The OFFICIAL PLAN *of the* TOWNSHIP *of* CLEARVIEW

CLEARVIEW

As Adopted by Council: May 2024

1 Introduction

PURPOSE · VISION · PRIORITIES

Photo: **Looking southwest from the shoulder of Sunnidale Concession No. 9.**

On a clear day, you can stand at the side of Sunnidale Concession No. 9 and look out for miles across the land, which stretches out before you in every direction, broad and level. To the west and south, the landscape starts to undulate, its hills rolling up into the Niagara Escarpment, whose ridge you can make out, off in the distance, as a jagged line marking the horizon. It's easy to see why the members of the small farming community that settled nearby, between the 9th and 10th concessions, chose this place for their home. It's also easy to see why that community chose the name it did – a name that, some 150 years later, would be given to the entire Township.

1.1 An Official Plan for Clearview Township

Clearview Township was officially established on January 1, 1994, by the *County of Simcoe Act, 1993*, which amalgamated four former municipalities – the Village of Creemore, the Township of Nottawasaga, the Town of Stayner, and the Township of Sunnidale – into a single Township. Occupying approximately 556 square kilometres in the Nottawasaga Valley, Clearview Township

enjoys a remarkable natural setting, between the Niagara Escarpment in the west and the Minesing Wetlands and the Nottawasaga River in the east.

Clearview Township is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Tionontati, and Wendat. The lands that now make up the Township were conveyed to the British Crown from the Chippewa Nation as part of the "Lake Simcoe – Nottawasaga Purchase" (Treaty No. 18), signed on October 17, 1818. Europeans from diverse immigrant communities began arriving in the 1830s, with many of the first settlers establishing themselves along the original Sunnidale Road (now Simcoe County Road 10). The area became known for agriculture early on, a legacy that has continued to this day. Most of the Township's present-day communities were founded in the 1840s and 1850s, including Creemore in 1842 and Nottawasaga Station – now Stayner – between 1851 and 1855.

Today, the connections between its neighbouring towns and villages are what make Clearview a unique place, a true "community of communities."

1.1.1 Community Profile

At the time of its amalgamation in 1994, Clearview Township was home to around 12,000 people.[1] By the 2021 Census, the population had grown to 14,814 people – an increase of almost 28% over thirty years. Like many places in Canada, Clearview has an aging demographic profile, with a median age that rose from 38.4 years in the 2001 Census to 44.8 years in 2021, although it is worth noting that this is a slight decrease from the median age of 45.3 years reported in the 2016 Census. Clearview remains a multi-generational community, with just over a third of its population (34.2%) being between the ages of 15 and 44 and another 30% being between 45 and 64, according to the 2021 Census.

The Township's predominantly rural setting, dotted with small towns and villages, means that agriculture is important not just economically but also as an integral part of the community's identity. Other sectors employing significant portions of the labour force include construction (14.0%), health care and social assistance (11.2%), manufacturing (11.0%), and retail trades (9.1%). According to Statistics Canada, employment within Clearview has increased by over 30% since 2001, with the 2021 Census reporting an employed labour force of 4,145 people working in Clearview.[2] Just over half of the people working in Clearview live within the Township, with the remainder travelling from

1 Statistics Canada reported the Township's population as 11,598 in the 1991 Census and as 12,407 in 1996.

2 According to the 2021 Census, there were 1,360 residents who commuted to a usual place of work in Clearview Township, another 1,455 residents who worked at home, and 1,330 people who commuted to Clearview from a different municipality. (The 2021 Census reports a further 1,275 residents with no fixed workplace address.) The increase from 3,160 people working in Clearview, according to the 2001 Census, to 4,145 people in 2021 is an increase of 985 people, or 31.2% of the 2001 figure.

Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, and other nearby communities to work here. On top of this, a fair portion of the Township's residents commute to work in other municipalities, the most common destinations being Collingwood, New Tecumseth, and Barrie. Thus, maintaining connections with our municipal neighbours remains important for life in Clearview.

