

City of Pembroke Official Plan Review



Background Report

JLR No.: 33796-001
Revision: Draft for Client Review

June 29, 2026

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The City of Pembroke (the City) is a single-tier municipality, while simultaneously serving as the seat of Renfrew County despite being independent of the County's government. The City was first incorporated as a Town in 1878 and then as a City in 1971. The construction of the Renfrew County Courthouse in 1867 spurred construction in the then Town and attracted civil servants. Since this time other key industries have developed in the City including forestry and wood product manufacturing, as Pembroke is ideally located along Highway-17 and is in close proximity to major markets in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. Pembroke is also home to a variety of local businesses and entrepreneurs and is a vibrant cultural centre in the region known widely for its heritage murals which detail the City's rich history.

The City is located on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin people. The Algonquins of Greater Golden Lake First Nation are a Non-Reserve Algonquin First Nation Community comprised largely of members throughout the Ottawa Valley including Pembroke where their community center is based. The Algonquins of Greater Golden Lake First Nation are one of ten communities that make up the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO).

The City has an area of approximately 14.32 km² situated on the western edge of the Ottawa Valley sitting at the confluence of the Ottawa River and the Muskrat River. With a 2021 population of 14,364, the City is home to residents of all ages, but similar to municipalities across Ontario it is experiencing the demographic shift that comes with a significant aging population.

The City will need to consider changes in growth management, housing, climate change, and the provision of long-term economic sustainability for its residents. It will need to consider its current goals and strategies to determine if they can guide the future growth and development within the City over the next 25 years.

The Official Plan (OP) is the key tool to help the City navigate these changes. The OP was last comprehensively updated in 2016 and since then, there have been several changes to the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Planning Statement that need to be incorporated into the revised document.

1.2 Official Plan Review

Given the long-term nature of an Official Plan, consistent change in the external environment, and a continuously evolving legislative, policy, and regulatory framework for land use planning, it is a standard practice to periodically review an Official Plan to ensure that it reflects the best available information, continues to reflect the vision and goals of the community, and balances the vision and goals with matters of provincial interest in local land use planning.

This practice is enshrined in the *Planning Act* under Section 26 which requires that planning authorities revise their Official Plan no less frequently than ten years after it comes into effect as a new Official Plan and every five years thereafter, unless replaced by a new Official Plan. The purpose of this regular review and update is to ensure that the Official Plan has regard to matters of provincial interest in land use planning as per Section 2 of the *Planning Act*, is consistent with

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policy statements issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, and that it conforms, or does not conflict with, provincial plans.

Since the Official Plan was last comprehensively reviewed, there have been numerous changes to legislation and policy at the provincial level which are not reflected in the Official Plan. Given the extensive changes that have occurred in the planning framework since 2016, when the last comprehensive review occurred, an updated Official Plan to guide land use planning and development within the municipality over the next twenty-five years is necessary.

For the purposes of this review, a new Official Plan is proposed in accordance with Section 17 of the Planning Act.

The project is structured in a series of phases, as outlined below:

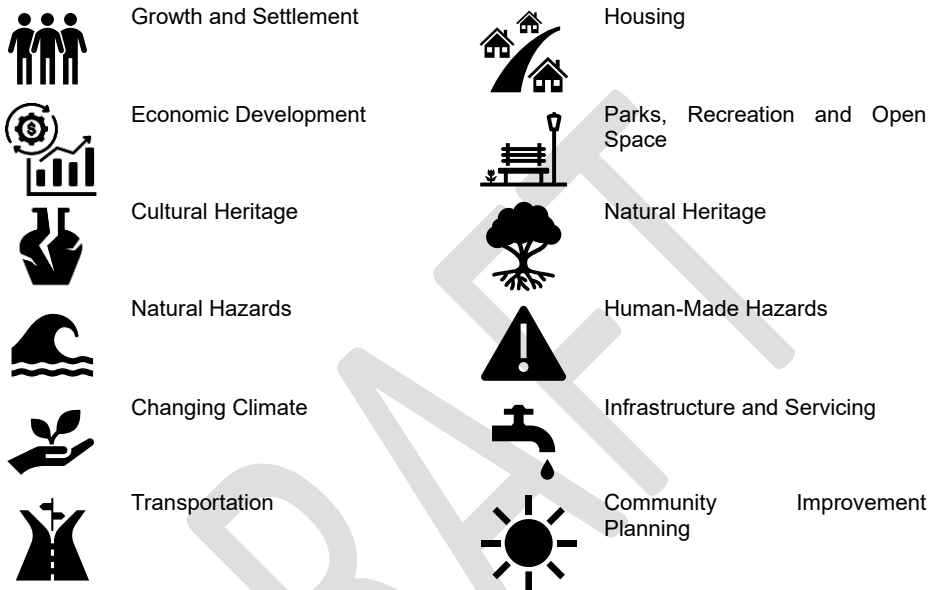
Table 1: Project Structure

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Initial Consultation	Background Review	Public Engagement and Draft Official Plan
• Kick-off meeting; • GIS Data Request; • Indigenous Engagement Letters; • Work Plan and Consultation Strategy; • One-Window Meeting with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; • Indigenous Engagement Meetings; and • Special Meeting of Council.	• Technical review of Official Plan; • Review and integration of background material; • Online public survey; • Digital Base Map; • Vacant Land Supply Analysis; • Population Projections; and • Draft Background and Directions Report.	• Council Presentation: Background and Directions Report; • Finalize Background and Directions Report; • Draft Redline Official Plan and Circulation to MMAH; • Revise Official Plan; • Public Open House; • Staff Report and Comment Matrix; • Statutory Public Meeting; • Adoption of Official Plan by Council; • and Approval by MMAH.

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1.3 Purpose of the Report

This report summarizes key information from several sources, describes the existing provincial planning framework for land use planning and development, and discusses policies in the existing Official Plan. The report is organized thematically to address the following topics:



Please note that while not specifically addressed in this background report, minor changes to ensure consistency with the PPS and to reflect updated terminology will be made to the draft Official Plan.

This report is intended to serve as a 'working document' that is updated throughout the Official Plan review process and will be used as the rationale for submission of the Draft Official Plan to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for approval. Changes will be noted using the date of the change being noted in the text.

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2.0 Planning Context

The planning policy framework for preparing an updated Official Plan is comprised by the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), each of which is discussed in this section.

2.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* (the *Act*) is the Province's legislation for land use planning in Ontario and provides the basis for planning authorities to prepare Official Plans to guide growth and development in their communities over a twenty-five-year planning period. Under the *Planning Act*, planning authorities must have regard to matters of provincial interest as listed in Section 2, and decisions affecting land use planning must be consistent with policy statements issued under Section 3 of the *Act* and conform to, or not conflict with, provincial plans.

Since 2016, when the Official Plan was last updated, the *Planning Act* has been the subject of numerous amendments, including:

- *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016 (Bill 7)*
- *Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act, 2017 (Bill 39)*
- *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139)*
- *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108)*
- *Covid-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 (Bill 197)*
- *Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021 (Bill 276)*
- *More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 (Bill 109)*
- *Build More Homes Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23)*
- *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (Bill 185)*
- *Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 (Bill 200)*
- *Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025 (Bill 5)*
- *Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 (Bill 17)*
- *Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 (Bill 60)*
- *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026 (Bill 98)*

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Key updates of particular relevance to the Official Plan, among other matters, include:

- Requirements for planning authorities to consider the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing, as a matter of provincial interest.
- Requirements for planning authorities to include a description of measures and procedures in their Official Plan for informing and obtaining the views of the public with respect to various Planning Act approvals.
- Requirements for Official Plans to include climate change policies.
- Modified parkland dedication requirements.
- Modified timelines for appeals of non-decisions for certain types of development applications.
- Changes to types of matters and reasons for appeal of decisions, as well as changes to persons who may file appeals, accompanied by transformation of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to the now Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).
- Modifications to the types of development and the matters relating to building that are subject to site plan control. For example, residential development with 10 residential units or fewer are exempt from site plan control unless the property is located within 120 metres of a water features (wetland, stream etc.) or 300 metres of a railway.
- Up to two Additional Residential Units (ARUs) permitted as of right on municipally serviced urban residential land.
- Requirements for site plan approval to be delegated to municipal staff.
- Schools now permitted on as-of-right on residentially designated and zoned lands.
- Standardizing the table of contents and list of land use schedules for official plans.

2.1.1 **Bill 98 – Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026**

Bill 98 'Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026' is a comprehensive piece of legislation proposing modifications to numerous Provincial Acts that will impact the way in which municipalities function. Key changes proposed to the Planning Act through Bill 98 that will impact the City include:

- Changes to the structure and contents of Official Plans
- Removals of climate change policy requirements in Official Plans
- The creation of standardized application requirements

Bill 98 introduces a mandatory, simplified structure for Official Plans including a standardized Table of Contents and standardized schedules (maps). Municipalities are now limited to a set of 12 specific land use designations defined by the Province. Local governments can no longer

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create custom, local land use designations within the Official Plan. The transition to this new Official Plan framework is not immediate. The transition date is January 1, 2029. This is essentially a 'trigger date' to start the clock for conformity with the new Provincial format, meaning that, the City must adopt a new Official Plan that is reflective of the new standardized format at its first Official Plan Review after the January 1, 2029 date.

Bill 98 was approved on May 15, 2026, and received Royal Assent on June 2, 2026. The specific provisions regarding Official Plan standardization will not take effect immediately after Royal Assent. Rather, the requirements for Official Plan standardization will come into force upon proclamation on a date declared by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This provides the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing time to finalize the technical requirements and regulations that municipalities will ultimately need to follow within the local Official Plan.

Pembroke is participating in a pilot project with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to prepare a Bill 98 compliant table of contents in line with the proposed standardized official plan table of contents and schedules. The province has finalized its proposed legislative changes with regard to this initiative on March 30, 2026 although some details will be refined through future regulatory changes. For Pembroke, this mainly includes adjusting the list of land use designations as follows:

Table 2: Existing and Proposed Land Use Designations

Current Pembroke Official Plan Designation	Proposed Land Use Designation
Residential	Neighbourhoods
Institutional	Neighbourhoods (small scale) Mixed-Use Areas (larger scale)
Central Commercial	Mixed-Use Areas
Shopping Centre Commercial	Mixed-Use Areas or Mixed-Use Commercial Area*
Highway Commercial	Mixed-Use Commercial Area*
Economic Enterprise	Employment Areas
Industrial	Employment Areas
Mixed Use	Mixed-Use Commercial Areas*
Open Space	Parks and Open Space
Hazard Land	Natural Environment and Water Resource Areas

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Flood Fringe	Natural Environment and Water Resource Areas
Special Exception	TBD
New	Resource Areas (for existing pits and quarries designated Industrial)
* A final determination of specific land uses will need to be made in the future as to the appropriateness of particular land uses for the land use designations proposed in the new Official Plan. For example, Some highway commercial shopping centres may be better designated mixed use, which permits sensitive uses as well, for example residential re-development on underutilized portions of large paved surface parking. There may be other commercial uses and locations which are not suitable for residential uses, which can be designated Mixed-Use.	

2.2 Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) is issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the PPS sets the policy 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 current Official Plan was updated to be consistent with the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2014) which was in force and effect at the time. Since then, the PPS was revised in 2020 and 2024.

PPS 2020 enacted the following policy changes of note to PPS 2014:

- Encourage planning for communities that are strong, sustainable, and resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.
- Promote development that minimizes or avoids negative impacts or adverse effects on the natural environment.
- Encourage the development of an increased mix and supply of housing.
- Protect the environment and public safety.
- Reduce barriers and costs for development.
- Provide greater predictability.
- Support rural, northern, and Indigenous communities.

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- Support the economy and job creation.
- PPS 2024 significantly builds on the changes reflected in PPS 2020 and PPS 2014, to:
- Increase housing supply and mix of housing types.
- Address housing affordability needs.
- Support investment ready communities.
- Optimize investments in infrastructure and public service facilities.
- Prioritize growth and development within urban and rural settlements.
- Support viability of rural areas and local food production and the agri-food network.
- Protect natural areas, local food production and the agri-food network.
- Further recognize the role of indigenous communities in land use planning and development.

3.0 Growth Trends and Outlook

Understanding the future development needs of the community is vital to ensuring there is adequate land supply, servicing, and infrastructure available, and a framework in place to ensure development meets the needs of the community. This section provides an overview of the population projections for the City, and the current approach to growth management in the Official Plan. This information will be used to determine vacant land supply needs of the municipality. Population estimates form the foundation and greatly influence the overall community.

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. has prepared detailed population, household and employment projections for the City of Pembroke as part of this Official Plan Review. This work is reiterated in this chapter, while the original technical memo can be found in Appendix A of this report.

A broad range of considerations related to demographics, economics, and socio-economics is anticipated to impact future population and employment growth trends in Pembroke over the 2026 to 2056 planning horizon. These factors will not only affect the rate and magnitude of growth but will also influence the form, density, and location of residential and non-residential development.

As a starting point, it is important to recognize that future population and employment growth within Pembroke is strongly correlated with the growth outlook and competitiveness of the economy within the surrounding region. Key regional and local growth drivers include:

- Pembroke's Importance as a Regional Centre – Pembroke serves a relatively large regional market in Eastern Ontario. Over the next two decades, Pembroke's role as the largest centre in the region and primary service hub will continue to expand and evolve in retail trade, transportation services, government, education, health, and social services.

