.	Completed
9.	Policy included in Health and Safety Manual (Section 8) accommodating employees return to work.	Completed
10.	Revised Personnel Policy to include policies that take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during the performance process and deployment.	Completed
<b>FUTURE ACTIVITIES</b>		
1.	Keep employees abreast of changes to policies	Ongoing
2.	Review Personnel Policy to include accessible employment practices	1-3 years

## **Appendix "B" Municipal Facilities/Services**

### **Targets and Actions and Review Dates**

Staff undertook a review to identify barriers within their respective Departments, both physical and operational, and by applying the requirements from both the Building Code and the AODA, a number of potential accessible barriers were identified.

Targets need to be set to help establish when these barriers will be addressed or actions taken to address preventative measures.

The Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Targets are to be completed based on priorities and budget allocations and the target time frames are approximations, not exact dates.

### **County Administration Building (General Facility)**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for Removal or Prevention</b>	<b>Target Time Frame</b>
Physical	Wider accessible parking space	Implement accessible parking space with accompanying vertical sign, markings on pavement and access aisle close to entrance	Complete
Physical	Replace automatic opener at 26 Pitt Street to larger button	Contact supplier to purchase and install	1-2 years
Physical	Replace help light in accessible washroom with bell	Explore option for install of trouble bell	1-2 years
Technology	Review and increase availability of online forms	Review practices and meet with IT to implement	Ongoing
Systemic	Review fire evacuation plan as it relates to secured areas and safety zones.	Review plan, complete fire drill with someone in safe zone and	Ongoing

	Identify staff for safe with red vest or hat.	purchase hats or vests for staff in safe zones.	
Systemic	Review process for individuals coming into building for safety purposes and exiting upon emergency	Review practices.	Ongoing
Systemic	Review process with reception to ensure proper and timely access to accessible washroom	Review practices.	Ongoing
Attitudinal	Train all staff, Councillors on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

### **Corporate Services**

Informational	Narrate important information on the website such as emergency messaging	Communications Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator will complete	Ongoing
Technology	Website upgrade to WCAG AA Standard	Be part of meetings with IT to ensure new website is at WCAG AA Standard  Provide training to staff to ensure new documents are accessible	Completed

**Tourism Division of Corporate Services – Jail, County Administration Building**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for Removal or Prevention</b>	<b>Target Time Frame</b>
Physical	Provide accessible parking space at Jail entrance	Implement accessible parking space with accompanying vertical sign, markings on pavement and access aisle close to entrance	1-2 years
Informational	Review Tourism material and practices to ensure accessibility.	Review all practices to identify barriers.	1-5 years
Technology	Create virtual tour of jail	Provide budget and contract for video taping of tour	1-3 years

**Financial Services – County Administration Building**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for Removal or Prevention</b>	<b>Target Time Frame</b>
Physical/Informational	Installation of TV in reception area for communication on court dockets, payment information, and building information	Install TV in reception area	Completed
Technology	Electronic Documents and Remote meetings for clients. Implement e-filing, end to end electronic management of POA cases and electronic court notices	Meet with IT services and design strategy for implementation	1-5 years
Technology	Enhance service of conference phone and	Meet with IT to discuss equipment upgrades	1-3 years

	video conferences in courtroom		
Technology	Increase volume of paging system	Review options for paging system	1-3 years
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

### **Transportation Services**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for Removal or Prevention</b>	<b>Target Time Frame</b>
Physical	Upgrade existing workstations to serve clients requiring full accessibility (ie mobile workstation in boardroom)	Review options and provide budget	Complete
Informational	Continue to work with Communication Co-ordinator to ensure external communication is accessible	Meet with Communication Co-ordinator to ensure all communication is accessible	Ongoing
Technology	Continue to invest in technology that can accommodate accessibility needs.	Provide budget	1-5 years
Systemic	Include installation of tactile walking surface indicators in all new pedestrian crossing installation.	Include requirement in appropriate tenders.	Complete (standard requirement)
Systemic	Review accessibility opportunities within County forests	Research opportunities / options	1-3 years

Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing
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### **Planning Services – County Administration Building**

Informational	Ensure updates regarding current appeal of the Official Plan are posted on the website in an accessible form.	Meet with Communications and IT to ensure accessible information	1-2 years
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

### **IT Services – County Administration Building**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for Removal or Prevention</b>	<b>Target Time Frame</b>
Physical	Review new office configuration of desks to ensure accessible access	Review office configuration	1-2 years
Informational	Creation of new website up to WCAG AA Standards and put policy in place to ensure ongoing compliance	Budget for website and create process for ensuring ongoing compliance	Completed
Technology	Upgrade all laptops and computers to Windows 10 operating system to make available built-in accessibility features and assistive technology support to all staff.	Budget and implement change	Completed
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service,	Ensure proper documentation is in	Ongoing

	Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	place to ensure all required persons receive training.	
Technology	Hearing impaired member of public meeting attending meetings may not be able to hear proceedings	Plan for and provide assistive technologies	1-2 years

### **Library Services – County Administration Building**

<b>Type of Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Strategy for Removal or Prevention</b>	<b>Target Time Frame</b>
Physical	Discuss with municipalities for installation of automatic doors at Finch, Lancaster, Crysler, Chesterville, Library Branches	Meet with municipal representatives to review possible changes to branches.	Ongoing (Installed at Finch, Lancaster & Crysler branches)
Physical	Discuss with municipalities for installation of accessible washrooms at Winchester, Alexandria, Williamstown and Chesterville Branches	Meet with municipal representatives to review possible changes to branches.	Ongoing (Installed at Alexandria branch)
Physical	Review of layout of furniture at all branches to ensure accessible access	Identify barriers and reconfigure to improve accessible access	Ongoing
Informational	Explore alternative formats for publications (PressReader provides text to speech, Libby and Flipster offer font sizing)  Complete review of Library's website to ensure compliance	Research alternative formats, costs, etc. and budget for improvements	Ongoing
Informational	Addition of large print books and books on tape	Budget and purchase	Ongoing



Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing
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ACTION REQUEST – Planning Services	
<b>To:</b>	<b>Warden and Members of Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>November 15, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>SDG Natural Heritage Study</b>

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry receives the Natural Heritage Study, 2021 Final Report and directs staff to:

1. Initiate an Official Plan Amendment to implement the Natural Heritage Study;
2. Include provisions for updated forest cover mapping and increased funding toward purchasing forested lands for consideration in the 2022 draft budget;
3. Work with the local municipalities and Conservation Authorities to ensure that all Provincially Significant Wetlands are recognized in zoning by-laws and covered through regulations;
4. Request that the six local municipalities and province of Ontario consider transferring surplus properties that may have an environmental function to the County forestry division or local Conservation Authorities; and
5. Work with the local municipalities and conservation authorities to prepare a comprehensive package of incentive and donation options for landowners interested in stewardship.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends that Council receive the Natural Heritage Study, 2021 and direct staff to undertake initiatives to implement the study.

### BACKGROUND:

*What is a Natural Heritage System?*

Municipalities are required to identify and protect natural heritage systems as part of their responsibilities under the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*. A Natural Heritage System (NHS) is a system of interconnected natural features such as forests, rivers, wetlands, and agricultural lands. These systems are made up of core natural areas and natural linkages that can connect these features and habitats. They support wildlife movement to maintain biological diversity, natural functions, and ecosystems.

South Nation Conservation (with support from Raisin Region Conservation Authority) was contracted by the United Counties of Prescott and Russell and SDG Counties to prepare a study to identify the natural heritage system in the two regions, along potential linkages that could be enhanced to connect these features and provide improved habitat and movement corridors for wildlife. A copy of the study and mapping of cores and linkages is attached to this report.

### *Regional Cores and Linkages*

The study includes the identification of 15 regional cores in both Counties. These regional cores have some of the best natural habitat in Eastern Ontario and generally include provincially significant wetlands, large public land holdings, and areas identified by the province for their natural or scientific qualities. These includes areas such as the Summertown Forest, Loch Garry, Newington Bog, Warwick Forest, and Winchester Bog. Approximately 26% of the overall land in regional cores is in public ownership, but this also can vary widely from 0% to 80% depending on the area. Corridors connecting these regions consist of lands in agricultural production, woodlands, wetlands, and rivers. Natural cover in these corridors varies from 8% to 60%.

Several other features were studied as part of the project including coastal wetlands along the St. Lawrence River and significant woodland mapping criteria. [Forest cover mapping](#) in SDG was last reviewed based on 2014 aerial photography and having updated information will be important for future local and County councils as they make decisions on land use and environmental initiatives. Between 2008 and 2014 there was a 4.3% decrease in forest cover in SDG, and forest cover by local municipality ranges from 13.3% to 41.1%, with an overall forest cover of 29% of land across SDG. As part of the recommendations to Council, staff intend to include updated forest cover mapping in the 2022 budget using the latest aerial photos and Lidar mapping.

### *Land ownership*

The Natural Heritage Study report notes that public ownership is the most straightforward and effective approach to preserving natural features and buffer areas. Staff recommend that Council consider increased funding toward purchasing forested lands in the 2022 budget that could be placed in a forestry reserve to purchase properties with environmental features when available, especially in the regional cores and linkages.

Additionally, staff recommend that the County request that the six local municipalities consider transferring surplus properties that may have an environmental function to the County forestry division or their local Conservation Authorities. It was noted in the preparation of the Natural Heritage System that while local municipalities may own lands within the regional cores, these were not

necessarily shown on the maps as they generally do not have a formal management plan or any protected status and could be declared surplus by future Councils.

Transferring properties with natural features to organizations with long-term stewardship mandates could have significant positive impacts, especially properties that are landlocked or have little potential tax revenue. South Stormont has recently transferred several properties to the SDG forestry division and is partnering with Raisin Region Conservation Authority to create a new conservation area in Long Sault. Staff recommend facilitating more of these types of transfers with the potential for covering costs and waiving fees to recognize the overall positive benefit to County residents.

Significant provincial land holdings such as near Hoople Bay, Summerstown Forest, and Winchester Bog have detailed use agreements and management plans but others may be at a risk of being declared surplus. While municipalities generally are circulated these properties, a comprehensive land transfer to the County forestry division could offer greater protection for features not currently identified for long term management by the province.

#### *Implementation*

The updated mapping and recommendations should be implemented in the County Official Plan, as part of the County's obligations under the Provincial Policy Statement. Policy updates will address known gaps, including environmental impact studies, coastal wetlands, and watercourse setbacks.

Policies will be implemented to enhance, protect, and restore the critical habitat within the NHS. These policies will also streamline environmental reviews to make small-scale development easier for private landowners. A summary of the recommended policies is included in the attached report.

Provincially significant wetlands form a key anchor of the natural heritage system and are required to be identified and protected through the Provincial Policy Statement. However, several of these wetlands are not recognized in municipal zoning by-laws and the Raisin Region Conservation Authority's [Enforceable Area](#) does not include non-coastal provincially significant wetlands. It is recommended that County staff work to support the local municipalities and Conservation Authorities and ensure that all Provincially Significant Wetlands are recognized in zoning by-laws and covered through regulations.

Agricultural uses are also a key part of the natural heritage system, and protecting and preserving this system will not succeed without increased partnerships with farmers. It is recommended that staff work with the local municipalities and conservation authorities to prepare a comprehensive package of incentive and

donation options for landowners interested in stewardship. These may specifically target landowners in the regional cores and linkage areas where the most benefit could be achieved.

## **OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

### **1. Recommended:**

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry receives the Natural Heritage Study, 2021 Final Report and directs staff to:

- a) Initiate an Official Plan Amendment to implement the Natural Heritage Study;
- b) Include provisions for updated forest cover mapping and increased funding toward purchasing forested lands for consideration in the 2022 draft budget;
- c) Work the local municipalities and Conservation Authorities to ensure that all Provincially Significant Wetlands are recognized in zoning by-laws and covered through regulations;
- d) Request that the six local municipalities and Province of Ontario consider transferring surplus properties that may have an environmental function to the County forestry division or their local Conservation Authorities; and
- e) Work with the local municipalities and conservation authorities to prepare a comprehensive package of incentive and donation options for landowners interested in stewardship.

These recommendations will help SDG meet its obligations under the Provincial Policy Statement and enhance the natural environment in the Counties.

- ### **2. Not recommended:**
- That Council receive this report and take no further action. The PPS requires that Council not only identify a natural heritage system but also protect it for the long-term. At a minimum, the study should be implemented through an Official Plan amendment.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

The recommendations in this report generally are addressed through annual budgets such as advertising costs. Impacts of Recommendation 2 will be considered through the 2022 budget process. Although donations of private land to a government agency can impact the overall assessment base, many of these lands would already have eligibility for significant exemptions or reductions through provincial property tax reduction programs offered for farmers and woodlot owners. Retaining existing natural features is significantly less expensive than trying to establish new wetlands and woodlands.

**LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

The recommendations would have a positive impact by ensuring additional environmental lands are protected for the long-term. Additionally, the policy updates will ensure there is greater clarity when considering development applications, with potential reductions in study requirements for low impact developments.

**RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**


The proposal would support **Strategic Priority 1 – Service Delivery – A Smarter Approach** by providing high quality land use planning services to SDG local municipalities with consistent policies and initiatives to support the protection of natural heritage features throughout the Counties. The project was also coordinated as a partnership with the United Counties of Prescott and Russell and local conservation authorities. The recommendations also support **Strategic Priority 4 - Community Sustainability – A Place Where You Want to Be**, by ensuring the rural landscape and character of SDG is preserved.

**OTHERS CONSULTED:**

Local municipalities, local Conservation Authorities, Director of Transportation Services, Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Natural Heritage Study, 2021 Final Report and mapping

**RECOMMENDED BY:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Peter Young**  
**Director of Planning Services****APPROVED BY:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**T.J. Simpson, CAO**





SOUTH NATION  
CONSERVATION  
DE LA NATION SUD

Prescott  
*Russell*



# Natural Heritage System Study

## Final Report

2021



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The Project Managers would like to acknowledge the dedication, support, and guidance of the Technical Team and Working Group.

The project brought together a diverse group of professionals from the Counties and Conservation Authority to collaborate on a comprehensive environmental study resulting in new natural heritage system mapping and significant environmental policy improvements.

The partnership included cooperation from the Raisin Region Conservation Authority and guidance from the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group including the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan and Mohawks of Akwesasne.

### South Nation Conservation Project Managers:

Alison McDonald, Team Lead, Approvals

John Mesman, Team Lead, Community Lands and Outreach

Technical Team	County Advisory Working Group
Colleen Bissonnette, SDG GIS Team Taylor Campbell, Communications Michelle Cavanagh, Team Lead, Stewardship Ben Colgan, SNC GIS Team Brent Harbers, Watershed Biologist Kiersti Havekes, SNC GIS Team James Holland, Watershed Planner Sonia Roy, UCPR GIS Team Raisin Region Planning Team	Dominique Lefebvre, UCPR Supervisor of Planning Stephanie Morin, SDG Planning Technician Jack Sullivan, SDG Planning Technician Peter Young, SDG Director of Planning Ben de Hann, SDG Director of Transportation Services

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR) and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) partnered with South Nation Conservation (SNC) to complete the Natural Heritage Systems Study.

The Report provides updates to the County Official Plan schedules to define natural linkages based on a regional landscape analysis. The Report also includes Official Plan policy amendments to streamline development where minimal environmental impact is expected and to protect large core natural areas. The focus of Natural Heritage System policy is to encourage public land acquisition and stewardship where it matters most.

This Report provides a description of how the Natural Heritage System was developed and gives general policy direction for the proposed Official Plan updates. Detailed policy updates were provided to each County through edited versions of the current Official Plans.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Natural Heritage System Benefits

Natural Heritage System (NHS) planning is about maintaining, restoring, and enhancing landscapes by linking natural core areas like significant woodlands and wetlands. These systems promote wildlife movement, increase biodiversity, reduce habitat fragmentation, and create a landscape resilient to disturbances like climate change by enabling species to migrate between core areas.

NHS planning also facilitates the restoration and enhancement of critical natural areas. For example, tree planting projects can be directed to watercourse corridors helping to reduce erosion, protect water quality, and increase local forest cover. These efforts enhance the connectivity between water and land.

Healthy NHSs provide ecosystem services that support human well-being and the health, safety, and economic prosperity of our communities. These benefits include lowering flood risk, soil retention, water purification and storage, improved air quality, pollination, and outdoor recreation opportunities that support tourism. When protected, these services can be provided in perpetuity, reducing the need for costly infrastructure solutions.

### 1.2 Provincial and Municipal Planning

The Province directs municipalities to identify and protect NHSs through the Provincial Policy Statement. Municipalities achieve this by including NHS mapping and policies in the Official Plan.

As primary public agencies for long-term land use planning, municipalities play a key role in managing natural heritage features and areas for the benefit of their communities. County Official Plan policies balance the need for land development, resource use, and protection of ecosystem services for the community while also considering the effects of climate change.

The Counties committed to updating their Natural Heritage System mapping and policies as part of their Official Plan updates. This Report summarizes provides the mapping and methodology for the final Natural Heritage System which will be added to both County Official Plans by amendment.

## 2.0 NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM MAPPING

### 2.1 Guiding Principles

NHS mapping is guided by principles and concepts drawn from the fields of landscape ecology and conservation biology, and by the spatial and temporal scales necessary to support regional and long-term movement of plant and animal species. These guiding principles were established with the municipal planners working groups during the early consultation meetings.

Several principles helped guide the methodology and design of the NHS:

- Large natural areas are preferred over fragmented areas.
- Wide corridors are better than narrow corridors.
- Corridors with continuous natural cover make the best wildlife movement routes.
- Connecting each core to multiple corridors ensures the NHS is resilient to landscape changes and will function long-term.
- Areas in public ownership have the highest level of protection and should be included in the natural heritage system where possible.
- Agricultural lands are recognized as part of the working rural landscape and can form part of a Natural Heritage System.

### 2.2 Scale

The Counties NHS functions at a regional scale, over a long period of time, to accommodate species with large ranges like fishers and moose, two keystone local wildlife species identified by the Province for regional scale NHS planning. These regional scale connections enable species to expand to new areas over generations.

The regional scale is equally important for plant and animal species that do not require a large range as it enables populations to be resilient to the impacts of a changing landscape, disease outbreaks, and long-term climate change. The regional NHS also allows species to migrate and repopulate areas that have experienced localized die-offs.

The NHS is intended to support natural heritage system planning at other scales. Many species require local scale connections to meet their lifecycle needs. There are also many smaller natural areas with unique ecosystems that are valued by local communities. Future natural heritage system mapping projects completed at a subwatershed or municipal scale can seamlessly tie into this natural heritage system map to incorporate regional wildlife movement.

### 2.3 Input Data and Studies

The NHS generally includes wetlands, waterways, areas of natural and scientific interest, woodlands, significant wildlife habitat, public land including trails and greenspaces, and natural hazard areas including floodplains.

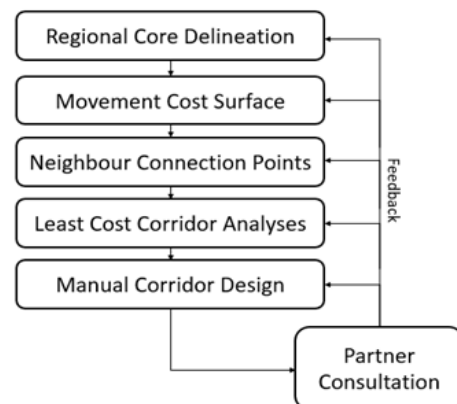
Only existing spatial data and studies, or datasets that could be readily derived from existing data, were used. The most current local information was used in place of older or coarser resolution data.

Sources of information included provincial agencies, conservation authorities, municipalities, environmental conservation agencies, environmental consultants, and academic institutions.

Information from neighbouring NHS and inventory projects was obtained in GIS format, or by georeferencing maps associated with a study or schedule of an Official Plan. A table of the input datasets and studies is provided in Appendix A.

## 2.4 Methodology

The Regional Cores were identified first. A dataset of wildlife movement costs was then compiled, neighbouring connection points were established, and the least cost corridor approach was used to connect these features. Partner feedback was incorporated throughout the process which led to revisions and adjustments to the final NHS. Public feedback was used to improve and support the final report.



## 2.5 Regional Cores

Regional Cores are large areas of mostly natural cover that are intended to remain in a natural state for an extended period. They are essential natural areas that protect biodiversity by accommodating functional wildlife populations.

These areas are often regionally and socially significant and include a large proportion of publicly owned lands. Examples of Regional Cores include the Larose Forest and Alfred Bog in UCPR, and Loch Garry Marsh in SDG.

Regional Cores act as anchor points for the County Natural Heritage System.

Local Cores are the building blocks for the Regional Cores. Local Cores are wetland and woodland areas identified as significant for land use planning purposes (i.e., shown on official plan schedules). The wetlands are identified as Provincially Significant by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), while woodlands are areas that meet MNRF significance criteria detailed in the Natural Heritage Reference Manual.

The significant features were combined into a single map layer, and areas within 20 meters were 'complexed' or grouped together. The total area and degree of fragmentation were generated for each complex. The largest complexes with the lowest degree of fragmentation were selected as the Local Cores (see notes 1 & 2, Appendix B).

Regional Cores were formed by complexing Local Cores within 50 metres, manually simplifying the outer boundaries to create large blocks, and dissolving the inner boundaries. The complexes were sorted by size, and thresholds were chosen to select the largest areas (see notes 3 & 4, Appendix B). The area was then buffered by an additional 25 metres around the perimeter.

The resulting Regional Cores are the largest areas of natural cover for the Counties. The features are shown in Figure 5. Table 2 provides a breakdown of landcover uses and public ownership for each Regional Core.

The resulting areas were reviewed by ecologists, forestry staff, and municipal planners. This review resulted in several additional Regional Cores, some of which were under the original size threshold but were identified as regionally significant (see note 4, Appendix B).

## 2.6 Wildlife Movement Cost Mapping

A least cost corridor analysis relies on a dataset that represents wildlife movement across the landscape. This dataset estimates the 'cost' or difficulty for species to migrate, with lower values assigned to good habitats that provide resources and safety, and higher scores assigned to unsuitable and potentially dangerous land uses.

A movement cost map was generated by building a land cover / land use datasets for the project area and assigning a movement cost score to each land use category. These scores and an example of the mapping are provided in Table 1 and Figure 2.