1.1.2 Updating the Official Plan

An official plan establishes principles, goals, and policies that will direct a community's growth and development; it also provides for the range of tools that will help the community achieve its vision and goals. Official plan policies can cover a wide range of subjects: they direct the efficient use and orderly development of a municipality's lands, provide for the responsible stewardship and protection of the natural environment, and shape the design of buildings and communities to promote compatibility and continuity of character.

Clearview Township's previous Official Plan, adopted in 2001, was based on forecasts for population growth and housing needs to 2021. The Township therefore requires an updated Official Plan, one that will better reflect the current needs of the community and that will plan for the growth in population, housing, and employment projected between now and 2031. There have also been a number of changes to policy at different levels of government since the adoption of Clearview's previous Official Plan, including:

(1) significant amendments to the *Planning Act*;

(2) the issuance of various policy statements under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, most recently the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024;

(3) recent updates to the Niagara Escarpment Plan in 2017; and

(4) the approval of a new Simcoe County Official Plan in 2016.

Clearview Township's Official Plan is statutorily required to be consistent with or conform with all of the policies and plans that were in effect at the time of its adoption.

Preparing an official plan is fundamentally a public process requiring significant contributions from residents and members of the community. These community contributions, combined with the more specialized knowledge of policy-makers and planners, help create policies that accurately reflect the community's vision for itself and that will be effective in achieving the community's goals. In addition to the public meetings required by provincial statute, this Plan has benefitted from the results of an online survey, from workshop discussions on specific issues and challenges, and from numerous conversations with stakeholder groups and community members. This Plan has further benefitted from the comments, suggestions, and recommendations that the community provided regarding the Public Consultation Draft released in August 2023. These various methods of engaging the public have been crucial for establishing the priorities this Plan needs to address and for directing policy-makers' attention to the issues that matter the most to the community.

1.1.3 Community Vision & Planning Priorities

One important outcome of the public engagement process is the formulation of a "vision statement" that encapsulates how a community sees itself now and into the future. Clearview's vision statement, built from key words and ideas provided by residents and stakeholders, reflects our aspirations for the future of the Township:

> **Clearview Township is a thriving community of small, family-friendly towns that features a successful agricultural sector and a robust economy. Clearview is a safe and peaceful place to live. We prioritize a clean and healthy natural environment, with the principles of sustainability guiding the future of planning for growth and development in the Township.**

The public engagement process also helped express the community's planning priorities, identifying important directions for policy to pursue:

Making sure development happens where it makes the most sense. This means directing housing development to areas with municipal services in order to optimize the use of existing infrastructure, focusing commercial and retail growth in community hubs, and ensuring that new employment uses are located on appropriate sites.

Growing as a sustainable community. We prioritize the protection, restoration, and enhancement of our natural environment, including the Township's vital water resources. We recognize that the reality of climate change must become a central focus of all decisions moving forward. All residents of Clearview deserve to live in and enjoy a healthy natural environment that provides opportunities for recreation and that promotes a diverse and innovative agricultural sector, with an eye to supporting future generations of farmers.

Enhancing community identity and sense of place. We will promote the unique aspects of our community's cultural heritage, and we place an emphasis on ensuring continuity of character in the built environment. In the years to come, Clearview will be a place where people of all ages love to live, where businesses seek to invest, and to which visitors often return.

1.2 Basis & Scope of the Official Plan

Section 16 of the *Planning Act* grants municipalities the authority to prepare and adopt official plans in order "to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment of the municipality," and allows an official plan to contain "a description of the measures and procedures" that will be used to attain its objectives, which can include zoning by-law's, community improvement plans, site plan control, and other tools authorized under various sections of the *Planning Act* (and other Acts).

1.2.1 Hierarchy of Planning Policy in Ontario

Land use planning in Ontario takes place within a multi-tiered hierarchy, and the contents and policies included in a local municipality's official plan, which guide decision-making at the local level, must be consistent or conform with plans and policies established at higher levels of government and by other authorized agencies. These plans and policies all play their own roles within the overall policy framework, which helps ensure that decisions are made consistently and that the objectives of various plans support and reinforce one another.