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- **Diversification of Economy** – Continued economic diversification provides opportunities for a broader range of non-residential development potential and employment prospects for Pembroke. Recent development trends, and employment and business growth over the past decade, as illustrated earlier, show a shift to more “knowledge-based” sectors in both the commercial and institutional sectors, including professional, scientific and technical services, education, and health services.
- **Immigration Levels for Canada** – Canada is expected to continue to attract relatively high levels of immigration. The population growth outlined in the following section assumes national immigration targets will be met. Under the population growth provided herein, it is assumed that the share of total provincial net migration allocated in the City of Pembroke will remain steady or modestly increase relative to historical trends experienced over the past decade.
- **Quality of Life** – Quality of life is a key factor influencing the residential location decisions of individuals and their families. It is also a factor considered by companies in relocation decisions. Typically, quality of life encompasses several sub-factors such as employment opportunities, cost of living, housing affordability, crime levels, quality of schools, transportation, recreational opportunities, climate, arts and culture, entertainment, amenities and population diversity. The importance of such factors, however, will vary considerably depending on life stage and individual preferences. Pembroke has a reputation for being a growing, affordable location in which to live in Ontario, with access to a wide range of recreational opportunities and amenities along the Ottawa River and the surrounding countryside.

3.1 Population

Planning authorities are directed to base population and employment growth forecasts on Ontario Population Projections published by the Ministry of Finance. The figure below illustrates the historical population for the City of Pembroke since 2001. With the exception of 2016, when the City experienced a slight decline in population growth, Pembroke has been steadily growing, adding 930 residents over the past two decades at an annual rate of 0.3%. Since then, the City continues to steadily grow, and it is estimated that the City's total population in 2026 is 15,280 people. Between 2021 and 2026, this represents an annual growth rate of 0.5%, slightly higher than the historical rate.

Recent trends across the broader regional economy point to stronger economic and population growth over the forecast period relative to historical trends over the past two decades. The figure below presents the population growth forecast for Pembroke from 2026 to 2056. Over the next three decades, the City is expected to experience strong growth, growing by 3,930 residents to

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2056. This represents an annual growth of 131 people per year or an annual growth rate of 0.8%, which is more than double what the City has historically experienced over the past two decades.

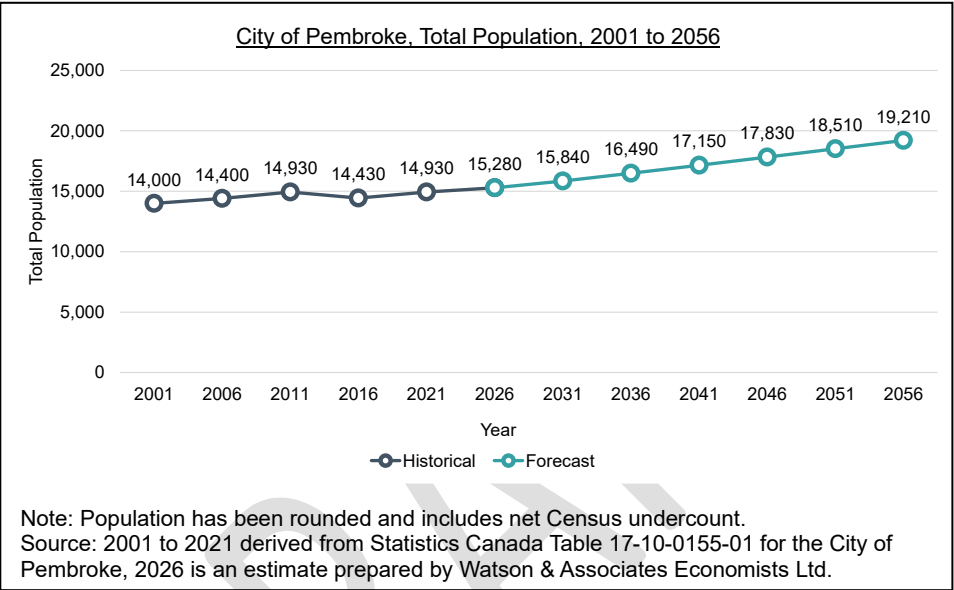


Figure 1 Graph showing City of Pembroke population forecast.

3.2 Housing

Demographic trends strongly influence housing and population growth patterns, as well as the potential for labour force growth. With an aging population, the Province and Eastern Ontario will be more reliant on net migration as a source of population growth, rather than natural increase (i.e., net population growth from births less deaths). With respect to future housing needs, strong population growth in the 75+ age group is expected to increase demand for medium- and high-density housing, including seniors' housing and affordable housing options.

Future housing demand from the 55+ age group is expected to remain strong over the next decade, driven by the aging of Baby Boomers. This will create a growing need to accommodate a larger number of seniors in housing that offers a range of services, from independent living to assisted living to full-time care. At the same time, a growing wave of new residents will be seeking housing opportunities geared towards active lifestyles and recreation.

The City of Pembroke's current (2026) housing base of approximately 6,700 occupied dwelling units largely comprises low-density housing (single detached/semi-detached), which accounts for

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65% of the total. Over the past decade (i.e., 2016 to 2025), new residential unit construction in Pembroke has averaged approximately 31 units annually, as illustrated in the figure below. The City experienced peaks in housing activity in 2017, with 57 new units created, and in 2022, with 52 units. Since 2022, housing development has moderated, aligning with historical average trends. Over the past decade, medium-density has accounted for the majority (40%) of new dwelling units, with apartments, single- and semi-detached housing accounting for 30% each.]

The figure below shows annual growth in 5-year increments between 2016 to 2056. Key observations include:

- Between 2016 and 2026, the City has averaged 52 new housing units per year, consisting largely high-density housing such as apartments, which accounted for 38% of overall housing growth. Low-density housing, such as single and semi-detached houses, accounted for 36% of the City's housing growth, while the remaining 26% came from medium-density housing, such as townhouses.
- Over the next three decades, the City is expected to grow, averaging 77 new housing units per year. This is nearly a doubling of housing growth compared with what the City has historically experienced over the past two decades.
- Over the longer-term forecast, annual housing growth is anticipated to gradually decline, largely due to the aging of the local and regional population base.
- New housing development is anticipated to shift to higher-density forms, such as apartments, over the forecast period. The share of high-density housing increases from 37% between 2026 and 2031 to 50% from 2051 and 2056.
- Over the forecast period, 2026-2056, Pembroke is anticipated to accommodate approximately 2,300 housing units, including 745 low-density units (32% of total units), 585 medium-density units (25%), and 970 high-density units (42%).

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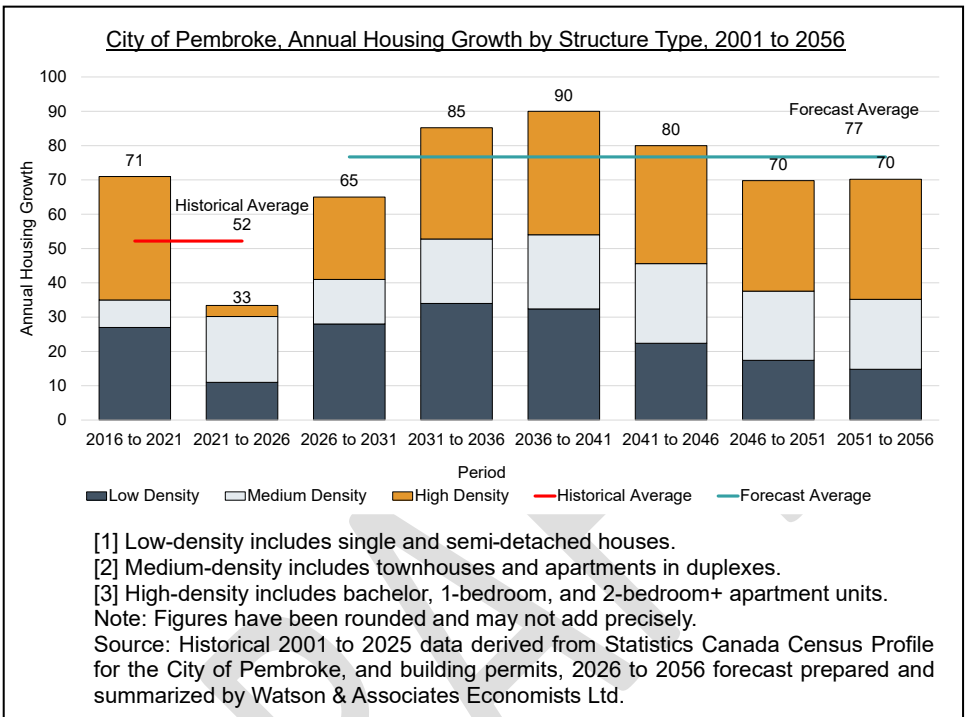


Figure 2 Graph showing City of Pembroke housing forecast.

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3.3 Employment

As shown in the figure below, the City’s employment activity rate (ratio of jobs to population) is expected to slightly decrease from 62% in 2026 to 59% by 2056. Between 2026 and 2056, Pembroke is expected to increase its total employment by 1,900 jobs, which represents an annual growth rate of 0.4% or 63 jobs annually. This increase is anticipated to be largely driven by population-related sectors such as retail, accommodation and food, and health and social services, as well as local and regional export-based employment sectors (e.g., transportation, construction, and small-scale manufacturing). Forecast job growth is also anticipated to be accommodated through home occupations, home-based businesses, and off-site employment.

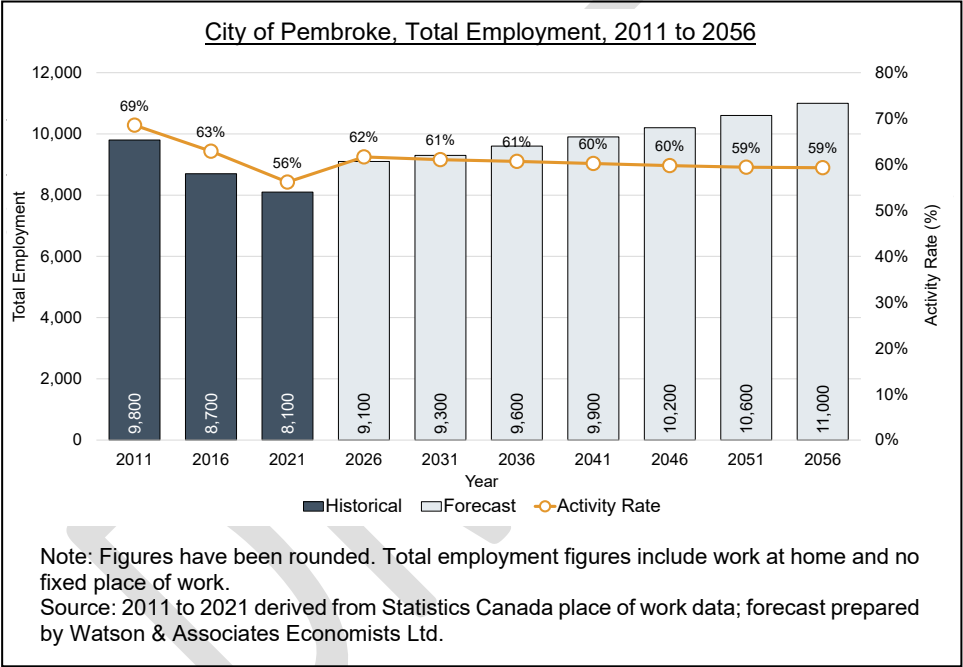


Figure 3 Graph showing City of Pembroke employment forecast.

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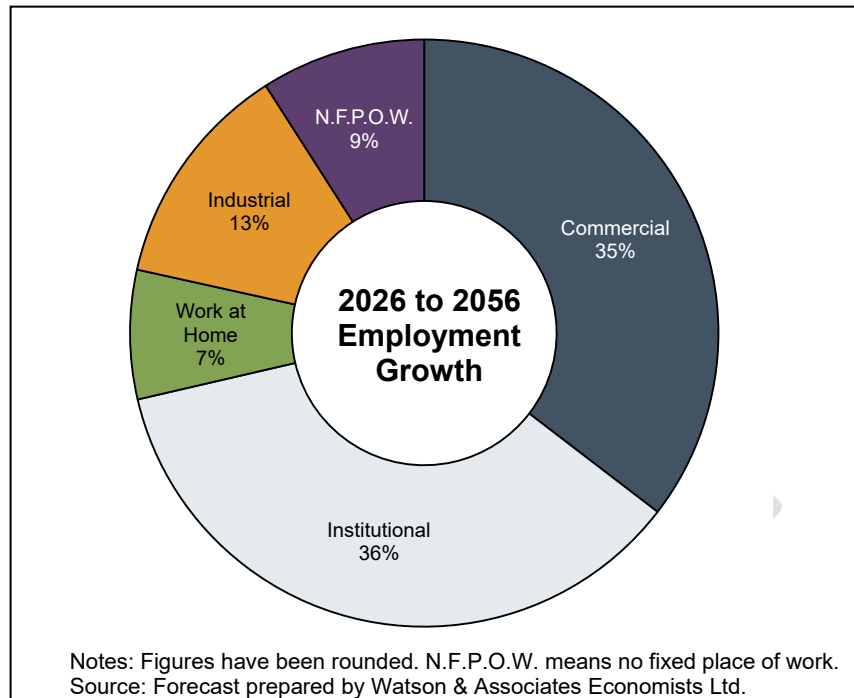


Figure 4 Graph showing employment growth by employment type.