Additional maps were created for important landscape characteristics that influence wildlife movement (i.e., floodplains, agricultural lands, etc.). These maps, called 'modifiers' were layered over the movement cost map, and a uniform factor was applied to increase or decrease underlying movement costs. Floodplains and vegetated watercourse riparian areas were used to lower movement costs by 50%. Prime agricultural lands doubled movement costs. The natural cover in prime agricultural land, however, was not adjusted to preserve these areas as 'stepping-stones' with lower movement costs. Finally, the movement costs within and adjacent to urban areas were increased to ensure the natural heritage system would avoid built-up areas.

Movement Cost	
Land Cover / Land Use	Cost
Woodland	1
Wetland	1
Woodland - Plantation	2
Open Water	5
Golf Courses	5
Railway	20
Ottawa & St. Lawrence Rivers	20
Rural Residential	20
Agriculture	20
Local Roads	30
Arterial Roads (County Roads)	50
Quarry	75
Highways	80
Urban and Built-up Areas	80

Modifier Map	
Modifier Map	Multiplier
100 year Floodplain	0.5
Watercourse 30m Riparian	0.5
Prime Agricultural	2
Urban Areas, plus 50m buffer	4

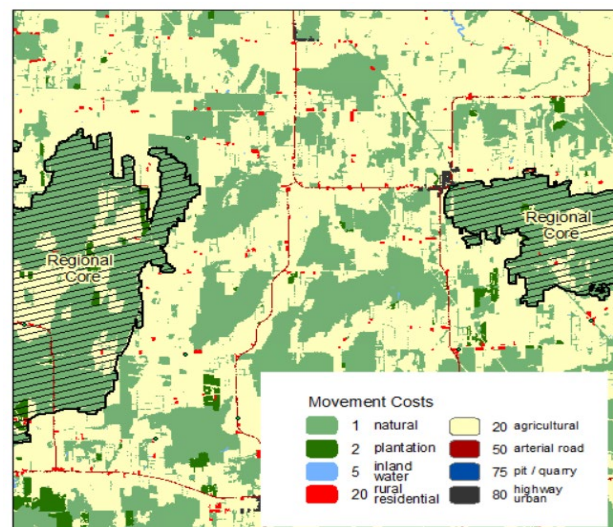


Table 1: Movement Cost and Modifier Scores

## 2.7 Regional Boundary Linkages

A natural heritage system must also connect to neighbouring habitats and populations i to ensure long-term wildlife health and resilience across expansive landscapes.

NHS and natural heritage inventory studies were identified for each neighbouring Canadian municipality. For New York State, a NHS study from the Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative was used. GIS files were obtained or study maps georeferenced to place these studies adjacent to the eastern Ontario study boundaries.



Boundary linkage points were identified to a core or corridor in each neighbouring study, and aerial imagery and local knowledge were used to identify specific crossing points on the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers. To be selected as a crossing point, both sides of the river were required to have natural cover, minimal shoreline development, and no shipping infrastructure. The distance between shorelines was also measured, and shorter distances used to prioritize crossings.

Studies from adjacent jurisdictions are listed in Appendix A.

## 2.8 Corridors

Regional cores are connected by corridors: predominantly natural, semi-natural, or rural areas that provide or have potential to provide ecological connectivity. Corridors include natural heritage features, and rural, agricultural, and other supporting lands. Without these corridors, wildlife populations in regional cores cannot easily migrate and are vulnerable to genetic isolation.

Corridors were delineated between the Regional Cores, neighbouring studies (i.e., the boundary linkage points) and between the Counties by determining the lowest scoring route across the movement cost map.

The least cost corridor method provides a travel 'cost' between a defined start and end point. Depending on the tool used, the output is a single line delineating the lowest cumulative cost between the two points, or a map of the cumulative cost for every pixel.

Both tools were used to evaluate potential corridors. To focus the analysis, only the lowest 1% of the pixels from the second tool were used (see note 5, Appendix B). The resulting layers provided the 'least cost paths' as the discrete lines, and the 'least cost pixels' to provide potential alternatives of similarly scoring paths, as shown in Figure 3.

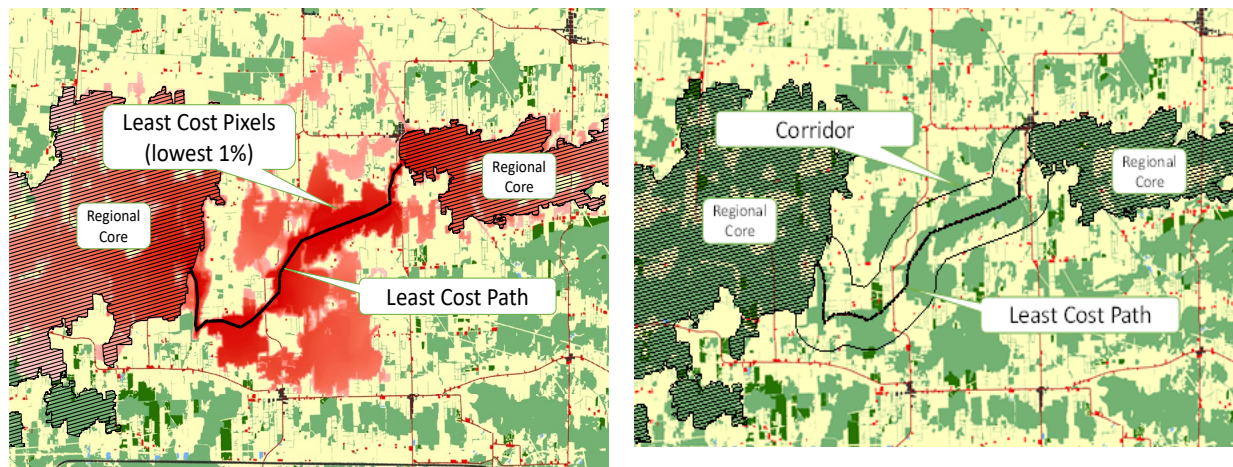


Figure 4: Corridor from Least Cost Path

The least cost paths were buffered to create the corridors with widths of one or two kilometres. The two-kilometre corridor width was selected for most terrestrial linkages, while a one-

kilometre width was used where the path followed a watercourse surrounded primarily by agriculture. An example of a standard 2-km width corridor is shown in Figure 4 (above).

Where a path passed through a built-up area, the corridor was reduced to the width of the watercourse plus riparian vegetation and public land to avoid incompatible land uses. Some of the corridors in rural lands include Enhancement Areas which are areas without natural cover that have potential to be restored to a natural state.

## **2.9 Corridor Design**

The corridors follow natural areas but also captured adjacent incompatible lands. Large blocks of natural cover south of Highway 401, for example, resulted in a two-kilometre buffer that encompassed the highway.

To avoid incompatible areas, the least cost paths were manually edited using two sources of information as reference: least cost pixels (i.e., the lowest 1% of the cumulative movement cost pixels) and publicly owned conservation lands. Alternate least cost pixels routes were followed when the route would help avoid an incompatible area.

The publicly owned conservation lands were prioritized because they provide the greatest long-term protection for the NHS. The adjusted paths were buffered again to regenerate the corridors. Finally, manual refinements were made to the corridor boundaries and widths to avoid built up areas and large settlement areas designated for future growth.

## **2.10 Expert Review and Consultation**

A draft version of the NHS was circulated to ecologists, land use planners, and forestry staff at the local municipalities and conservation authorities for feedback.

The input was used to adjust the Regional Core size thresholds, movement cost scores and modifier overlays, and to add or remove connection points to neighbouring studies.

The models were updated with each adjustment and the full analysis repeated. The feedback resulted in important changes to the NHS including:

- The size threshold for Regional Cores in SDG was adjusted and two new Regional Cores were added.
- Movement costs were fine-tuned for inland rivers and rural residential parcels.
- Natural cover was omitted from the agricultural modifier.
- Many settlement areas were removed from Regional Cores and corridors.
- A full corridor was removed due to a conflict with a settlement area.
- New corridors were added to increase connectivity between the Counties and neighbouring jurisdictions to the east and south.

Please see the full Record of Municipal Engagement was provided to the County as part of the Supporting Documentation.

## **2.11 Natural Heritage System Components**

The analysis resulted in fifteen Regional Cores, approximately twenty-five corridors, and twenty-one connections to neighbouring jurisdictions (Figure 5).

## 2.12 Regional Core Summary

Regional Cores comprise approximately 18% (95,988 hectares) of the total land area within both Counties.

The cores range in size from 1,335 hectares to over 21,000 hectares for the Loch Garry Marsh. Most of these areas are wetlands (43%), followed by upland forest (36%), and agriculture (17%). Approximately 1% of the system captures open water areas associated with wetlands or rivers. Approximately 26% (24,739 hectares) of the land in Regional Cores is in public ownership.

Percent Cover	Alfred Bog	Beaver Brook	Black River Swamp	Dickensons Creek	Hammond Wetland	Hosaic Creek	Larose Forest	Loch Garry Marsh	Newington Bog	Sand Hill Forest	Summerstown Forest	Treadwell Creek	Voyageur Park	Warwick Forest	Winchester Bog
Agriculture	2.2	19.1	13.6	11.9	14.4	18.9	18.9	20.1	21.0	15.9	11.1	17.8	20.6	16.9	3.9
Golf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Open Water	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.3	2.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.4
Pits & Quarry	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.3	0.4	1.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.7	6.8	0.9
Plantation	1.0	1.9	1.3	6.5	9.9	3.0	43.2	2.0	2.2	7.0	2.4	5.7	4.6	12.6	0.6
Transportation	0.1	1.2	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.4	1.8	1.3	1.7	1.7	0.1
Urban	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.0
Wetland	95.5	41.7	56.1	26.2	23.8	62.9	14.1	47.5	52.4	37.6	66.9	22.2	35.8	40.3	91.9
Woodland	1.2	35.1	26.1	52.2	46.2	11.6	20.7	25.6	21.6	38.9	17.2	50.9	34.4	21.5	2.1
Hectares	4,259	4,201	2,182	6,282	3,600	12,677	18,661	21,641	8,866	1,335	2,296	3,880	1,593	2,005	2,547
Public Ownership (%)	80	3	5	22	17	20	57	6	5	0	27	8	40	50	63

Table 2: Proportion of Land Cover and Land Uses within Regional Cores

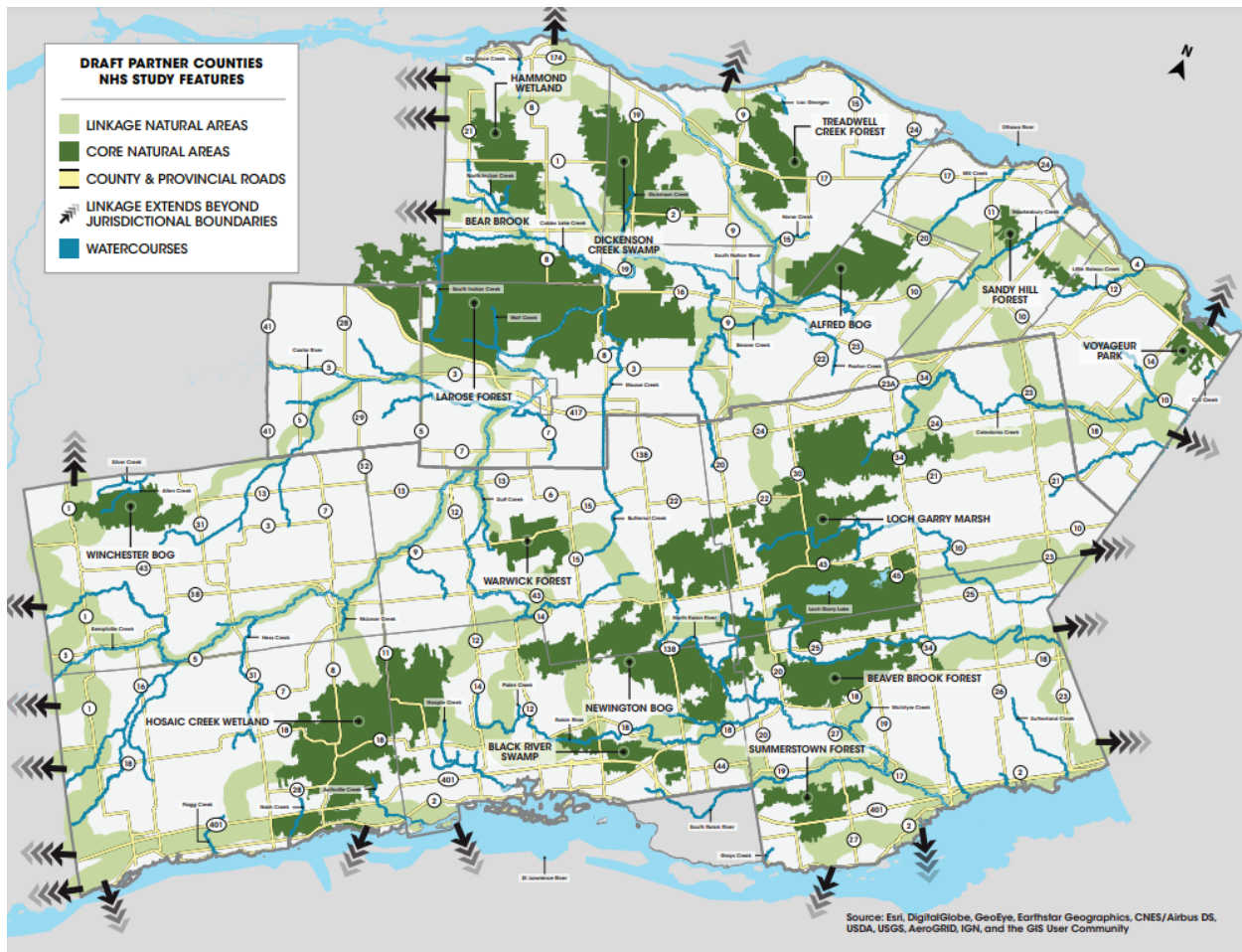


Figure 5: Natural Heritage System Components

### 2.13 Corridor Summary

Corridors account for approximately 19% or 101,123 hectares of the total land area within both Counties.

Wetlands, woodlands, and open water account for 36% of the corridors overall, ranging from as low as 8% in one corridor to as high as 60% (Figure 6).

Agriculture accounts for most of the remaining area in the corridors (59%). Most corridors are two kilometres in width (73%), while 25% are one kilometre. Approximately 2-3% were narrowed further as they travel through built-up areas such as Embrun, Chesterville and Chrysler, and many smaller areas to avoid areas of designated future growth.

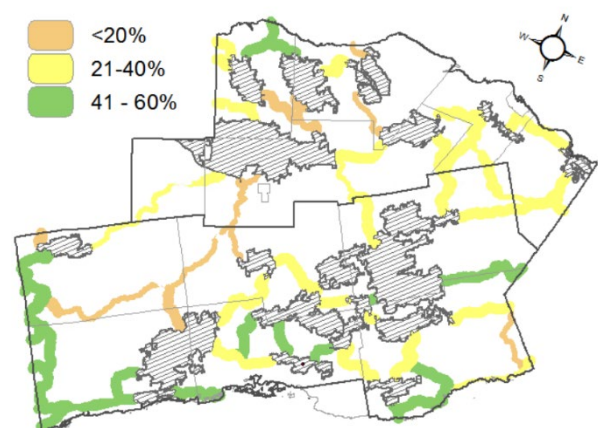


Figure 6: Corridors' Percent Natural Cover

The one-kilometre corridors tend to follow watercourses, such as the Castor River and South Nation River, but also some upland areas. For example, a corridor along the St. Lawrence River was narrowed to avoid Highway 401, while another corridor between Larose Forest and Warwick Forest follows the Payne River and South Nation River, but then connects through blocks of natural cover separated by agricultural lands.

### **3.0 OTHER MAPPING UPDATES**

Both Counties identified sub-projects that were associated with the Natural Heritage System project. These components reflected local priorities and interests and are described generally below. These sub-projects are being provided to the Counties for their consideration and may result in Official Plan amendments or additional, more detailed study.

#### **3.1 Significant Valleylands**

Significant valleylands are natural areas in a valley or depression where water flows. These features are extremely important wildlife corridors that provide safe areas for animals to move through habitat. Valleylands also serve as genetic reservoirs and biodiversity hubs due to the difficulty in developing within or around them; meaning they often remain untouched for extended periods.

The County Official Plans contain policies regarding Significant Valleylands; however, there are no existing significant valleylands identified on the Schedules. A Significant Valleyland was recently close to Larose Forest during a development-specific Environmental Impact Study.

UCPR expressed interest in scoping areas of significant valleylands in Larose Forest (publicly owned lands) to better understand the process for mapping these features when they are identified through site-specific or comprehensive assessments.

As a pilot investigation, Valleylands in Larose Forest were identified using GIS methods and high-definition aerial topographic imagery (LiDAR) (Figure 7). Further information on these areas is included in the Supporting Documentation.

#### **3.2 Coastal Wetlands**

Coastal wetlands are defined in the Provincial Policy Statement as:

- a) any wetland that is located on one of the Great Lakes or their connecting channels (Lake St. Clair, St. Marys, St. Clair, Detroit, Niagara, and St. Lawrence Rivers); or
- b) any other wetland that is on a tributary to any of the above-specified water bodies and lies, either wholly or in part, downstream of a line located 2 kilometres upstream of the 1:100 year flood line (plus wave run-up) of the large water body to which the tributary is connected.



The direction for coastal wetlands is provided in Section 2.1.5(f) of the PPS. The policy states that:

Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:

- f) coastal wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E that are not subject to policy 2.1.4 unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.

Section 5.5.6 of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Official Plan describes these wetlands; however, they are not included on the schedules as mapping was not available from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) at the time of Official Plan adoption.

SNC developed a methodology for identifying these wetlands. The process was reviewed with the Raisin Region Conservation Authority and a complete Coastal Wetlands Identification Technical Memo was prepared.

The methodology for defining Coastal Wetlands was applied to existing datasets and a draft coastal wetland layer was provided to the RRCA for review. The final coastal wetland dataset was provided to the County for future adoption into the Official Plan.

### 3.3 Groundwater Recharge Areas

The need for an update to UCPR Groundwater Recharge Areas mapping was identified in the Terms of Reference for the NHS Project. UCPR's Official Plan includes a specific policy goal (Section 5.5.9. (1) & (2)) to protect natural areas and features associated with vulnerable aquifers and groundwater recharge areas.

Section 5.5.9.2 of the UCPR Official Plan refers to a specific geographic area of known groundwater vulnerability; however, groundwater recharge areas extend throughout the County's geology (i.e., the Champlain Sand Aquifer).

Soil type is a key factor in determining groundwater recharge. Soil types have various recharge factors: clay has a low permeability (low recharge), whereas sand is highly permeable (high recharge). Groundwater vulnerability is also generally related to soil thickness in the area. Areas where bedrock is at the surface or areas with karst formations are more vulnerable to groundwater contamination and are also important from a recharge perspective.

An appropriate scope and scale for UCPR Groundwater Recharge Areas was discussed with the hydrogeologist, source protection policy staff, and planning staff; the draft mapping incorporates Source Water Protection Assessment Report studies, local geological information, and provincial karst mapping. These areas provide a more complete picture of the known groundwater recharge information within the County.

Significant groundwater recharge areas can be included in Natural Heritage System mapping as the hydrologic system is an essential component that ensures biodiversity and ecosystem resiliency are maintained and enhanced over the long term.

The groundwater recharge area mapping for the County is expansive and most of the area was not deemed significant through Source Protection assessment, meaning no Clean Water Act policies apply.

It was not recommended to include these areas in the Natural Heritage System; however, they could be included as an Appendix to the Official Plan for information purposes. The ultimate decision on how to incorporate this information into the Official Plan will be determined by the County.

Mapping details and policy recommendations were provided the County as Supporting Documentation.

### **3.4 Significant Woodlands Mapping Criteria**

SDG is working with a local municipality to refine criteria for mapping significant woodlands. This is associated with an appeal to the Land Use Planning Tribunal on the Official Plan Schedules approved in 2018.

The NHS Technical Team investigated the background information on the SDG Significant Woodlands layers. Comments were provided to the County directly to support their review. General information is provided below.

The Natural Heritage Reference Manual allows the planning authority to determine certain criteria and size thresholds for mapping significant woodlands. While forest size is one criterion used to determine significance, the manual also recommends establishing a minimum patch size for most of the other criteria (e.g., interior habitat, old growth, economic criteria, etc.).

The County may choose to use the same minimum patch size across the landscape (this is the approach used in the adopted Official Plan), or they can select different minimum patch sizes based on the forest cover percentage within each municipality or subwatershed, for example.

SDG will work with the local municipalities to determine the best path forward. The NHS mapping may assist in defining woodland significance (ex. Presence of Regional Cores or Corridors could be used as an additional criterion for significance).

## **4.0 POLICY UPDATES**

### **4.1 Overview**

The Counties have long-standing Official Plan policies that guide development and land use around significant natural features and areas. Periodically, these policies need to be reviewed and updated as communities grow and as implementation best practices emerge.

The Counties goal is to have clear, appropriately scoped, streamlined development policies that can be efficiently implemented after approval is granted. When policies are reasonable and clear, it strengthens environmental protection while allowing rural development in appropriate areas.

Key policy updates are provided below including modernizing development setbacks, scoping environmental impact studies, and natural system planning policies to improve environmental planning in the region. The policy considerations below include feedback from public engagement, conversations with County staff and local municipal planners, and discussions with stakeholders.

Policy considerations are organized by type and County Official Plan Section references are included at the beginning of each section. Detailed policy edits were provided to each County

separately.

## **4.2 Natural Heritage System Policies**

*Section 5.3.1 United Counties of Prescott and Russell*

*Section 5.5.8 United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry*

Most of the land in the Counties is privately owned. In areas where the natural heritage system crosses privately owned lands, policies already promote land donation, biodiversity offsetting, parkland acquisition, and conservation easement programs.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

1. The County should update their respective Natural Heritage System schedules to include the new mapping including the Regional Cores and Corridors.
2. Policies should describe the new regional cores and corridors and include discussion of natural system planning and its benefits, and the regional connections to the broader natural system.
3. Policies should include reference to stewardship and restoration programs including targeted environmental grants.
4. Policies should clarify that impacts on the NHS and its connectivity must be assessed when an Environmental Impact Study is required (i.e., the development is in or near a significant natural feature).
5. Policies should discuss potential enhancement areas outside of the NHS that have the potential to be improved or restored to a natural state. These areas could be added to the NHS over time through watershed plans, subwatershed studies, natural heritage system studies or other site-specific studies.
6. Preserving or conserving existing natural cover remains the most effective way to maintain the NHS. The principle of no net loss should be included for the regional cores: if habitat must be removed due to development, the same or greater amount of habitat must be replaced elsewhere, preferably within the same subwatershed.