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 ("PPS 2024") came into effect on October 20, 2024, replacing the previous Provincial Policy Statement from 2020. Issued by the Province of Ontario under Section 3 of the Planning Act, the PPS 2024 provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest and sets the foundation "for regulating the development and use of land province-wide, helping achieve the provincial goal of meeting the needs of a fast-growing province while enhancing the quality of life for all Ontarians." The PPS 2024 states that municipal official plans are "the most important vehicle for implementation of the Provincial Planning Statement and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning."

The PPS 2024 is available from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing ("MMAH") at https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-planning-statement-2024.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan ("NEP") was first established in 1985 to protect the Escarpment's "unique ecologic and historic areas" as a "continuous natural environment," while also providing for public access and recreational opportunities. The NEP covers an area stretching from Niagara Falls to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, including about 11,305 hectares of land within Clearview Township, just over 20% of the total municipal territory. The NEP applies its own set of land use designations, which establish permitted uses and standards for development within the area covered by the plan. Applications proposing development in the NEP Area are subject to the development permit system administered by the Niagara Escarpment Commission ("NEC").

The NEP's policies contribute towards the preservation of a healthy natural environment that provides recreational opportunities to the residents of Clearview. The Escarpment itself is also a prominent geographic landmark, providing much of Clearview with its unique character and distinct natural features. The NEP is a provincial plan, meaning that this Official Plan must conform with it (or not conflict with it).

The most recent version of the NEP is available through the NEC's website, at https://escarpment.org/land-use-planning/niagara-escarpment-plan.

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority ("NVCA") is an important partner in understanding, protecting, and improving the natural environment in the Nottawasaga Valley and in protecting public health and safety from erosion, flooding, and other natural hazards. The NVCA's efforts towards reducing erosion also help preserve agricultural lands. The NVCA is one

of the three conservation authorities that authored the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan, authorized in 2015 under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Development within the area regulated by the NVCA, as described in Ontario Regulation 172/06 under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, requires a permit from the NVCA under that Act.

The Simcoe County Official Plan ("SCOP") provides policy direction for the sixteen local, "lower-tier" municipalities that make up Simcoe County, including Clearview Township. Among other things, the SCOP establishes a framework of land use designations – Settlements, Rural Areas, Agricultural Lands, and Greenlands – and directs the growth management strategies of its local municipalities by allocating projected population and employment growth. The SCOP's growth management strategy directs that the "vast majority" of this growth be directed to the Township's Urban Settlement Areas (as settlement areas with delineated built-up areas and with existing municipal services).

The most recent version of the SCOP came into effect in 2016 and is available through the County of Simcoe's website, at https://www.simcoe.ca/Planning/Pages/official-plan.aspx.

1.2.2 Scope of Clearview Township's Official Plan

This Official Plan is intended as an enabling document that provides a "big picture" look at how we want our community to grow and that identifies the range of implementation tools that may be used to achieve the Township's policy objectives. This Plan has been prepared with reference to population and employment projections to the year 2053~~1~~ provided by the SCOP. Clearview Township intends to evaluate this Plan's effectiveness by monitoring development activity within the municipality, including the issuance of building permits, the creation of lots, and the changing of land uses resulting from any amendments to this Official Plan or to the implementing Zoning By-law. When necessary, either because of changes in the Township's physical, environmental, social, or economic circumstances, or because of policy changes made by Simcoe County or the Province of Ontario, this Official Plan will be updated as appropriate.

