



To: **Planning Advisory Committee**

Agenda Section: Corporate Services
Division: Engineering, Planning and Environment
Department: Planning Department

Item Number: PAC - 2021-076

Meeting Date: February 25, 2021

Subject: Update on the County's Municipal Comprehensive Review Project

Recommendation

That Item PAC 2021-076, dated February 25, 2021, regarding an update on the County of Simcoe Municipal Comprehensive Review project, be received.

Executive Summary

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 (Growth Plan) that took effect on August 28, 2020 continues to require that the County undertake a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The responsibility for upper-tier municipalities to complete an MCR was introduced in the 2017 Growth Plan. An MCR is an integrated planning tool which results in a process to comprehensively bring Official Plans into conformity with the Growth Plan. Various policy matters are impacted and require updating in both the County and lower-tier official plans as a result of the MCR. One key component of the MCR relates to the population and employment forecasts contained in Schedule 3 to the Growth Plan which will be used in the planning and management of growth in the County to the 2051 planning horizon.

Since the last update was provided to the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on April 14, 2020, the County has now retained Hemson Consulting (Hemson) for the completion of the Municipal Comprehensive Review project. Hemson has assembled a consortium of subject matter experts in order to address the multiple components of the MCR. A detailed work plan is now being laid out by this project team in order to achieve the required outcome of this project, which is to bring the County Official Plan into conformity with the Provincial Growth Plan.

Notwithstanding the project delays as a result of provincial updates and initiatives, the MCR is still targeted to be completed by July 1, 2022. With respect to lower-tier

municipalities, their Official Plans are to be brought into conformity within one year of the County's update.

This report is intended to provide an overview of project progress to date.

Background/Analysis/Options

On August 28, 2020, the Province released *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Office Consolidation 2020* (Growth Plan), and the associated *Land Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)*. This new Growth Plan continues to require that the County undertake a MCR.

Schedule 7 (Distribution of Population and Employment for the City of Barrie, City of Orillia and County of Simcoe to 2031) to the previous 2019 version of the Growth Plan has been removed, and the planning horizon within Schedule 3 (Distribution of Population and Employment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) was increased from 2041 to 2051. The County is now required by the Province to plan for a population of 555,000 and 198,000 jobs by 2051. Through the MCR, the County will utilize the Province's new Land Needs Assessment (LNA) Methodology to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted population and employment in each lower-tier municipality in accordance with Schedule 3, or a higher forecast as established by the County through its MCR. These population and employment allocation numbers will be incorporated in an updated County Official Plan to be approved by the Province.

With the approval of the new Growth Plan and LNA methodology in 2020 it has provided certainty with respect to the MCR work to be completed. This certainty has enabled the County to finalize the MCR project Request for Proposal (RFP) and Terms of Reference. On September 30, 2020 the County posted RFP 2020-054 for the County's MCR project to its bids & tenders website, and the RFP posting closed on November 11, 2020. Following the evaluation process, the County awarded the MCR contract to Hemson.

Hemson as the lead consultant has put together a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to address the various components of the MCR as follows:

1. Provincial Natural Heritage System Review and Refinement – North South Environmental Inc.
2. Provincial Agricultural System Review and Refinement – DBH Soil Services Inc.
3. Employment Strategy – Hemson Consulting and Cushman Wakefield
4. Climate Change Strategy – Hemson Consulting and Laura Taylor Designs
5. Watershed Management Strategy – Wood Environmental & Infrastructure Solutions Inc.
6. Growth Management – Hemson Consulting
7. County Official Plan Amendment(s) - Meridian Planning
8. Communications Strategy – The Planning Partnership, Meridian Planning, and Nbsiing Consulting

Since retaining Hemson, County Staff has participated in several meetings with the MCR project team and local area municipalities, as follows:

- December 16, 2020 – Initial project kick-off meeting, monthly check-in meetings scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month for the duration of the project
- January 5, 2021 – Consultation Strategy kick-off meeting
- January 27, 2021 – Provincial Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System Review and Refinement kick-off meetings
- January 28, 2021 – Land Needs Assessment kick-off meeting
- February 2, 2021 – Indigenous communities engagement plan meeting with Nbisiing Consulting
- February 8, 2021 – MCR kick-off meeting with the local area municipalities
- February 17, 2021 – Data Sharing meeting
- February 26, 2021 – Climate Change Strategy kick-off meeting to be held

The PowerPoint presentation from the December 16, 2020 MCR project kick-off meeting is included as Schedule 1 to this Report.

The PowerPoint presentation from the February 8, 2021 MCR project kick-off meeting with the local area municipalities is included as Schedule 2 to this Report.

Next Steps and Immediate Priorities for Project

The MCR is a multi-stepped process involving several independent but interrelated components. As a result, many of the project tasks are occurring simultaneously however, certain tasks are proceeding with priority, as they are fundamental to establishing a foundation for the project. The tasks that form the next steps and represent the immediate priorities are as follows:

- Complete process of data sharing from County and local municipalities in order to continue with technical work and background research to support these components;
- Finalize communication strategy and uploading content for the MCR project webpage will provide interested parties and stakeholders a formal opportunity to obtain information and provide a forum to contribute input and comments;
- Provincially mapped Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System will be evaluated for refinement prior to implementation. These provincial maps have already been created by the Province, and it is the role of the MCR process to implement them with a one-time opportunity to “refine” the maps based on local information. It is important to understand however, that this is not intended to produce an alternative natural heritage or agricultural system, but rather adjust and “clean up” discrepancies primarily along the boundary of these provincial systems;

- Commencing the growth management and Land Needs Assessment is also underway. The Province has provided population and employment forecast numbers for the County of Simcoe to 2051, and these forecasts must be evaluated, and specific population and employment numbers allocated to each individual local municipality in the County. This process will require growth management direction to be provided from the lower tier municipalities to the County. Commencing this component of the MCR as early in the process as possible to identify for each municipality how much allocation they must plan for is critical; and
- Re-engage local municipal staff to provide more specific details on requirements for background information, input and direction. This will be an opportunity to verify what local information is already available and whether or not there are gaps of information which will need to be addressed, and if so how and by whom.

Financial and Resource Implications

Funds for this project have been allocated in the 2021 Operating Budget.

Relationship to Corporate Strategic Plan

This Item may support the following strategic initiatives from the County of Simcoe's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan: A) Growth Related Service Delivery, B) Strengthened Social, Health and Educational Opportunities, D) Environmental Sustainability and F) Responsive and Effective Governance.

Reference Documents

- **PAC 2020-127** (April 14, 2020) Update on the County's Municipal Comprehensive Review
- **CCW 17-269** (September 12, 2017) Overview of Growth Plan, 2017 and the Potential Impacts on County and Local Municipal Planning Matters

Attachments

Schedule 1 - PowerPoint presentation from the December 16, 2020 MCR project initial kick-off meeting

Schedule 2 - PowerPoint presentation from the February 8, 2021 MCR project kick-off meeting with the local area municipalities

Prepared By

Dan Amadio, Manager of Planning
Greg Marek, Manager of Planning

Approvals

Date

David Parks, Director of Planning, Economic Development,
Transit and Airport Services