## **4.3 Environmental Impact Studies**

*Section 5.6 United Counties of Prescott and Russell*

*Section 5.5.7 United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry*

An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) helps shape new development by confirming boundaries of natural heritage features on the site and ensuring the development will not negatively impact these features.

EISs are completed by qualified professionals and peer-reviewed by specialists (i.e., Conservation Authority). Often, an EIS sets out a development setback from a natural heritage feature which is agreed upon by technical reviewers, planning staff, and the developer.

EISs often include mitigation measures to protect natural heritage features from construction impacts (e.g., vegetated buffers next to rivers, timing windows for animal breeding, protection of



species at risk habitat) and limits encroachment in natural heritage features (e.g., backyard fencing along a significant woodland).

Municipal and Conservation Authority staff agree that some development proposals warrant a more flexible, 'scoped' approach. Generally, this would apply to minor development like single family homes, single lot severances, and/or proposals where a development impact will take place entirely outside of the natural heritage feature (within 120 metres). In this case, there are standard mitigations that can be applied.

Consistent policies are proposed to allow the municipality, in consultation with a qualified environmental professional (i.e., a biologist from the Conservation Authority), to waive or scope the requirement for an EIS.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

1. The Counties receive numerous applications for single lot severances in the 120-metre adjacent lands. Screening area distances can be adjusted by the approval authority (as noted in Section 4.4.2 of the Natural Heritage Reference Manual).
  - a. If the proposed severance is separated from the significant feature by a barrier such as a road or existing development, the risk of impacting the significant feature is low. The EIS requirement can be waived by the approval authority in consultation with the Conservation Authority.
  - b. Small-scale development (e.g., severances for single-family development) more than 30 metres from a natural heritage feature would be eligible for either a scoped EIS or the EIS may be waived completely.
    - i. Where the requirement is to be waived, a site visit should be completed to confirm there are no additional natural features or species at risk on site. The cost of a site visit would be the responsibility of the applicant.
    - ii. Where the EIS is waived, the Conservation Authority may recommend standard mitigation measures in the severance review comments.
2. EISs submitted by consultants often do not address the policies of the Official Plan regarding significance and no negative impact. A pre-screening process is recommended to help landowners work with the municipality or Conservation Authority to review applications and assess the EIS requirements up front. The goal is to ensure applicants do not pay for unnecessary assessments and the reports are focused on the policy requirements.
3. Both Counties expressed a strong interest in consistency between Conservation Authorities and municipalities. New EIS guidelines and standard conditions will be prepared by the Conservation Authorities to help municipalities respond to development applications quickly and consistently. The guidelines will also help environmental consultants focus on important criteria and policy requirements.

## 4.4 Development Setbacks, Buffers, and Adjacent Lands

*Section 5.5 (generally) United Counties of Prescott and Russell*

*Sections 3.5.2.9, 5.5.2, and 5.6.2 United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry*

### 4.4.1 Terminology

The purpose and function of setbacks, buffers, and adjacent lands are sometimes used interchangeably in application of Official Plan policies which can cause confusion for staff and applicants.

‘Adjacent Lands’ is defined in the PPS and further explained in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry’s Natural Heritage Reference Manual. Adjacent Lands distances (generally 120 m for most features) set the screening area for EISs. Adjacent lands are the lands closest to a natural heritage feature or area where it is possible that development or site alteration would have a negative impact on the natural heritage feature or area. Generally, an EIS is required to assess the potential impacts of the proposed activities and recommend appropriate setbacks and buffers from the natural heritage feature or area within the adjacent lands to ensure no negative impacts.

The Official Plans include detailed policies to establish setbacks from watercourses, woodlands, and wetlands. Setbacks describe the minimum distance required between development and a specified line. Setbacks may also contain buffers, but setbacks are simply distances between two specified points and are not necessarily vegetated.

A buffer is a zone specifically designed to protect adjacent natural heritage features and functions or preserve a natural transition area between development and the natural feature. Buffers should be vegetated through native plantings or allowed to naturalize. Buffers should not be treated as extensions of the natural feature. The functions and benefits of buffers to natural heritage features will vary with the proposed adjacent land use and include reducing encroachment, reducing light and noise, space for tree fall, protection of root zones, core habitat protection, locations for trails, and attenuation and filtration of water runoff. In the case of steep or unstable slopes and woodland edges, a buffer can also mitigate hazards by providing separation from the hazard zone.

Buffers prevent degradation and impacts to natural heritage features and functions and to the Natural Heritage System. In contrast to adjacent lands, which are established before development is proposed in official plans and or zoning by-laws, buffers are determined once the nature of development is known, natural heritage features are identified and assessed, and the extent of potential impacts can be determined.

Minimum buffer distance requirements are identified in Appendix C.

### Policy Recommendations:

1. A new subsection in the Official Plan is proposed to describe the function and purpose of setbacks and eliminate confusing terminology. This additional clarity will help consultants, developers, and planners apply the correct setback to protect a natural feature.

2. Both Counties have low riparian (water's edge) forest cover, especially in agricultural areas. Figure 6 notes major regional corridors with less than 20% natural cover; some are noted as low as 8%. Watercourse cover is essential for local water quality, temperature, aquatic habitat, and animal movement.

Policy updates are proposed to strengthen natural shoreline setbacks including tree and vegetation buffers (riparian lands). Restoration policies will be added to encourage tree planting and naturally vegetated setbacks especially where they are associated with the Natural Heritage System or natural hazard areas.

#### **4.4.2 Implementation Challenges**

Setbacks are generally required when development is proposed near natural features and/or hazards. When setbacks include private property, local municipalities face challenges trying to control landscaping and development encroachment over time. This can be dangerous for the property owner and their neighbours in the case of setbacks associated with a floodplain or unstable slope.

Official Plan policies also permit setback reductions (i.e., a 30-metre watercourse setback reduced to 20-metre) following technical studies that usually propose specific mitigation requirements. Setbacks premised on development conditions are notoriously difficult to implement. For example, 'no-touch' setbacks must be naturally vegetated (not a manicured lawn) and not subject to any site alteration or development.

Landowners often purchase property without knowing these setbacks or requirements exist. When these areas are not described anywhere except on a map in a supporting study for a Draft Plan application, it is easy to see how these requirements can be missed or ignored.

Without tree-cutting by-laws or site alteration by-laws, municipal staff are not able to prevent impacts in setback areas. Where setbacks serve multiple purposes (e.g., flooding, erosion, and water quality) municipal staff have challenges explaining what is and is not permitted in the setback. The multitude of technical studies are often filed away and are easily missed when building permits come in.

Follow-through is an important consideration in planning policy: additional tools are needed once the planning process ends to ensure setbacks are protected and mitigation is completed.

#### **Policy Recommendations:**

1. Zoning setback lands is essential to provide notice to landowners. Zoning information is readily available to property owners, real estate agents, lawyers, and municipal staff, and is considered legal notice. Zoning is also enforceable by by-law officers and through the building code. Policies should be added to require setback to be zoned as a condition of development. This could be done on an annual 'house-keeping' basis to reduce administrative cost.
2. Setback areas are regularly impacted by tree cutting, landscaping, and small-scale development even when zoned restrictively. Public ownership is the most straightforward approach to protecting these areas.

Policies are proposed to strongly encourage public ownership for larger setback areas, especially where natural hazards are present. In some urban municipalities, developers transfer setback lands to the municipality as part of the development process. These public lands create ecological buffers, keep development out of hazardous areas, and allow passive recreational uses for residents to share and enjoy natural spaces.

## **5.0 AGRICULTURE AS PART OF A NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM**

Natural systems and agricultural lands collectively provide habitat for different species. In Southern and Eastern Ontario, agricultural lands are working landscapes that provide valuable ecosystem services such as pollination, atmospheric regulation, soil retention, and wildlife habitat (MNRF, 2009).

Agriculture is the predominant land use on the rural landscape and nearly all the province's prime agricultural lands are located below the Canadian Shield. It is important that working landscapes be included in natural system planning in Eastern Ontario.

As such, the Counties Natural Heritage System mapping was prepared using approaches supported by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (2017, Growth Plan).

Not all farming practices benefit the environment, some result in habitat loss and fragmentation. However, natural heritage policies recognize and value practices that encourage and foster cooperation with private landowners to protect the environment and improve the quality of natural habitat and corridors.

Financial incentives were identified by the local Agricultural Forest Cover Committee as an important tool for retention of natural cover. The policies for the Counties NHS incorporate these important recommendations, making it clear to landowners the areas of vital importance for the region's biodiversity. This information can be used to prioritize areas for best management practices, grant programs, land donation, or passive restoration. Stewardship projects completed by landowners in these areas will help improve the NHS for local wildlife populations and contribute to regional landscape connectivity.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The NHS is a network of interconnected natural features and areas like forests, lakes, rivers, agricultural lands, and wetlands. The NHS helps conserve biological diversity, maintain ecological functions (e.g., movement corridors for wildlife, endangered species habitat) and sustain ecosystem services that we all depend on (e.g., pollination, clean water, flood damage reduction).

The Province of Ontario requires the Counties to identify the NHS and preserve the diversity and connectivity of these features. This is translated into mapping and policies to inform development, stewardship actions, climate change resiliency, environmental studies, and conservation efforts. This strategic approach to maintaining biodiversity preserves green infrastructure that is resilient to climate change and development pressure.

The new NHS and proposed policy updates provided in the Report are a step forward for environmental planning and stewardship in the Counties.

SNC would like to thank the Counties for engaging the Conservation Authority to work on this project. The Report brings together many years of CA-Municipal collaboration and committee recommendations to provide a new perspective on natural heritage planning and stewardship.

SNC also extends our appreciation to members of the public and stakeholder groups who provided feedback and discussion on the draft maps, including those who live, work, and depend on the landscape. Personal, lived experience, historical, and indigenous perspectives helped make the Counties planning framework more inclusive and comprehensive.

## Appendix A: Input Datasets and Studies

### Input Studies

Study	Date	Website
Algonquin to Adirondack Analysis Methodology	2014	<a href="http://www.a2acollaborative.org/mapping.html">http://www.a2acollaborative.org/mapping.html</a>
Cartographie détaillée des milieux humides du territoire des basses-terres de l'Outaouais et ses environs	2017	<a href="http://maps.ducks.ca/cwi/com/duc/assets/reports/Rapport_carto_MH_Outouais_2017.pdf">http://maps.ducks.ca/cwi/com/duc/assets/reports/Rapport_carto_MH_Outouais_2017.pdf</a>
Portrait des milieux naturels de la MRC d'Argenteuil	2013	<a href="https://www.argenteuil.qc.ca/database/Image_usager/2/Amenagement/Environnement/Strat%C3%A9gie%20annexes/Annexe%201%20Rapport_portrait%20septembre%202013.pdf">https://www.argenteuil.qc.ca/database/Image_usager/2/Amenagement/Environnement/Strat%C3%A9gie%20annexes/Annexe%201%20Rapport_portrait%20septembre%202013.pdf</a>
L'environnement et les milieux naturels MRC de Vaudreuil-Soulanges	2018	<a href="http://mrcvs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Chapitre-7-Cartable-Final-2018-04-12_web.pdf">http://mrcvs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Chapitre-7-Cartable-Final-2018-04-12_web.pdf</a>
MRC de Papineau - Schéma d'aménagement et de développement	2018	<a href="http://www.mrcpapineau.com/89%7CSchema-d-amenagement">http://www.mrcpapineau.com/89%7CSchema-d-amenagement</a>
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Official Plan	2019	<a href="https://www.leedsgrenville.com/en/government/official-plan.aspx">https://www.leedsgrenville.com/en/government/official-plan.aspx</a>
City of Ottawa Natural Landscape Linkage Analysis	2012	<a href="http://greenspace-alliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Natural_Linkages_Analysis_-_Final_-Doc_11-red.pdf">http://greenspace-alliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Natural_Linkages_Analysis_-_Final_-Doc_11-red.pdf</a>

### Input Datasets

Process Step	Dataset	Source	Resolution Scale	Effective Date	Contribution
1	Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System (SOLRIS vs. 3.0)	GeoHub (LIO)	15m pixel	2015	provided continuous pixel base to build upon, urban classes retained
2	Assessment Parcels (residential codes)	Province	1:10,000	2020	identified rural residential parcels and golf courses, added to urban areas
3	Woodlands	Counties	1:10,000	2014	represented natural managed and unmanaged forests and hedgerows
4	Wetlands	GeoHub (LIO)	1:10,000	downloaded 2019	identified wetlands and open water , modified forests where coincident
5	Railways	GeoHub (LIO)	1:10,000	downloaded 2019	represented active railway routes, represented by 20m corridors, modified underlying classes where coincident
6	Waterbodies (Ontario Hydrologic Network)	GeoHub (LIO)	1:10,000	downloaded 2019	identified additional open water areas, modified underlying class where coincident
7	Roads (Ontario Road Network)	GeoHub (LIO)	1:10,000	downloaded 2020	represented corridors for local roads (14m), arterial roads (26m) and provincial and federal highways (40m)
8	Pits and Quarries	MNR/OPs	varies	varies	combined from multiple sources to represent aggregate sites
9	1:100 Year Floodplains	CAs	1:10,000	varies	used as overlay to reduce movement scores by 50%
10	Riparian Vegetation	derived dataset	1:10,000	varies	used as overlay to reduce movement scores by 50%, derived using watercourse, woodland and wetland layers
11	Assessment Parcels (agricultural codes)	Province	1:10,000	2020	used as overlay to double movement scores, excluded all natural areas in calculation

## Appendix B: Technical GIS Endnotes

1. Complexing to create the Local Cores and Regional Cores was achieved by buffering features by half the distance of the intended feature separation. For example, a buffer of 10m was used to group features within 20m. The option to dissolve internal boundaries was selected when buffering. The Multipart to Singlepart tool was used to break apart buffer polygons. Each buffer polygon was given a unique number in the attribute table. A Union between the buffer polygons and original features then transferred the unique number to the features. The polygons representing the buffered area was removed from the Local Core layer. The polygon, however, was not removed when complexing features to create the Regional Cores.
2. Fragmentation was determined by dividing the complex perimeter by the total complex area so that lower scores indicated lower fragmentation. Complexes were then sorted from lowest to highest for both criteria (i.e., fragmentation and total area), and the top 20% of the features for each criterion documented in the attribute table (i.e., those features with the lowest fragmentation scores and largest total areas). Features attributed for both criteria were then selected as the final Local Cores.
3. Simplifying the outer boundary involved manually reshaping the polygons to remove narrow encroachments of other land uses, primarily agriculture, and complex boundaries where a simple arc could replace many vertices. The 25m buffer, generated to complex the individual features together, also helped to simplify the boundary.
4. A size threshold of 1000 hectares in United Counties of Prescott and Russell identified the large, obvious blocks of natural cover. The threshold for the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, however, required considerably more analysis before a size threshold of 1900 hectares was selected. Manual grouping also occurred before Regional Cores were finalized. Treadwell Creek is a grouping of Regional Cores and two Local Cores that did not meet the proximity threshold, which together, capture an ecologically important area. Local Cores on the south side of Highway 401 were added to Summerstown Forest and Hoasic Creek in recognition that these have an ecological connection, even though the highway is a considerable barrier. Without these connections, the natural heritage system would not adequately represent the north-south wildlife movement within the study site or to other jurisdictions.
5. The Spatial Analyst tools for least cost movement analyses were Cost Path to delineate the least cost lines, and Cost Distance to create a cumulative raster surface. The raster surface was subset to the lowest 1% of the pixels for the final analysis.

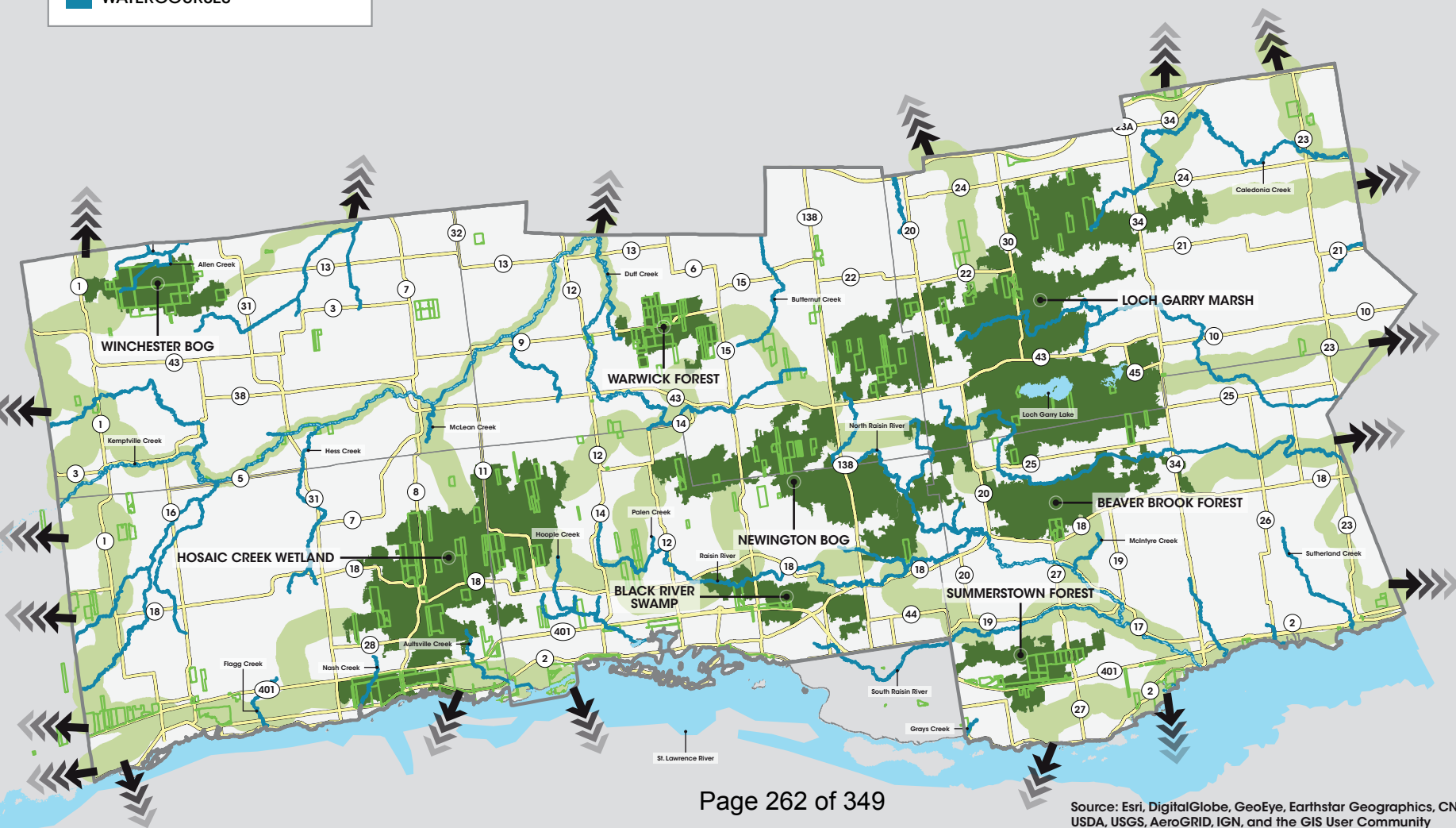
## Appendix C: Minimum Buffer Distances

<b>Natural Heritage Feature or Area</b>	<b>Minimum Buffer Width</b>	<b>Final Buffer Width</b>	<b>Adjacent Lands Distance</b>
Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs)	No minimum buffer	Established through EIS or in consultation with MNRF	50 – 120 m
Significant Habitat for Provincially Endangered and Threatened Species	No minimum buffer	Established through EIS or in consultation with MECP, MNRF, or DFO	120 m
Provincially Significant Wetlands	30 m	Established through EIS or in consultation with the Conservation Authority	120 m
Locally Significant Wetlands	15 m	Established through EIS or in consultation with the Conservation Authority	120 m
Significant Coastal Wetlands	30 m	Established through EIS or in consultation with the Conservation Authority	120 m
Permanent Surface Water Features and Fish Habitat	30 m	Established through EIS	120 m
Intermittent Surface Water Features and undetermined Fish Habitat	15 m	Established through EIS	120 m
Significant Woodlands	10 m from the tree drip line	Established through EIS	120 m
Significant Valleylands	No minimum buffer	Established through EIS	120 m
Significant Wildlife Habitat	No minimum buffer	Established through EIS	120 m



**PARTNER COUNTIES NHS  
STUDY FEATURES AND  
PUBLIC LANDS**

- LINKAGE NATURAL AREAS
- CORE NATURAL AREAS
- COUNTY & PROVINCIAL ROADS
- CONSERVATION LANDS
- LINKAGE EXTENDS BEYOND JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES
- WATERCOURSES



ACTION REQUEST – Planning Services	
<b>To:</b>	<b>Warden and Members of Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>November 15, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Affordable Housing</b>

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry direct staff to:

1. Initiate an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan and work with the six local municipalities to create development-ready sites for affordable housing;
2. Develop a Housing First policy template in consultation with the local municipalities and circulate a draft policy to County and local Councils for consideration;
3. Work with the City of Cornwall, SDG local municipalities, local housing providers and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to improve the availability of data on housing in SDG, as recommended by the Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee; and

THAT Council recommends that the incoming Council in 2022 consider the establishment of an affordable housing committee.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends several actions that County Council can take to promote and facilitate affordable housing across SDG.

### BACKGROUND:

Municipalities are required to address housing needs through the *Housing Services Act*, *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*, and the *Policy Statement: Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans*, where specific direction is also given to planning authorities and service managers.

Section 1.4.3 of the PPS states that planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents of the regional market area in several ways, including:

*a) establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households and which aligns with applicable housing and homelessness plans. However, where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality, the upper-tier municipality in consultation with the lower-tier municipalities may identify a higher target(s) which shall represent the minimum target(s) for these lower-tier municipalities;*

*b) permitting and facilitating:*

*1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including special needs requirements and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities; and*

*2. all types of residential intensification, including additional residential units, and redevelopment in accordance with policy 1.1.3.3;*

While these types of directions are addressed in the County Official Plan and local zoning by-laws, affordable housing developments may require controversial rezoning applications that can add months to approval processes.

The City of Cornwall was designated as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for the City of Cornwall and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) in the year 2000. As a result, the City is responsible for responding to a wide range of housing needs in the area. The City administers provincial housing funding in SDG, and also offers several programs to supplement rent, address homelessness and assist in improving living standards in older homes.