1.2.3 Transitional Policies for Official Plan Review

The County of Simcoe adopted Amendment No. 7 to the SCOP on August 9, 2022, for the purpose of updating the SCOP's population, employment, and housing forecasts to the year 2051. ~~The current SCOP requires the Township of Clearview to plan for a population of 19,700 people and for total employment of 5,100 jobs by 2031. Once approved, t~~Therefore the forecasts and allocations in Amendment No. 7 to the SCOP ~~would~~ require the Township to plan for 21,820 residents and 6,470 jobs by 2051. At the time this Official Plan was being prepared for adoption, Amendment No. 7 had not yet been approved by the Province, meaning that the projections to 2031 contained in the current SCOP were~~remain~~ in effect. T~~herefore, t~~he forecasts presented in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** of this Official Plan, and this Plan's policies more generally, reflect the 2035~~1~~ projections set out in the 2026 approved~~current~~ SCOP.

As mentioned in Section 1.1.2, this Official Plan is meant to replace the Official Plan that the Township adopted in 2001 and, in doing so, to establish updated policies that reflect the current needs of the community and that take into account the growth projected to 2053~~3~~1. ~~Given the uncertain status of Amendment No. 7 to the SCOP, and uncertainties surrounding provincial policy more generally, it is not considered prudent to delay the adoption of this Official Plan until those uncertainties have been resolved. At the same time, this Official Plan acknowledges that it is advisable to plan beyond the 2031 horizon (as contemplated by Amendment No. 7), and furthermore recognizes that the Province's approval of Amendment No. 7 (should it be granted) will require an amendment to the Township's Official Plan to conform with the amended SCOP.~~

~~Therefore, the overall intent is for this Official Plan to be reviewed and amended once the matters referred to in the previous paragraphs have been resolved, or at least once there is more certainty regarding longer-term policy direction from the County and Provincial levels. The policies presented in this section of the Plan should generally be understood as statements of intent to provide guidance for the amendment prepared during that review process.~~

Nothing in this section of the Official Plan is intended to affect, hinder, or interfere with Council's authority under the *Planning Act* to amend this Official Plan or to implement its policies, and nothing in this section shall be interpreted as preventing, in any way, Council from exercising any authority it has under the *Planning Act* or its delegates from exercising any authority as may be delegated under that Act.

1. For the purposes of this section, the term "Official Plan Review" shall refer to the process of reviewing and amending this Official Plan initiated by Council in response to, or as necessitated by, any of the following:
    (a) the issuance of a decision by the MMAH with respect to Amendment No. 7 to the Official Plan of the County of Simcoe;
    (b) the issuance of a decision by the Province of Ontario with respect to the Provincial Planning Statement proposed on April 6, 2023 (ERO No. 019-6813) or with respect to a similar policy statement proposed in place of that document; or
    (c) the coming into force, on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor, of Subsection 1 (2) of Schedule 9 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*.
2. To clarify, more than one Official Plan Review process may be initiated under this section of the Official Plan, such as in circumstances where the events described in No. 1.2.3.1 above occur at different times.
3. If Council is of the opinion that all the matters contemplated in this section of the Official Plan have been adequately addressed, Council may amend this Official Plan to remove and repeal this section, even if one or more of the events described in No. 1.2.3.1 has not occurred.
4. It is anticipated that an Official Plan Review process will focus on the following:

(a) updating this Plan's population, housing, and employment forecasts to conform with such projections as may be approved by the Province;

(b) updating existing policies, or incorporating new policies, regarding the location and staging of development with respect to the availability of infrastructure and municipal services;

(c) making any alterations to the boundaries of Settlement Areas as Council considers necessary or advisable in order to ensure orderly, efficient, and sustainable development; and

(d) ensuring that the land use designations shown on the Schedules to this Plan continue to provide for and support the orderly, efficient, and sustainable development of land.

5. Nothing in No. 1.2.3.4 above requires that all of the matters identified in that policy be addressed through the same Official Plan Review process, and nothing shall prevent an amendment prepared and adopted through an Official Plan Review process from addressing matters that are not identified in Policy No. 1.2.3.4.