With respect to employment growth by major employment sector, the following observations have been made:

- **Primary Employment** – Employment in the primary sector (i.e., agriculture and other resource-based industries) has historically remained stable and is expected to remain steady over the forecast period. As of 2026, there are approximately 30 primary jobs. Over the next 30 years, primary employment is expected to remain steady by 2056, accounting for less than 1% of the City's total employment growth.
- **Industrial Employment** – Future growth in industrial employment in Pembroke is expected to grow by 240 jobs between 2026 and 2056, representing 12% of the overall employment increase. Growth in industrial employment is expected to mainly occur in sectors related to small and medium-sized transportation and warehousing, construction, food processing, and manufacturing.
- **Commercial Employment** – Commercial/population-related employment (which includes retail sectors) represents the City's second largest major sector with respect to total

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employment growth. This sector is largely driven by local population growth. Commercial employment growth is forecast to increase by approximately 670 jobs over the 2026 to 2056 period, accounting for 35% of total employment growth.

- **Institutional Employment** – Institutional employment growth represents the City's largest major sector. Over the next three decades, Pembroke is anticipated to add 680 jobs (36% of total employment growth), which will be largely driven by population growth. This includes employment growth in education, health and social services and other institutional facilities (i.e., cultural and religious). The City is expected to experience an increase in seniors' health facilities/services, including retirement homes and assisted living facilities, as well as other institutional-related development due to a growing, but aging, population base.
- **Work at Home** – In addition to reviewing employment trends by usual place of work, consideration has also been given to the employment outlook in Pembroke for employees who work at home. Over the forecast period, work at home employment in the City is expected to expand by 140 jobs, driven by forecast growth in the knowledge-based and creative-class economy. This will be facilitated by opportunities related to telecommuting and increased technology. Demographics also play a role in the employment outlook for work at home employment. As the City's population and labour force continue to age, it is likely that an increasing number of working and semi-retired residents will seek lifestyles that allow them to work from home, full-time or part-time.
- **No Fixed Place of Work** – This type of employment is forecast to steadily increase within the City over the long term, largely driven by steady employment growth in the construction, transportation and warehousing sectors. Over the forecast period, N.F.P.O.W. employment is expected to expand by approximately 170 jobs, 9% of the total employment growth.

3.4 Land Supply

Using the projected population estimates for the City, the next step in determining whether there is sufficient land supply to meet projected needs over the next 20 to 30 years is to examine the current supply of vacant land within the municipality which may accommodate future residential development. In addition to ensuring an adequate land supply over this time horizon, the PPS further requires that planning authorities maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for at least 15 years through lands which are designated and available for residential development, as well as ensuring adequate land is available with servicing capacity which is sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units (i.e., lands suitably zoned for residential use, including units in draft approved or registered plans).

Table 3 summarizes the available vacant land supply within each land use category, while Appendix B provides a map of the vacant lands identified in Pembroke. The vacant land inventory was prepared using data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. Lands constrained by natural heritage or natural hazard features were excluded from the inventory. Draft approved lands where development has been completed were also excluded; however, draft approved lands that remain vacant were included.

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Table 3 Existing Vacant Land Supply by Land Use

Urban – Land Use	Total Vacant Land Area Designated (ha)	Total Vacant Land Area – Zoned and Serviced (ha)	Total Vacant Land Area – Zoned, Serviced, and Min Lot Req. (ha)
Commercial	28.11	26.48	25.75
Industrial	20.36	15.91	15.86
Residential	145.63	48.98	48.27

The Province's projection methodology for Land Needs Assessment, the simplified method was applied to assist with determining the amount of land that would be required to accommodate the projected population and housing needs, as well as employment forecast and assumed densities for the City of Pembroke.

It is forecasted that there will be 1900 new jobs by 2056. As discussed in Section 3.3, 71% of the jobs are considered general employment (GE), 13% are considered employment land employment (ELE), 1% are rural and 15% are other. Jobs in the institutional sector were considered as within GE. In this analysis it was assumed that the employment within the rural and other categories can be accommodated through intensification. Of the GE and ELE jobs, it was assumed that 75% will be accommodated through intensification and 25% will require vacant lands. Lands designated Economic Enterprise were classified under the general employment category rather than the employment lands category for this analysis.

Table 4 details the density (jobs/ha) assumptions that were used to assess the vacant land supply needed by 2056. It was determined through this analysis that 13 hectares of land are needed to accommodate the projected GE and ELE jobs. Based on the available vacant lands in the City that are zoned, serviced, and meeting the minimum lot area required, there is a significant excess of commercial and industrial lands available.

Table 4 Employment Land Needs Analysis

Employment Type	New Jobs Requiring Vacant Land	Density (jobs/ha)	Vacant Land Needed	Total Vacant Land Area – Zoned, Serviced, and Min Lot Req. (ha)	Remaining Land Needs (ha)
General Employment (Commercial)	337	30	11.2	25.75	-14.5
Employment Lands (Industrial)	62	35	1.8	15.86	-17.6

It is anticipated that there will be 2300 new households between 2021 and 2056. It is assumed that the housing intensification target is 15% as per policy 4.2.2.1.4 of the Official Plan. As such, 345 new units can be accommodated through intensification of built-up areas, and 1955 new units will need to be developed on vacant lands.

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Table 5 details the residential density assumptions that were used to assess the residential vacant land supply needed by 2056. The maximum density was assumed to range from 21.5 to 80 units per hectare, based on a review of the current minimum lot standards in Pembroke for different residential densities. It was determined through this analysis that 50 net hectares of land are needed for the projected number of units. With a net to gross ratio of 7%, the total gross hectares needed for housing is 71.5 hectares.

Table 5 Residential Land Needs Analysis

Residential Land Use Type	Maximum Density (units per ha)	Target Mix	Number of Units	Vacant Land Needed
Low Density	21.5	33%	645	30
Medium Density	50	25%	489	9.8
High Density	80	42%	821	10.3

3.5 Recommendations

The PPS requires planning authorities to maintain sufficient land designated and available to accommodate at least 15 years of residential growth. The PPS also requires planning authorities to maintain, where new development is to occur, land with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units through lands suitably zoned and with servicing capacity to facilitate residential development.

Through the land needs analysis, it was determined that 1020 residential units are forecasted by 2041 (15 years), which results in a need of 37.3 hectares of land. As demonstrated in Table 3, there is presently 145.63 hectares of land that is designated and available for residential growth. Of this total, there are 48.27 hectares of vacant land which are zoned, serviced, and meeting the minimum lot area requirements. As such, it is concluded that there is adequate vacant land supply to meet the PPS requirements for residential land supply.

The PPS does not define a specific amount of land for employment areas, however, it notes that planning authorities shall plan for, protect, and preserve employment areas for current and future uses. The PPS definition for employment area, specifically excluded commercial and institutional uses. From this analysis, it is confirmed that there is an excess of 17.6 hectares for the forecasted industrial (ELE) jobs by 2056.

The PPS does not define a specific amount of land for commercial/institutional areas. This analysis confirms that there are 25.75 hectares of vacant land available for development today as those lands are zoned, serviced, and meeting the minimum lot area. There is an excess of 14.5 hectares for the forecasted commercial/institutional (GE) jobs by 2056.

The entire City of Pembroke is considered an urban settlement area. As such, there are constraints in its ability to expand its urban settlement area, as it would mean expanding its municipal boundaries. Given this limitation, the City may choose to remove employment lands in favour of redesignating them for the forecasted housing needs.

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To further improve the accommodation of forecasted land needs, it is recommended that the Official Plan update include:

- Updates to policy direction to broadly consider additional residential units as of right;
- Establish intensification targets to directly development to existing built-up areas within
- settlement areas;
- Establish density targets for low, medium and high-density residential land uses;
- Update references to affordable housing.

4.0 Housing

Housing is a basic human right. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, international law requires that Canada work towards having access to adequate and affordable housing. There is ample evidence that demonstrates that attainable and affordable housing is central to achieving positive economic and social outcomes. It is no secret that Canada's housing market has become more competitive in recent years, placing upward pressure on housing costs, both ownership and rental.

The PPS requires that municipalities provide a range of housing types, tenures and densities to ensure that households of different ages, sizes and incomes have access to housing within their means. To meet these needs, Section 2.1.4 of the PPS requires that municipalities to have sufficient land which is designated and available to accommodate residential growth for a minimum 15 years and ensure that there is land with servicing capacity and zoning sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential growth.

The Province also implemented legislative and policy changes to encourage intensification as a means of increasing housing stock. Recent changes to the Planning Act as a result of Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act (2022), changed the jurisdiction of municipalities to permit or restrict residential dwellings. The Planning Act now requires municipalities to permit three residential dwellings per residential lot as-of-right on urban residential lands, in any combination within a detached, semi-detached or townhouse or ancillary building to the primary dwelling. On June 1, 2024, the Development Charges Act, 1997, S.O.1997.c.27, was amended to include updated definitions for affordable and attainable residential units. These definitions rely on the proposed MMAH Affordable Residential Units bulletin to establish guidance on income-based rents and affordable purchase prices. The Affordable Residential Units bulletin is effective June 1, 2024, and will be replaced by a new bulletin annually.

Section 2.2 of the PPS contains policies for the provision of an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet the needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

- Establishing targets for the provision of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households

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- Permitting and facilitating all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including additional needs housing, and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities.
- Permitting and facilitating all types of intensification, including the redevelopment and development of underutilized commercial and institutional sites (e.g., shopping malls and plazas) for residential use.
- Introducing new housing options into previously developed areas.
- Promoting densities that efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure, public service facilities, and support active transportation.
- Requiring transit supportive development near public transportation routes.

In reviewing the Statistics Canada Census data for Pembroke, the average household size has remained consistent at around 2.1 persons per household over the past 10 years. Additionally, the median population age has reduced from 47.2 to 46.2 over the last 10 years, which demonstrates a slightly older population.

The total number of occupied private dwellings by structural type of dwelling has increased from 6,200 in 2016 to 6,540 in 2021 (5.5% increase). Of the total occupied units, the three predominant dwelling types are single detached dwellings (57.8% of dwellings or 3,780 units), apartments in a building with fewer than 5 storeys (25.8% of dwellings or 1,690 units) and semi-detached houses (7.8% of dwellings or 510 units). The majority of households within Pembroke own their homes (57.8%).

In reviewing the median value of owned dwellings, it has increased from \$200,415 in 2016 to \$250,000 in 2021, which is an increase of 24.7%. However, housing prices have changed significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic. As per the monthly market statistics made available for the Renfrew County Real Estate Board, the sales price between August 2025 and May 2026 ranged from \$313,250 to \$437,567, with an average sales price at \$370,405. This is a significant increase from the median values assessed in the 2021 Census and is indicative of broader challenges related to household affordability in Pembroke.

Short-term rentals pose a risk to the housing supply in various municipalities across Ontario, particularly those with a larger seasonal population. Specific Official Plan policies are not needed in order for the City to regulate short term rental housing through a licensing by-law under the Municipal Act, however the City may establish some policies to guide future regulations if desired.

The County of Renfrew is the service manager for housing and homelessness support in the City of Pembroke. We have reviewed the County's 2019 '10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan' which notes a sustained incidence of low and moderate income households in core need with defined affordability issues, with 1/3 of renters paying more than 30% of their income on housing. A major goal of the plan is to ensure an adequate supply and choice of housing including more choice of housing options and density patterns than the traditional low density built form in the County. Actions to support this goal include promoting the preservation and development of affordable, accessible and supportive housing in partnership with municipalities, and encouraging

Commented [DW1]: We need more up-to-date statistics for average household costs. This is all out of whack from the pandemic.

Commented [NJ2R1]: See update

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local municipalities to maintain and update policies that establish tools that encourage affordable housing.

Land use planning can impact the cost of housing and support more affordable options by ensuring an adequate land supply, facilitating all forms and densities of housing, ensuring efficient use of land, and using effective business practices.

4.1 Current Official Plan Policies

The Official Plan's Residential Area and Mixed Use Area policies facilitate a range of housing options. The Official Plan also includes general policies for Accessory Uses (including accessory residential) and Group Homes, as well.

Within the residential area land use designation a mix of housing types is encouraged to meet a range of needs, noting that the form of development will be generally compact, energy efficient, and fully serviced. The Official Plan notes that in existing neighbourhoods the focus should be on maintaining the existing housing stock and encouraging infill on vacant lots or redevelopment at a higher density. However, it notes that development/redevelopment will only be permitted when it is compatible with the density and height off the surrounding area.

Currently the Official Plan notes that special needs housing such as group homes will be considered where they can be "integrated into residential areas with sensitivity". Section 6.1.3 of the PPS requires the PPS to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This means ensuring that group homes shall be permitted in any residential areas where housing is permitted. Therefore, Official Plan policies relating to group homes will need to be updated in accordance with requirements.

In addition to all types of residential dwellings being permitted in the Residential Area the Official Plan notes that uses such as schools, places of worship, parks, seniors housing, local commercial uses, home based businesses, garden suites, second units, bed and breakfast and public service uses and infrastructure shall also be permitted.

The Official Plan outlines policies for Second Units, permitting them within dwellings and limiting their size to 40% of the gross floor area of the principal dwelling, and requiring maintenance of the external appearance of the principal dwelling. As noted previously in this report, the Planning act permits up to two Additional Residential Units in addition to a principal dwelling on urban serviced residential land.

The Official Plan also notes that in Residential Areas that conversion of larger single detached dwellings or non-residential dwelling shall be permitted to be converted where practical to increase the supply of housing.

Residential uses are also permitted within the Mixed Use Area land use designation. The Mixed-Use Area designation also permits the conversion of commercial uses to residential uses, subject to site plan control.