Although SDG is involved in the City's housing program through the Service Manager Joint Liaison Committee and the Cornwall and Area Housing Corporation (soon to become defunct), the County can supplement these efforts and work to support and facilitate housing more directly through the land use planning process and by facilitating housing projects in its rural areas and villages.

Council received a presentation from the Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee at its September 20, 2021 meeting. The committee prepared a comprehensive report (attached) outlining the current situation in Dundas County and the lack of affordable housing. It notes that a low share of homes sold in 2020-2021 could be classified as affordable based on household incomes (10-17%) and individual incomes (2-4%). Many of these more affordable homes may also require major repairs. Many housing supports are only in fair condition due to the age of the buildings, which limits funding available for adding new units; waitlists can be

long and funding for some programs such as Ontario Renovates are over-subscribed. The report is specifically addressing Dundas County, but the issues raised would apply to the rest of SDG and other rural communities.

The Committee made eight recommendations which are summarized below:

- 1) **Create an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee:** Establish an affordable housing advisory committee. The committee will work along side the Local Governments within SDG Counties to provide recommendations, data, affordable housing opportunities and what should be prioritized.
- 2) **Annually Examine Housing Needs and Policies:** The local governments within SDG Counties and the advisory committee annually identify and report on changing housing needs, land use, permits, new builds and data surrounding these factors. The local governments then bring forth this information to the other levels of the government and the community as a whole.
- 3) **Housing First Approach:** Taking a 'housing first' approach involves developing a policy directed at meeting affordable housing needs. The local governments within SDG Counties lands would be considered for affordable housing before being put to any other use.
- 4) **Financial Incentives:** The local governments within SDG Counties use financial incentives to offer financial assistance to providers of affordable housing.
- 5) **Regulatory Approach:** Regulatory powers and responsibilities can be used strategically as a part of a comprehensive approach to meet affordable housing needs.
- 6) **Annually Determine Affordable Home Ownership:** Requesting staff to adopt the calculation of affordable homeownership proposed by the Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee and to calculate the affordable homeownership threshold on an annual basis.
- 7) **Access to Rental Data:** The local governments within SDG Counties request that the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) routinely release to the township/municipalities rental related data, including annual surveys of market rents and other relevant rental information at a municipal level, in a format that addresses any privacy matters so that township/municipalities can more easily calculate accurate market rents to develop affordable housing policies.

- 8) **Annually Determine Affordable Rental Housing:** The local governments within SDG Counties adopt the calculation of affordable rental housing (by unit type) as proposed by Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee in order to determine affordable rentals threshold for North Dundas and South Dundas on an annual basis.

Staff are proposing that Council could undertake the following initiatives in response to the Committee recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** An affordable housing committee could supplement some of the work done by the City, County, and local municipalities and provide advice to Council on potential projects. Given there is a transition process underway with the Cornwall and Area Housing Corporation becoming part of the City of Cornwall's housing division, and there are a limited number of meetings remaining in the current term, Council could request that the next Council consider establishing this as a committee in 2022.

**Recommendations 2, 6, 7 and 8:** Staff could work with the City of Cornwall, MPAC and the local municipalities to provide more comprehensive reports to Council on affordable housing annually.

**Recommendation 3:** Staff agree that a Housing First policy could enhance existing programs such as annual donations to Habitat for Humanity. It is recommended that County staff draft a policy that could be considered by County and local Councils.

**Recommendation 4:** Council requested changes to the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) legislation and regulations at its September 20, 2021 meeting. If approved by the provincial government, SDG would be able to have its own regional CIP incentive plan that could offer grants, loans, and/or tax-increment financing to affordable housing projects throughout the six local municipalities. It is recommended that this project be initiated if approval is granted by the province. Provincial staff have provided several examples of other communities with affordable housing CIPs.

**Recommendation 5:** The City of Cornwall initiated a [Housing Revitalization Plan](#) in 2020. This plan included recommendations to enhance existing sites owned by local housing providers, and also reviewed potential opportunities in SDG for new affordable housing projects. However, many of these sites needed rezoning and potential studies to be completed that would delay consideration for potential funding opportunities. SDG Planning staff work closely with all six local municipalities and are familiar with the Official Plan designations, local zoning by-laws, and site plan processes. It is recommended that the County support the local municipalities by initiating work needed to make these sites more development-

ready, along with reviewing by-laws on other sites with potential for intensification and affordable housing. Funding could be included in the 2022 budget to support these efforts.

#### **OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

**1. Recommended:** THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry direct staff to:

- a. Initiate an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan and work with the six local municipalities to create development-ready sites for affordable housing;
- b. Develop a Housing First policy template in consultation with the local municipalities and circulate a draft policy to County and local Councils for consideration; and,
- c. Work with the City of Cornwall, SDG local municipalities, local housing providers and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to improve the availability of data on housing in SDG, as recommended by the Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee.
- d. AND THAT Council recommends that the incoming Council in 2022 consider the establishment of an affordable housing committee.

**2. Not Recommended:** That Council take no action at this time. Although programs and incentives offered by the federal, provincial and City governments can have a greater impact on the provision of affordable housing, local initiatives can also supplement programs and fill in gaps in funding.

#### **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

An affordable housing Community Improvement Plan could have an impact on future budgets, however these programs are designed to encourage projects that may not have gone forward without incentives. Council would determine the level of subsidy offered at a future date. There may be some professional fees required to support development-ready sites, however generally the intention would be to complete the majority of the work in-house.

#### **LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

The recommendations would have a positive impact by providing greater opportunities for housing in the local municipalities.



**RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

The proposal would support **Strategic Priority 1 – Service Delivery – A Smarter Approach** by providing high quality land use planning services to SDG local municipalities with consistent policies and initiatives to support the provision of affordable housing across the Counties.

The recommendations also support **Strategic Priority 4 - Community Sustainability – A Place Where You Want to Be**, as providing a variety of housing types support long-term viability of local towns and villages.

**OTHERS CONSULTED:**

Chief Administrative Officer  
Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee


**ATTACHMENTS:**

Dundas County Housing Report – September 2021

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Peter Young**  
**Director of Planning Services**

**APPROVED BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**T.J. Simpson, CAO**

# DUNDAS COUNTY HOUSING REPORT



**DUNDAS COUNTY HOUSING INITIATIVE COMMITTEE**

**September 2021**



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## ABOUT THE REPORT

**“Imagine living in a community where everyone has access to affordable housing. I care about our community and will continue to advocate and be a voice for housing needs.” – Committee member**

“I was so stressed and worried when my landlord sold the house that I live in with my two daughters. I was frightened that I wouldn’t be able to find a place that I could afford that was close enough to work so that I wouldn’t need to quit my job. I was concerned for my kids – they would need to change schools and childcare. I am having a lot of sleepless nights.”

*Testimonial from T. Mother of 6- and 9-year-old children*

**Shelter is one of the most fundamental human rights**

Housing is limited. Rents are dramatically increasing, and home ownership is not an option for many individuals. The lack of suitable affordable housing in North and South Dundas is a significant problem. Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee is a group of dedicated community members and agencies that believes everyone in Dundas County should have access to affordable housing. This report is meant to provide insight as to housing in Dundas County, invoke discussion of housing needs especially for our most vulnerable community members and to call to action each community member, community agency and business as well each level of government to make choices that give hope to people who do not have a safe affordable place to sleep tonight.

### Vision Statement

**To be in a community where each individual has a safe and affordable place to live**

### Mission Statement

**A collaborative approach to creating safe and affordable safe spaces in our Dundas County Community**

# WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) housing is considered to be affordable when a household spends less than 30% of its pre-tax income on adequate shelter. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on shelter are deemed to be in core housing need.

30% of the median total income of households in South Dundas is \$19,520 therefore a monthly housing costs should not exceed \$1627.00 to be considered affordable



30% of the median total income of households in North Dundas is \$23,458 therefore a monthly housing costs should not exceed \$1955.00 to be considered affordable

For renting or home ownership the 30% of the median income total includes all utilities (such as heat, hydro, mortgage interest, property tax and maintenance).

Figure 1 - Median Total Income of Households in Dundas County

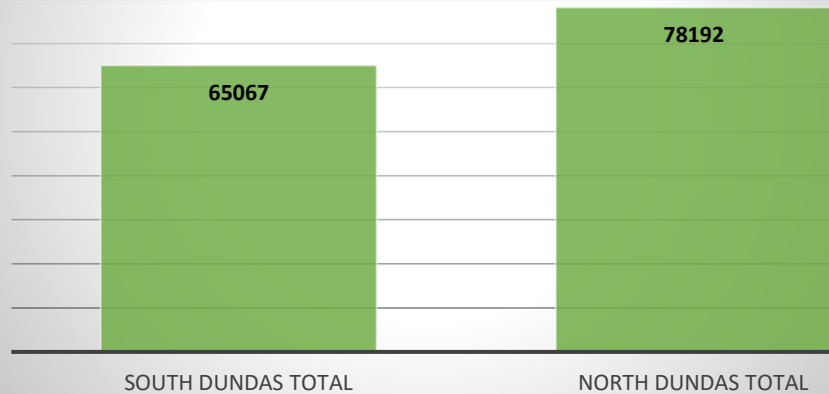
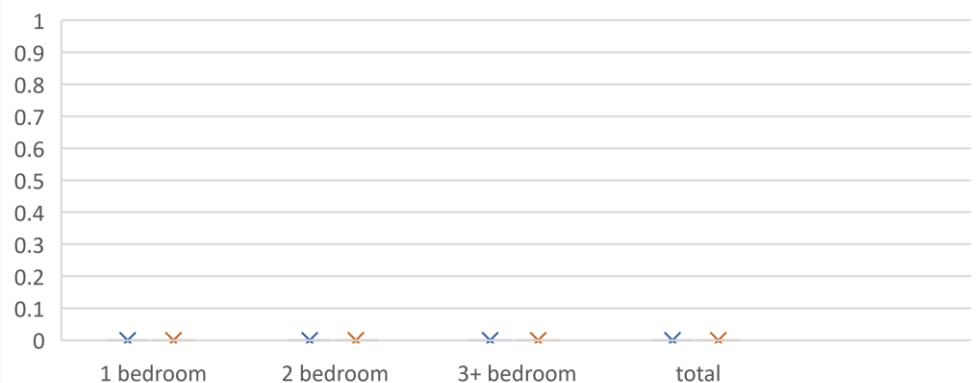


Figure 2 - Vacancy Rates for Private Apartments in South Dundas



According to Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation the rental vacancy rates for Private Apartments in South Dundas have been 0 for all dwellings types in 2019 and 2020.

# AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP IN DUNDAS COUNTY

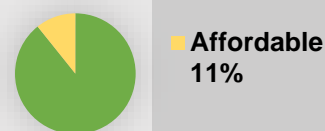
The Provincial Policy Statement of the Provincial Planning Act defines affordable home ownership as “the least expensive of:

1. **Housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area; or**
2. **Housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households.”**

Using data from the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table, calculating affordable housing based on the second option resulted in the least expensive threshold for affordable housing in North Dundas and South Dundas:

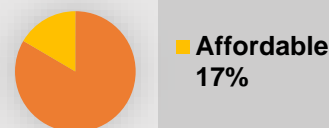
Based on the total median income of households for North Dundas which is \$78,192 and the Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table (2020) North Dundas total income falls under the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile which deems \$287,400 an affordable house price when not exceeding 30 percent of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households. Between August 1, 2020 - August 1, 2021 a total of 26 houses out of 216 were sold without exceeding 30% of gross annual median household income.

**Figure 3 - Percentage of Affordable Homes Sold in North Dundas 2020-2021**



Based on the total median income for South Dundas which is \$65,067 and the Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table (2020) South Dundas total income falls under the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile which deems \$236,500 an affordable house price when not exceeding 30 percent of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households. Between August 1, 2020 - August 1, 2021 a total of 41 houses out of 207 were sold without exceeding 30% of gross annual household income.

**Figure 4 - Percentage of Affordable Homes Sold in South Dundas 2020-2021**



When considering the population as a whole we must also consider that there is a drastic difference in figures when comparing median household income to median individual income in North Dundas and South Dundas, resulting in;

Figure 5

Location	Median Total Income of Individuals	Affordable Monthly Housing Costs	Percentage of Affordable Homes Sold (2020-2021)
North Dundas	\$37,581	\$939.00	2%
South Dundas	\$32,117	\$803.00	4%

# CURRENT HOUSING SUPPORTS

## SOUTH DUNDAS

### Cornwall Area Housing Corporation

Cornwall Area Housing Corporation operates on a non-profit basis offering affordable housing (RGI) for seniors, families and adults in Cornwall and SD&G.

- 10 Dundas Street, Iroquois ON, K0E 1K0, Canada (42 units, seniors)
- 12446 County Rd 2, Morrisburg, ON, K0C 1X0, Canada (30 units, seniors)



### J.W. MacIntosh Community Support Services Private Non-Profit – Affordable Housing Units

J.W. MacIntosh Community Support Services provide affordable housing units in Williamsburg, Ontario for mature adults, seniors and community living as well as community support services.

- Tolly Place - 4327 Hess Street, Williamsburg, ON, K0C 2H0, Canada (20 units, mature adults)
- Community Living - 12445 County Road 18, Williamsburg, ON, K0C 2H0, Canada (6 units, adults with a disability)
- Community Living - 4305 Schell St. Williamsburg, ON, K0C 2H0, Canada (6 units, adults with a disability)
- Park Drive Villa - 4324 Villa Drive, Williamsburg, ON, K0C 2H0, Canada (38 units, seniors)

### Coming Soon: House of Lazarus Private Non-Profit – Affordable Housing Units

House of Lazarus aspires to fill in the gaps in services and resources for residents in surrounding communities. Linking Hands is an initiative created by the House of Lazarus to reduce poverty in Dundas County by listening to and addressing the needs of the people throughout the county's communities. These units will be ready to rent Fall 2021.

- 4326 County Road 31, Williamsburg, ON, 20C 2H0, Canada (2, 3-bedroom family units)

**50%** of the current housing supports are in fair condition

**50%** of the current housing supports are in good condition

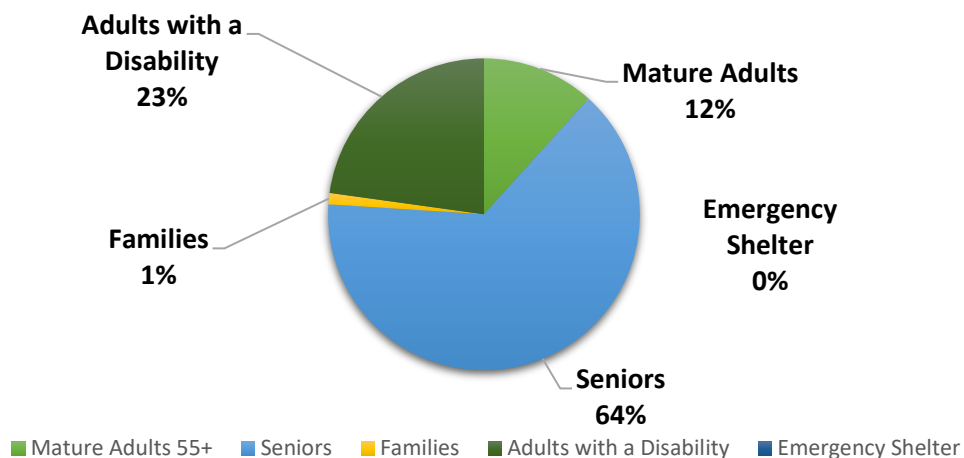


## Community Living

Community Living Dundas County provides services and supports to adults with an intellectual disability and their families through education, accommodation support and leadership training.

- Live in group homes: 2 homes in Morrisburg, accommodating 10 individuals
- Supported independent living: 15 individuals being assisted in South Dundas
- Home Share: 2 individuals being assisted in South Dundas

**Figure 6 - Current Population of Housing Supports in South Dundas**



**All housing supports through Cornwall Area Housing Corporation in Dundas County currently have a significant waitlist – Individuals are encouraged to find their own rental housing in the private market, while they wait**



## North Dundas

### Cornwall Area Housing Corporation

Cornwall Area Housing Corporation operates on a non-profit basis offering affordable housing (RGI) for seniors, families and adults in Cornwall and SD&G

- 49 Water Street, Chesterville, ON, K0C 1H0, Canada (25 units, seniors)
- 517 Albert Street, Winchester, ON, K0C 2K0, Canada (36 units, seniors)
- 510 Beach Street, Winchester, ON K0C 2K0, Canada (6 units, seniors)



### Community Living

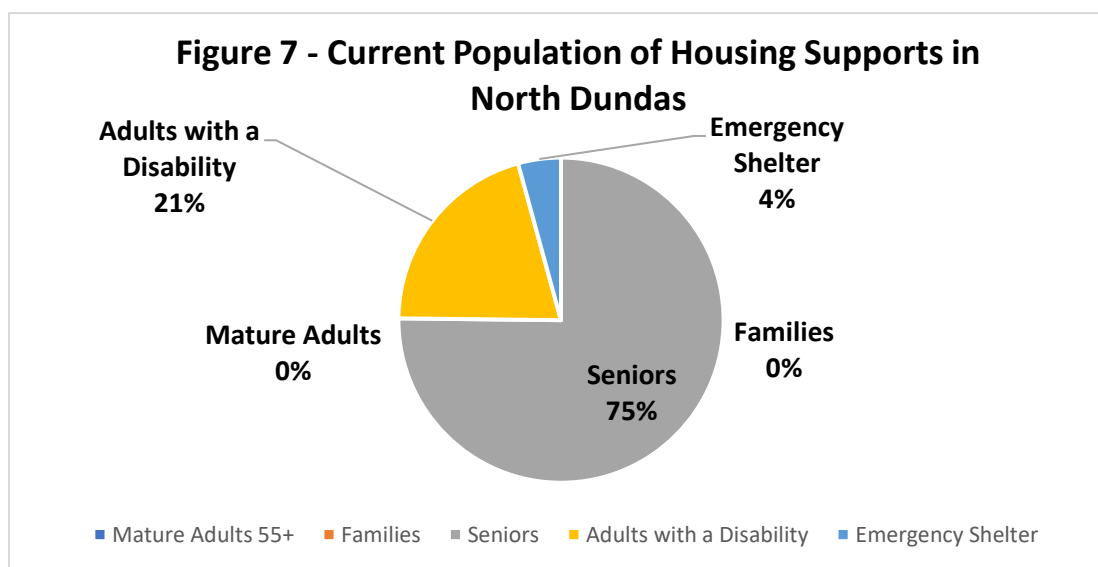
Community Living Dundas County provides services and supports to adults with an intellectual disability and their families through education, accommodation support and leadership training.

- Live in group homes: 2 homes in Winchester, accommodating 12 individuals.
- Supported independent living: 15 individuals being assisted in North Dundas
- Home Share: 2 individuals being assisted in North Dundas

### Naomi's Family Resource Centre - Emergency Shelter

Provides confidential, safe and secure emergency shelter for women with or without children who have been physically, emotionally, sexually or financially threatened or harassed in the Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry Counties of Ontario Canada.

Naomi's Family Resource Centre (6 rooms, fully occupied at 11 individuals)



# EMERGING THEMES FROM DUNDAS COUNTY AGENCIES

There is a lack of affordable housing

Limited accessible units

We are in a housing crisis

Clients are often in emergency situations

Support pets are not welcome in all available units, risking client's mental health

Clients are being sent hours away to be housed because there is nothing available here which eliminates their support systems

Clients are moving back in with their parents

We hear from multiple clients weekly and have nowhere to send them

In the summer months many clients live in tents and sheds to avoid homelessness

Clients are experiencing mental health issues and high stress levels

Clients request funds to go to Ottawa so they can access shelters

The following agencies provided insight:

Habitat for Humanity

Social Housing Division – City of Cornwall

Carefor Healthy and Community Services – Winchester

JW MacIntosh Community Support Services

Naomi's Family Resource Centre

Canadian Mental Health Association

Ontario Early ON Centre

Community Living Dundas County

Landlords are selling their homes, leaving clients in emergency situations and limited rental opportunities

More clients are moving to unhealthy/stressful places or living in camping trailers year-round to stabilize their housing situation

Clients are living in unsafe living conditions

Multiple individuals remain in their RVs in an RV park for 5-6 months of the year migrating to Florida (or other locations) for the other half of the year (snowbirds) because they can't afford anything else.



# VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

## Dundas County Foodbanks

Lack of affordable housing is one factor that contributes to the instability of those living in poverty. In 2019, Community Food Share and House of Lazarus surveyed their food bank clients in order to gain insight into their clients' needs. 90% of food bank clients rent. With a lack of affordable units to rent and the insecurity in the housing market, foodbank clients are at greater risk. Only 6.5% of food bank clients in Dundas County access subsidized housing. Factoring that there is no subsidized housing for anyone other than seniors in Dundas County, this is not surprising. Choices are being made each month by food bank users to eat or pay for housing costs. In our food bank survey, 51% of clients stated that they had missed meals to pay bills: 27% were paying their rent, 34% were paying their hydro costs.

### BALANCING ACT FOR DUNDAS COUNTY FOOD BANK CLIENTS: PAYING FOR HOUSING OR PAYING FOR FOOD?

"Do I want to have a roof over my head, or do I want to eat?"

Figure 8

**51%** of respondents said they've missed a meal to pay for something else.

What are they paying for?



34% hydro



26% rent



40% other\*

**Some of the most vulnerable populations in need of affordable housing based on feedback from local agencies include:**

- Single adults
- Single parent households
- Individuals dealing with mental health issues and/or addictions
- Individuals with disabilities
- Women and children leaving abusive situations
- Homeless Veterans
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Seniors (emergency/transitional housing)

# HOUSEHOLDS WITH LOW INCOMES IN DUNDAS COUNTY

Individuals and families with low-incomes often reside in rental housing. Below are multiple scenarios outlining monthly expenses, current rental prices and income. In most scenarios the % of income required for rent greatly exceeds the 30% (which is what is deemed affordable).