6. An amendment to this Official Plan made for the purpose of updating the forecasts and projections in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** will, among other things:

(a) delete the current versions of **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.**, and **Error! Reference source not found.** and replace with them with Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3, and Table 1.4 below., ~~in the event that the MMAH approves Amendment No. 7 to the County of Simcoe's Official Plan without making any modifications that affect population, housing, and employment forecasts as they pertain to Clearview Township~~;

~~(b) delete the current versions of Table 2.1, Table 2.2, Table 2.3, and Table 2.4 and replace with them tables that conform with such projections and forecasts as may be approved by the Province, in the event that the MMAH approves Amendment No. 7 to the County of Simcoe's Official Plan with modifications that affect the population, housing, and employment forecasts pertaining to Clearview Township; or~~

~~(c) ensure that Table 2.1, Table 2.2, Table 2.3, and Table 2.4 remain in conformity with such projections and forecasts as may be approved by the Province, in the event that the MMAH refuses to approve Amendment No. 7 to the County of Simcoe's Official Plan.~~

~~NON-DECISION NOTED IN BOXES BELOW RELATED TO 2041 and 2051 growth forecasts.~~

Table 1.1 – Target distribution of population growth to 2051

Settlement Area	Estimated population, 2021[(a)]	Target share of pop~~ul~~'n growth	Projected population ~~2031~~	~~2041~~	2051
Urban Settlement Areas	6,401	70%	~~7,759~~	~~9,289~~	11,015
Stayner	5,056	*52.5%*	~~6,074~~	~~7,222~~	8,516
Creemore	1,345	*17.5%*	~~1,685~~	~~2,067~~	2,499
Community Settlement Areas	2,101	20%	~~2,489~~	~~2,926~~	3,419
New Lowell	965	*8%*	~~1,120~~	~~1,295~~	1,492
Nottawa	1,136	*12%*	~~1,369~~	~~1,631~~	1,927
Rural Settlement Areas	793	6%	~~909~~	~~1,041~~	1,188
Lands outside Settlement Areas	5,934	4%	~~6,012~~	~~6,099~~	6,198
Total, Clearview Township	**15,229**	**100%**	**~~17,169~~**	**~~19,355~~**	**21,820**

[(a)]Based on 2021 Census Dissemination Block data from Statistics Canada.

Table 1.2 – Projected employment growth in Clearview, 2021-2051

Employment type	No. of jobs 2021	~~2031~~	~~2041~~	2051	Job growth, 2021-2051
Population-Related	2,360	~~2,650~~	~~3,000~~	3,180	+820
Employment Land	390	~~560~~	~~850~~	1,190	+800
Rural	1,600	~~1,730~~	~~1,860~~	1,910	+310
Total Employment	**4,350**	**~~4,940~~**	**~~5,710~~**	**~~6,280~~6,470**	**+~~1,930~~2,120**

Source: Hemson Consulting, *Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment* (31 March 2022), Appendix D (Detailed Forecast Results).

Table 1.3 – Target distribution of new dwelling units, 2021-2051

	No. of new dwelling units…		
Settlement Area	**…by 2031**	**…by 2041**	**…by 2051**
Urban Settlement Areas	1,024	2,264	2,944
Stayner	768	1,698	2,208
within delineated built-up area	*288*	*637*	*828*
in designated greenfield area	*480*	*1,061*	*1,380*
Creemore	256	566	736
within delineated built-up area	*96*	*212*	*276*
in designated greenfield area	*160*	*354*	*460*
Community Settlement Areas	174	385	500
New Lowell	77	170	220
Nottawa	97	215	280
Rural Settlement Areas	51	113	148
Lands outside Settlement Areas	31	68	88
Total, Clearview Township	**1,280**	**2,830**	**3,680**

Table 1.4 – Target share of housing density types per Settlement Area

Settlement Area type	Total no. of new units by 2051	Low-density	Medium-density	High-density
Urban Settlement Areas	2,944	60%	30%	10%
Community Settlement Areas	500	75%	25%	0%
Rural Settlement Areas	148	100%	0%	0%
Lands outside Settlement Areas	88	100%	0%	0%

7. The Township may base its planning for infrastructure and public service facilities on the projections contained in Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3, and Table 1.4, ~~even if those projections are not yet in effect,~~ and furthermore may plan for infrastructure and public service facilities beyond the horizon year of 2051.