February 18, 2021

Rob Elliott, General Manager, Engineering, Planning and
Environment

February 18, 2021

Trevor Wilcox, General Manager, Corporate Performance

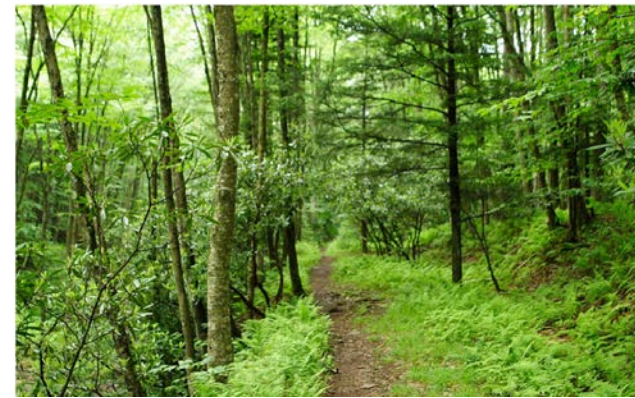
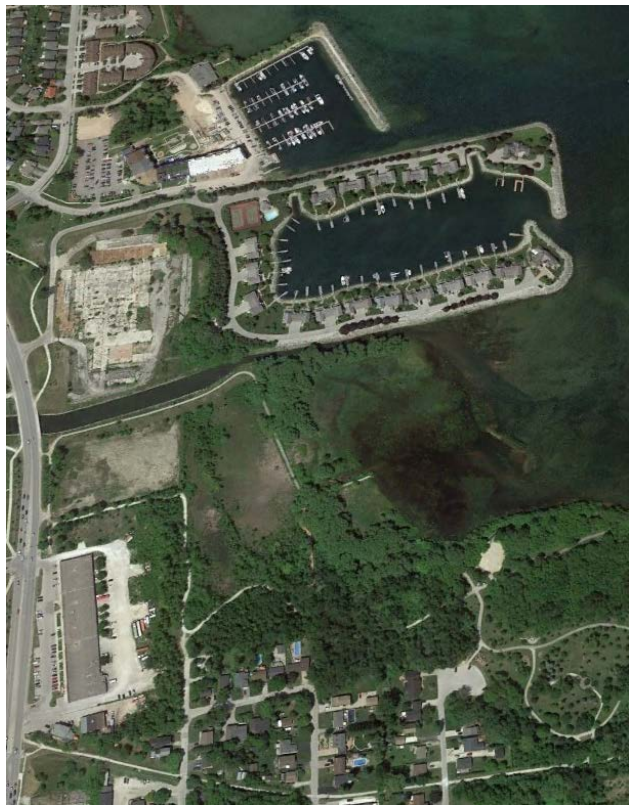
February 19, 2021

Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer

February 19, 2021

Simcoe County Municipal Comprehensive Review

Project Kick-off Meeting



COUNTY OF SIMCOE

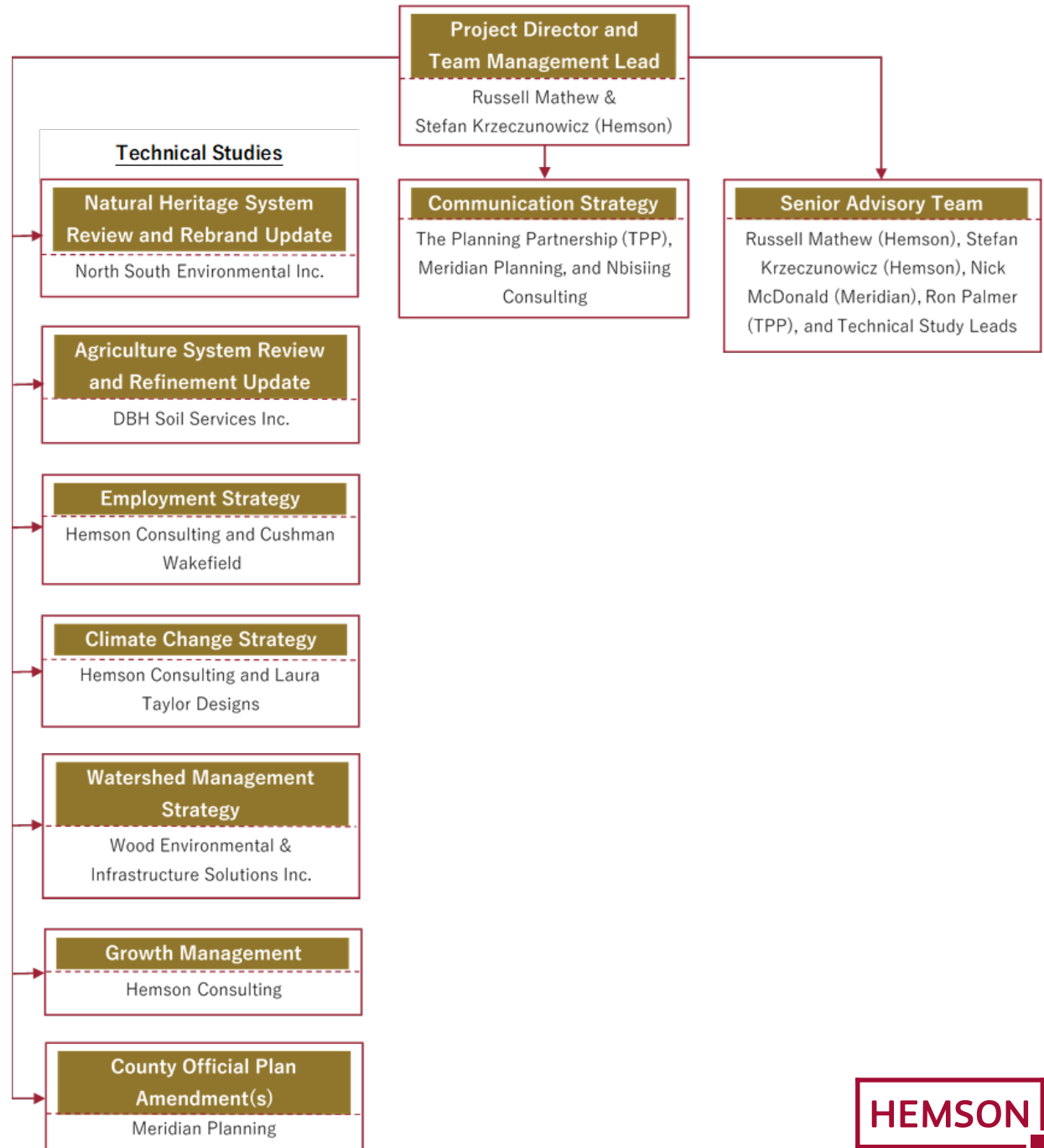
Wednesday, December 16th, 2020



Today we will discuss...

- Consulting Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Role of Lower-Tier Municipalities
- Workplan Overview
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Next Steps

Consulting Team Roles & Responsibilities



A Large, Multi-Disciplinary Project Requires Frequent Communication

- Members of the Senior Advisory Team will:
 - review and provide input to the status reports submitted throughout the duration of the assignment;
 - provide continuity and quality control through the course of the project; and
 - ensure that multi-disciplinary issues are co-ordinated and integrated with the overall workplan

- Hemson will maintain overall communication with the Consulting Team and the overall scope of work, budget and timelines related to assignment

- Regular communication will be had with the County's MCR Project Manager
 - Suggested monthly check-in meeting

MCR is a Collaborative Exercise with the Lower-Tier Municipalities

Simcoe Local Area Municipalities



We will ask the locals municipalities to...