<i>Figure # 9</i>	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
** includes basic allowance, maximum shelter allowance, GST/HST credit & Ontario Trillium Benefit	One person household, OW	One person household, ODSP	One person household, OAS/GIS	One person household minimum wage (35 hrs a week)
<b>Total Monthly Income</b>	\$825.00**	\$1272.00**	\$1727.00**	\$1960.00
<b>Average Monthly Rent (may or may not include heat &amp; utilities)</b>	bachelor \$917.00	1 bedroom for accessibility \$1125.00	1 bedroom \$1125.00	1 bedroom \$1125.00
<b>Funds remaining</b> For hydro/heat, transportation, clothing, phone, food and everything else	(\$92.00)	\$147.00	\$602.00	\$835.00
<b>% Of income required for rent</b>	111%	88%	65%	57%

<i>Figure #10</i>	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
*Includes basic allowance, maximum shelter allowance, Canada Child Benefit, GST/HST credit & Ontario Trillium Benefit, if they qualify	Family of Four, OW 2 adults ages 31-50 & 2 children age 8 & 14	Family of Four, Full time minimum wage earner 2 adults ages 31-50 & 2 children age 8 & 14	Single parent- household, OW 1 adult age 31-50 & 2 children age 8 & 14
<b>Total Monthly Income</b>	\$2623.00*	\$3633.00*	\$2401.00*
<b>Average Monthly Rent (may or may not include heat &amp; utilities)</b>	3-bedroom \$1559.00	3-bedroom \$1559.00	2-bedroom \$1285.00
<b>Funds remaining</b> for hydro/heat, childcare, transportation, clothing, phone, food and everything else	\$1064.00	\$2074.00	\$1116.00
<b>% Of income required for rent</b>	59%	43%	54%

# HOMELESS VETERANS

Homelessness among Veterans is a significant problem. It is common for Veterans to experience traumatic brain injuries, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after providing services in the military, which are two of the most substantial risk factors for homelessness. Like the general homeless population, veterans are at a significantly increased risk of homelessness if they have low socioeconomic status, a mental health disorder, and/or a history of substance abuse.

As a part of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy goal to end homelessness by 2025, a province-wide enumeration of homeless persons was undertaken for the first time in Ontario. The Social & Housing Services Department, as the Service Manager for the City of Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, conducted an enumeration during the week of July 18th to 24th, 2018 utilizing the period prevalence method. A total of 83 surveys were completed, with 34 meeting the provincial criteria for homelessness.



Based on the surveys completed 68% of homeless individuals are living in Cornwall, and 32% of homeless individuals are living in North Dundas (this data is based on the surveys that were completed and may not be a true representative of all homeless individuals throughout SD&G).

12% of the respondents indicated that they have served in the military.

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**The Royal Canadian Legion is committed to making a difference in the lives of Veterans and their families, providing services in communities, and remembering the men and women who fought for our country.**

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**There are 4 Royal Canadian Legions in Dundas County:**

- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 48 – Morrisburg, Ontario
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 370 – Iroquois, Ontario
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 434 – Chesterville, Ontario
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108 – Winchester, Ontario

<b>In North Dundas 30% of homeless individuals have identified as Homeless Veterans</b>
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# HOMELESSNESS IN OUR BACKYARD

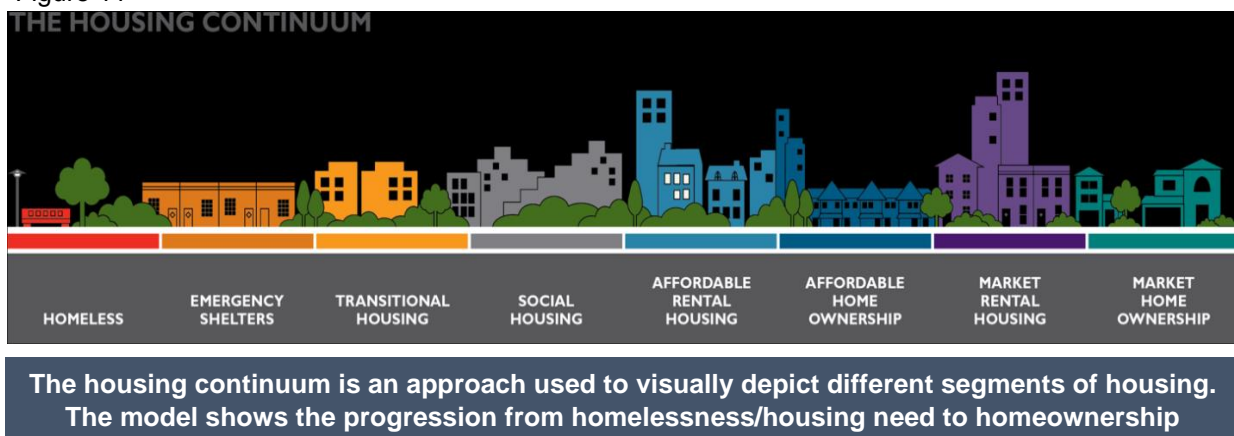
**“The most vulnerable in our community have nowhere to live a safe, healthy life.” – Cathy Ashby**

In rural Dundas County one may be surprised that homelessness exists. It certainly is not as visible as in large urban cities, however homelessness, especially hidden homelessness occurs at a greater rate in rural areas than in cities. According to the Rural Ontario Institute's 2017 report "Homelessness and Hidden Homelessness in Rural and Northern Ontario" states that people in Ontario living in rural areas were more likely to have experienced hidden homelessness at some point in their lives than were people living in cities (urban 7.5%; rural 9.7%). Hidden homelessness may include staying with family or friends, substandard accommodation, temporary accommodation, squatting, institutionalization leading to homelessness upon release, and outdoor accommodation in forests, encampments, or camps. In the City of Cornwall's 2019 Homelessness Enumeration Report, not only did homelessness exist in Dundas County, but 11 of the 34 people surveyed, who met the province's definition of homelessness, came from North Dundas. There are people in Dundas County living in camping trailers year-round, living fulltime in substandard motel rooms, staying in abusive situations because at least they have a roof over their heads and living in their vehicles. Causes of hidden homelessness include poverty, mental illness, addictions, sickness and illness, inadequate or precarious housing and domestic violence. In other words, the most vulnerable in our community have no where to live a safe, healthy life.



## THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

Figure 11





## WHERE WILL WE LIVE?

September 3, 2021

I was recently asked to write a short testimony on the difficulties of finding suitable housing in Dundas County, Ontario. As an individual that has been relentlessly searching for my own home since September 2019, I feel experienced on this subject.

I am a single middle-aged woman with no children. Unfortunately, over the last few years I have been unable to work due to several medical issues. This has left me with the shame of having to require government assistance. The fact that I have the independence to move anywhere in the township and the flexibility to adjust size and space of rental accommodations has been of no benefit to finding a place to live.

In two years, I have looked at only three rental properties in Iroquois, Morrisburg, and South Mountain that were barely close to affordable. From Ingleside, Long Sault, and Cornwall (including Martin town and Newington), I saw seven other rentals that were a minimum of \$800 monthly, plus utilities. A few of these units also fell below standard living conditions, not to mention, beyond my financial means.

Another difficulty I have faced in finding a new home is being the owner of an eight-year-old therapy companion canine. Despite the fact that "working dogs" have impeccable social and behavioural demeanors, I have been refused immediately as a prospective tenant.

Despite the fact I have applied for RGI - Rent Geared to Income, Rent Supplement Program, and COHB, the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit – there hasn't been anything available, and the wait-list for subsidized housing units through the Cornwall Social Housing Division, is a minimum of five years wait. Being a client and having an intensive case manager through CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association), I've also tried utilizing their resources to no avail.

In August of 2020, I developed asthma and mold toxicity from the place I was living in. In my extensive and desperate search for a suitable and healthy home, the "only" organization to come to my aid was the House of Lazarus. A local non-profit organization that immediately provided me with emergency funds and a lovely, healthy place to stay. This tiny home was provided to me for three months free of charge, while I continued my search. Still unable to find a more suitable place to live, I returned to my previous dwelling, where I currently reside.

The demand for affordable housing is increasing by the day and something must be done! If the lack of housing doesn't change in the Dundas County area, the number of homeless people will steadily increase.

Community Member



# HOUSING: ROLES OF EACH GOVERNMENT

**All levels of government play a role in housing development and housing supports in Dundas County.**

North Dundas and South Dundas are two of the 6 lower tier municipalities comprising the upper tier municipality of SDG Counties. The municipal responsibilities set out under the Municipal Act, Planning Act and other provincial legislation are split between SDG Counties and each respective lower tier government (South Stormont, North Stormont, South Glengarry, North Glengarry, South Dundas and North Dundas).



## **Consolidated Municipal Service Manager**

The Provincially designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for the City and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is the City of Cornwall Housing Division, which is governed by the Housing Services Act, 2011 and its regulations. As required the service manager developed a 10-year housing and homelessness plan, strategy 8 states “to use tools available in both city and county official plans to encourage a broad range of affordable housing options” which can be found reflected in the recommendations. The service manager has the responsibility for the administration of social housing and other social services programs as directed by the province. The Social Housing Division is accountable for the administration of 4 publicly funded housing providers in Dundas County.

Community Housing and Homelessness 10-year plan for Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, called Vision 2025, was released in 2014. Vision 2025 focuses on 4 community visions.

Figure 12

<b>Community Vision #1</b>	<b>People experiencing a housing crisis are housed or sheltered</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To ensure a system of services and supports is in place to help those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless to obtain housing.
<b>Community Vision #2</b>	<b>People who are currently housed but at risk of becoming homeless remain housed</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To ensure a system of services and supports is in place to help those who are at risk of becoming homeless to maintain/stabilize their housing.
<b>Community Vision #3</b>	<b>Suitable existing housing stock is maintained</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To support and promote efforts that help maintain and preserve suitable existing housing stock in the community.
<b>Community Vision #4</b>	<b>The supply of appropriate housing is enhanced</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To encourage the development of appropriate and affordable new housing.

## **Housing Programs Available through Cornwall Social Housing:**

### **Social Housing (rent geared to income) Program**

Social Housing refers to rental housing developed with the assistance of government and subsidized by government for people with low to moderate incomes, seniors, or people with special needs who can live, with supports, in the community. Subsidies are based on the tenant's ability to pay, with rents calculated at approximately 30% of gross monthly household income up to market rent, also known as Rent Geared to Income. Applicants complete the Social Housing Application, if eligible; they will be placed on the waitlist.

### **Rent Supplement Program**

A Rent Supplement is a nominal subsidy paid to the landlord on behalf of a household in need of rental assistance, depending on the household income it can be either \$100 or \$200 a month. Maximum time frame allowed to be in receipt of rent supplement is dependent on funding availability. The process involves the applicant completing a pre-determination package to determine eligibility, if they qualify, they are added to the waitlist.

### **Ontario Renovates**

The Ontario Renovates Program is a Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) program for low- and modest-income households that provide funding for major repairs and rehabilitation that may be required to make a home safe and modifications to increase accessibility. The city of Cornwall as Service manager, administer the Ontario Renovates funding to eligible property owners within the City of Cornwall and the United Counties of SD&G. Once the program is launched applications are available online and accepted until funds are depleted.

### **Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)**

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) is a federal-provincial housing allowance program. The purpose of the COHB program is to increase the affordability of rental housing by providing an income-tested, Portable Housing Benefit (PHB) payment directly to eligible households in housing need that are on, or are eligible to be on, social housing waiting lists and to households in housing need living in community housing.

### **Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)**

Originally implemented in January 2013, the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) is a 100 per cent provincially funded outcomes-based program that aims to prevent and end homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness services for people

**Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) ends in March 2028 or until the funding is exhausted.**

**Out of 65 applicants for Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, 5 are from Dundas County.**

**Ontario Renovates is launched once a year, by the end of the first launch week there are more than enough applicants to exhaust the funding. In 2021 over 100 applications were received, and around 45 were approved.**

**For Ontario Renovates in Dundas County, 5 individuals were approved in 2020 and in 2021 only 3 individuals.**

experiencing homelessness and for people at-risk of homelessness. CHPI is administered under a service agreement between the Minister of Housing and each Service Manager (SM). The responsibility for delivering CHPI in local community's rests with 47 SMs across Ontario. These SMs are provided with funding and flexibility to offer programs and services to meet the objectives and outcomes of CHPI. CHPI helps with rental arrears, hydro arrears, fuel for heating, moving assistance, repatriation, pest control and minor home repairs.

## Crisis Bed

Individuals reporting to be homeless are sent to a crisis bed at Riverview Manor or a motel. A maximum stay is permitted, and the individual must comply with program requirements to obtain and secure stable housing. The program can be accessed once every 6 months.

## SDG Counites

SDG Counties is an upper tier government comprising 6 lower tier municipalities, including North Dundas and South Dundas. SDG Counites is responsible for Economic development, corporate and financial services, court services, SDG libraries, transportation and planning. SDG Counites play a role in planning for housing across the Counties. The Counites develop an Official Plan which includes housing, employment and population projections for each municipal government. They work with townships/municipalities to increase infrastructure needs such as water and sewage.



## Projected Total Population Growth, 2016-2036

Figure 13

Municipality	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Net change	Compound Annual Growth
North Dundas	11,715	12,107	12,640	13,099	13,236	1,522	0.6
South Dundas	11,173	11,252	11,489	11,654	11,657	484	0.2

## Projected Housing Unit Growth, 2016-2036

Figure 14

Municipality	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Net change	Compound Annual Growth
North Dundas	4,592	4,866	5,118	5,352	5,467	875	0.9
South Dundas	4,583	4,727	4,852	4,962	5,014	431	0.4

## Projected Employment Growth, 2016-2036

Figure 15

Municipality	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Net change	Compound Annual Growth
North Dundas	4,356	4,230	4,027	3,878	3,577	-779	-1.0
South Dundas	4,097	3,968	3,810	3,673	3,562	-534	- 0.7



## The Ontario Government

Introduced by the Ontario Government in the spring of 2019, Bill 108, The More Homes, More Choice Act, came into effect on September 3, 2019 and amends 13 statutes across multiple ministries that impact municipalities and reform the land use planning process, including amendments to the Provincial Planning Act. The Provincial Planning Act sets out the parameters for land use planning and development in Ontario and provides a range of planning tools that municipalities can use to address community housing needs, including affordable housing.



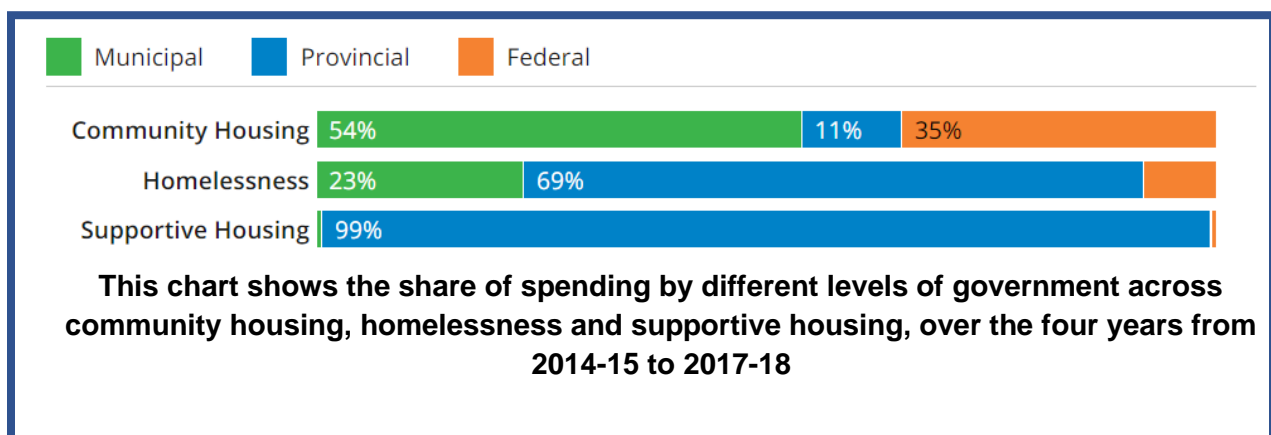
### Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)

OPHI is one of the three provincially-delivered and cost-matched initiatives under the federal National Housing Strategy. This initiative aims to provide Service Managers with access to flexible funding to address local housing priorities and improve access to affordable housing options. It is made up of five components:

- (i) Rental Housing Component
- (ii) Homeownership Component
- (iii) Ontario Renovates Component
- (iv) Rental Assistance Component
- (v) Housing Support Services Component



Figure 16



## The Federal Government

The National Housing Strategy was launched by the Federal Government in November 2017 and is a 10-year, \$40 billion plan to expand and sustain the supply of affordable housing in Canada. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is the Federal Crown Corporation responsible to undertake the range of initiatives under the strategy.



CMHC initiatives:

- The Seed Funding Program supports affordable housing through interest-free loans and/or non-repayable contributions and is designed to cover the pre-development costs.
- The National Housing Co-Investment Fund provides low-cost loans and capital contributions for the construction, repair and renewal of affordable housing.
- The Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCF) is a rental housing supply program financing new construction rental projects that are financially viable without requiring ongoing operating subsidies.
- The Federal Lands Initiative is a \$200-million-dollar fund that supports the transfer of surplus federal lands and buildings to eligible applicants for the development of affordable housing.

## Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)

COCHI is one of three provincially-delivered and cost-matched initiatives under the federal National Housing Strategy. The goal of COCHI is to protect affordability for households in social housing, to support the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply, and to expand the supply of community housing over time.

## Canada's National Housing Strategy

Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS) aims to provide Canadians across the country with access to housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. One of the initiatives that will deliver on the NHS is the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF), which is administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Habitat for Humanity Canada, on behalf of local Habitats, secured a \$35.8 million financial commitment from CMHC over a 3-year period (2019-2021) to build decent and affordable homes.

**“We began to address the issue, but need support in solving it.” – Juliette Labossiere, Executive Director of United Way and Committee Member of Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee**

## FINDINGS

- SDG Counties play a role in planning for housing across the Counties. The Counties develop an Official Plan which includes housing, employment and population projections for each municipal government. They work with townships/municipalities to increase infrastructure needs such as water and sewage.
- Community Housing and Homelessness 10-year plan for Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, called Vision 2025, was released in 2014. Vision 2025 focuses on 4 community visions.
- SDG Counties Council approved a new tax ratio for multiple housing units. This has created an equal playing field for the development of multi unit dwellings and single housing units. This has had a positive effect on new housing developments in North Dundas. More than 50% of upcoming developments in North Dundas are for multi unit housing including semi-detached and town homes.
- North Dundas is in the midst of a surge in new housing developments. 350 units are being developed over the next two years which equates to a typical 10 years of housing growth. Of course, this dramatic growth is causing infrastructure issues. Maintaining an adequate water supply is currently the biggest issue facing Winchester and Chesterville.
- Habitat for Humanity: North Dundas donated land for one Habitat for Humanity build. South Dundas has donated land for one Habitat for Humanity build. Habitat for Humanity holds interest free mortgages for its homeowners



### **"WE FOLLOW THE LAND"**

Founded in 1998, Habitat for Humanity Cornwall & The Counties services the area of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry including Cornwall and Cornwall Island. We are working towards a world where everyone has a

safe and decent place to live. Our mission is to mobilize volunteers and community partners in building affordable housing and promoting homeownership as a means to breaking the cycle of poverty. Once completed, Habitat homes are appraised and sold to families at fair market value with a no down payment, no interest mortgage, held by Habitat and amortized approximately 20 years. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments go into a revolving fund, which is used to build more local homes.

"Working with community partners, Habitat for Humanity Cornwall & The Counties has identified the importance of securing suitable, affordable land so we may continue to build affordable housing units in our service area. It's quite simple really - follow donated land and we are able to put more resources into building more homes in our community." – Leigh Taggart, Habitat for Humanity

- SDG Counties oversee housing planning for South Dundas. The Municipality reviews and approves housing development projects as well as oversees enforcement of building codes.
- A developer in South Dundas is looking at developing affordable housing units in Iroquois.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- A very low percentage of homes being sold in Dundas County are deemed affordable. Affordable doesn't mean safe, the houses that are deemed affordable (including mobile homes) are often in need of major repairs, and are in poor living condition.
- The most vulnerable in our community have nowhere to live a safe, healthy life.
- All current social housing stock in Dundas County has a significant waitlist.
- Barriers to affordable housing include: the lack of, large families, poor credit, nothing local, etc.,
- The current housing supports are mostly for seniors.
- Many individuals in Dundas County are in dire need of housing, and have limited time without ended up homeless.
- We cannot do this alone.

### Places for People Dundas County

In 2018, the Linking Hands Housing Committee started to look at affordable housing projects across the province to determine which would work best in Dundas County. The Places for People model from Haliburton County was chosen. This model used private investors to purchase buildings which could be renovated to provide affordable housing units. The Places for People model also partners tenants with mentors who work with them to reach the tenant's personal goals. 5% of rent is placed in a trust fund for the tenant to use when emergencies arise or when they leave the rental unit. In Haliburton County several tenants used the trust fund as a down payment for home ownership. The Linking Hands Housing committee has been dedicated to finding appropriate buildings in Dundas County, finding private investors and creating forms such as rental agreements. This process has not been easy, and has taken years to find private investors and secure our first home. Members of this committee include Community Living Dundas County, Naomi's Family Resource Centre, Roy McMurtry Legal Clinic, City of Cornwall Housing, Habitat for Humanity, House of Lazarus' Linking Hands and community members. In spite of a Covid-19 delay, in 2021 private investors were found as well as a suitable building. The building will provide two- three-bedroom family units.

**“The cost of buying a home is becoming out of reach for many and affordable rentals are too hard to find. Plus, the cost of housing is hurting Ontario's economy, making it harder to attract investment and create jobs.” Steve Clark, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 01 Recommendation 1 Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Establish an affordable housing advisory committee. The committee will work along side the Local Governments within SDG Counties to provide recommendations, data, affordable housing opportunities and what should be prioritized. The advisory committee will:



- Put into place mechanisms to ensure key advocacy roles are being carried out on an ongoing basis.
- Take a leadership role in facilitating community partnerships to meet affordable housing needs.
- Coordinate housing registries.
- Encourage private and public partnerships to develop affordable housing.
- Provide data/stat updates to the local governments to ensure the public are being addressed on current and future housing needs.
- Provide data/updates to the local governments so they can provide and facilitate public education to develop community support.
- Advocate for the vulnerable populations in the community and provide resources (linkage to City of Cornwall services on The Township of North Dundas and the Municipality of South Dundas Websites).
- Recommend/inform the local governments on poor living conditions within our community that could benefit from repair.

### Motive:

- Establishes affordable housing as an ongoing focus within the local governments.
- Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee is a committee that has already been formed to address affordable housing within Dundas, multiple programs have been started within this committee such as, Places for People, Landlord Registry, Roommate Registry, Tiny Home Project, Data Collection and Hope Bags for the Homeless. Select members of the committee are willing to be a part of the advisory committee and work alongside the local governments.