8. Notwithstanding No. 1.2.3.6 above, where a decision has been made or an event has occurred that results in circumstances in which the Township is authorized to prepare and adopt its own growth projections and forecasts:

   (a) Council may initiate an Official Plan Review process that involves the preparation of such projections and forecasts; and,

   (b) until such time as Council initiates the process referred to in Clause 1.2.3.8(a), the projections and forecasts that were in effect immediately before the decision in question was made or the event in question occurred shall remain in effect as part of this Official Plan.

9. The Official Plan Review process referred to in Clause 1.2.3.8(a) will have due regard for the projections and forecasts to the year 2051 that:

   (a) were in effect as part of the Official Plan of the County of Simcoe immediately before the decision or event referred to in No. 1.2.3.8 occurred, in circumstances where the MMAH has approved Amendment No. 7 to that Plan, with or without modifications; or

   (b) were part of Amendment No. 7 to the Official Plan of the County of Simcoe as adopted by the County, in circumstances where the MMAH has not made a decision regarding Amendment No. 7 or has refused to approve that Amendment.

10. Any alterations to the boundaries of Settlement Areas or to the land use designations on Schedule B made through an Official Plan Review process will be guided by the following principles:

    (a) All alterations to Settlement Area boundaries will be consistent with the Community Structure & Growth Management policies set out in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** of this Official Plan and based on the land needed to accommodate growth projected to 2051.

    (b) The decision to add lands to a Settlement Area will generally be based on the suitability of the subject lands for development in the short or medium term, with the ability to provide municipal services and infrastructure to support development being considered a top priority.

    (c) The decision to remove lands from a Settlement Area will generally be based on factors that constrain the long-term development of the lands in question, including the presence of environmentally sensitive features, the existence of natural hazards, and factors preventing services and infrastructure to support development from being provided feasibly and sustainably.

(d) In addition to the factors described above, decisions regarding alterations to Settlement Area boundaries will also take into consideration the logical rounding-out of Settlement Areas.

(e) Decisions regarding land use designations will ensure that development is located in a way that prioritizes the efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective provision of infrastructure and municipal services.

(f) Decisions regarding the "Agricultural" designation or the "Greenlands" designations will be consistent with this Official Plan's stated objectives regarding the preservation of prime agricultural areas for long-term agricultural use, the protection and preservation of natural heritage features, and the directing of development away from hazardous lands and hazardous sites.

11. Any alterations made to the boundaries of the Urban Settlement Areas of Stayner or Creemore shall be subject to Policy No. **Error! Reference source not found.**.**Error! Reference source not found.** or Policy No. **Error! Reference source not found.**.**Error! Reference source not found.** of this Plan, as the case may be.

12. Nothing in this section shall prevent Council from amending this Official Plan in response to circumstances or events that are not described or contemplated in this section of the Plan.

1.3 How to Read the Official Plan

This document shall be known formally as the "Official Plan of the Township of Clearview." References within this document to "this Official Plan" or to "this Plan" should be understood as representing the document's full title. The words "Official Plan" have been capitalized whenever the text refers to this Plan or refers specifically to another municipality's Official Plan (such as Simcoe County's). These words have not been capitalized when referring to official plans in general.

1.3.1 Contents of this Official Plan

The Official Plan of the Township of Clearview consists of the written text (divided into 13 sections, including this Introduction), three appendices, and eight accompanying map schedules, identified by the letters "A" through "G", plus Schedule "SP" for areas subject to specific policies. Each map schedule shows the entirety of Clearview Township, and some include sub-schedules (identified by appending a number to the schedule's letter, such as "B-1", "B-2", etc.) to provide greater detail for individual Settlement Areas. Any reference to one of the schedules in the text of this Official Plan should be understood as referring to all such sub-schedules, where they exist. (For instance, a reference to "Schedule B" should be understood as including "Schedule B-1" through "Schedule B-12".)