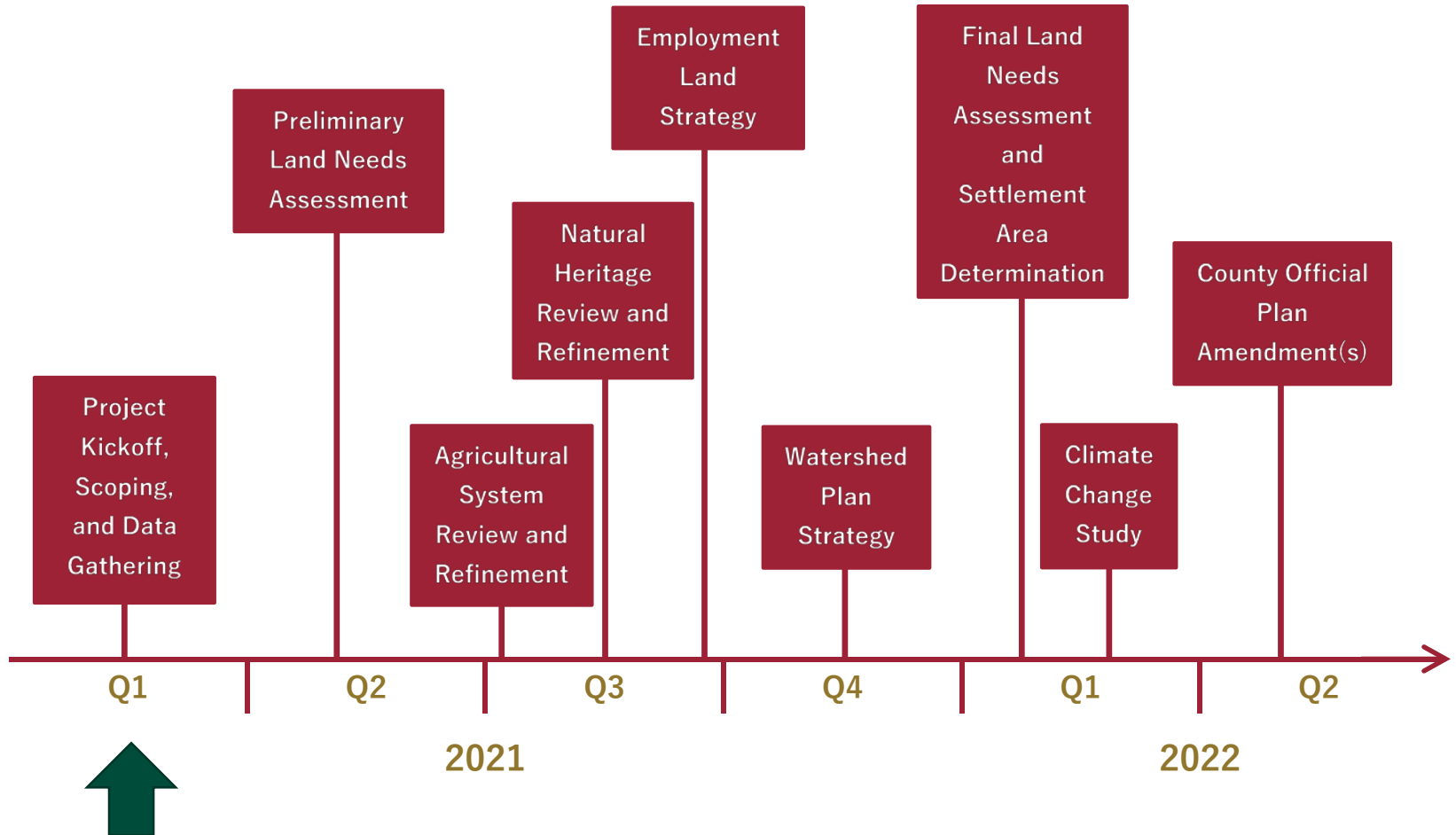
- Advise the Consulting Team of background information and technical analysis relevant to the project
- Provide local municipal data and mapping
- Comment on draft analysis related to the MCR and technical studies
- Participate in meetings and workshops to provide input

How should we engage with Orillia and Barrie?

Several Technical Studies Will Inform the MCR

Study Technical	County/Local Municipalities	Considerations
Land Need Assessment	County (Hemson)	What work has been done on intensification potential? More detailed analysis of land supply information
Agricultural Systems and Refinement	County (DBH Soils)	
Natural Heritage System Review and Refinement	County (North-South Environmental / Wood)	
Employment Land Strategy	County (Hemson / Cushman & Wakefield)	Strategy will balance market perspectives with policy requirements
Watershed Plan Strategy	County (Wood)	
Climate Change Study	County (Hemson / Laura Taylor Designs)	Initial discussion on primary purpose and scope of study required
Public Facilities and Infrastructure Needs	Local Municipalities	Requirement of Growth Plan 2.2.8.3 a) and c)
Fiscal Impact Assessment	Local Municipalities	Requirement of Growth Plan 2.2.8.3 b)
Agricultural Impact Assessment	Local Municipalities	Requirement of Growth Plan 2.2.8.3 f), g) (MDS formula) and h)
County Official Plan Policies	County (Meridian) & Local Municipalities	Close collaboration with municipalities required to determine actual settlement boundaries
Public Consultant	County (The Planning Partnership / Nbisiing)	Includes consultation with indigenous communities

Proposed Sequencing of Technical Studies



Stakeholder Consultation

- Province
- Lower-Tier Municipalities
 - Key stakeholders in this process
 - Need to understand specific roles and responsibilities
 - Need to emphasize timely review of materials
- Other Public Agencies
- Indigenous Communities
- General Public
- County Council
 - What is the political will to achieve consensus?

Next Steps

- Establish key points of contact for each technical study

- Consulting Team to provide requests for data

- Kick-off with lower-tier municipalities

- Consultation Strategy
 - Establish project website
 - Establish workplan

Contact Information

Project Director: Russell Mathew

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P: (416) 593-5090 (ext. 26)

Day-to-Day Project Management: Stefan Krzeczunowicz

E: stefank@hemson.com

P: (416) 593-5090 (ext. 13)

Cell: 416-884-7666

Day-to-Day Consultant: Jackie Hall

E: jhall@hemson.com

P: (416) 593-5090 (ext. 52)