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4.2 Feedback to Date

As the project progresses feedback will continue to be gathered on the topic of housing. So far, comments have been received from the Ottawa Valley Affordable Housing Non-Profit (OVAH) on the topic of affordable housing. Their recommendations are as follows:

- Revise Affordable Housing Definition
- Stronger Objectives for Affordable and Attainable Housing
- Update Residential Section to Support Infill and Gentle Intensification
- (Incentivize) Renovation and Underused Lands
- (Use of) Implementation Tools and Further Engagement
- (Encourage) Municipal Land and Partnerships
- Monitoring and reporting (metrics and KPIs)
- (Connect) Economic Development and Community Wellbeing

As the project progresses, feedback on housing will continue to be gathered and carefully considered. These recommendations will be considered carefully along with provincial policy to provide direction for strengthening the approach to affordable and attainable housing.

4.3 Recommendations

Updates to housing and residential policy in the City's Official Plan should focus on:

- Updating minimum residential land supply policies from a minimum of 10 years to a minimum of 15 years per PPS direction.
- Updating policies and adherence to Ontario's Human Rights Code as it relates to group homes, additional needs housing and supportive housing.
- Updating the definition and policies around affordable housing reflect the definition of affordable housing in the PPS.
- Creation of minimum targets for the provision of affordable and attainable housing targeted at low to moderate income households.
- Replacing Second Unit policies with policies for Additional Residential Units.
- Update site plan control policies to ensure it is clear that site plan control does not apply to residential developments of 10 or fewer units, unless the units are adjacent to a shoreline or a railway.

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5.0 Economic Development

A strong economy is central to a healthy and sustainable community. The economic base of the City is diverse, comprising biofuel and wood processing and by-products, retail and commercial services, tourism, construction, transportation and warehousing, healthcare and social assistance, and a wide range of professional services. The City is also a regional hub for administrative, judicial, healthcare, and commercial centre for the surrounding communities in the region. The City of Pembroke Business Retention and Expansion Project (2024-2025) report highlights that key economic strengths of the city include a high quality of life, municipal support, strong community relationships, reliable utilities, the City's natural beauty, and access to regional roads and highways. Barriers to economic and business growth in the report included lack of availability of adequate housing, condition of local road infrastructure, distance to rail and airport facilities, limited supports for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as well as mental health support, and workforce and consumer base limitations.

As outlined in the City of Pembroke Strategic Plan (2023-2027) the City is focused on creating a welcoming and vibrant community that offers services and amenities to enhance sustainable and healthy lifestyles for its residents, including a thriving and vibrant downtown. The City is also focussed on upgrading and expanding their municipal infrastructure to entice business expansion opportunities.

Policies in the PPS specific to employment areas direct planning authorities to plan and protect these areas for current and future uses ensuring the necessary infrastructure is provided. Planning authorities shall designate, protect and plan for all employment areas in settlement areas by:

- Planning for employment area uses over the long-term that require those locations including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing and goods movement, and associated retail and office uses and ancillary facilities;
- Prohibiting residential uses, commercial uses, public service facilities and other institutional uses in designated employment areas;
- Prohibiting retail and office uses that are not associated with the primary employment use;
- Prohibiting other sensitive land uses that are not ancillary to uses permitted in the employment area; and
- Including an appropriate transition to adjacent non-employment areas to ensure land use compatibility and economic viability.

The new Pembroke Official Plan will include an Employment Areas designation. The new Official Plan will ensure the Employment Area permits the above-noted permitted uses. Employment uses that do not align with the permitted uses in the PPS for employment areas will be placed in a different land use designation such as Mixed-Use Commercial or Major Facilities.

When considering the above policy directions of the PPS with respect to economic development and competitiveness, the policies of the Official Plan must ensure that any such uses are

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appropriate to the infrastructure which is planned or available and avoids the need for the unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion of this infrastructure.

5.1 Current Official Plan Policies

The Official Plan permits commercial uses within the Central Commercial, Shopping Centre Commercial, Highway Commercial, Industrial, and Economic Enterprise Areas. The distinction between these land use designations is noted below.

The Central Commercial Area represents the downtown area of the city and permits a mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses. The intent of this designation is to maintain the rich architectural heritage, visual landmarks of City Hall, in addition to permitting the mix of uses. Commercial uses permitted in this designation include retail services, hotels, theatres, offices, automobile services and sales, etc. Medium and high-density residential uses are permitted in the Central Commercial area, as well as residential apartments above commercial ground floors, as well as new row housing and apartment developments.

The Shopping Centre Commercial Area designation applies to the shopping centres at either end of Pembroke Street, noting that the intent of the plan is conserve a balance between the separate roles of the shopping centres and the City's downtown. With the Official Plan defining shopping centre as a group of commercial, retail and business establishments planned, developed, owned and managed as a unit. New shopping centres are only permitted through amendment to the Official Plan and shopping centres that exceed 2,000 m² of gross leasable floor area shall be considered a community facility serving the surrounding area.

The Highway Commercial Area designation as the name suggests predominantly reflects an automobile-oriented commercial district. Uses in this designation include retail, businesses, transportation-related use, tourism associated uses, building supply outlets as well as warehousing and distribution centres. Proposed development in this designation may be subject to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) permits and approval process if located within the MTO Permit Control Area.

The Industrial Area designation is intended to permit Class I (Light), II (Medium), and III (Heavy) Industrial uses. Permitted industrial uses under this designation include warehousing, processing, manufacturing, assembling, fabricating, railway and transportation terminal uses, as well as storage. Other permitted uses include business parks and retail uses associated with industrial uses.

Lastly, the Economic Enterprise Area designation is intended to address economic development opportunities in areas outside of the Central Commercial Area designation. The Economic Enterprise Area comprises some lands around Highway 17, where the intent is to encourage the development of the area as a major employment generator through highway commercial, service commercial, and industrial uses.

5.2 Feedback to Date

As we have kicked-off the project, we have received comments regarding the desire to preserve commercial storefronts in the City's downtown.

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5.3 Recommendations

We recommend the City designate employment areas within the settlement areas by adding policies and delineating them on the schedules. Employment areas do not include commercial or institutional uses (per the PPS), so these sections will need to be removed from the current employment areas section of the OP and described in a separate section.

Other recommended updates to the Official Plan include:

- Updating reference to Ministry of the Environment and Climate change to Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- Update Industrial Area designation to Employment Area designation and include updated definition of Employment Areas to be consistent with the PPS. Some lands in the Economic Enterprise designation may also be suitable for development as Employment Area. Lands which do not meet the definition of Employment Area in the PPS will be designated Mixed-Use Commercial or Major Facilities in the new OP, where employment uses are also permitted.
- Examine policies for the potential to expand and support sites for investment and economic growth in the City.
- Include policies to preserve the retail function and economic, social and cultural importance of Downtown Pembroke.
- Update land use designations to match the required land use designations in Bill 98

6.0 Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Access to nature and outdoor recreation are key components of a healthy, liveable, and safe community. Parks and open spaces provide a range of benefits. From an environmental perspective, parks and open space mitigate flood risks and impacts of climate change by offering permeable, high-absorbing lands that offset the impacts of potential flood events, and trees and vegetation that absorb carbon dioxide and provide cooling canopies. Additionally, parks and open spaces provide areas where native species can thrive within developed or built-up areas. On a human level, parks and open spaces have positive impacts on physical health by encouraging physical activity and community connections. Parks and open spaces also offer opportunities to attract residents to the area and create a sense of place and space for residents.

The PPS directs planning authorities to promote healthy and active communities through a variety of approaches, including:

- Planning public streets, spaces, and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of persons of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, foster social interaction, and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity;
- Planning and providing for the needs of persons of all ages and abilities in the distribution of a full range of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including

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facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources;

- Providing opportunities for public access to shorelines; and
- Recognizing provincial parks, conservation reserves, and other protected areas, and minimizing negative impacts on these areas.

With respect to acquiring additional lands for park and other public recreation purposes through the development process, Section 51.1 of the Planning Act enables planning authorities to require that land be conveyed to for park or other public recreation purposes as a condition of approval of a plan of subdivision. In the case of a subdivision proposed for commercial or industrial purposes, the amount of land to be conveyed for park or other public recreation purposes cannot exceed 2 percent of the land within the plan of subdivision, and in the case of a subdivision proposed for all other purposes, including residential purposes, the amount of land to be conveyed for park or other public recreation purposes cannot exceed 5 percent of the land within the plan of subdivision. As an alternative to conveying land for park or other public recreation purposes, planning authorities may instead require a payment in lieu, to the value of the land otherwise required to be conveyed.

In 2024, the City of Pembroke adopted their Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2024-2034), which is a comprehensive, long-term strategic guide designed to meet the evolving needs of the community by enhancing recreational services, facilities, and programs. The intent of the Master Plan is to improve community health, foster better social cohesion, and promote sustainability, while overcoming challenges related to aging infrastructure, financial limitations and changing demographic demands.

The Master Plan categorizes its recommendations under the following thematic areas:

- Enhancing Sustainability and Inclusivity
- Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Strategic Investment in Infrastructure
- Economic Growth and Tourism
- Partnerships and Collaboration
- Public Engagement and Inclusivity in Decision-Making

Recommendations under these categories are phased under the Short-Term (0-2 years), Medium-Term (2-5 years) and Long-Term (5+ years).

The Master Plan included an Inventory of Assets, outlined in the table below:

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Table 6: Recreational and Parkland Facilities in Pembroke

Indoor Recreational Facilities		- Pembroke and Area Community Centre - Pembroke Memorial Centre - Kinsmen Pool - O.P.P. Station
Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	13 Parks - Alfred Street Parkette, Rondeau Park, Shamrock Park, The Timber Raft, War Memorial Park, Whitewood Park, Dunlop Park, D' Youville Park, Independent Order of Forrester's (IOF) Parkette, River Road Parkette, Golfview Park, Cecil Street Park, Lea Street Park
	Community Parks	5 Parks - Rotary Park, Hillcrest Park, Memory Garden, Bereaved Families of Ontario (BFO), Coronation Park, Harvey Fraser Park
	Regional Park	4 Parks/Major Recreation Facilities - Kinsmen Park, Pembroke Waterfront, Riverside Park, Pansy Patch Park
Trails		- Kiwanis Way (City) - Pembroke Memorial Centre (Renfrew) - Kinsmen Pool (Renfrew)

Overall, the Master Plan prioritizes accessible, inclusive, and multi-purpose recreation facilities and parks and serves as a thorough policy framework to guide these community assets and promote resident wellbeing.

6.1 Current Official Plan Policies

The Open Space designation is intended to serve a variety of purposes in the community including recreational areas, playgrounds, passive leisure areas, linkages for recreational trails and pedestrian pathways, natural areas, cemeteries, areas subject to environmental constraints, heritage sites and landscapes, and landscape boulevards as well as public lawns.

Parks are categorized into the following three categories:

- Neighbourhood Parks**, or parks primarily providing playgrounds, recreational facilities, tot lots, sitting areas and other open spaces for active or passive recreation within the City's residential neighbourhoods and preferably distributed to provide such facilities at maximum intervals of approximately 1.5 km.
- Community Parks**, or parks providing playing fields and other active recreational facilities for use by the community at large and preferably distributed to provide such facilities at maximum intervals of 3 km.
- Regional Parks**, or parks primarily based on the amenities or unique resources of the natural landscape and providing land and facilities for active and passive recreation including special activities of regional appeal.

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The Official Plan policy under this section outlines the following minimum parkland ratios:

Table 7: Current Parkland Provision Requirements

Park Category	Ratio
Neighbourhood Parks	0.4 ha (1 ac.) per 1,000 persons
Community Parks	1.2 ha (2.96 ac.) per 1,000 persons
Regional Parks	2.4 ha (5.93 ac.) per 1,000 persons
Total parks system	4 ha (9.88 ac.) per 1,000 persons

This section of the Official Plan also outlines Parkland Dedication and Cash-in-lieu policies, noting that new development shall be subject to parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu of payment, as required under the Planning Act. For residential development (5%) or commercial/industrial development (2%).

Section 42(3) and 51.1(2) of the Act allow an alternative to the conveyance described above to be used for residential development or redevelopment at the rate of one hectare for each 600 net hectares of residential units proposed, or a lesser rate if specified in the municipality's parkland conveyance by-law. In order to use the alternative rate for residential development, the municipality's official plan must contain policies to permit a by-law to be passed to enable an alternative parkland provision requirement.

6.2 Recommendations

The current Official Plan provides a strong foundation for parks, recreation, and open space planning. The updates to the parks, recreation, and open space policies in the City's Official Plan should focus on:

- Update policies to reflect recommendations and direction from the *City of Pembroke Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2024-2034)*.
- Update parkland dedication policies to be consistent with the requirements of the *Planning Act*.
- Consideration to be given for policies to enable the use of a parkland conveyance by-law using the alternative rate for parkland provision of one hectare per 600 net hectare of residential units proposed.

7.0 Cultural Heritage and Archeological Resources

Cultural heritage landscapes are defined in the PPS as "defined geographical area[s] that may have been modified by human activity and [are] identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Indigenous community." These areas may include features such as buildings, structures, spaces, views, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association. Built heritage also falls under the realm of cultural heritage and is an important component of responsible land use planning. Built heritage resources refers to buildings, structures, monuments, installations or any

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manufactured or constructed parts or remnants that contribute to a property's cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Indigenous community. Policy direction in the PPS requires that protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, must be conserved.

Archaeological resources and areas of archaeological potential as described by the PPS. Archaeological resources include artifacts, archaeological sites, and marine archaeological sites which are identified and evaluated based upon archaeological fieldwork conducted in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Areas which are likely to contain archaeological resources are deemed to hold archaeological potential and require confirmation by a licensed archaeologist where development or site alteration is proposed. The Province has an established set of criteria to identify whether a property may hold archaeological potential which considers factors such as the presence of known archaeological sites on adjacent lands, proximity to present or past water sources, or evidence of early historic settlement, among other factors ([Criteria for Evaluating Archaeological Potential](#)). Policy direction in the PPS prohibits development and site alteration on lands containing archaeological resources or in areas of archaeological potential unless significant archaeological resources have been conserved.

The Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (MCM) is responsible for inclusion, multiculturalism, community recognition and heritage conservation. Comments from MCM as part of the One-window Consultation with MMAH and partner ministries noted several registered archaeological sites and areas of potential in the municipality. MCM noted the following three properties in the municipality designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act:

- 1 Pembroke street East (Pembroke City Hall/Pembroke Post Office)
- 237 Victoria Street (Pembroke public Library)
- 42 Renfrew Street (Pembroke Victoria Hall)

As well as three provincial heritage plaques within the municipality:

- 1032 Pembroke Street East ("The Founder of Pembroke")
- Tourist information booth on Highway 417 ("The Pembroke Mattawan Road")
- 303 James Street ("Jeanne Lajoie, 1899-1930")

Lastly MCM is aware of one property designated as a Federal Heritage Building in the municipality:

- 177 Victoria Street (Armoury)

The MCM has also developed several screening checklists to assist, municipalities, developers, property owners, and consultants to identify both known and potential cultural heritage resources.

The PPS also requires that planning authorities engage early with Indigenous communities and ensure their interests are considered when identifying, protecting, and managing archaeological resources, built heritage resources, and cultural heritage landscapes. MMAH identified the

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following Indigenous communities to notify of the Official Plan project and engage to see if there was interest in collaboration:

- Alderville First Nation
- Curve Lake First Nation
- Hiawatha First Nation
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Council of the Wendat Nation
- Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (Algonquins of Golden Lake First Nation)
- Algonquins of Ontario.

On March 3rd, 2026, City staff and JLR met with the Algonquins of Ontario to discuss the project and their interest as well as recommendations related to the review and update. Emphasis was noted on the need to better communication and animate Indigenous history and contributions to the City and surrounding area. The Algonquins of Golden Lake First Nation have also expressed an interest in the project and remaining informed as the project progresses.

7.1 Current Official Plan Policies

Under General Policies, Section 3.6 of the Official Plan outlines policies for Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources Preservation. The Official Plan notes under this section that significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.

Policies under this section note that development and site alteration can only be permitted on lands of archaeological resources and potential if significant archaeological resources have been conserved. Further policies outline that only development and site alteration that maintains the heritage integrity of the site may be permitted. The Official Plan notes that it is the policy of Council to consider the conservation of cultural heritage resources, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes, and archaeology conservation in all land use planning decisions. It further specifies a number of directions for Council to implement this including encouraging identification, establishing a Municipal Heritage Committee, heritage designation policies, encourage inventories of cultural heritage resources, consider where appropriate archaeological zoning by-laws, and the use of holding provisions next to protected heritage properties.

This section also contains specific definitions of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, conserved, archaeological resources, areas of archaeological potential, and heritage attributes.

Requirements for Archaeological Assessments are also outlined for properties where there has been an identified area of archaeological potential under which the following Council policy applies:

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"The proponent shall carry out an archaeological assessment of the subject property and mitigate, through preservation or resource removal and documentation, adverse impacts to any significant archaeological resources found. No grading or other soil disturbances shall take place on the property prior to the approval authority and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport confirming that all archaeological resources have met licensing and resource conservation requirements. The assessment shall be carried out by a licensed archaeologist under the Ontario Heritage Act."

Section 7.23 of the Official Plan outlines policies for '*Aboriginal Consultation*'. Under this policy it is noted that,

"Pursuant to the Provincial Policy Statement, Council will endeavour to coordinate planning matters with Aboriginal communities to the extent possible. All planning matters shall be carried out in recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights pursuant to section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

7.2 Recommendations

Updates to the cultural heritage and archaeological resources policies in the City's Official Plan should focus on ensuring consistency with the PPS, current provincial terminology, and best practices for identifying, conserving, and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources. In particular, updates should focus on:

- Include criteria for assessing whether development is proposed in an area having archaeological potential.
- Update definitions of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscape, conserved, archaeological resources, and areas of archaeological potential to be consistent with the definitions in the PPS. Other terminology should also be updated for consistency with the PPS.
- Update references from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.
- Indigenous consultation policies should be updated to be consistent with current PPS policy direction.
- Policies should be added to encourage public art that celebrates Indigenous design, language and recognition.
- A data sharing agreement is encouraged between the Planning Board and Council and MCM to obtain archaeological site location information.

8.0 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage features and areas provide numerous economic, environmental, and social benefits, and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and to the maintenance of the quality of our air, land, and water. The PPS includes consideration for significant wetlands, significant coastal wetlands, fish habitat, habitat of endangered and threatened species, significant wildlife

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habitat, significant valleylands, significant woodlands, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest which are important for their environmental and social values as a legacy of the natural landscapes of an area.

Natural heritage features and source water protection relates to climate change and ensures a holistic approach is used when assessing communities and determining where and how growth and development shall occur. A holistic and balanced approach is required in order to allow for community development while ensuring that it occurs in a sustainable manner that protects natural heritage features while still meeting the development objectives of the community.

The PPS requires that municipalities protect natural features and areas for the long term. Within the context of Callander these include significant wetlands, significant wildlife habitat, fish habitat, and the habitat of endangered and threatened species.

- The PPS prohibits development and site alteration in significant wetlands.
- It also prohibits development and site alteration in significant wildlife habitat, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological function.
- The PPS also prohibits development and site alteration in fish habitat except in accordance with federal and provincial requirements.
- Similarly, development and site alteration is not permitted in habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
- Additionally, development and site alteration is not permitted on lands adjacent to significant wetlands, significant wildlife habitat and fish habitat, significant valleylands or significant woodlands unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there is not negative impact on the natural features or on their ecological functions.

The PPS requires that municipalities identify water resource systems, maintain linkages and functions of water resource systems, implement necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to protect all drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas, and protect, improve or restore vulnerable surface and ground water, and their hydrologic functions.

In addition, the PPS directs that development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to these natural heritage features and areas unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated, and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.

In determining the scope of what constitutes "adjacent lands" to the above-referenced natural heritage features and areas, the Natural Heritage Reference Manual prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources provides the following recommendations:

Table 8: Required Adjacent Lands Widths

Natural Heritage Feature / Area	Adjacent Lands
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Habitat of endangered and threatened species	120 m
Significant wetlands and significant coastal wetlands	120 m
Significant wildlife habitat	120 m
Significant areas of natural and scientific interest – life science	120 m
Significant areas of natural and scientific interest – earth science	50 m
Fish habitat – inland lake trout lake (at capacity) on Canadian shield	300 m*
Fish habitat – all other fish habitat	120 m*
Significant Woodlands	120 m
Significant Valleylands	120 m
* To be measured from the seasonal highwater mark	

The PPS directs that planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water. This includes ensuring consideration of environmental lake capacity through studies to assess local waterbodies.

8.1 Current Official Plan Policies

Schedule D of the current City of Pembroke Official Plan identifies the City's Natural Heritage System, which consists of significant wildlife habitat, wetlands (evaluated and unevaluated), waterbodies, watercourses, valleylands, woodlands and parks. There is one significant wetland shown on Schedule D located adjacent to the westernmost limit of the City along the Ottawa River.

Section 3.4 of the Official Plan contains policies for natural heritage features and areas. The Official Plan requires an official plan amendment for changes to the natural heritage system including the identification of new features or amendments to boundaries of existing features or areas. Flexibility could be added to allow new features to be added without an amendment to the Plan.

8.2 Recommendations

The Official Plan schedules will be reviewed and updated to clearly identify what natural heritage features are present in the City and where they are located. Official Plan policies will be updated to specify what (if any) development can occur on or adjacent to these features, in line with provincial guidance. In particular, it is recommended that policies regarding the protection of natural heritage features and areas be incorporated in the updated Official Plan which:

- Recognize the importance of sensitive environmental features including wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, ANSIs, fisheries resources, and significant wildlife habitat in general and support their protection.
- Recognize that fish habitat includes all lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, intermittent and seasonally flooded, unless demonstrated to be otherwise by a study completed by a qualified professional.
- Direct that, should new PSWs be identified, policies related to PSWs and the schedules may be updated to reflect the new PSWs without amendment to the plan.

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- Require assessment of ecological features and functions and the consideration of impacts, to be undertaken by a qualified professional, where development or site alteration is proposed on lands adjacent to significant natural heritage features, including ANSIs, as outlined in the table above.
- Recommend that site-specific assessment is undertaken to identify the potential of significant wildlife habitat when lands are subject to one or more of the following:
 - Creation of more than three lots through either consent or plan of subdivision.
 - Change in land use, not including the creation of a lot, that requires approval under the *Planning Act*.
 - Lot creation where the subject lands have direct frontage on the Ottawa River and are within 120 metres of the adjacent waterbody.
 - Development or site alteration which is required to facilitate proposed recreational uses (e.g., golf courses, serviced playing fields, serviced campgrounds, and ski hills) that require large-scale modification of terrain, vegetation, or both.
- Development and site alteration in significant wildlife habitats and ANSIs shall not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated there will be no negative impacts on the ecological function.
- Development and site alteration shall not be permitted within adjacent lands of significant wildlife habitats and ANSIs unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the ecological function.
- Require setbacks of at least 30 m for new development along waterbodies and that these lands remain undisturbed and naturally vegetated to protect fish habitats.
- Update Schedules as appropriate to reflect new information on the location of natural heritage feature and areas.

9.0 Natural Hazards

Natural hazards include hazardous lands, hazardous sites and hazardous forest types for wildland fire. These hazard types are influenced by climate change. The PPS defines hazardous lands as property or lands that could be unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes. Policies concerning natural hazards in the 2024 PPS direct development to generally occur in areas outside of hazardous lands adjacent to the shorelines of the Great Lakes, large inland lakes, rivers, streams, and small inland lakes impacted by flooding hazards, erosion hazards, and in areas outside of hazardous sites (i.e., property or lands that could be unsafe for development and site alteration due to naturally occurring hazards, including unstable soils or unstable bedrock, steep slopes which may be associated with slope instability, erosion, or access constraints).

The PPS expressly prohibits development and site alteration within floodways, regardless of whether the area of inundation contains high points of land not subject to flooding. Natural hazard

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policies in the PPS further prohibit development and site alteration within areas that would be rendered inaccessible to people and vehicles during times of flooding hazards and erosion hazards, unless it has been demonstrated that the site has safe access appropriate for the nature of the development and the natural hazard. New policies in the PPS require that planning authorities prepare for the impacts of a changing climate that may increase the risk associated with natural hazards.

Only limited permissions are included in the PPS for development and site alteration in certain areas associated with the flooding hazard along river, stream, and small inland lake systems, for instance, where development is limited to uses which by their nature must locate within the floodway and in exceptional circumstances where a special policy area has been approved by the Province.

As for other types of natural hazards, the PPS further requires that development be generally directed to areas outside of lands that are unsafe for development due to the presence of hazardous forest types for wildland fire – that is, forest types assessed as being associated with the risk of high to extreme wildland fire using risk assessment tools established by the province and amended from time to time. The PPS permits development on lands with hazardous forest types for wildland fire only where the risk is mitigated in accordance with wildland fire assessment and mitigation standards.

9.1 Current Official Plan Policies

The Hazard Land designation is intended to identify lands that are unsafe or unsuitable for development and site alteration due to the presence of natural hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health, safety, or property damage. The predominant use of land in the Hazard land classification shall be for conservation and protection of the natural landscape and/or environmental uses, with some limited outdoor recreational uses permitted.

The Official Plan provides definitions and policies for a variety of hazards.

Section 4.10.3 defines flood-related terms and establishes how development is managed within flood-prone areas along the Ottawa River. The floodplain is based on the extent of a 1:100-year flood event and is divided using the two-zone concept into the floodway and flood fringe. The floodway is the inner, more hazardous portion of the floodplain and these lands are designated as Hazard Land with development generally restricted. The flood fringe is the outer portion of the floodplain where limited development may be permitted, provided appropriate floodproofing and mitigation measures are implemented.

An erosion hazard is identified, within the Hazard Land designation, along the Muskrat and Indian Rivers and their tributaries, which extends from top-of-bank to top-of-bank and it recognizes unstable (Leda) clay slope constraints. Extensive areas of river valley lands located in the City also have inherent environmental hazards.

Wildland fire hazards are assessed for certain forested areas of the City, based on their potential. Development is permitted in areas with hazardous forest types for wildland fire where the risk is mitigated in accordance with wildland fire assessment and mitigation standards.

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Karst topography is characterized by sinkholes and underground cavities which present a potential hazard to human safety. Appendix A shows the karst topography evaluation and identified areas of karst topography are shown on Schedule D.

Section 4.10.7 outlines criteria for development and site alteration within the Hazard Land designation which includes mitigation of the hazard through established standards and procedures, managing any impacts of these hazards, new hazards or adverse environmental effects are not caused, ensuring safe access for entry and exit, and considering impacts to abutting landowners.