References (by number) to individual policies within this Official Plan are preceded by the subsection number, which itself consists of three numbers (for example, this sentence appears in

Subsection 1.3.1). Where necessary, an individual policy may include sub-items, referred to as clauses, indicated by lowercase letters (a, b, c, etc.), and sub-clauses under these, indicated by lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). Any reference to a policy by number should be understood as referring to any clauses and sub-clauses as may appear under that policy.

This Official Plan needs to be read in its entirety in order for its meaning to be fully understood, correctly interpreted, and properly applied.

1.3.2 Interpretation of Specific Terms

Some of the policies in this Plan use terms in a specific sense that needs to be distinguished from the ordinary definition of the term or that requires some form of clarification, while some other terms are used in a specific sense in another document (such as the PPS 2024 or the SCOP). In these cases, the term in question will be underlined in green, like so, and the corresponding definition can be found in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** (**Error! Reference source not found.**). When a word or term is used without being underlined, it should be understood according to its ordinary meaning or dictionary definition.

This Official Plan refers to various ministries of the Province of Ontario, the names of which appear in the text underlined in blue. The specific names of Provincial ministries can change from time to time – for example, the ministry referred to in this Plan as the Ministry of the Environment has changed its name multiple times since the late 1990s, having been referred to as the "Ministry of the Environment" from 1997 to April 2002, as the "Ministry of the Environment and Energy" from April 2002 to August 2002, the "Ministry of the Environment" again from August 2002 until 2014, the "Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change" from 2014 to 2018, and the "Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks" since 2018.

Despite these name changes, the ministry in question is, by definition, presided over by the Minister who is responsible for administering the *Ministry of the Environment Act* (R.S.O. 1990, c M.24) and who has charge of the Ministry pursuant to Subsection 2 (2) of that Act. Therefore, this Official Plan uses the term "Ministry of the Environment" ("MOE") and the names of other ministries according to their statutory definitions, which are specified in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** of this Plan. The purpose of the blue underlining is to remind the reader that references to Provincial ministries should be understood according to the definitions in that section of this Plan and, for this reason, may not reflect the exact names currently in use. This avoids the need for a housekeeping amendment to the Official Plan every time a ministry changes its name. (It has the added benefit of brevity, in situations like that of the Ministry of Natural Resources ("MNR"), which for a few months in 2021 was referred to as the "Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry", or "MNDMNRF".)

1.3.3 "May" & "Shall"

Throughout this Plan, you will find many statements that use the verbs "may" and "shall." These verbs have specific legal meanings when they are used in policy documents and in legislation, but they can strike the modern reader as somewhat odd. For example, in everyday conversation, "may" usually indicates some mixture of possibility and uncertainty (as in "maybe, maybe not"). In legal language, however, "may" is what is called a "permissive" – in other words, it grants someone permission to do something (that they would not otherwise be allowed to do). Along with permission, though, comes the option of not doing the something you are now permitted to do. Thus, the statement, "The Township may do so-and-so" is probably best understood as meaning, "The Township has the legal authority to do so-and-so (but is not obligated to do so-and-so)."[3] In certain instances, "may" is also used to express or introduce a conditional circumstance: for example, in a statement like, "Such-and-such a land use may be permitted if the following conditions are met…." This use of the verb "may" still carries the permission-without-obligation sense of the word.

The word "shall," on the other hand, is referred to as an "imperative": to say, "The Township shall do so-and-so" means that it is no longer a matter of permission or choice – the Township now has a legal obligation to do so-and-so. (Today, we would probably express this in conversation using the word "must" or the phrase "has to.") In some places, "shall" is also used to indicate mandatory conditions and to establish criteria that must be met – as, for example, in the statement, "Before permitting such-and-such a use, Council shall be satisfied that…."

Finally, some statements in this Official Plan use the verb "will", which in ordinary conversation is generally used to create the future tense but which in the context of this document should be understood as indicating intent. Thus, "The Township will do so-and-so" should be interpreted as meaning "The Township has every intent of doing so-and-so" – but, as with "may," there is no legal obligation to do so-and-so.