Consultation Lead: Nick McDonald

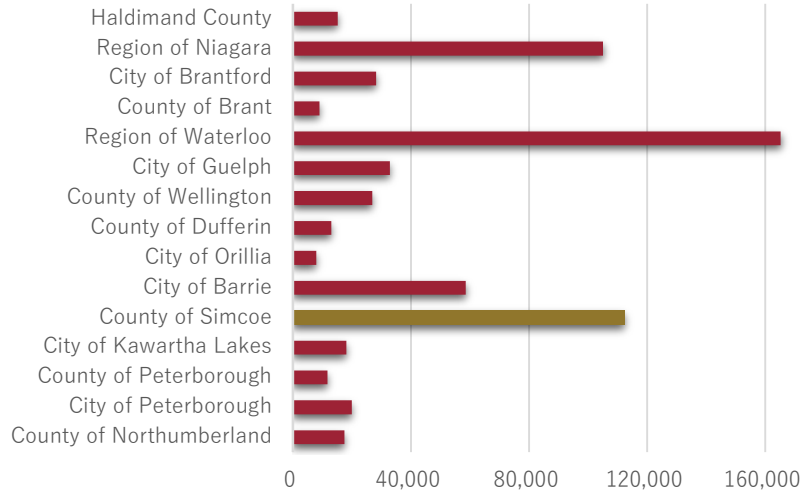
E: nick@meridian-Vaughan.ca

P: 416-700-8806

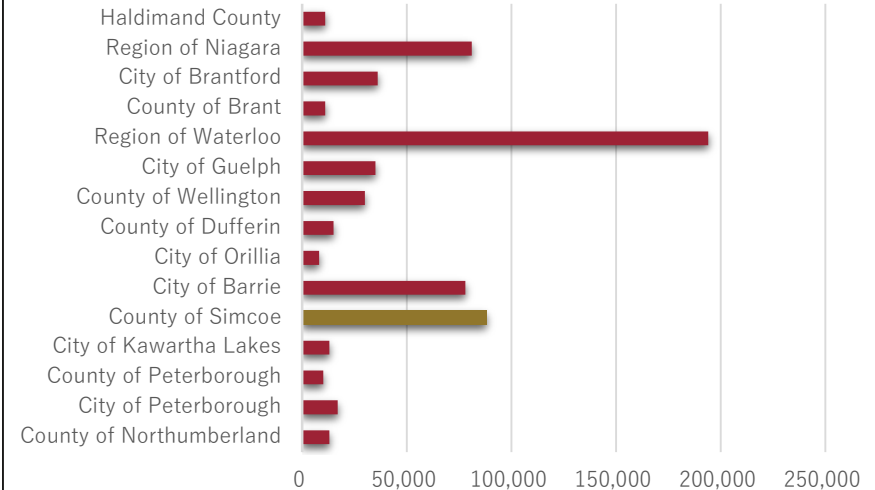
Appendix A: Growth Dynamics

Simcoe is Extremely Complex... And Will Experience Significant Growth

Occupied Housing Growth in the Outer Ring,
2016 to 2051

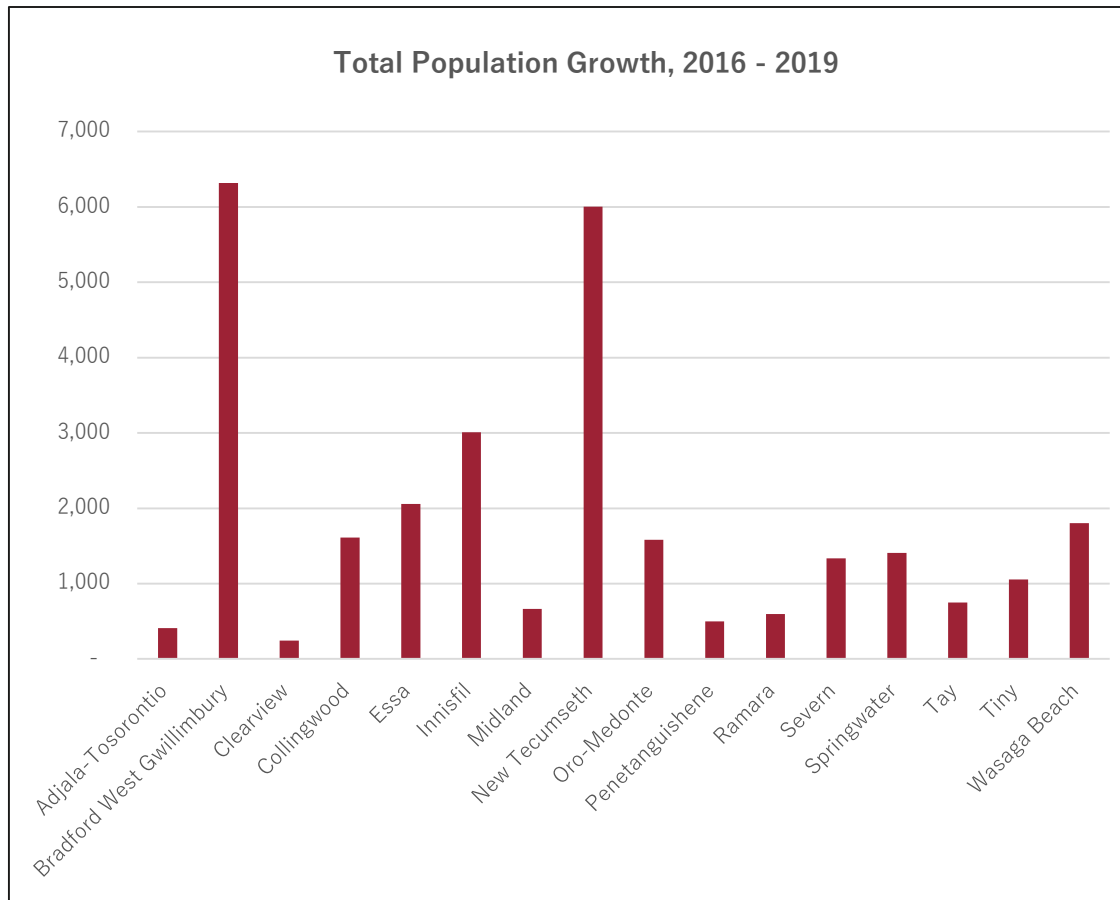


Total Employment Growth in the Outer Ring,
2016 to 2051



- Over the next 30-year Simcoe is expected to experience unprecedented growth
- The anticipated amount of housing growth in Simcoe to 2051 is the second highest in the GGH Outer Ring
- The same general pattern applies for employment

The GTA Will Influence How Local Municipalities in Simcoe Grow



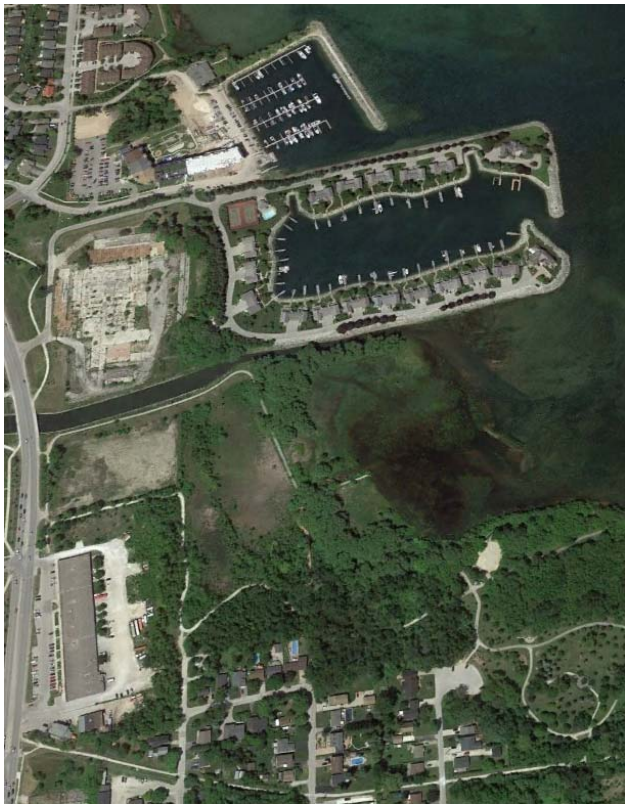
- Municipalities closest to the GTA provide residential dwellings for commuters
- Development capacity of GTA municipalities will influence growth in the County
- Highway 400 is a critical piece of transportation infrastructure that links Southern and Northern Ontario



COUNTY OF SIMCOE

MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Local Municipal Project Kick-off Meeting



COUNTY OF SIMCOE

Monday, February 8, 2021



Today we will discuss...

- What is a Municipal Comprehensive Review?
- Consulting Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Engagement with Local Municipalities
 - Role and responsibilities
 - Key points of contact
- Overview of Engagement Strategy
- Work Program and Consultation
- Questions?
- Next Steps

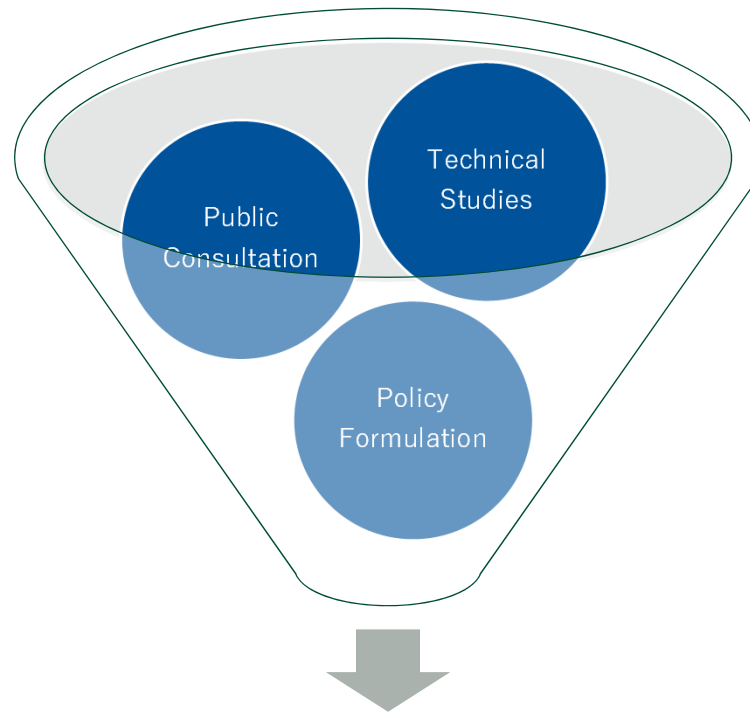
What is a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)?