9.2 Recommendations

The Official Plan policies related to public health and safety should be reviewed and expanded to include the full range of hazards identified in the PPS. Official Plan should also be reviewed to ensure that hazard mapping remains accurate and that policies are appropriate to address the risk of development associated with such hazards and are consistent with the 2024 PPS. In particular, policies in the Official Plan should be updated to:

- Restrict development on flood prone lands. The City will work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to better understand the extent of flood prone areas and enact policies to prevent residential development in flood hazard lands.
- Add a policy and mapping to address the PPS requirements for development in areas having high risk for wildland fire.
- Identify hazardous lands and hazardous sites with provincial guidance and update Official Plan schedules accordingly.
- Include a policy that states development and site alteration shall not be permitted within hazardous lands and hazardous sites as per PPS policies 5.2.3 and 5.2.6.
- Map karst topography where features are known, inferred, or potentially present on an overlay on the applicable schedules to support implementation of PPS policies

10.0 Human-Made Hazards

Human made hazards – that is, those places where human activity on the landscape has occurred and the activity has created a risk to further development. Human made hazards include mine hazards, oil, gas and salt hazards, or former mineral mining operations, mineral aggregate operations or petroleum resource operations. Policies regarding human-made hazards in the PPS permit development on, abutting, or adjacent to lands affected by human-made hazards only if rehabilitation or other measures to address and mitigate known or suspected hazards are underway or have been completed. These policies also require contaminated sites to be assessed and remediated as needed prior to any activity on the site associated with a proposed use such that there will be no adverse effects.

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10.1 Current Official Plan Policies

Brownfield sites are human made hazards as they are usually former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict, or vacant. The sources of contamination on these sites may include the disposal of waste materials, raw material storage, residues left in containers, maintenance activities and spills. The Official Plan requires that brownfield sites shall be remediated prior to any activity and outlines the criteria to be satisfied. Environmental studies and a Record of Site Condition are required, particularly when changing to more sensitive uses, and any necessary remediation must meet provincial standards. Site plan control or holding zones may be used to ensure sites are properly remediated.

10.2 Recommendations

The Official Plan schedules will be reviewed and updated to clearly identify the presence of an Abandoned Mines Information System (AMIS) site within the boundary of the City, and the influence area of a second AMIS site outside of the municipal boundary which extends into the City. The Official Plan policies will be updated as follows:

- Replace any entry of Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) to Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM).
- Ensuring there is a distinction in verbiage when describing minerals, mineral deposits and mineral mining operation (the Mining Act, MINES) and mineral aggregate resources and mineral aggregate operations (the Aggregate Resources Act, MNRF), as per the PPS 2024..
- Include wording that requires applicants for proposed developments within 1,000 m of an Abandoned Mine Hazard Site to consult with the MEM Southern Ontario Land Use Geologist and to undertake any required rehabilitation measures in compliance with the Mining Act.
- Include consideration for Section 4.4 of the Provincial Policy Statement which requires the identification and protection of mineral deposits and resources and permits development that could hinder access to these resources only under specific circumstances.

11.0 Changing Climate

In 2019, the Government of Canada released Canada's Changing Climate Report, part of a national assessment of how and why Canada's climate is changing, the impacts of those changes and how the country is adapting to the change. This report concludes, in part, that:

- Both past and future warming in Canada is, on average, about double the magnitude of global warming.
- The effects of widespread warming are evident in many parts of Canada and are projected to intensify in the future. This includes more extreme heat, less extreme cold, longer growing seasons, reduced snow and ice cover, and early spring peak streamflow.

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- Precipitation is projected to increase for most of Canada, on average, although summer rainfall may decrease in some areas. Precipitation has increased in many parts of Canada, and there has been a shift toward less snowfall and more rainfall. Annual and winter precipitation is projected to increase everywhere in Canada over the 21st Century. More intense rainfalls will increase flood risk.
- The seasonal availability of freshwater is changing. Warmer winters and earlier snowmelt will combine to produce higher winter runoff. Warmer summers will increase evaporation of surface water and contribute to reduced summer water availability in the future despite more precipitation in some places.
- A warmer climate will intensify some weather extremes in the future. Extreme hot temperatures will become more frequent. This will increase the severity of heatwaves and contribute to the increased drought and wildfire risk.
- The rate and magnitude of climate change under high versus low emission scenarios project two very different futures for Canada. Much of the impacts of climate change will depend on the ability of individuals, corporations, municipalities, and all levels of government, to reduce carbon emissions.

According to the Canadian Centre for Climate Services, annual mean temperature and total precipitation are projected to increase over the next 30 years in the Planning Area. Available data for the City of Pembroke shows:

- For the 1971 – 2000 period, the annual average temperature was 5.2 °C.
 - Under a high emissions scenario, annual median temperatures are projected to increase to 7.9 °C for the 2021-2050 period, 10.0 °C for the 2051-2080 period, and 11.8 °C for the last 30 years of this century.
- Average annual precipitation for the 1971-2000 period was 889 mm.
 - Under a high emissions scenario, the annual median precipitation is projected to be 7% higher for the 2021-2051 period, 12% higher for the 2051-2080 period and 17% higher for the last 30 years of this century.

The PPS states that planning authorities shall plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change through approaches that:

- Support the achievement of compact, transit-supportive, and complete communities;
- Incorporate climate change considerations in planning for and the development of infrastructure, including stormwater management systems, and public service facilities;
- Support energy conservation and efficiency;
- Promote green infrastructure, low impact development, and active transportation, protect the environment and improve air quality; and,

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- Take into consideration any additional approaches that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build community resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.
- It should be noted that Bill 98 repeals section 16(14) of the Planning Act so that Official Plans are no longer required to contain goals, objectives and actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and provide for adaptation to a changing climate. Given that the City will still be affected by climate change impacts and that policies for climate change remain in the PPS 2024, we would still recommend climate change adaption and mitigation policies be added to the Official Plan.

11.1 Current Official Plan Policies

The Official Plan has a policy that says all developments shall be planned and designed to minimize impacts on climate and to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. The Official Plan also has a policy supporting energy efficiency and improved air quality, with permissions for alternate and renewable energy systems throughout the City.

11.2 Recommendations

Updates to the climate change policies in the City's Official Plan should focus on strengthening policy direction related to climate mitigation, adaptation, and community resilience, while ensuring consistency with the PPS. In particular, updates should focus on:

- Promote compact form and energy efficient design for new development.
- New development or redevelopment of single lot and multi-lot/multi-units will be encouraged to incorporate energy conservation practices in building design and enhanced by natural vegetative cover in site design and development.
- Encourage the use of alternative and renewable energy systems where they comply with provincial legislation and local zoning standards (e.g., systems that generate electricity, heat and/or cooling from a renewable energy source, including wind, water, biomass, biogas, biofuel, solar energy, and geothermal energy).
- Encourage designs which maximize energy efficiency and conservation and consider the mitigating impacts of vegetation and green infrastructure (e.g., components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, stormwater management systems, natural channels, permeable surfaces, green roofs, etc., which provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes).
- Encourage green infrastructure, including low impact development, to complement traditional stormwater management infrastructure that may be required with development proposed by plan of subdivision or plan of condominium.
- Require any planning for stormwater management to consider the impacts of a changing climate through the effective management of stormwater including the use of green infrastructure.

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- Continue to direct development away from natural and human-made hazards in order to protect public health and safety from the risks posed by a changing climate.

12.0 Infrastructure and Servicing

General policies for infrastructure and public service facilities in Section 3.1 of the PPS direct that they shall be provided in an efficient manner while accommodating projected needs. Planning for infrastructure, and public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management so that they: a) are financially viable over their life cycle and b) are available to meet current and projected needs. Municipalities shall promote water and energy conservation and efficiency.

Municipal sewage services and municipal water services are the preferred form of servicing for settlement areas. Private communal services are preferred in areas of multi-unit/lot development where municipal services are unavailable and not planned. Individual on-site services are to be used where suitable as long as they demonstrate there will be no negative impacts. Section 3.6.5 permits partial services in the following circumstances:

- Where they are necessary to address failed individual on-site services in an existing development.
- Within settlement areas to allow for infilling and minor rounding out of existing development on partial services, providing no negative impacts.
- Within rural settlement areas where new development will be serviced with a combination of individual on-site water services and municipal sewage or communal sewage services.

Section 3.6.8 of the PPS outlines that planning for stormwater management shall:

- a) be integrated with planning for sewage and water services and ensure that systems are optimized, retrofitted, feasible and financially viable over their full life cycle;
- b) minimize, prevent or reduce increases in stormwater volumes and contaminant loads;
- c) minimize erosion and changes in water balance including through the use of green infrastructure;
- d) mitigate risks to human health, safety, property and the environment;
- e) maximize the extent and function of vegetative and pervious surfaces;
- f) promote best practices, including stormwater attenuation and re-use, water conservation and efficiency, and low impact development; and
- g) align with any comprehensive municipal plans for stormwater management that consider cumulative impacts of stormwater from development on a watershed scale.

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The impacts of a changing climate will necessitate sufficient infrastructure for stormwater management.

Since the current Official Plan came into effect, land use planning for stormwater management has also evolved to emphasize the need for more naturalized stormwater management practices to help reduce maintenance cost and encourage more sustainable practices, such as green infrastructure and low impact development.

The PPS also states that waste management systems need to be planned for and provided that are of an appropriate size, type, and location to accommodate present and future requirements, and facilitate integrated waste management.

12.1 Current Official Plan Policies

Section 5 of the Official Plan states that all future urban development shall be provided with adequate public services. There is emphasis on the efficient use of existing municipal water and sewage systems, while protecting human health, the environment, and long-term system viability. Full municipal servicing is the preferred and expected form of servicing, and development is permitted only where sufficient reserve water and sewage capacity exists. On-site and partial services are permitted only in limited circumstances, such as infilling, minor rounding out, or where municipal services are not reasonably available, subject to certain conditions and future connection to municipal systems. The policies also prioritize drinking water protection, compliance with provincial legislation, and appropriate separation between sensitive land uses and wastewater treatment facilities.

Section 3.3 of the Official Plan states that stormwater management shall be required for all urban development as a preventative approach. The key principles guiding Council's approach to stormwater management are to maintain and, where possible, enhance natural hydrological characteristics, maximize on-site water infiltration in new development, and ensure that development does not increase downstream flooding or erosion or cause adverse impacts on receiving waters.

The current Official Plan includes a policy to ensure waste disposal is adequate to service development. Waste disposal is also mentioned a few times in the Official Plan as it relates to site plan control and subdivision.

12.2 Recommendations

The updated Official Plan should reflect the servicing hierarchy established by the PPS, which directs development to areas first with existing municipal services and subsequently to rural areas where communal sewage and water services be considered for multi-lot/unit development, and to lands with capacity for individual on-site sewage and water services. Partial servicing to be permitted only in specific circumstances as detailed in the PPS.

Additional policies dedicated specifically to waste disposal should be added as it relates to the accommodation of waste management systems that can accommodate present and future requirements and facilitate integrated waste management. Consider including specific policy for encouraging waste reduction in accordance with *Waste Free Ontario Act*.

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13.0 Transportation

The PPS defines a transportation system as a system of facilities, corridors and rights-of-way for the movement of people and goods, and associated transportation facilities including transit stops and stations, sidewalks, cycle lanes, bus lanes, high occupancy vehicle lanes, rail facilities, parking facilities, park'n'ride lots, service centres, rest stops, vehicle inspection stations, inter modal facilities, harbours, airports, marine facilities, ferries, canals and associated facilities such as storage and maintenance.

Pembroke's transportation system includes Provincial Highways (Highway 41, Highway 148, Highway 17), local municipal roads, private roads, sidewalks, recreational trails and paths, as well as public parking facilities. In collaboration with Laurentian Valley Township, the City is working on a Transportation Master Plan for East-West Traffic.

The City is also piloting an on-demand public transit system. A transit feasibility study was completed in 2022 which concluded that a point-to-point transit service would best meet City needs. In August 2025, the City launched a new on-demand transit service, called "Ottawa River Transit", operating as an initial 3 year pilot project.

Since the Official Plan came into effect, the practice of land use planning has evolved to place an increasing emphasis on the need to integrate land use and transportation decisions and to provide individuals with additional non-automobile modes of transportation including walking and cycling with the goal of improving health and climate outcomes. The PPS states that as part of a multi-modal transportation system, connectivity within and among transportation systems and modes should be planned for, maintained and, where possible, improved, including connections with cross-jurisdictional boundaries.

The PPS also encourages the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure, including through the use of transportation demand management strategies where feasible. This is part of the PPS's direction to encourage transportation systems which are safe, energy efficient, facilitate the movement of people and goods, are appropriate to address projected needs, and support the use of zero and low emission vehicles.

Creating communities that support a variety of transportation methods helps to create healthier, more active communities, and can reduce the impacts of automobile related to climate change. Enhanced sidewalk and trail networks provide venues for active transportation methods which allow for physical activity, increased social exchanges, and reduced road congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. These forms of transportation are also more accessible to a larger population.

13.1 Current Official Plan Policies

The Official Plan provides for a safe, efficient, and well-classified road network that accommodates expected traffic volumes, minimizes conflicts between local and through traffic, promotes connectivity, and supports land use patterns that reduce vehicle trips and encourage public transit.

Section 5.3 further describes the hierarchy of roads including provincial highway, arterial, collector and local streets. Each of these are defined by their function, right-of-way width, and design

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standards, with controls on access, building setbacks, and reverse frontage where appropriate to ensure traffic safety, manage access, and protect the intended function of each road type. Pembroke Street is specifically identified as a major deficiency in the street system due to its narrow right-of-way for which the proposed solution was future widenings and improvements to Lake and Nelson Streets.

The Official Plan provides limited direction on active transportation and public transit. The policies of Section 5.4 and 5.5 states that pedestrian, cycling, and other special vehicle needs are to be accommodated at service levels appropriate to each road type, with separation from motor vehicle traffic where feasible. Sidewalks may be provided on one side of local and collector roads and on both sides of arterial roads, subject to municipal standards and available funding. No public transit is available in the City, however the Official Plan provides enabling policies to allow for the consideration of a transit service.

Section 5.7 of the Official Plan states the intention to increase parking capacity to support growth, address existing deficiencies, and sustain downtown economic vitality, with cash-in-lieu used to expand off-street parking in the Central Area.