## **02 Recommendation 2** **Annually Examine Housing Needs and Policies**

The local governments within SDG Counties and the advisory committee annually identify and report on changing housing needs, land use, permits, new builds and data surrounding these factors. The local governments then bring forth this information to the other levels of the government and the community as a whole. Such as:

- Type and location of residential building permits issued
- Number and average of affordable rental dwelling units and type of dwelling
- Number and average of affordable housing dwelling units and type of dwelling
- Housing and affordable incentives utilized
- Locations of affordable housing and rental housing
- Vacancy Rates for affordable housing and affordable rental units
- New developments of affordable housing and location
- Feedback from agencies on waitlists in need of affordable rentals/housing
- Other applicable information
- Identifiable trends and emerging issues and possible new options and alternative strategies to assist with enhancing affordable housing opportunities

### **Motive:**

- Conducting research annually allows the local governments to remain in a head position to meet affordable housing requirements
- Bringing forth information annually keeps the community and government in the forefront
- Provides context for appropriate changes
- Identifies emerging issues and opportunities

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## **03 Recommendation 3** **Housing First Approach**

Taking a 'housing first' approach involves developing a policy directed at meeting affordable housing needs. The local governments within SDG Counties lands would be considered for affordable housing before being put to any other use.

### **Motive:**

- Housing first is an effective approach to end homelessness for individuals experiencing a housing crisis within our community.
- Opportunity to provide more affordable and stable housing within our community.

## 04 Recommendation 4 Financial Incentives

The local governments within SDG Counties use financial incentives to offer financial assistance to providers of affordable housing. Such as:

- Waiving development charges under certain conditions.
- Selling or leasing surplus municipal lands for nominal amounts.
- Start-up grants, low interest loans and revolving funds.
- Request provincial approval to create new classes for property tax purposes that reduce annual property taxes on affordable housing and rental apartments.
- Exempt affordable housing projects entirely from property tax.



## 05 Recommendation 5 Regulatory Approach

Regulatory powers and responsibilities can be used strategically as a part of a comprehensive approach to meet affordable housing needs. Such as:

- Official plans
- Zoning by-laws
- Site plan agreements
- Fire and building codes and licensing provisions
- Reach agreements and trade-offs with developers to ensure some forms of affordable housing are provided in return for various planning concessions



## 06 Recommendation 6 Annually Determine Affordable Home Ownership

Requesting staff to adopt the calculation of affordable homeownership proposed by the Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee and to calculate the affordable homeownership threshold on an annual basis.

The 2014 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement definition states that affordable homeownership homes are “the least expensive of:

- Housing with a purchase price which results in annual accommodation costs not exceeding 30% of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households (households with incomes in the lowest 60% for the regional market area); or
- Housing for which the purchase price is at least 10% below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area.”

In 2020, the figure for the first calculation works out to \$287,400 in North Dundas and \$236,500 in South Dundas, while the second is \$425,569 in North Dundas and \$337,440 in South Dundas, with the first being the “least expensive” and therefore the threshold for affordable home ownership in North Dundas and South Dundas.

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## 07 Recommendation 7 Access to Rental Data

The local governments within SDG Counties request that the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) routinely release to the township/municipalities rental related data, including annual surveys of market rents and other relevant rental information at a municipal level, in a format that addresses any privacy matters so that township/municipalities can more easily calculate accurate market rents to develop affordable housing policies.

### **Motive:**

- Limited residential market rent data currently available
- Difficult to calculate residential market rents and comply with senior government affordable housing policy requirements



## **08 Recommendation 8**

### **Annually Determine Affordable Rental Housing**

The local governments within SDG Counties adopt the calculation of affordable rental housing (by unit type) as proposed by Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee in order to determine affordable rentals threshold for North Dundas and South Dundas on an annual basis. Calculation steps are detailed below:

1. Utilize the most recent census figure on average shelter cost for rent which is produced every 4 years and includes all rentals in North Dundas and South Dundas;
2. Gross this figure up (step 1) using the consumer price index unadjusted “all items” basket for Ontario;
3. Establish a ratio of how much rents by bedroom types differ off the average rents in Eastern Ontario using Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s annual market survey (e.g., in 2018 CMHC determined the average market rent in eastern Ontario was \$1,114; the average market rent for a bachelor was .757 of the average, a one bedroom .929, two bedroom 1.061, three bedroom 1.287 and four bedroom 2.344);
4. Multiply this ratio (step 3) by the 2018 avg. shelter costs for North Dundas/South Dundas (step 2) to produce an average market rent for North Dundas and South Dundas for various bedroom types; and
5. Apply an 80% affordability threshold (which is what the City of Cornwall uses to establish affordable rents) to the result of step 4 to establish North Dundas and South Dundas affordable rents.

A breakdown of this calculation can be found in appendix C.

#### **Motive:**

- Utilizes a modified calculation using available data.
- Allows annual up-to-date calculations.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee, SDG Counties, The Municipality of South Dundas, The Township of North Dundas, Dundas Community Members, and local agencies who contributed to the report.



**AUTHOR:** Kristina McDermott, Linking Hands Coordinator, House of Lazarus  
Cathy Ashby, Executive Director, House of Lazarus

**CONTRIBUTERS:** Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee Members

# GLOSSARY

**Affordable Housing:** The most basic definition of affordable housing is where a household spends no more than 30% of its gross household income towards shelter. Housing that meets this test and where the shelter costs are below the average market costs in the area is deemed to be affordable housing.

**Community Housing:** Housing which was originally built by the province for social housing programs and which continues to operate in the community. Residents of this housing have rents that are typically calculated on a rent-geared-to-income basis, making this form of housing inherently affordable.

**Homelessness:** A situation in which an individual or a family lacks appropriate, permanent, or stable housing; lacks the means or ability to acquire appropriate housing; or faces the immediate prospect of losing housing.

**Housing cost burden, owner:** Households who pay more than 30 percent of their income for their mortgage and utilities.

**Incentive Zoning:** Township/Municipal and county planning ordinances that allow a developer to develop in a way that ordinarily would not be permitted in exchange for a public benefit that would otherwise not be required.

**Inclusionary Zoning:** Township/Municipal and county planning ordinances that require a specific share of new construction be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes. This integration of affordable units into market-rate projects creates mixed-income communities, where households of different income levels have access to the same community services and amenities.

**Advocacy:** The definition of advocacy is the act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, or thing.

**Poverty:** A state of living characterized by lack, deprivation, and an inability to obtain the basic necessities.

**Low Vacancy Rates:** Renters looking for affordable rental homes have limited choices.

## APPENDIX A: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cathy Ashby – Executive Director, House of Lazarus

Kristina McDermott – Advocate, House of Lazarus

Brenda Laviolette – Coordinator, Community Living Dundas County

David van Noppen – Owner, More Than Enough

Rebecca van Noppen – Communications and Coaching Care Director, More Than Enough

Debbie Boardman – Executive Director, Community Living Dundas County

Mike Hayes – Community Member

Sandy Casselman - Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, The Chesterville Record

Nanda Wubs – Community Advocate, Community Foodshare

Meaghan Hartley – Interim Shelter Manager, Naomi's Family Resource Centre

Juliette Labossiere – Executive Director, United Way

Robert Coulombe – Staff Lawyer, Deputy Director at Roy McMurtry Legal Clinic

Deborah Thomson – Director, Naomi's Family Resource Centre

Mario Bissonnette – City of Cornwall Housing

Patti Carson – Community Developer, Roy McMurtry Legal Clinic

Rob Fraser – Pastor, South Gate Church

Shelley Spruit – Community Member

*The Dundas County Housing Initiative Committee came together as we were all working on individual projects and thought we would be stronger as a team, working together and sharing valuable resources with each other. We all have the same vision which is to change the status quo when it comes to affordable housing within our county.*

# APPENDIX B: CURRENT DUNDAS COUNTY HOUSING INITIATIVE PROJECTS

## EMERGENCY HOUSING

- **Tiny Home Project:** The tiny home is used for an emergency, transitional and/or affordable housing up to 60 days. The tiny home provides a safe place to stay, as well as provide the opportunity to be connected with local resources for support.
- **Emergency/Transitional Shelter:** Connecting with agencies in Ottawa to form partnerships.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- **Places for People:** Places for people is a program that offers affordable housing, an emergency savings plan for tenants as well as a mentorship program.
- **Landlord Registry:** A registry for agencies to access.
- **Roommate Registry:** The registry is accessible to the public, supplies a toolkit for homeowners and roommates as well as inventory of room rentals.



## HOMELESSNESS

- **Hope Bags for the Homeless:** Hope Bags have been put in place to provide basic necessities and resources to individuals who are experiencing homelessness within our community. We are also connected with the Community Officer of SD&G, in which the OPP keeps 1 male and 1 female hope bag on hand.
- **Emergency Homeless Plan:** A plan put in place if an individual comes to us who is experiencing homelessness.

## EDUCATION

- **Data Collection:** Dundas Housing Initiative has been collecting housing data, collecting stories and sitting in on presentations from local agencies regarding housing concerns.

# APPENDIX C: FORMULA FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

## South Dundas

Most recent census figure (gathered in 2015) on average shelter cost of rent which includes all rentals in South Dundas - **\$858.00**

Using the consumer price index for Ontario (for June 16, 2021, the CPI is 1.426) Resulting in an average shelter cost of **\$1224.00** in South Dundas.

Ratio of how much rents by bedroom types differ off the average rents in Eastern Ontario using Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual market survey (in 2018 CMHC determined the average market rent in Eastern Ontario was \$1114.

Average market rent for a bachelor - .757

Average market rent for a one bedroom - .929

Average market rent for a two bedroom – 1.061

Average market rent for a three bedroom – 1.287

Average market rent for a four bedroom – 2.344

By multiplying these ratios by the 2018 average shelter costs of South Dundas we have produced an average market rent for South Dundas:

**Bachelor - \$926.00**

**One bedroom - \$1137.00**

**Two bedroom - \$1299.00**

**Three bedroom - \$1575.00**

**Four bedroom - \$2869.00**

After applying an 80% affordability threshold (which is what City of Cornwall uses to establish affordable rents) we have established affordable rents for South Dundas are:

**Bachelor - \$741.00**

**One bedroom - \$910.00**

**Two bedroom - \$1039.00**

**Three bedroom - \$1260.00**

**Four bedroom - \$2295.00**

## North Dundas

Most recent census figure (gathered in 2015) on average shelter cost of rent which includes all rentals in North Dundas - **\$840.00**

Using the consumer price index for Ontario (for June 16, 2021, the CPI is 1.426) Resulting in an average shelter cost of **\$1198.00** in North Dundas.

Ratio of how much rents by bedroom types differ off the average rents in Eastern Ontario using Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual market survey (in 2018 CMHC determined the average market rent in Eastern Ontario was \$1114.

Average market rent for a bachelor - .757

Average market rent for a one bedroom - .929

Average market rent for a two bedroom – 1.061

Average market rent for a three bedroom – 1.287

Average market rent for a four bedroom – 2.344

By multiplying these ratios by the 2018 average shelter costs of North Dundas we have produced an average market rent for North Dundas:

**Bachelor - \$907.00**

**One bedroom - \$1113.00**

**Two bedroom - \$ 1271.00**

**Three bedroom - \$1542.00**

**Four bedroom - \$2808.00**

After applying an 80% affordability threshold (which is what City of Cornwall uses to establish affordable rents) we have established affordable rents for North Dundas are:

**Bachelor - \$726.00**

**One bedroom - \$890.00**

**Two bedroom - \$1017.00**

**Three bedroom - \$1234.00**

**Four bedroom - \$2246.00**

## APPENDIX D: DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

May 10, 2021: Fiona Carr, Ontario Early ON Centre

May 14, 2021: Stephane Fortin, Canadian Mental Health Association

May 19, 2021: Debbie Boardman, Community Living Dundas County

June 23, 2021: Leigh Taggart, Habitat for Humanity Cornwall and the Counties

June 23, 2021: Mario Bissonnette, City of Cornwall Housing

July 21, 2021: Caroline Rooney, Care For – Winchester

July 21, 2021: Tracy Crowder, JW MacIntosh Community Support Services

June 23, 2021: Meaghan Hartley, Naomi's Family Resource Centre

August 4, 2021: Amy Martin, Director of Planning and Development, Municipality of North Grenville

August 10, 2021: Peter Young, MCIP RPP, Director of Planning Services, SDG Counties

August 16, 2021: Nicole Lowery, Chief Building Official, Municipality of South Dundas

August 16, 2021: Tara FairBairn, Building and Planning Technician, Municipality of South Dundas

August 19, 2021: Calvin Pol, Director of Planning, Building and By-law Enforcement, Township of North Dundas



## APPENDIX E: LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Median incomes in Dundas County

Figure 2 – Vacancy Rates in South Dundas

Figure 3 – Percentage of Affordable Homes sold in North Dundas, 2020-2021

Figure 4 – Percentage of Affordable Homes sold in South Dundas, 2020-2021

Figure 5 – Median Individual Income in North Dundas and South Dundas

Figure 6 - Current Population of Housing Supports in South Dundas

Figure 7 – Current Population of Housing Supports in North Dundas

Figure 8 – Balancing act for Dundas County Food Bank clients: Paying for housing or paying for food?

Figure 9 – Single Individual – % of income spent on housing

Figure 10 – Families - % of income spent on housing

Figure 11 – The Housing Continuum

Figure 12 – Community Housing and Homelessness 10-year plan for Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, 4 community visions

Figure 13 – SDG Counties, Projected Total Population Growth, 2016-2036

Figure 14 – SDG Counties, Projected Housing Unit Growth, 2016-2036

Figure 15 – SDG Counties, Projected Employment Growth, 2016-2036

Figure 16 – Share of spending by program type

## APPENDIX F: SOURCES OF DATA

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<b>ACTION REQUEST – Planning Services</b>	
<b>To:</b>	<b>Warden and Members of Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>November 15, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Request to Initiate an Official Plan Amendment – Priority Bedrock Area</b>

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry direct Staff to initiate an Official Plan Amendment to clarify bedrock resource mapping on the County Official Plan schedules.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report recommends that Council initiates an Official Plan Amendment to clarify mineral aggregate resource mapping in the County Official Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

Section 2.5.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) states that Mineral aggregate resources shall be protected for long-term use and, where provincial information is available, deposits of mineral aggregate resources shall be identified. These include deposits of sand, gravel, and bedrock resources that are suitable for future pit and quarry operations.

Section 2.5.2.5 of the PPS goes on to state that in known deposits of mineral aggregate resources and on adjacent lands, development and activities which would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resources shall only be permitted if:

- a) resource use would not be feasible; or
- b) the proposed land use or development serves a greater long-term public interest; and
- c) issues of public health, public safety and environmental impact are addressed.

Municipalities must identify these resources in their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws, with appropriate setbacks. The SDG Official Plan identifies primary and secondary Mineral Aggregate Reserves (sand and gravel) on Schedule A, while tertiary sand and gravel resources and bedrock resources are identified as constraints on Schedule B. However, through past Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) decisions related to the 2006 County Official Plan, several properties that are identified with potential bedrock that would support a future quarry are shown as an Extractive Resource Lands (Mineral Aggregate Reserve) even though the text of the Official Plan states that this designation is intended to show sand and gravel

reserves only. The designation affects the recommended setback distances and potential evaluation of impacts from adjacent development.

County Council adopted a new Official Plan in July 2017 which was later approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in February 2018. The Township of North Dundas and several other parties submitted appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal that included concerns with the aggregate mapping. North Dundas noted in their appeal that the Sullivan Quarry on County Road 8 was improperly identified on Schedule A. Discrepancies have been identified for properties in other local municipalities based on past OMB decisions.

It is recommended that the Official Plan schedules and text be amended to identify priority bedrock resource areas on Schedule A that would be required to be recognized in local zoning by-laws. This could include large parcels suitable for quarry operations and parcels adjacent to existing quarries. Other properties with bedrock resources would still have protection under the constraints schedule.

Subject to Council direction, County staff would initiate an Official Plan amendment to make these corrections and potentially resolve several appeals without the need for a full hearing. If the affected parties are agreeable to the potential wording of the amendment, the expected public meeting date and consideration by Council would be at the start of the December 20, 2021 Council meeting in order for this to be considered through the Ontario Land Tribunal process.

#### **OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

1. **Recommended:** That Council direct Staff to initiate an Official Plan Amendment to clarify bedrock resource mapping on the County Official Plan schedules.
2. **Not recommended:** That Council direct Staff to seek a resolution to the bedrock resource mapping discrepancies at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

#### **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

The Official Plan amendment will be completed internally, and the only direct cost would be for advertisement. This would save significant time and legal fees as an alternative to either the County or the Township of North Dundas preparing witness statements at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

#### **LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

The amendment to the Official Plan would provide greater clarity for local municipalities in preparing zoning by-laws and reviewing planning applications near areas with mineral aggregate resources.

**RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

The proposal would support **Strategic Priority 1 – Service Delivery – A Smarter Approach** by providing high quality land use planning services to SDG local municipalities with a coordinated approach to protecting mineral aggregate resources.

**OTHERS CONSULTED:**

County solicitor, Township of North Dundas

**ATTACHMENTS:**


N/A

**RECOMMENDED BY:**



**Peter Young**  
**Director of Planning Services**

**APPROVED BY:**



**T.J. Simpson, CAO**

ACTION REQUEST – Please choose a department	
To:	Warden and Members of Council
Date of Meeting:	November 15, 2021
Subject:	Lease Extension Agreement – Catering2Kidz

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That By-law No. 5323, being a by-law to authorize a lease extension agreement between the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and Catering2Kidz, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report recommends extending the existing lease for the commercial kitchen located in the former jail with Catering2Kidz, for an additional 1-year period (January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022). Notwithstanding the end date, and amended lease fees, the terms and conditions associated with the original lease will remain as is.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Catering2Kidz, the current tenants of the commercial kitchen in the former jail, have leased this space from SDG since 2012/2013. This space provides Catering2Kidz with commercial kitchen facilities from which to run their catering business while at the same time providing the County with a modest rental income for an otherwise unused area. Catering2Kidz have been an excellent tenant and staff are of the view that this arrangement remains beneficial for both parties.

The proposed 1-year extension maintains the current lease clauses and amends the lease rate for 2022 to match the 'residential' rent increase of 1.64%

The previous lease extension was for a 3-year term. The tenants have previously indicated a desire for 1-year extensions, and, considering that the County has recently started a feasibility study which may impact this space, staff agree that a 1-year extension at the present time is mutually preferable.

#### **OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

- 1. Extend the Lease Agreement – Recommended.**
- 2. Do Not Extend the Lease Agreement – Not Recommended.** The current arrangement works well for both parties and there is no reason not to extend the lease for a further period of 1 year.



**FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

The proposed lease rate is as follows:

Commencing January 1st, 2022, the rent shall be in the amount of \$930.00 plus HST per month (1.64% increase over current rate). The lease rate covers all operating costs of the County (including the commercial property tax attributable to the operation).

**LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

None.

**RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Creating a mutually beneficial public-private partnership to make efficient use of existing infrastructure aligns with SDG's strategic direction No. 1, ***Service Delivery, a Smarter Approach.***

**OTHERS CONSULTED:**

- Rebecca Russell, Director of Financial Services
- Catering2Kidz (tenants)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- By-law No. 5323
- Lease Extension Agreement

**RECOMMENDED BY:**



Benjamin de Haan, P. Eng  
County Engineer

**APPROVED BY:**



T.J. Simpson, CAO



**THE CORPORATION OF THE UNITED COUNTIES**  
**OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY**

**BY-LAW NO. 5323**

**A BY-LAW** to authorize a lease extension agreement between the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and Catering2Kidz

**WHEREAS** under Section 5 (3) of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 2001, provides that a municipal power, including a municipality's capacity, rights, powers and privileges shall be exercised by by-law unless the municipality is specifically authorized to do otherwise.

**AND WHEREAS** the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry wishes to extend the lease agreement with Catering2Kidz, for commercial kitchen facilities located in the former jail of the County Administration building.

**NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL FOR THE UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. That the Lease Extension Agreement, attached hereto as Schedule "A" to this By-law be hereby approved.
2. That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to execute the Lease Extension Agreement on behalf of the Corporation

**READ** and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2021.

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WARDEN

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CLERK

## LEASE EXTENSION AGREEMENT

Made this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2021

BETWEEN:

The Corporation of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (**Landlord**)  
-and-  
Carolyn Bourdeau and Jennifer Keenan o/a Catering2Kidz (**Tenant**)

In consideration of the initial Lease Agreement between the Parties named above dated November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and subsequent three-year extension executed in September 2018, the Landlord and Tenant agree to extend for an additional one (1) year, said lease of the kitchen and storage area (**the Premise**) located at 13 Water Street West, Cornwall, ON, all obligations and covenants remaining unchanged, with the exception of the following:

**1. RENT:**

- a. Commencing January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the rent shall be in the amount of \$930.00 plus H.S.T. per month;

**2. TERM:**

- a. The Tenant shall have possession of the Premises for the period commencing January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and ending on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the parties hereto have executed this Lease Extension Agreement.

**SIGNED, SEALED & DELIVERED**

**LANDLORD**

Per: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated this      day of      , 2021  
Allan Armstrong, Warden

Per: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated this      day of      , 2021  
Kimberley Casselman, Clerk

**TENANT**

Per: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated this      day of      , 2021  
Carolyn Bourdeau

Per: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated this      day of      , 2021  
Jennifer Keenan

ACTION REQUEST – Transportation Services	
<b>To:</b>	<b>Warden and Members of Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>November 15, 2021</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Speed Limit Updates – Morrisburg and Winchester</b>

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT By-law No. 5324, being a By-law to revise the prescribed rate of speed for motor vehicles driven on certain County roads, be read and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Staff are recommending speed limit changes in both Morrisburg and Winchester based on current development which has taken place in both these communities.

**BACKGROUND:**

With the impending completion of the roundabout and streetscaping work in Morrisburg, as well as the continued expansion of Winchester because of the Wellings project, staff have reviewed the existing speed limits through both of these communities to ascertain if updates to the posted speed were necessary. The following changes are being recommended based on our analysis.

**Morrisburg**

The extension of the existing 50km/hr speed zone was warranted in both the easterly and westerly direction to account for the changing streetscape and to harmonize speeds into the newly reconfigured 'downtown'. Staff are proposing to start the 50km/hr zone at a point between Merkley and Augusta Street (550m west of the intersection of SDG 31), and continue this speed zone on County Road 2 east to Allison Ave. A 60km/hr transitional speed zone would extend 350m east, 400m west of the revised 50km/hr speed zone. A new 60km/hr transitional speed zone would additionally be introduced 350m north of the existing 50km/hr zone on County Road 31.