- Official plans must be brought into conformity with Provincial plans within specific timeframes

- Many Growth Plan policies can be implemented through OPAs at any time

- Some policies require implementation through MCR
 - New OP or OPA initiated by upper or single-tier under s.26 of *Planning Act* that comprehensively applies Growth Plan policies and schedules

Key Features of an MCR



Revised County OP

- Submit to Province
- Conformity after approval
- Approval non-appealable

Key Growth Plan Policies

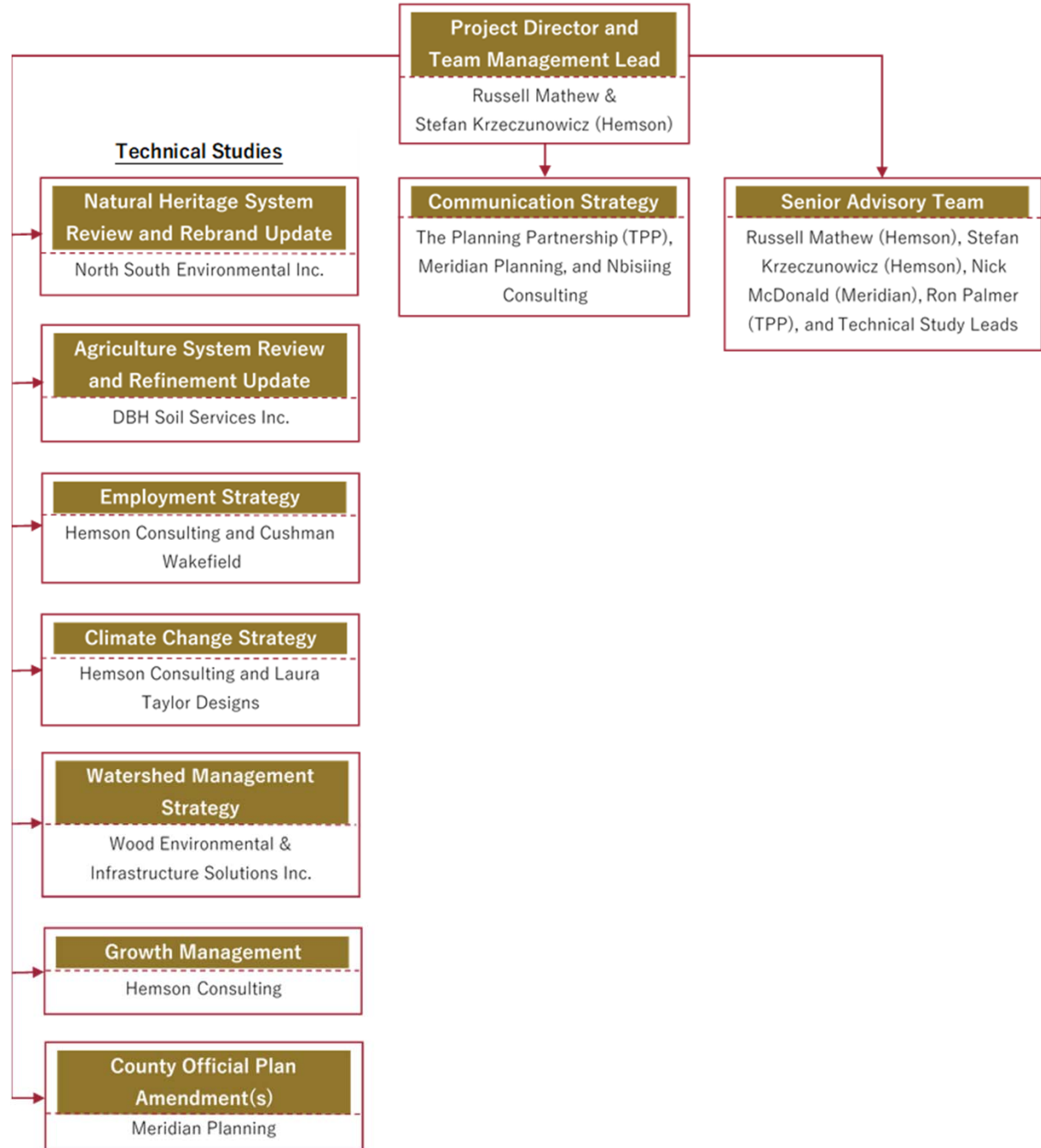
- Schedule 3—growth forecasts to 2051
 - Schedule 7—growth allocations to 2031 no longer in effect

- Section 6—growth management in Simcoe Sub-Area
 - Schedule 8—primary settlement areas and key employment areas

- County must allocate growth to local municipalities
 - New LNA Methodology

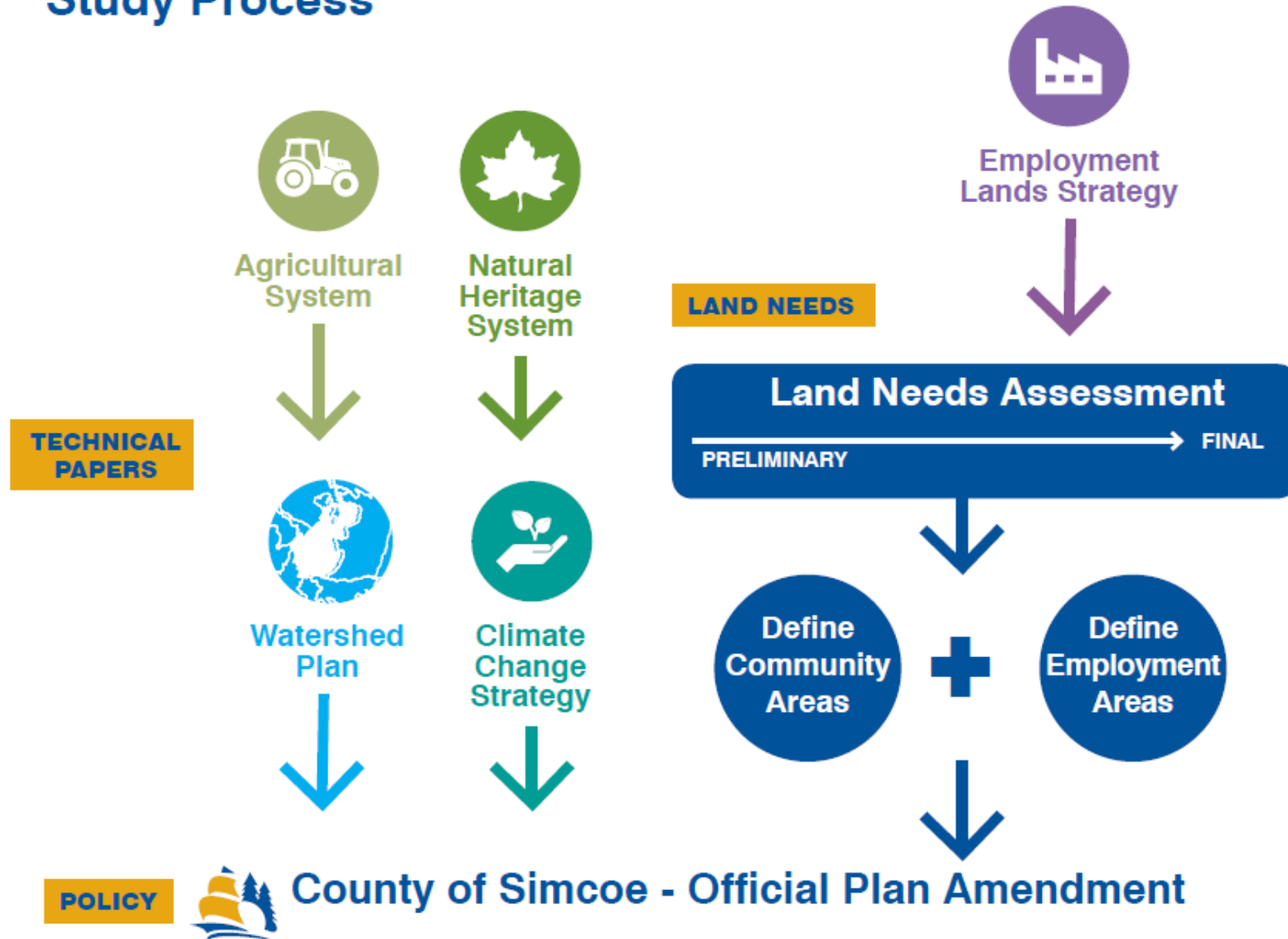
- Section 2.2.8—settlement boundary expansions