13.2 Recommendations

The updated Official Plan should reflect the PPS's direction to plan for a multimodal transportation system that supports the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. In addition to maintaining an appropriate road hierarchy, updated policies should place greater emphasis on active transportation by supporting walking and cycling, improving connections between neighbourhoods, downtown, parks, schools, public facilities, and trails, and ensuring infrastructure is accessible to persons of all ages and abilities. The Official Plan should also be updated to recognize and support the City's on-demand public transit system and to better coordinate land use and transportation planning.

14.0 Community Improvement Planning

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a municipal planning tool authorized under Section 28 of the Planning Act that allows municipalities to designate a Community Improvement Project Area and implement policies and financial incentive programs—such as grants, loans, or tax assistance—to encourage redevelopment, rehabilitation, and economic investment in targeted areas. The Planning Act establishes the legal framework for CIPs, requiring that they be enabled through Official Plan policies and permitting municipalities to undertake works, acquire land, and provide incentives that would otherwise be restricted. While the CIP itself is not required by the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), it functions as a key implementation tool within Ontario's policy-led planning system, helping municipalities achieve provincial objectives related to housing supply, intensification, economic development, and efficient land use.

An update to the City of Pembroke Community Improvement Plan was adopted in January 20, 2026. The entire municipality is designated as the Community Improvement Project Area, allowing incentive programs to be applied broadly across the City to support investment and revitalization.

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The financial incentive programs offered are split into three categories:

- Municipal – includes municipal-led financial tools, such as fee rebates and funding supports, that help reduce development costs and improve the viability of projects aligned with the CIP's objectives.
- Housing – focuses on increasing housing supply by providing incentives for new residential units, including affordable and multi-unit housing, to support intensification and meet local housing needs.
- Building and Property Improvement - supports upgrades to existing properties through programs such as façade improvements, accessibility enhancements, energy efficiency measures, and streetscape-related initiatives to encourage reinvestment and revitalization.

14.1 Current Official Plan Policies

Section 7 of the Official Plan provides implementation tools, noting Community Improvement Plans as one such tool. Section 7.2 lists objectives for the CIP under a number of categories including residential, commercial, industrial, waterfront, and general. The Official Plan indicates a focus on the rehabilitation and improvement of building in the downtown and areas within the City that are deemed to be rich in historical or architectural features. In addition to a community improvement plan, the Official Plan notes a variety of other methods for community improvement including property standards by-laws, site plan control, municipal maintenance plan, intensification, and brownfield redevelopment.

14.2 Recommendations

Given that the Community Improvement Plan was updated in January 2026, no significant changes are anticipated to this section. The wording will be updated to ensure alignment with the Community Improvement plan and to reflect best practices. The updated Official Plan will also reflect any related Planning Act changes.

15.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

The recommendations presented in this report will inform the basis for drafting the updated Official Plan for the City and will be presented to Council, stakeholders, and the public for their input on the directions. Once a draft of the updated Official Plan has been prepared based on the recommendations provided in this background report, direction from Council, and early consultation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the draft Official Plan will be presented to the public and interested stakeholders at an in-person open house and public meeting, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.

The final draft Official Plan will be accordingly revised to incorporate input from the public and stakeholders before presenting it to Council for a decision on adoption at, or following, a statutory public meeting, and a summary of the feedback gathered throughout the project will be presented to Council in a report which will be made publicly available. Ultimately, the new Official Plan will be subject to approval by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing upon its adoption by

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Council. We anticipate that the open house and public meeting will be held in late 2026, with approval from the Ministry following in 2027.

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Growth Analysis

City of Pembroke

Draft

April 29, 2026

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1. Introduction

As part of the OP Review, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson) was retained to undertake a growth analysis for the City of Pembroke.

2. Macro Economic and Regional Trends Influencing Growth Trends in Pembroke

The following provides an overview analysis of the macro-economic and demographic factors that are anticipated to influence future population and employment growth by sector across the City of Pembroke and the broader Eastern Ontario. These factors are anticipated to influence future growth trends on residential and non-residential lands within Pembroke and the broader regional market over the coming decades.

2.1 Navigating Increased Uncertainty in a Changing Global Economy

After several years of resilient global economic growth following the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the global economy is now facing a mounting number of near-term economic challenges and geo-political conflicts. These global economic challenges largely relate to unresolved conflicts associated with the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia; the Israel/Gaza and Iranian conflict; rising global trade tensions, particularly with the United States (U.S.); increasing government, corporate and consumer debt; and ongoing concerns regarding persistent inflation.

While not a new trend, globalization and technological advancements continue to shift the economic composition of developed economies from goods production toward a service-based economy. Since the onset of the pandemic, this economic shift has increasingly raised fundamental concerns in certain cases regarding national security, economic trade balances, and prosperity, which has further prompted countries to adopt protectionist measures when setting out their near- and longer-term national economic strategies.

These ongoing structural changes and technological disruptions shaping the global economy, combined with rising geo-political and trade tensions, will require that both



senior and local governments become increasingly agile and responsive to evolving industry demands and disruptive economic forces, a trend that has been expedited by the COVID-19 pandemic. These revised near-term economic forecasts and ongoing disruptions are anticipated to influence the near-term population and employment growth outlook for Canada, Ontario, and Pembroke over the coming years.

2.2 Canadian Immigration Targets

Canada's population has experienced significant growth in recent years. During the recovery period from COVID-19, immigration targets were raised in Canada primarily in response to labour force demands faced by the country. Immigration accounts for almost 100% of Canada's labour force growth and nearly 80% of its population growth. As a result of these increased immigration targets, Canada welcomed 471,800 and 483,600 new permanent residents in 2023 and 2024, respectively. With population growth outpacing G.D.P. growth, the G.D.P. per capita has trended lower and has been recently trending well below pre-pandemic levels.^[1] The key challenges to growth in Canadian G.D.P. per capita include declining labour productivity and a rising unemployment rate for recent immigrants, which has increased from 9.5% to 12.6% over the past five years.^[2] In response to these challenges, the federal government reduced its immigration targets by 21% in 2024 compared to the previous targets in 2023. More specifically, the federal government has lowered the previous near-term immigration target of 500,000 people per year to 395,000 in 2025, 380,000 in 2026, and 365,000 in 2027. The federal government has also announced that it will reduce the percentage of N.P.R. from 7.3% of the national population to 5.0% by the end of

^[1] Statistics Canada, Economic and Social Reports, *Canada's Gross Domestic Product Per Capita Perspectives on the Return to the Trend* report by Carter McCormack and Weimin Wang, April 24, 2024.

^[2] TD Economic Reports, Canadian Employment (July 2024), *Canada's job market softens further in July*, published August 9, 2024.



2026.^{[1].[2].[3]} These modifications address the changing needs of the country by easing pressures on housing, infrastructure, and social services. These changes are anticipated to have a further downward impact on future population growth in Canada, including Ontario, over the next few years.^[4] Based on 2024 data and looking forward through 2025 and beyond, despite the target cuts, immigration levels to Canada and Ontario are anticipated to remain strong, exceeding pre-pandemic averages between 2015 and 2019.

2.3 Regional Population Growth Trends

Figure 1 illustrates historical and forecast population growth in Renfrew Census Division (C.D.) based on provincial Ministry of Finance (M.O.F.) Growth Projections. As shown, Renfrew C.D.'s population has grown steadily over the past 20 years, at an annual rate of 0.6%. The M.O.F. projection for 2025 presents a continued steady growth through 2051. Based on the latest 2025 growth projections, Renfrew Census Division's population is expected to increase from 110,600 in 2021 to 142,300 in 2051, an increase of 29%, with an average annual growth rate of 0.8%.

^[1] Non-permanent residents (N.P.R.) are defined by Statistics Canada as persons from another country who have been legally granted the right to live in Canada on a temporary resident permit, along with members of their family living with them. These residents include foreign workers, foreign students, the humanitarian population such as refugees, and other temporary residents.

^[2] N.P.R. share as of Q3 2024 derived from Statistics Canada Tables 17-10-0009-01 and 17-10-0121-01. There are 3,002,090 N.P.R. out of 41,288,599 residents in Canada.

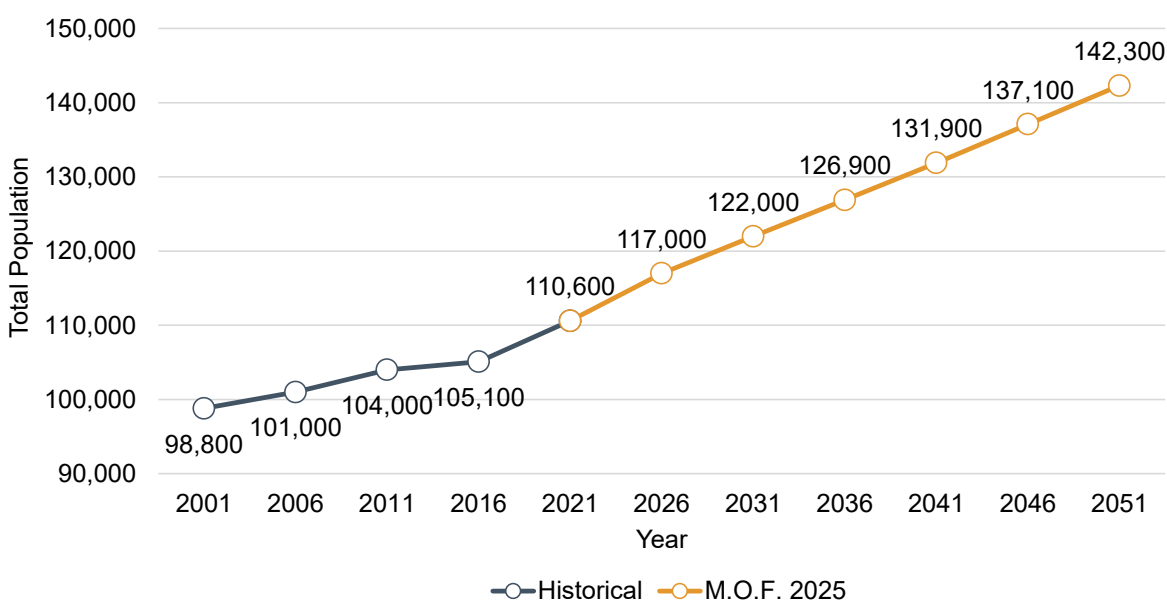
^[3] N.P.R. national population target of 5% from the Government of Canada 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan.

^[4] Government of Canada News Release, October 24, 2024.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/government-of-canada-reduces-immigration.html>



Figure 1
Renfrew Census Division Population – Historical and Forecast, 2001 to 2051



Note: Figures have been rounded and include net Census undercount.

Source: Historical data derived from Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0140-01; forecast data from Ministry of Finance (M.O.F.) Summer 2025 projection summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

2.4 Aging Population and Labour Force

Demographic trends strongly influence both housing and population growth patterns, as well as labour force growth potential. Across Canada and Eastern Ontario, the population is getting older on average, due to the aging of the Baby Boomers.^[1] With an aging population, the Province and Eastern Ontario will be more reliant on net migration as a source of population growth as opposed to natural increase (i.e., net population growth from births less deaths). Pembroke will increasingly become more reliant on net migration as a source of population growth as a result of these demographic conditions. An aging labour force is also anticipated to place downward pressure on long-term economic growth, driven by declining labour force participation and potential labour shortages.^[2]

^[1] Baby Boomers are generally defined as people born between 1946 and 1964.

^[2] The labour force participation rate is defined as the percentage of the population that is actively participating in the labour force.



With respect to future housing needs, strong population growth in the 75+ age group is anticipated to increase the demand for medium- and high-density forms of housing, including seniors' housing and affordable housing options. This will generate an increasing need to accommodate a growing number of seniors in housing forms that offer a variety of services, ranging from independent living to assisted living and full-time care.

2.5 Emerging Industry Sector and Labour Force Trends

Continued structural changes in the global economy and technological advancements will require municipalities to be increasingly responsive and adaptive to changing industry needs and disruptive economic forces, which have been accelerated by A.I. A number of key industry and labour force trends are expected to influence growth and development patterns in eastern Ontario over the coming decades, including:

- Continued disruption of “bricks and mortar” retail driven by changes in consumer behaviour through e-commerce.
- Economic growth related to the logistics sector, generated from growing demand in e-commerce.
- Increasing use of technology in commercial services, leading to alternative platforms to purchase and share products.
- Longer-term opportunities and challenges in the manufacturing sector associated with nearshoring, automation, and the rise of artificial intelligence.
- Growing opportunities within the Clean Technology sector as the provincial economy transitions to a clean energy economy.
- Increased opportunities related to work at home, hybrid work at home/at office work models, distributed work/learning largely driven by technological innovation and improvements to regional telecommunications.
- Continued rise of the gig economy as individuals utilize technology to supplement their income in more flexible ways, in contrast to traditional work patterns.

2.6 Observations

Recognizing these recent structural changes in the macro-economy and demographic drivers, there is a need for Pembroke to ensure that the amount, type, and location of



the City's established and planned residential and non-residential areas are well aligned with these broader trends and the anticipated local market demand.

3. Pembroke Growth Trends and Outlook

The following provides an assessment of the long-term population, housing and employment growth potential for the City of Pembroke to the year 2056 in five-year increments. In developing the City's long-term population, housing and employment forecast, consideration has been given to the long-term demographic and economic outlook for Renfrew County and Eastern Ontario.