The changes as outlined above will provide a more harmonized speed limit approach through Morrisburg and will compliment/encourage speed compliance through the newly reconstructed area.

**Winchester**

With the growth associated with the Wellings project and newer 'on-street' pedestrian facilities on the north side of County Road 3 from downtown Winchester to the Sobey's complex, staff are recommending that the existing 50km/hr zone be

extended westerly to Dawley Drive. The 60km/hr transitional zone would be shortened from SDG 31 to Dawley Drive.

**OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

1. **Approve the recommended changes to the aforementioned speed limits (Recommended).**
2. **Accept some of the recommended changes (Not Recommended).**  
Council has the ultimate authority to set speed limits via By-law, and, may choose to accept some, but not all, of the recommendations.
3. **Do not approve the changes.** Not recommended

**FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:**

Although there will be a requirement to purchase and install new signs, the speed limit changes will have a negligible financial impact, and, will be paid for out of the general sign budget.

**LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT:**

The speed limit changes will be communicated with the local Public Works Officials and the OPP.

**RELEVANCE TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Speed limits that reflect the roadside environment support liveable and safe communities, which is consistent with SDG Strategic Priority No. 4, ***Community Sustainability – A Place Where You Want to Be***

**OTHERS CONSULTED:**

- N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**


- By-law 5324

**RECOMMENDED BY:**



Benjamin de Haan, P. Eng  
County Engineer

**APPROVED BY:**



T.J. Simpson, CAO

**THE CORPORATION OF THE UNITED COUNTIES**  
**OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY**

**BY-LAW No. 5324**

**A BY-LAW** to regulate the prescribed rate of speed for motor vehicles driven on certain County Roads.

**WHEREAS** Section 5 (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001 S. O. 2001*, provides that a municipal power, including a municipality's capacity, rights, powers and privileges shall be exercised by by-law unless the municipality is specifically authorized to do otherwise.

**AND WHEREAS** it is deemed expedient to revise and amend the rates of speeds prescribed by previous by-laws.

**NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL FOR THE UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. That the maximum rate of speed for motor vehicles driven on the highways or portions thereof, which are listed in Schedules "A", "B", "C", "D" appended hereto and forming part of this By-law, be as prescribed in the said Schedules.
2. That the maximum rate of speed for motor vehicles driven on all highways or portions thereof, not listed in Schedules "A", "B", "C" and "D", be 80 kilometres per hour.
3. That By-law No. 5300 together with schedules, as amended, is hereby repealed in its entirety.
4. That this By-law shall take force and effect as and when the highways or portions thereof that are affected by this by-law have been signed in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O., 1990 and the Regulations made thereunder.

**READ** and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November 2021.

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WARDEN

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CLERK

**SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW NO. 5324**

MAXIMUM RATE OF SPEED - **40** KILOMETRES PER HOUR

<b>County Road</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
34 Alexandria	Co. Rd. 10	150m south of Co. Rd. 46

**SCHEDULE "B" TO BY-LAW NO. 5324**

**MAXIMUM RATE OF SPEED – 50 KILOMETRES PER HOUR**

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
1 Iroquois	Co. Rd. 2	400m north of Co. Rd. 2
1 Hallville	Co. Rd. 43	700m north of Co. Rd. 43
2 Iroquois	300m west of Co. Rd. 1	700m east of Co. Rd. 1
2 Morrisburg	550m west of Co. Rd. 31 intersection	Allison Avenue
2 Long Sault	50m west of Co. Rd. 35	75m east of Co. Rd. 36
2 South Lancaster	Church St.	Hwy 401
2 Lancaster	Co. Rd. 34	Boundary St.
3 South Mountain	Co. Rd. 1	1350m east of Co. Rd. 1
3 Inkerman	350m south of the mid-line of the north branch of the S. Nation River	100m west of the intersection of Guy Rd.
3 Winchester	Dawley Drive	Ottawa St. 900m north of Main St.
5 Winchester Springs	Co. Rd. 31	450m west of Co. Rd. 31
7 Dunbar	Froats Road	600m north of Froats Road
7 Chesterville	750m north of Co. Rd. 43	Co. Rd. 9 (west leg)
7 Morewood	750m south of Co. Rd. 13	300m north of Co. Rd. 13
7 Marionville	Boundary Road	400m east of Boundary Road
10 Alexandria	Co. Rd. 34	600m east of Co. Rd. 34
10 Glen Robertson	500m west of Co. Rd. 23 (south leg)	800m east of Co. Rd. 23 (south leg)

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
12 Lunenburg	500m south of Co. Rd. 18	100m north of Co. Rd. 18
12 Newington	200m south of Co. Rd. 14	250m west of Co. Rd. 14
12 Finch	575m south of Co. Rd. 43	600m north of Co. Rd. 43
12 Berwick	150m south of Co. Rd. 9	850m north of Co. Rd. 9
12 Crysler	350m south of Co. Rd. 13 (east leg)	350m north of Co. Rd. 13 (north leg)
13 Morewood	550m west of Co. Rd. 7 (south leg)	500m east of Co. Rd. 7 (south leg)
13 Crysler	1050m west of Co. Rd. 12	350m east of Co. Rd. 12
14 Ingleside	Co. Rd. 2	1375m north of Co. Rd. 2
14 Newington	Co. Rd. 12	Saving Street
15 Avonmore	Co. Rd. 43	1100m north of Co. Rd. 43
15 Moose Creek	125m west of Nevada St.	300m east of Valley St.
16 Brinston	350m south of Gilmour/ Henderson Road	350m north of Gilmour/ Henderson Road
16 Dixons Corners	150m south of Co. Rd. 18	300m north of Co. Rd. 18
17 Williamstown	975m west of Co. Rd. 19	850m east of Co. Rd. 19
17 Lancaster	500m west of Co. Rd. 34	Co. Rd. 34
18 Williamsburg	1000m west of Co. Rd. 31	650m east of Co. Rd. 31
18 St. Andrews West	800m west of King's Highway 138	1000m east of King's Highway 138
18 Martintown	400m west of the mid line of the Raisin River	400m east of the Raisin River
18 St. Raphaels West	150m west of Frog Hollow Road	600m east of Frog Hollow Road



<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
18 North Lancaster	500m west of Co. Rd. 26	500m east of Co. Rd. 26
19 Williamstown	500m south of Co. Rd. 17	300m north of Co. Rd. 17
20 Martintown	Co. Rd. 18	500m north of Co. Rd. 18
20 Apple Hill	800m south of Kenyon Concession Road 2	200m north of Kenyon Concession Road 2
20 Maxville	200m south of Co. Rd. 22 (east leg)	450m north of Co. Rd. 22 (west leg)
21 Glen Sandfield	450m west of Co. Rd. 23	Co. Rd. 23
22 Maxville	800m west of Co. Rd. 20	200m east of Co. Rd. 20
23 Glen Robertson	300m south of Co. Rd. 10	Co. Rd. 10
23 Glen Robertson	Co. Rd. 10	600m north-west of Co. Rd. 10
23 Glen Sandfield	150m south of Co. Rd. 21	150m north of Co. Rd. 21
23 Dalkeith	200m south of Co. Rd. 24	300m north of Co. Rd. 24
24 Dunvegan	450m west of Co. Rd. 30	450m east of Co. Rd. 30
24 Dalkeith	600m west of Co. Rd. 23	150m east of Co. Rd. 23
25 Glen Roy Area	100m west of Glen Roy Road	150m east of Glen Roy Road
26 North Lancaster	150m south of Co. Rd. 18	Co. Rd. 18
27 Summerstown Station	north limit of King's Highway 401	450m north of the north limit of Highway 401
30 Greenfield	150m south of Kenyon Concession Road 5	Canadian National Railway crossing
30 Dunvegan	100m south of Co. Rd. 24	250m north of Co. Rd. 24
31 Morrisburg	Co. Rd. 2	300m north of Co. Rd. 2

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
31 Williamsburg	600m south of Co. Rd. 18	550m north of Co. Rd. 18
34 Lancaster	Highway 401	150m north of North Beech Street
34 Green Valley	50m south of Co. Rd. 25 (W. Leg)	400m north of the Canadian Pacific Railway crossing
34 Alexandria	Co. Rd. 45	Co. Rd. 10
34 Alexandria	150m south of Co. Rd. 46	250m north of VIA Railway Crossing
35 Long Sault	Co. Rd. 2	1450m north of Co. Rd. 2
36 Long Sault	Co. Rd. 2	450m northeast of Milles Roches Road
37 Chesterville	Co. Rd. 43	Co. Rd. 7
38 Winchester	1000m north of Co. Rd. 31	Co. Rd. 3
43 Finch	600m west Co. Rd. 12 (north leg)	1000m east of Co. Rd. 12 (north leg)
43 Monkland	150m west of King's Highway 138	Canadian Pacific Railway crossing
43 Alexandria	800m west of Co. Rd. 34	Co. Rd. 34
44 Headline	King's Highway 138	Co. Rd. 42
46 Alexandria	Co. Rd. 43	Co. Rd. 34

# SCHEDULE "C" TO BY-LAW NO. 5324

## MAXIMUM RATE OF SPEED - 60 KILOMETRES PER HOUR

County Road Number	from	to
1 Hainsville	150m south of Co. Rd. 18 (east leg)	150m north of Co. Rd. 18 (east leg)
1 South Mountain	375m south of Co. Rd. 3	Co. Rd. 3
1 Mountain	400m south of Canadian Pacific Railway	200m north of Canadian Pacific Railway
1 Hallville	700m north of Co. Rd. 43	950m north of Co. Rd. 43
2 Morrisburg	900m west of Co. Rd. 31	550m west of Co. Rd. 31
2 Morrisburg	Laurier Ave	400m east of Laurier Ave.
2 Long Sault	400m west of Co. Rd 35	50m west of Co. Rd. 35
2 Long Sault	75m east of Co. Rd. 36	350m east of Co. Rd. 36
2 Glen Walter Summerstown	east limits of the City of Cornwall	150m west of Pilon Point Road
2 South Lancaster	400m west of the mid-point of the Raisin River Bridge	Church Street
2 Lancaster	Boundary St.	850m east of Co. Rd. 34
2 Curry Hill	Co. Rd. 23	750m east of Co. Rd. 23
3 South Mountain	500m west of Co. Rd. 1 (River Road)	Co. Rd. 1
3 Inkerman	100m west of Guy Road	100m north of Guy Road
3 Winchester	Co. Rd. 31	Dawley Drive
5 Winchester Springs	450m west of Co. Rd. 31	750m west of Co. Rd. 31 (Hollister Rd.)

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
7 Elma	300m west of Marcellus Road	300m east of Marcellus Road
7 Chesterville	Co. Rd. 9 (west leg)	500m north of Co. Rd. 9 (west leg)
8 Riverside Heights	Co. Rd. 2	400m north of Co. Rd. 2
9 Berwick	300m west of Co. Rd. 12	300m east of Co. Rd. 12
12 Wales Village	Co. Rd. 2	750m north of Co. Rd. 2
12 Lunenburg	700m south of Co. Rd. 18	500m south of Co. Rd. 18
12 Newington	250m west of Co. Rd. 14	800m west of Co. Rd. 14
12 Crysler	350m north of Co. Rd. 13 (north leg)	850m north of Co. Rd. 13 (north leg)
13 Crysler	Ouderkirk Rd.	1050m west of Co. Rd. 12
14 Osnabrock Centre	150m south of Co. Rd. 18 (east leg)	500m north of Co. Rd. 18 (east leg)
14 Newington	Saving Street	300m north of Saving Street
15 Harrisons Corners	250m south of Co. Rd. 18	250m north of Co. Rd. 18
15 Moose Creek	300m east of Valley Street	950m east of Valley Street
16 Hulbert	300m north of the Hulbert/Snowbird Road	850m north of the Hulbert/Snowbird Road
17 Williamstown	850m east of Co. Rd. 19	1200m east of Co. Rd. 19
18 Dixons Corners	250m west of Co. Rd. 16	300m east of Co. Rd. 16
18 Dundela	300m west of Heritage Road	300m east of Heritage Road
18 Williamsburg	1400m west of Co. Rd. 31	1000m west of Co. Rd. 31
18 Boucks Hill	150m west of Boucks Hill Road	350m east of Boucks Hill Road

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
18 Osnabruck Centre	300m west of Co. Rd. 14	200m east of Co. Rd. 14
18 Lunenburg	200m west of Co. Rd. 12	300m east of Co. Rd. 12
18 Harrisons Corners	200m west of Co. Rd. 15	200m east of Co. Rd. 15
18 St. Andrews West	1000m west of King's Highway 138	800m west of King's Highway 138
18 Martintown	1000m west of the mid line of the Raisin River	400m west of the mid line of the Raisin River
18 Martintown	400m east of the mid line of the Raisin River	650m east of the mid line of the Raisin River
18 Brown House	Co. Rd. 34	600m east of Co. Rd. 34
18 Vinegar Hill	1550m east of Co. Rd. 34	1975m east of Co. Rd. 34
20 Martintown	500m north of Co. Rd. 18	650m north of Co. Rd. 18
20 Apple Hill	200m north of Kenyon Concession Road 2	350m north of Kenyon Concession Road 2
20 Dominionville	600m south of Kenyon Concession Road 16 IL	100m north of Kenyon Concession Road 16 IL
20 Maxville	500m south of Co. Rd. 22 (east leg)	200m south of Co. Rd. 22 (east leg)
20 Maxville	450m north of Co. Rd. 22 (west leg)	750m north of Co. Rd. 22 (west leg)
21 Lochiel	600m west of Old Military Road	150m east of Old Military Road
22 Maxville	1100m west of Co. Rd. 20	800m west of Co. Rd. 20
23 Dalhousie Mills	400m south of Morrison Road	100m north of Morrison Road
23A McCrimmon	Co. Rd. 34	400m north of Co. Rd. 34
25 Glen Roy Area	150m east of the Glen Roy Road	350m east of the Glen Roy Road
25 Green Valley	Co. Rd. 34	250m east of Co. Rd. 34

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
25 Glen Norman	300m west of the Second Line Road (south leg)	225m east of the Second Line Road (south leg)
26 North Lancaster	650m south of Co. Rd. 18	150m south of Co. Rd. 18
30 Greenfield	Canadian National Railway crossing	300m north of the Canadian National Railway crossing
31 Morrisburg	300m north of Co. Rd. 2	650m north of Co. Rd. 2
31 Winchester Springs	250m south of Co. Rd. 5	200m north of Co. Rd. 5
32 Cannamore	425m north of Co. Rd. 13	800m north of Co. Rd. 13
34 Lancaster	150m north of North Beech Street	450m north of North Beech Street
36 Long Sault	450m northeast of Milles Roches Road	1000m east of Milles Roches Road
38 Winchester	Co. Rd. 31	1000m north of Co. Rd. 31
40	Co. Rd. 1	Co. Rd. 16
43 Avonmore	300m west of Co. Rd. 15	330m east of Co. Rd. 15
45 Alexandria	Co. Rd. 34	1200m west of Co. Rd. 34

**SCHEDULE "D" TO BY-LAW NO. 5324**

**MAXIMUM RATE OF SPEED - 70 KILOMETRES PER HOUR**

<b>County Road Number</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
2 Ingleside	500m west of Co. Rd. 14	200m east of Co. Rd. 14
15	125m west of Nevada St.	525m west of Nevada St.
16	Co. Rd. 2	1100m northerly (CNR)
17	Co. Rd. 27	975m west of Co. Rd. 19
19A	60m west of Co. Rd. 19	Co. Rd. 19
27 Summerstown	Co. Rd. 2	1,000m north of Co. Rd. 2
31 Williamsburg	600m south of Co. Rd. 18	1,000m south of Co. Rd. 18
31 Glen Becker	450m south of Co. Rd. 28	800m north of Co. Rd. 28
36 Post Road	1000m east of Milles Roches Road	Co. Rd. 15
34 Alexandria	250m north of VIA Railway Crossing	Power Dam Road
45 Kenyon Dam	1250m south of County Rd. 43	1500m south of County Rd. 43

## **MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

### **CAO**

**November 15, 2021**

#### **WORK COMPLETED:**

- October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – EOWC CAO's planning meeting
- October 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Annual Ontario Professional Planners Institute conference
- October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Annual Cunningham Swan employment and labour law seminar
- October 26<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Bi-weekly Covid-19 updates with Dr. Paul of the EOHU
- October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Meeting with Education working group to finalize Executive Summary document
- November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 – Meeting with waste management consultant and staff working group
- November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 – EOWC CAO's meeting
- November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Service Manager Joint Liaison Committee 2022 budget meeting
- November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – EOWC CAO's planning meeting
- Education report
- Mandatory vaccination policy implementation

#### **WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- 2022 County budget preparation
- Personnel Policy Manual review
- Recruiting for various positions
  - Administrative Assistant – Planning
  - Administrative Assistant – Finance
  - Various library services positions
- Preparation for Warden's breakfast event (November)
- Preparation for Warden's inauguration (December)



## **MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

### **Corporate Services**

**November 15, 2021**

#### **WORK COMPLETED:**

- Attended weekly Director's meetings
- Attended weekly Corporate Services staff meetings
- Attended various meetings with eSCRIBE re: implementation of new meeting and agenda management system.
- Assisted with the recruitment for the Planning Administrative Assistant position
- Assembled and circulated October 27<sup>th</sup> Accessibility Advisory Committee agenda
- Assembled and circulated November 15<sup>th</sup> Council meeting agenda
- Various meetings and planning for Warden's Business Breakfast event
- AMCTO Zone 6 Fall Meeting (virtual) – November 5<sup>th</sup>
- MFIPPA/FOI Request duties
- Prepared various meeting minutes, reviewed staff reports
- Continued research re: Corporate Records Management systems and best practices. Request for Information development with Director of IT Services
- Scanning/filing records

#### **WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- Ongoing planning for Warden's Business Breakfast event – November 19<sup>th</sup>
- Ongoing planning for Inaugural Meeting – December 17<sup>th</sup>
- Agenda preparation for November Committee of the Whole meeting, December Budget meetings, December Council meeting, and Police Services Board meeting

## **MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

### **Financial Services**

**November 15, 2021**

#### **WORK COMPLETED:**

- Weekly Management Team meetings
- Meeting with Regional Senior Justice of the Peace, Oct. 15, 2021
- Eastern Ontario Treasurers meeting, Oct. 19, 2021
- Education Committee meetings (POA), Oct. 19, 26, 2021
- MCMA Conference, Oct. 20-21, 2021
- AMCTO HST Audit Webinar, Oct. 21, 2021
- Staff Engagement Meeting, Oct. 21, 2021
- Cunningham Swan Labour and Employment Seminar, Oct. 26, 2021
- Canada Community Building Fund (Federal Gas Tax) webinar, Oct. 28, 2021
- Meeting with MAG PIII Crown, Oct. 26, 29, 2021
- Bill 177 Implementation (Court Services), Nov. 1, 2021
- AMCTO Municipal Forum, Nov. 4, 2021
- Joint Liaison Meeting, Nov. 9, 2021
- Federal Gas Tax Audit Complete

#### **WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- Courtroom enhancements for Zoom Court
- Asset Management Planning
- Budget 2022
- Vadim Online Timesheets
- Paymentus for Library Services
- GIS/PSD Asset Integration
- Review of MPAC Appeals/RFR's
- Part III Transfer – Ministry of the Attorney General
- Recruitment – Financial Services

## **MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

### **Transportation Services**

**November 15, 2021**

#### **WORK COMPLETED:**

##### **Transportation**

- Attended EOLC Working Group Meeting (Intelligent Transportation)
- Submitted a funding application for the Municipal Modernization Fund on behalf of the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council (Integrated One-Window Permitting)
- Issued a variety of permits (entrance, sign, road cut)
- Issued the 2022 Road Building Equipment Hourly Rate quotation
- Worked on a variety of Human Resource Issues
- Started Winter 'Night Shift'
- Reviewed and commented on various development plans/ drawings
- McPhee Bridge
- Salt Delivery
- Patrol Yard Paving
- Martintown Reconstruction
- St. Andrew's West Rehabilitation
- Biennial Bridge Inspections and Asset Management Report
- Submission of Draft Budget
- Provided comments and attended meetings for numerous planning applications (subdivisions, severances, pre-severances)
- Boundary Road Bridge
- Meeting with Warden-Elect to discuss issues and strategic direction in 2022

##### **GIS**

- Created Business District maps for North Glengarry Economic Development.
- Updated North Stormont zoning and Schedules.
- Set up South Dundas for water/sewer network asset management updates in ArcOnline.
- Updates to North Dundas road segment ID data.
- Provided CloudPermit GIS data for the new Planning Application
- Snowmobile Trail Maps (Crossings at County Roads)
- Mapping of collision data (ARIS)
- Updated County Snow Plow Maps for upcoming season.

- Updates to civic address and road network and sent out data to Emergency Services. Sent out updates to 911 Map Guide and Street List
- Attended webinar for Teranet Imagery Partnership Program for informational purposes.

## **Forestry**

- Finalizing Macaulay acquisition
- Dealing with various property issues / hunting conflicts
- Moving forward with Gallinger property acquisition
- Work at Howard Mitchel Forest in preparation of 2022 maple tapping
- Review of potential property acquisition in North Stormont

## **WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- CP Winchester Bridge Rehabilitation
- Ditching and fall roadside clean-up
- Two-Way Radio Tower and equipment.
- County Road 8
- Morrisburg Roundabout and Streetscaping
- Warden's House
- 2022 Bridge capital planning
- Regional Waste Management Study
- 2022 Budget reports
- Update road and civic data for CAD Map Upgrade (fire response) – Cornwall Police.
- Specialty Paint Marking Inventory Checks
- Asset Management integration for South Stormont (GIS & Finance)
- Transfer various data to ArcGIS Server/Portal – on-going.
- Official Plan updates as needed.
- Covid Survey updates as needed (SDG, ND, SD)
- Update to ArcGIS Server in progress (version upgrade)
- Update to Python Script for Vadim Ownership Information with GIS (ESRI)
- Roads Needs Application – Updates needed
- Heritage Parkway Map (Tourism Dept)

## MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY

### Planning Services

November 15, 2021

#### WORK COMPLETED:

- Held SDG Planner's Group Meeting
- Attended SDG Economic Development Working Group
- Assisted North Dundas with Planner interviews
- Attended tree planting event in South Stormont
- Pre-Consultation for development proposals
- Attended Council meetings in North Stormont
- Public Meeting for:
  - Held: 01-SS-S-2021 John Chase Subdivision (Oct 27)
- Subdivision Draft Approval issued for:
  - 01-NS-S-2021 – Jen-Sub Developments (209 units)
- Severances:
  - 8 new applications processed since October 18, 2021.
  - Review day held October 28, 2021, upcoming review November 24, 2021.
  - 3 files deferred.
  - 10 severances granted since October 18, 2021.
  - 16 files completed since October 18, 2021.
  - 35 files awaiting circulation.