Consulting Team Roles & Responsibilities



COUNTY OF SIMCOE
MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Study Process



Several Technical Studies Will Inform the MCR

Technical Study	County/ Local Municipalities	Considerations
Land Need Assessment	County (Hemson)	What work has been done on intensification potential? More detailed analysis of land supply information
Agricultural Systems and Refinement	County (DBH Soils)	County-wide study
Natural Heritage System Review and Refinement	County (North-South Environmental / Wood)	County-wide study – studying natural heritage features to support urban expansion to be local responsibility
Employment Land Strategy	County (Hemson / Cushman & Wakefield)	Strategy will balance market perspectives with policy requirements
Watershed Plan Strategy	County (Wood)	
Climate Change Study	County (Hemson / Laura Taylor Designs)	
Public Facilities and Infrastructure Needs	Local Municipalities	Requirement of Growth Plan 2.2.8.3 a) and c)
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County Official Plan Policies	County (Meridian) & Local Municipalities	Close collaboration with municipalities required to determine actual settlement boundaries
Public Consultant	County (The Planning Partnership / Nbisiing)	Includes consultation with indigenous communities

MCR is a Collaborative Exercise with Local Municipalities

Simcoe Local Area Municipalities



Role of local municipalities:

- **Advise** Consulting Team of background information and technical analysis relevant to the project
- **Provide** local data and mapping
- **Comment** on draft analysis related to MCR and technical studies
- **Prepare** justification for urban expansions
- **Participate** in meetings and workshops to provide input

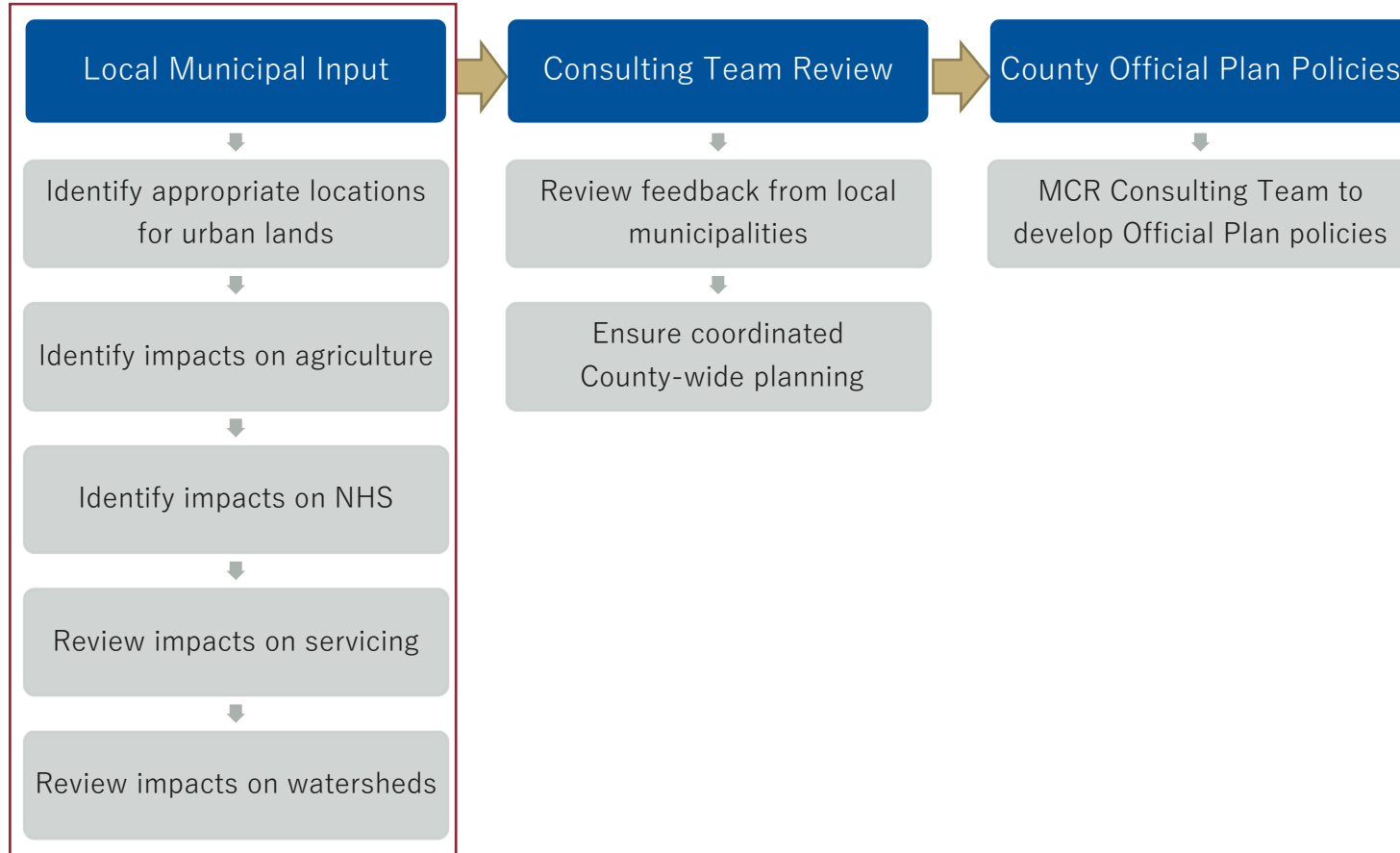
Local Municipal Data Sharing

- Supporting data and analysis related to:
 - Natural heritage
 - Agriculture
 - Growth management
 - Employment demand (e.g. inventories, densities)
 - Land Needs Assessment (e.g. non-developable lands, intensification potential)
 - Climate change

- All data sharing to be done through County (for now)

- Any issues with data sharing?

Local Municipal Input is Needed to Determine Location of Future Urban Lands



County Staff will be Key Point of Contact for Project

- Consulting Team will maintain regular communication with County staff throughout the assignment

- Questions/comments can be directed to:
 - **Dan Amadio, Manager of Planning**
705-726-9300 ext. 1005
dan.amadio@simcoe.ca

 - **Greg Marek, Manager of Planning**
705-726-9300 ext. 1362
greg.marek@simcoe.ca

Work Program And Consultation At-a-Glance

PHASE 1

Data Gathering & Analysis

- Communications
- What is the MCR?
 - What are the opportunities for involvement?