#### WORK IN PROGRESS:

- 2022 Budget
- Cloudpermit implementation
- Growth Management Study and Population Projection
- Planning Services in North Stormont and South Dundas
- Application for Municipal Modernization Fund (Subdivision Manual and Zoning By-law updates)
- Natural Heritage Study implementation
- Official Plan Ontario Land Tribunal Appeal: Meetings and communication with many of the appellants and participants. Next Case Management Conference scheduled for January 18, 2022.

## **MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

### **IT Services**

**November 15, 2021**

#### **WORK COMPLETED:**

- Weekly management meetings
- Weekly IT team meetings
- Council chambers video streaming
- POA improvements to video system for virtual court
- Labour and employment seminar
- South Glengarry council video system meetings
- EOITC meeting
- Meeting with Warden Elect Williams
- EMC meeting

#### **WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- Business continuity and DR planning and implementation
- Online timesheets deployment
- HR System integration
- Standardize Service Desk project
- Vadim Online modules for local municipalities
- Voice over IP (VoIP) system and services for South Glengarry, Library branches
- South Dundas web site hosting
- Records Management

## MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY

### Library Services

November 15, 2021

#### WORK COMPLETED:

- Collections Development: Adult fiction & non-fiction (print); replacements; French fiction & non-fiction (Adult & Juvenile); Teen graphic novels; Picture books
- Participation in weekly Directors' meetings
- Fall 2021 District meetings for front-line staff
- October 20 & 27: Meetings with T. Simpson, CAO
- October 21: Regular meeting of Library Board – held virtually
- October 27: Attendance at Ontario Library Service regional CEO (virtual) networking meeting
- October 28: Meeting with C. Williams, Warden-Elect, and M. MacDonald, Library Board Chair
- October 29: Suspension of inter-library lending service for remainder of 2021, due to pending staff shortage
- Recruitment of Cataloguing/Acquisitions Technician, Systems Librarian, and Library Service Assistants (2)
- Weekly meetings with (new) Community Librarian
- Air quality testing at designated branches
- Receipt of Provincial Library Operating Grant (PLOG)
- SDG Library's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event: "A Conversation with Margaret Atwood" – Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 6:30pm (current SDG Library membership & event registration required – [programs@sdglibrary.ca](mailto:programs@sdglibrary.ca))

#### WORK IN PROGRESS:

- Collections Development: Adult fiction & non-fiction (digital); Winter 2022 new releases (print & digital); Juvenile fiction & non-fiction (print); A/V material
- Preparation of 2022 Library Services Budget presentation (to Council)
- Library Board (video) Storytime series (<https://bit.ly/SDGLibraryStorytimes>)
- November 25: Lancaster Branch Library Feasibility Study follow-up meeting
- Agenda preparations for (virtual) Regular meeting of Library Board – Thursday, December 9, 4:30pm – open to public via YouTube

# COUNCIL MONTHLY SUMMARY



GL5410

Date : Nov 03, 2021

Page : 1

Time : 9:05 am

For Period Ending 31-Oct-2021

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	YEAR TO DATE
	.....2020.....	.....2021.....	.....2021.....
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>			
<b>REVENUE SUMMARY</b>			
Taxation	-50,656,564	-50,690,910	-50,908,215
Surplus & Tax Changes	-210,689	-380,000	-101,330
OMPF & Corporate Funding	-1,128,088	-2,082,300	-1,926,992
Council & Committees	-22,000	-1,118,623	0
Corporate Services	-46,367	-95,970	-25,863
Economic Development/Tourism	-236,779	-508,055	-54,185
Planning Services	-270,198	-195,600	-247,060
Forestry	-4,104	-96,000	-17,996
Financial Services	-471,610	-318,380	-222,447
IT Services	-54,662	-46,980	-8,057
Office Complex	-123,775	-70,980	-9,150
Police Services	-106,649	-135,967	-98,758
Library Services	-156,990	-252,449	-159,046
Court Services	-1,955,511	-2,436,000	-1,837,618
Road Services	-6,653,655	-11,188,141	-5,177,816
Total REVENUE SUMMARY	-62,097,643	-69,616,355	-60,794,534
<b>EXPENSES SUMMARY</b>			
Corporate Items	1,064,272	1,260,000	438,968
Council & Committees	1,914,312	1,603,268	459,008
Corporate Services	583,667	808,138	517,404
Economic Development/Tourism	921,073	1,258,333	507,589
Planning Services	716,190	699,560	586,568
Forestry	103,559	238,775	135,854
Financial Services	1,539,555	1,627,661	1,501,062
IT Services	544,842	661,327	375,551
Health & Social Services	9,033,526	9,800,507	8,129,349
Office Complex	68,713	110,112	52,899
Police Services	10,480,237	10,562,224	7,880,777
Library Services	2,601,569	2,764,171	2,023,398
Court Services	1,277,746	1,732,697	1,320,279
Transportation Services	31,248,381	36,489,582	22,857,805
Total EXPENSES SUMMARY	62,097,643	69,616,355	46,786,511
Total GENERAL FUND	0	0	-14,008,023





## **Branch Report, November 2021, District 1**

### **CHESTERVILLE BRANCH - Jennifer H.**

Playing a key role in the public's quest to print off proof of vaccination, the Chesterville Branch fulfilled many printing requests in the past couple months.

### **CRYSLER BRANCH - Josée B.**

Local partnerships continue to be a priority, despite current COVID restrictions. The Crysler Branch has been faithfully providing reading material to elementary school students even though in-person class visits are not yet allowed.

### **MAKERLAB – FINCH BRANCH - Josée C.**

Strengthening the Library's internal capacity is of utmost importance. The Library's MakerLab has found its new maker expert – LSA Josée has completed her orientation and is busy familiarizing herself with the Lab's maker mission.

### **SOUTH MOUNTAIN BRANCH - Ginette T.**

The Library continues to provide patrons with opportunities to explore new educational avenues. The 'Homework Helpers' curriculum kits have been very popular, especially in South Mountain, where several families have taken advantage of this innovative offering.

### **WINCHESTER BRANCH - Rose D.**

As more patrons become comfortable visiting the Library for extended stays, the Winchester Branch is seeing an increase in the use of in-branch resources. Items such as the mobile internet hotspots and museum passes have been in-demand in recent weeks.

### **DISTRICT SUPERVISOR - Jenna L.**

Priorities in October included program planning and support, recruitment and training of the new Finch/MakerLab LSA, participation in the Advancing Public Library Leadership (APLL) Intensive, and coordinating/releasing the November/December edition of the 'Navigator Flash'.



## **Branch Report, November 2021, District 2**

### **INGLESIDE BRANCH: (Linda P. and Colleen C.)**

Book clubs are an important opportunity to connect amongst Library members, and although in-person meetings are still not possible, patrons have found that virtual get-togethers have allowed them to get re-acquainted with others after so many months of isolation.

### **LONG SAULT: (Christine D. and Joann L.)**

Staff and Library patrons are still enjoying the refreshed look and feel that recent renovations have created in this popular neighbourhood Library branch. It is very welcoming and is much appreciated by many.

### **MORRISBURG BRANCH: (Stacey P. and Kate M.)**

While having personal attention is always appreciated, patrons who have been trying out the recently-installed Self-Checkout system at this branch are enjoying this unique and independent way of using their Library.

### **IROQUOIS: (Jeannette D. and Eleanor P.)**

The Library is proud to have been able to support everyone in this community with free printing of Proof of Vaccination forms. For us, this is a relatively simple gesture, but for them, it means the world!

### **WILLIAMSBURG: (Cheryl T.)**

When changes happen in staffing, it can affect the public's perceptions of Library service. And, while another staffing change has recently taken place at this beloved branch, the community has been very gracious in welcoming a relatively new face, in part because its owner has made the effort to make connections here.

### **DISTRICT SUPERVISOR: (Cheryl S.)**

The many facets of being a supervisor for a number of Library branches and their front-line staff is that you wear a lot of hats, including hiring and training new colleagues, planning programs, assisting in collections maintenance and development (in this case, picture books, early readers and board books for babies), and even taking on the occasional shift at "the desk". The SDG Library benefits from the experience and dedication of its supervisory staff!



## **Branch Report, November 2021 District 3**

### **ALEXANDRIA BRANCH - Sylvie J. and Iris C.**

SDG Libraries, among other libraries in Ontario, are offering free proof of vaccination printing. Staff at the Alexandria Branch have been very busy assisting patrons of all ages to access their information and printing their vaccination certificates.

### **AVONMORE BRANCH - Kelsey D.**

The 'Cupcakes in a jar' giveaway and children's colouring contest were activities planned to help celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during October, as well as to also help raise awareness of the valuable role libraries play in Canadians' lives.

### **LANCASTER BRANCH - Tara N. and Valerie E.**

Book Clubs promote a love of literature in a positive, nurturing environment, while also offering opportunities to meet new people and making new friends. The Cairnview Book Club took a hiatus during the early months of the pandemic, but now, facilitated by LSA Valerie, is meeting virtually until it can resume meeting at the branch.

### **MAXVILLE BRANCH - Emily A.**

Building internal capacity by ongoing staff training and development strengthens and enhances staff skills to meet the needs and changes of the communities we serve. LSA Emily continues to do exactly this, by pursuing the Ontario Library Association's certificate program in Managing Small Public Libraries, where she recently successfully completed a Community Outreach course.

### **WILLIAMSTOWN BRANCH – Rachel L.**

Staff engagement in community outreach is a way to collaborate with community organizations such as our local schools, especially now as pandemic restrictions are starting to ease up. LSA Rachel reached out to her local public school to offer safe Library services in various ways, which has resulted in 16 new Library membership registrations.

### **DISTRICT SUPERVISOR – Darlene A.**

October supervisory duties included preparing information for the November-December edition of the Library's Navigator newsletter, and planning and hosting our (virtual) quarterly staff district meeting.

**Ministry of  
Municipal Affairs  
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

777 Bay Street, 17th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 2J3  
Tel.: 416 585-7000

**Ministère des  
Affaires municipales  
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre

777, rue Bay, 17e étage  
Toronto ON M7A 2J3  
Tél. : 416 585-7000



234-2021-3966

October 15, 2021

Warden Allan Armstrong  
United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry  
[aarmstrong@northdundas.com](mailto:aarmstrong@northdundas.com)

Dear Warden Armstrong:

I would like to thank you, Deputy Mayor Lyle Warden (South Glengarry), Chief Administrative Officer Tim Simpson, County Planning Director Peter Young and General Manager of Planning Joanne Haley (South Glengarry) for taking the time to meet with Parliamentary Assistant (PA) Jim McDonell at the 2021 Virtual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference. As Ontario responds to COVID-19, our government will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our municipal partners to ensure you have the resources and tools you need to support your community, and emerge from the pandemic stronger than ever.

I was pleased to hear that PA McDonell had the opportunity to hear your concerns about the length of time to Ontario Land Tribunal appeals heard, and the recent progress made in settlement discussions on the County Official Plan.

As discussed during your delegation, our government is committed to working with you and all six lower-tier municipalities to find a mutually agreeable solution so certain lands may be returned to a rural designation to help support your long term economic development efforts. More specifically, I understand progress has been made involving specific lands around the Cornwall Airport. I will also share your comments with my Cabinet colleagues about the need for Ontario Land Tribunal cases to be heard faster.

If you or your staff would like to discuss matters pertaining to your official plan further, ministry staff would be pleased to assist. Please feel free to contact Michael Elms, Manager of Community Planning and Development in the Eastern Municipal Services Office at 613-453-9242 or [Michael.Elms@ontario.ca](mailto:Michael.Elms@ontario.ca). You can also contact my Director of Policy, Kirstin Jensen, at [Kirstin.Jensen@ontario.ca](mailto:Kirstin.Jensen@ontario.ca).

We will continue to work closely with our municipal leaders to keep Ontarians safe. I cannot thank you enough for your diligence and leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and your commitment to supporting families and businesses during these challenging times.

.../2

Once again, thank you for taking the time to meet with PA McDonell at the AMO Conference.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark  
Minister

- c. Jim McDonell, MPP Stormont – Dundas – South Glengarry  
Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing,  
[Jim.McDonell@ontario.ca](mailto:Jim.McDonell@ontario.ca)  
Lyle Warden, Deputy Mayor/Acting Mayor, Township of South Glengarry  
[lylewarden@southglengarry.com](mailto:lylewarden@southglengarry.com)  
Tim Simpson, CAO, United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry  
[tsimpson@sdgcounties.ca](mailto:tsimpson@sdgcounties.ca)



80 Commerce Valley Drive E, Suite 1  
Markham, ON L3T 0B2  
Phone: 905-739-9739 • Fax: 905-739-9740  
Web: cupe.on.ca E-mail: info@cupe.on.ca

Dear United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Council:

On behalf of CUPE Ontario's nearly 125,000 active members of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS), I am writing today to express our serious concerns with OMERS' investment performance.

In 2020, OMERS posted a net loss 2.7%, representing three billion dollars in losses. This was during a year that comparable defined benefit pension plans and funds in Canada posted substantial investment gains. CUPE Ontario investigated further and tracked investment returns at OMERS for ten years. We found that OMERS has underperformed relative to other large pension plans and funds, as well as relative to its own benchmarks. We also found that OMERS no longer shares this critical information in their annual reporting, making it difficult for plan members to hold their investment managers accountable.

Attached you will find a report detailing OMERS investment underperformance. Also attached, you will find the analysis of a third-party actuary (PBI Actuarial consultants) who confirmed that our reasoning and conclusions were sound.

CUPE Ontario believes plan members and employers have the right to know why OMERS' investments have, over a ten-year period, underperformed other large defined benefit pension plans and funds. If OMERS had performed in line with the average large Canadian public pension plan, it would have a substantial, multi-billion-dollar surplus, versus the deficit it currently faces.

Considering the significant impact such underperformance could have on plan members and on all sponsors who hold the liabilities of the plan, **we are calling on OMERS to cooperate fully with an independent and transparent third-party review of its investment performance** transparent and accountable to plan members, sponsors like CUPE Ontario, other unions, and employers like the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

We are hoping that the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Council will join our call for an independent expert review of OMERS. **We are asking you, and other municipal councils across the province, to debate the following motion or to pass a similar motion calling for a third-party expert review of OMERS.** The terms of such a review would need to be agreed upon by sponsors and they could explore whether reasonable costs could be funded from the plan.

We simply cannot afford another decade of investment returns so far below other pension plans and funds. We know that ensuring strong investment returns is a goal shared by employers like the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and by unions like CUPE.

CUPE Ontario staff person Liam Bedard is available to answer any questions you may have. He can be reached at [lbedard@cupe.on.ca](mailto:lbedard@cupe.on.ca).

All materials are available in French at [cupe.on.ca/francaisomers](http://cupe.on.ca/francaisomers).

It's time for all of us to work together to #FixOMERS.

Thank you,



Fred Hahn  
President of CUPE Ontario

## **Proposed Motion – Independent Review of OMERS' Investment Performance**

1. The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Council is calling for an immediate, comprehensive and independent third-party expert review of OMERS' investment performance and practices over the past ten years, conducted by the OMERS Pension Plan's sponsors and stakeholders.
2. Such a review would, at a minimum:
  - a. Compare OMERS plan-level, and asset class-level performance to other comparable defined benefit pension plans and funds, OMERS internal benchmarks, and market-based benchmarks.
  - b. Examine OMERS decision-making processes around the timing of various investment decisions.
  - c. Assess the risk management policies and protocols that were in place and determine if they were followed and/or if they were sufficient to protect the plan from undue risk.
  - d. Assess whether the disclosures provided to the OMERS Administrative and Sponsorship Boards were sufficient evidence to allow the Boards to respond appropriately and in a timely manner.
  - e. Examine executive compensation, investment fees and investment costs at OMERS in comparison to other major defined benefit pension plans and funds.
  - f. Examine other relevant issues identified by the third-party expert review.
  - g. Make recommendations for changes at OMERS to ensure stronger returns moving forward.
  - h. Issue their final report and recommendations in a timely manner.
  - i. Publicly release its full report and recommendations to ensure that it is available to OMERS sponsors, stakeholders, and plan members.
3. The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Council further calls on the OMERS Administrative Corporation to:
  - a. Provide all requested data, documentation and information required of the review panel to fulfill its mandate.
  - b. Establish a step-by-step plan, with OMERS sponsors and stakeholders, to implement any recommendations set out in the review report.







## **KEY INFORMATION REPORT**

### **Transportation Services**

**November 15, 2021**

**SUBJECT:** Morrisburg Roundabout

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Progress on site is moving well. At the time of this meeting, it is anticipated that all major construction items should be at or near completion. The anticipated work remaining includes final touch-ups, line painting, cleaning and demobilization. The project is expected to be substantially complete on or before Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Based on current projections, staff are expecting to end the project very close to the approved budget.

As noted in the Key Information Report delivered by County staff at the October 18<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, staff have received a request to fill in the County's ditch at SDG's expense, along the front of their property, detailed below.

As Council may recall, the original plan included filled-in ditches along most of the project length, including at the subject location. When tenders were considered at the December 2020 regular Council meeting, it was confirmed that prices were in excess of the project budget. County staff were directed to work with the designer and find savings. One of the cost-saving measures that was carried forward within the project approved by Council was leaving as many of the existing ditches open as possible.

#### **COMMENTS:**

Through the project, staff have had to make on-site modifications to the tendered design to accommodate existing utilities, address roadside safety and/or provide for the new poles, lights and the multi-use path. These on-site adjustments have resulted in needing to 'fill' more areas than originally envisioned; however staff have proactively managed these necessary modifications to ensure that the project remained on-budget. Currently, the remaining open ditches include in front of MacEwen's and the OPP station, ditching along Upper Canada Motor Sales and Strader Motors and ditching along the south side of SDG 2 from Morris Glen Court to Laurier Drive. These ditches vary in depth but have acceptable and maintainable side slopes from a roadside safety perspective. It should be noted that open ditches serve a dual-purpose in providing stormwater storage capacity for significant rain events when compared to a piped storm system.

As noted above, the owner of Strader Motors is not satisfied with the open ditch within the County right-of-way in front of his property (see images below). County staff have reviewed the ditch from a safety perspective and found no issues. Rip-rap has been installed along the backslope to minimize maintenance demands and the asphalt at the top of slope (in the right-of-way, approx. 2m width) has been left to avoid any grassed areas adjacent to the property. Staff are additionally installing pre-cast curbing along the property line to ensure the parking lot is properly delineated.



*Figure 1: View of Ditch at Strader Motor Sales*

Although the property owner can complete a ditch-filling at their cost in accordance with By-law 5122, this option is not desired by the landowner. Staff have estimated the cost to fill the ditch to be approximately \$20,000, and, have asked the contractor to provide a firm estimate (will be verbally confirmed during the meeting).

Given that this ditch filling would be considered extra to the contract and will impact final costs, is not necessary from a stormwater management / roadside safety perspective and may create further requests for filling for those areas which remain 'open', County staff are looking for direction from Council on how to proceed.

Respectfully Submitted.

## KEY INFORMATION REPORT

### Transportation Services

November 15, 2021

**SUBJECT:** CPR Grade Separation Winchester

#### BACKGROUND:

Construction is progressing well. As of the date of authoring this report, recent work underway includes repair of ballast walls, construction of the semi-integral abutment and the reconstruction of at least one of the approach slabs. After 'flipping' to the other side of the bridge, the existing deck was found to be in good shape, with few concrete patching/repairs needed.



**COMMENTS:**

The short-term work ahead of the contractor includes finishing the second approach slab and the installation of the traffic safety barrier. Completion is still anticipated to be around the first week of December. County staff can manage winter maintenance activities with the one-lane bridge arrangement.

Respectfully Submitted.



## KEY INFORMATION REPORT

### Transportation Services

**November 15, 2021**

**SUBJECT:** 2021 Resurfacing Program

County staff reported at the October 18<sup>th</sup> Council meeting that the 2021 Hot mix paving work was completed.

This key information report is to advise that 2021 saw significant increases in the asphalt cement (AC) price index. Per contractual obligations, the County will be required to make a payment to the contractor to account for these price increases. County staff, in cooperation with the contractor, are reviewing the completed work and price index to determine the appropriate amount. Staff will report back to Council once finalized; however, it should be noted that this adjustment will impact final year-end surpluses.

Month (2021)	Published Asphalt Cement Index
Jan	\$617.25
Feb	\$617.25
Mar	\$732.00
Apr	\$749.80
May	\$781.50
Jun	\$819.00
Jul	\$862.60
Aug	\$891.00
Sep	\$893.50
Oct	\$904.60

Respectfully Submitted.

**THE CORPORATION OF THE UNITED COUNTIES**  
**OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY**

**BY-LAW NO. 5325**

**A BY-LAW** of the Corporation of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry to adopt, confirm and ratify matters dealt with by resolution.

**WHEREAS** Section 5(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, S. O. 2001, Chapter 25, as amended, provides that the powers of the Corporation of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, shall be exercised by by-law.

**AND WHEREAS** in many cases, action which is taken or authorized to be taken by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry does not lend itself to the passage of an individual by-law.

**NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS;**

1. That the minutes of the meeting, including the in-camera minutes, held October 18, 2021, of the Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, be hereby adopted.
2. That the actions of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, at its meeting held on November 15 2021, in respect of each motion, resolution and other action taken by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry at its meetings are, except where the prior approval of the Ontario Land Tribunal or other authority is required by law, hereby adopted, ratified and confirmed as if all such proceedings were expressly embodied in this by-law.
3. That where no individual by-law has been or is passed with respect to the taking of any action authorized in or by the above-mentioned minutes or with respect to the exercise of any powers by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry in the above-mentioned minutes, then this by-law shall be deemed for all purposes to be the by-law required for approving and authorizing and taking of any action authorized therein and thereby or required for the exercise of any powers therein by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

4. That the Warden and Members of Council of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the said action of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry to obtain approvals where required and except as otherwise provided, the Warden or Clerk are hereby directed to execute all documents necessary on behalf of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

**READ** and passed in Open Council, signed and sealed this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2021.

---

WARDEN

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CLERK