PHASE 2

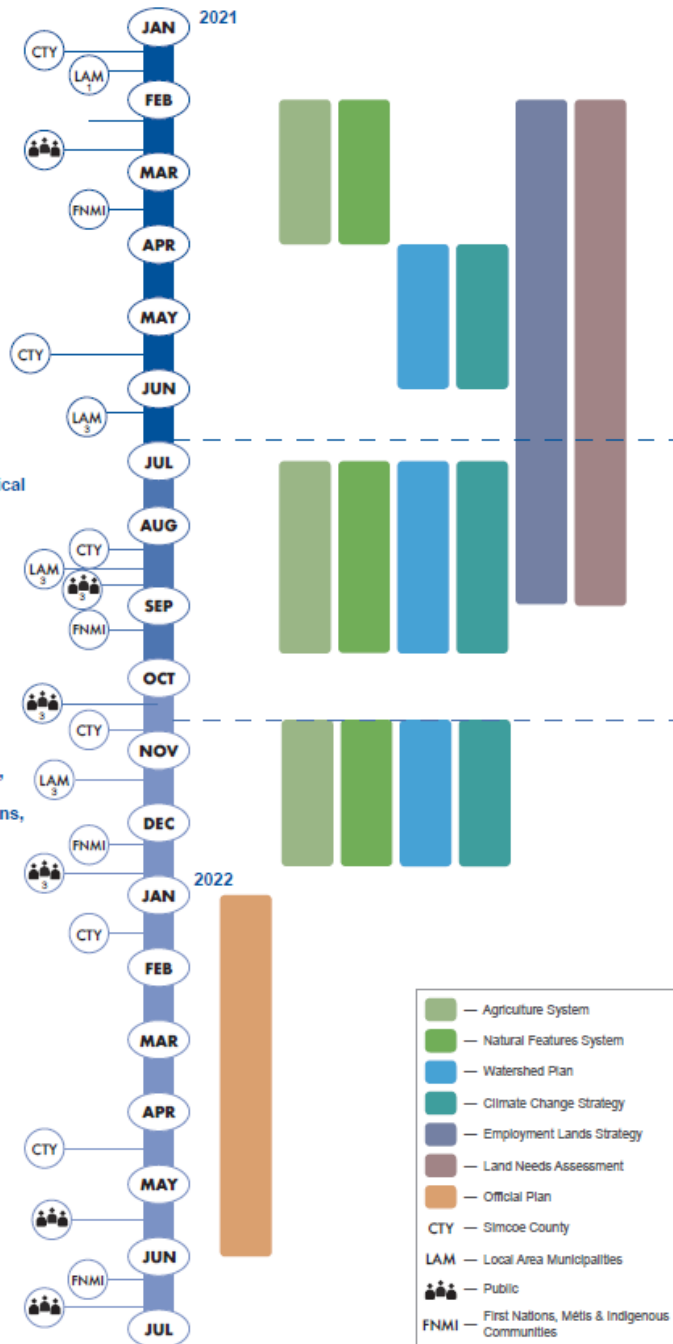
Draft Reports, Draft Technical Recommendations, Land Need

- Communications
- Preliminary Mapping
 - Draft Technical Recommendations
 - Draft and Final Land Needs

PHASE 3

Prepare Technical Reports, Final Mapping & Final Technical Recommendations, Official Plan

- Communications
- Final Technical Recommendations
 - Draft Official Plan
 - Final Official Plan

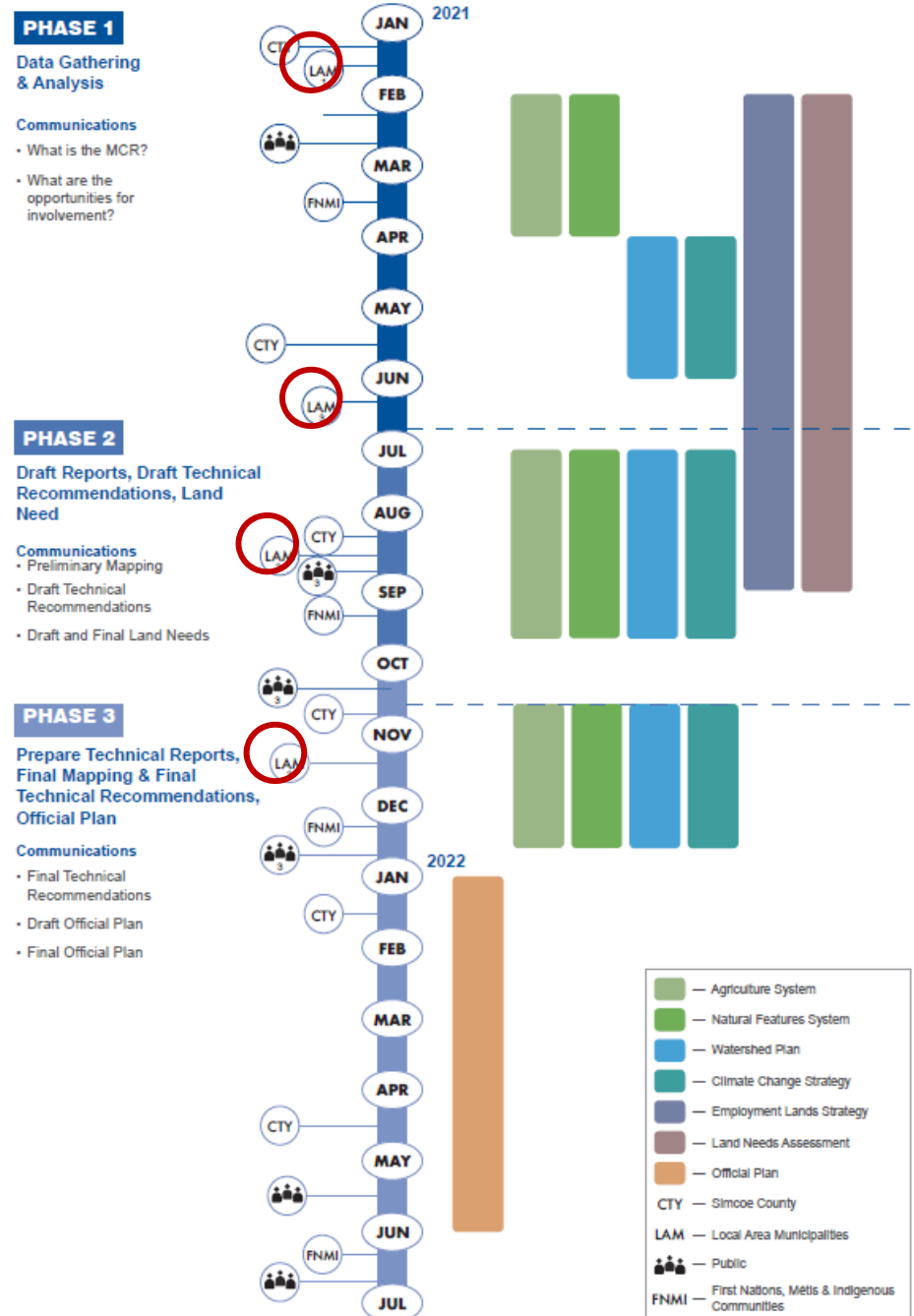


- Project components
- Phases/timing
- Engagement

Engagement Plan - Goals

- build awareness and understanding of the purpose of the MCR, which is mainly a technical exercise;
- effectively engage all stakeholders including County staff, staff at the Local Area Municipalities, conservation authorities, residents, landowners, community groups and business owners;
- build relationships with the stakeholders to generate broad-based support for the MCR;
- encourage participation and input through a variety of face-to-face and online forums; and,
- demonstrate a transparent process that explains how feedback and input was considered throughout the process.

Work Program And Consultation At-a-Glance



Engagement Plan – People/Groups to Consult

- County of Simcoe staff
- County of Simcoe council
- staff from Local Area Municipalities
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
- Indigenous/First Nations communities
- School boards
- Residents (seasonal and permanent)
- Community/business groups and associations
- Major Landowners/developers

Work Program And Consultation At-a-Glance

PHASE 1

Data Gathering & Analysis

- Communications
- What is the MCR?
 - What are the opportunities for involvement?

PHASE 2

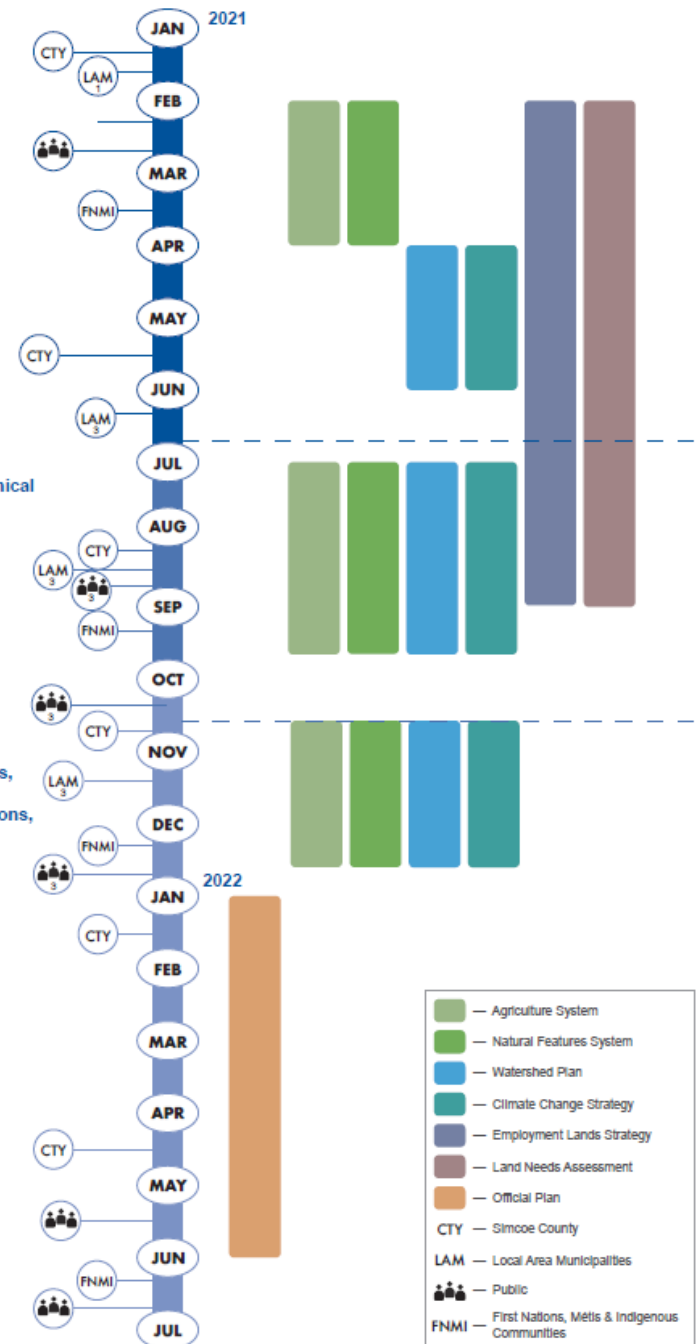
Draft Reports, Draft Technical Recommendations, Land Need

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PHASE 3

Prepare Technical Reports, Final Mapping & Final Technical Recommendations, Official Plan

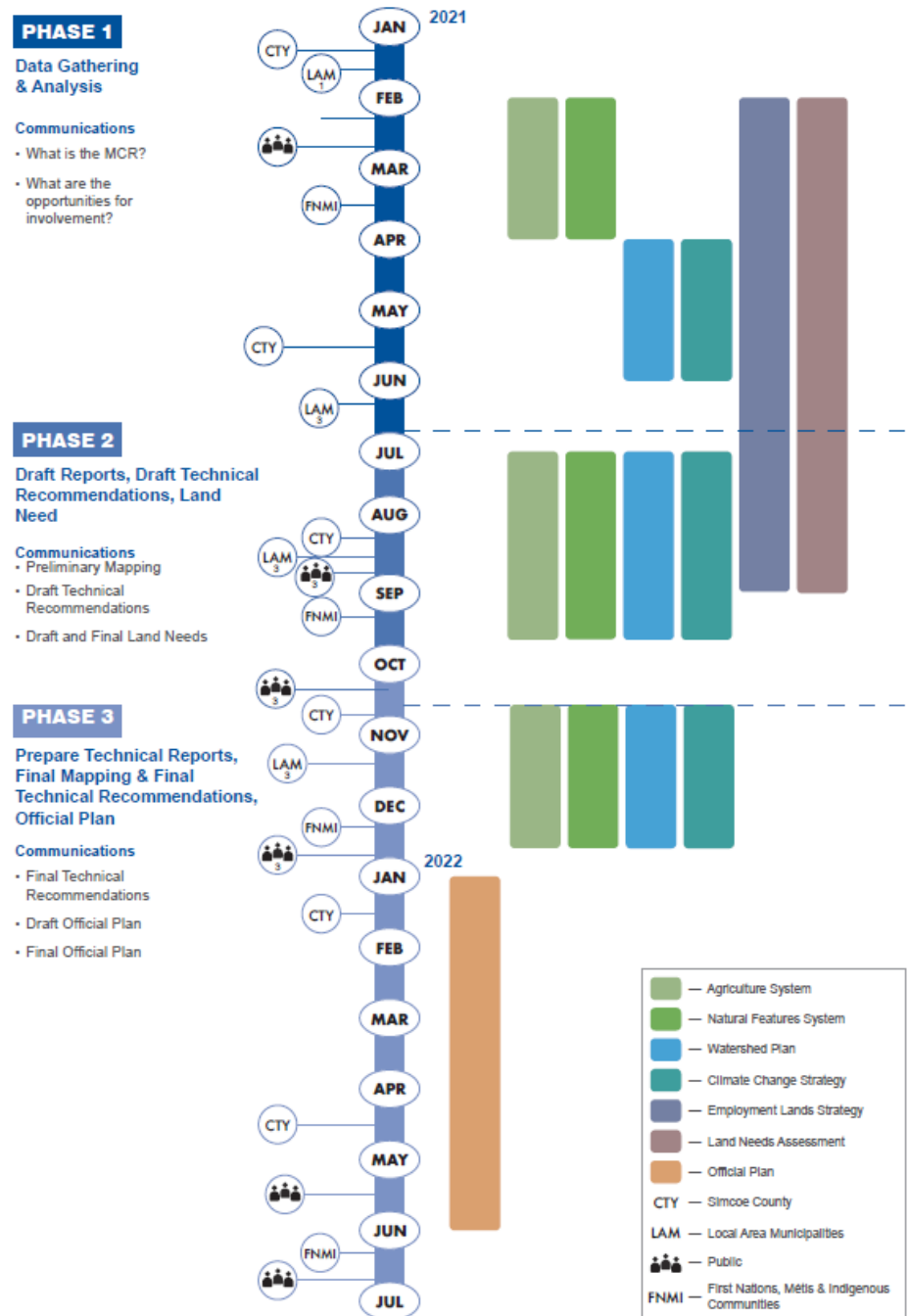
- Communications
- Final Technical Recommendations
 - Draft Official Plan
 - Final Official Plan



Engagement Plan – Tools and Tactics

- Online meetings
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face depending on direction from Public Health
- Updates posted online to the dedicated webpage
- Posts on social media to encourage engagement and feedback
- Project updates in the County’s regular communications tools
- Updates shared in media briefs for local media
- Email blasts to the study’s list of interested parties and circulated through the network of social media contacts

Work Program And Consultation At-a-Glance



Questions?

Next Steps

- Data gathering and review (underway)
- Initiate technical studies (underway)
- Develop content for Simcoe MCR website landing page
- Circulate material to local municipalities for review/comment

Consulting Team Contact Information

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