The growth forecast is intended to guide decision-making and policy development specifically related to planning and growth management, urban land needs, and long-range master planning for municipal services. Such forecasts typically include a comprehensive review of how anticipated economic and demographic trends, as well as government policies, are expected to influence future growth and development patterns.

3.1 Regional and Local Growth Drivers

A broad range of considerations related to demographics, economics, and socio-economics is anticipated to impact future population and employment growth trends in Pembroke over the 2026 to 2056 planning horizon. These factors will not only affect the rate and magnitude of growth but will also influence the form, density, and location of residential and non-residential development.

As a starting point, it is important to recognize that future population and employment growth within Pembroke is strongly correlated with the growth outlook and competitiveness of the economy within the surrounding region. Key regional and local growth drivers include:

- **Pembroke's Importance as a Regional Centre** – Pembroke serves a relatively large regional market in Eastern Ontario. Over the next two decades, Pembroke's role as the largest centre in the region and primary service hub will continue to expand and evolve in retail trade, transportation services, government, education, health, and social services.
- **Diversification of Economy** – Continued economic diversification provides opportunities for a broader range of non-residential development potential and



employment prospects for Pembroke. Recent development trends, and employment and business growth over the past decade, as illustrated earlier, show a shift to more “knowledge-based” sectors in both the commercial and institutional sectors, including professional, scientific and technical services, education, and health services.

- **Immigration Levels for Canada** – Canada is expected to continue to attract relatively high levels of immigration. The population growth outlined in the following section assumes national immigration targets will be met. Under the population growth provided herein, it is assumed that the share of total provincial net migration allocated in the City of Pembroke will remain steady or modestly increase relative to historical trends experienced over the past decade.
- **Quality of Life** – Quality of life is a key factor influencing the residential location decisions of individuals and their families. It is also a factor considered by companies in relocation decisions. Typically, quality of life encompasses several sub-factors such as employment opportunities, cost of living, housing affordability, crime levels, quality of schools, transportation, recreational opportunities, climate, arts and culture, entertainment, amenities and population diversity. The importance of such factors, however, will vary considerably depending on life stage and individual preferences. Pembroke has a reputation for being a growing, affordable location in which to live in Ontario, with access to a wide range of recreational opportunities and amenities along the Ottawa River and the surrounding countryside.

3.2 Population Growth Trends and Outlook

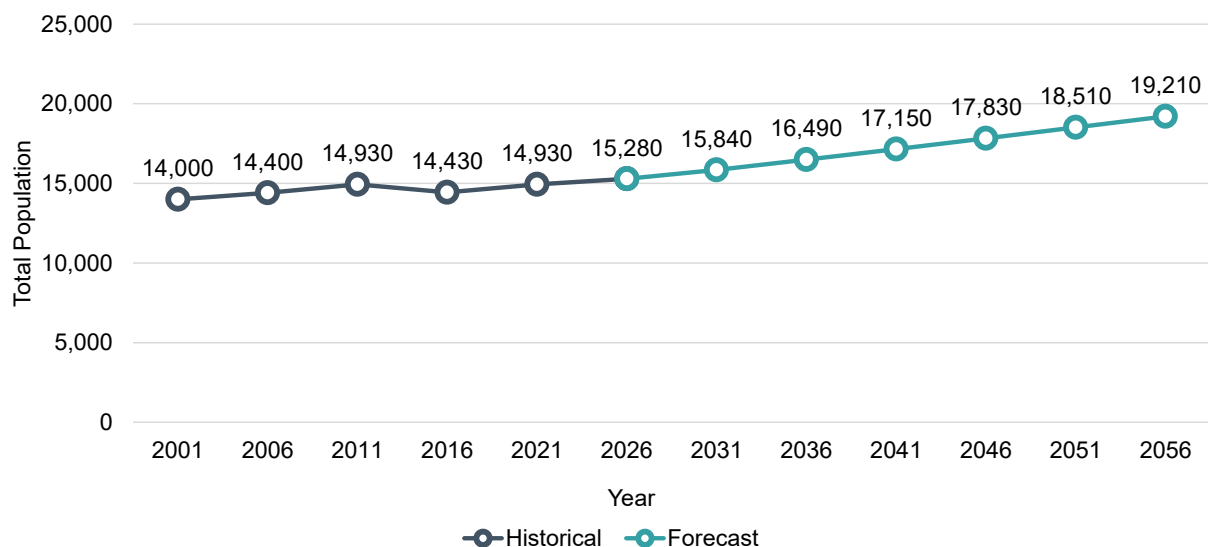
The figure below illustrates the historical population for the City of Pembroke since 2001. With the exception of 2016, when the City experienced a slight decline in population growth, Pembroke has been steadily growing, adding 930 residents over the past two decades at an annual rate of 0.3%. Since then, the City continues to steadily grow, and it is estimated that the City’s total population in 2026 is 15,280 people. Between 2021 and 2026, this represents an annual growth rate of 0.5%, slightly higher than the historical rate.

Recent trends across the broader regional economy point to stronger economic and population growth over the forecast period relative to historical trends over the past two decades. The figure below presents the population growth forecast for Pembroke from



2026 to 2056. Over the next three decades, the City is expected to experience strong growth, growing by 3,930 residents to 2056. This represents an annual growth of 131 people per year or an annual growth rate of 0.8%, which is more than double what the City has historically experienced over the past two decades.

Figure 2
City of Pembroke
Total Population, 2001 to 2056



Note: Population has been rounded and includes net Census undercount.

Source: 2001 to 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0155-01 for the City of Pembroke, 2026 is an estimate prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

3.3 Housing Growth Trends and Outlook

Demographic trends strongly influence housing and population growth patterns, as well as the potential for labour force growth. With an aging population, the Province and Eastern Ontario will be more reliant on net migration as a source of population growth, rather than natural increase (i.e., net population growth from births less deaths). With respect to future housing needs, strong population growth in the 75+ age group is expected to increase demand for medium- and high-density housing, including seniors' housing and affordable housing options.

Future housing demand from the 55+ age group is expected to remain strong over the next decade, driven by the aging of Baby Boomers. This will create a growing need to



accommodate a larger number of seniors in housing that offers a range of services, from independent living to assisted living to full-time care. At the same time, a growing wave of new residents will be seeking housing opportunities geared towards active lifestyles and recreation.

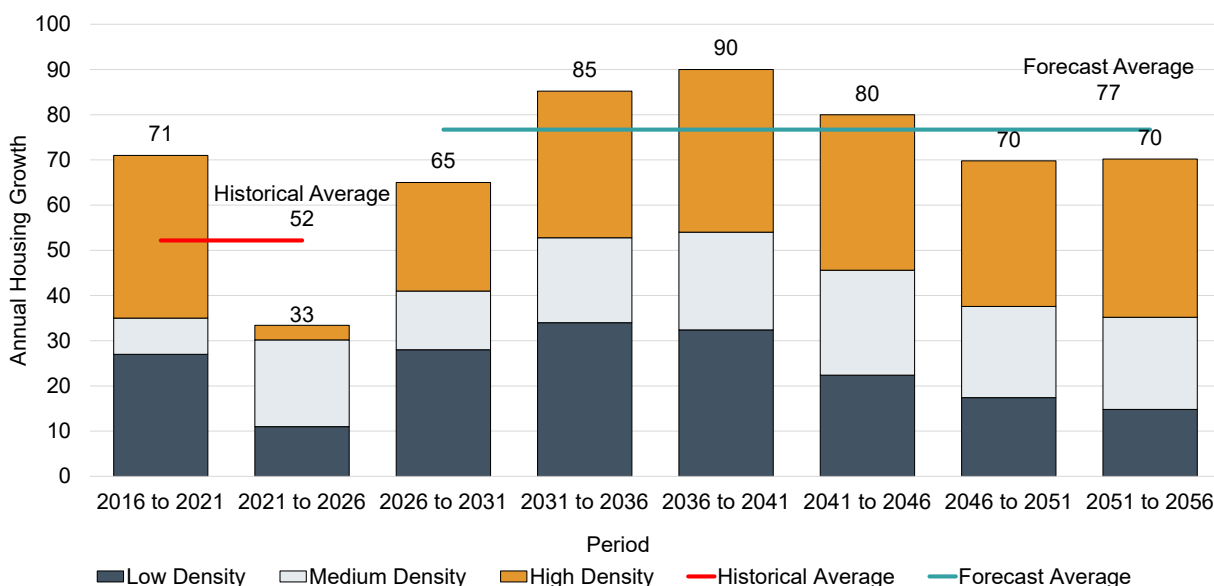
The City of Pembroke's current (2026) housing base of approximately 6,700 occupied dwelling units largely comprises low-density housing (single detached/semi-detached), which accounts for 65% of the total. Over the past decade (i.e., 2016 to 2025), new residential unit construction in Pembroke has averaged approximately 31 units annually, as illustrated in the figure below. The City experienced peaks in housing activity in 2017, with 57 new units created, and in 2022, with 52 units. Since 2022, housing development has moderated, aligning with historical average trends. Over the past decade, medium-density has accounted for the majority (40%) of new dwelling units, with apartments, single- and semi-detached housing accounting for 30% each.¹

The figure below shows annual growth in 5-year increments between 2016 to 2056. Key observations include:

- Between 2016 and 2026, the City has averaged 52 new housing units per year, largely high-density housing such as apartments, which accounted for 38% of overall housing growth. Low-density housing, such as single and semi-detached houses, accounted for 36% of the City's housing growth, while the remaining 26% came from medium-density housing, such as townhouses.
- Over the next three decades, the City is expected to grow, averaging 77 new housing units per year. This is nearly a doubling of housing growth compared with what the City has historically experienced over the past two decades.
- Over the longer-term forecast, annual housing growth is anticipated to gradually decline, largely due to the aging of the local and regional population base.
- New housing development is anticipated to shift to higher-density forms, such as apartments, over the forecast period. The share of high-density housing increases from 37% between 2026 and 2031 to 50% from 2051 and 2056.
- Over the forecast period, 2026-2056, Pembroke is anticipated to accommodate approximately 2,300 housing units, including 745 low-density units (32% of total units), 585 medium-density units (25%), and 970 high-density units (42%).



Figure 3
City of Pembroke
Annual Housing Growth by Structure Type, 2001 to 2056



[1] Low-density includes single and semi-detached houses.

[2] Medium-density includes townhouses and apartments in duplexes.

[3] High-density includes bachelor, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom+ apartment units.

Note: Figures have been rounded and may not add precisely.

Source: Historical 2001 to 2025 data derived from Statistics Canada Census Profile for the City of Pembroke, and building permits, 2026 to 2056 forecast prepared and summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

3.4 Employment Growth Trends and Outlook

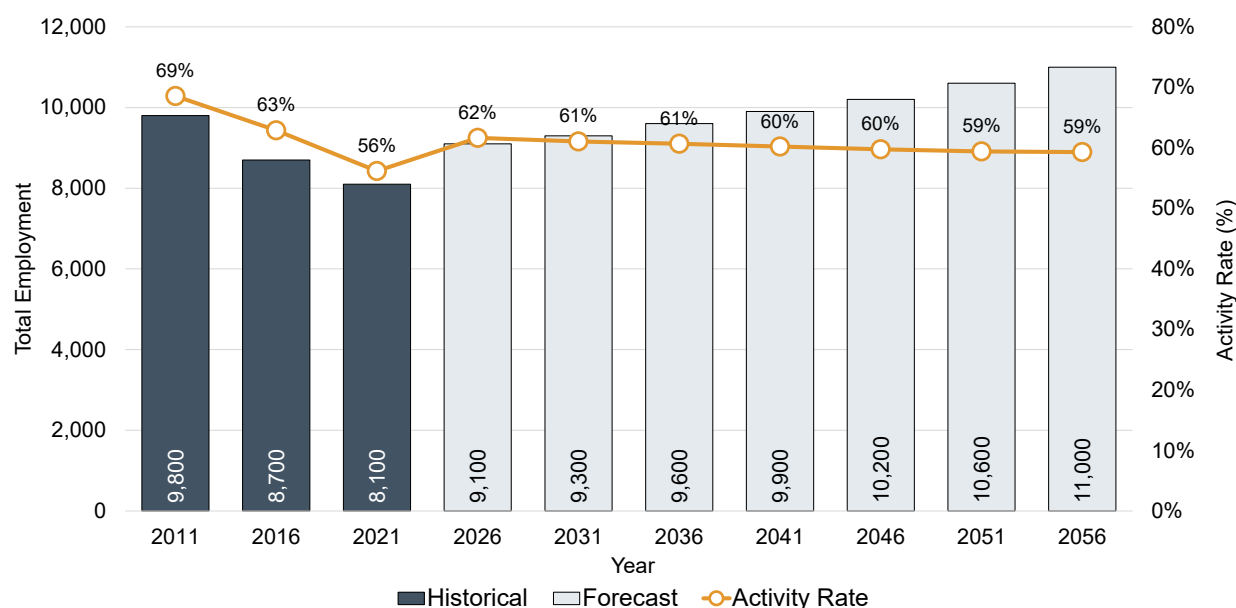
As shown in the figure below, the City's employment activity rate is expected to slightly decrease from 62% in 2026 to 59% by 2056.^[1] Between 2026 and 2056, Pembroke is expected to increase its total employment by 1,900 jobs, which represents an annual growth rate of 0.4% or 63 jobs annually. This increase is anticipated to be largely driven by population-related sectors such as retail, accommodation and food, and health and social services, as well as local and regional export-based employment sectors (e.g., transportation, construction, and small-scale manufacturing). Forecast job growth is also

[1] An activity rate is the ratio of jobs to population.



anticipated to be accommodated through home occupations, home-based businesses, and off-site employment.

Figure 4
City of Pembroke
Total Employment, 2011 to 2056



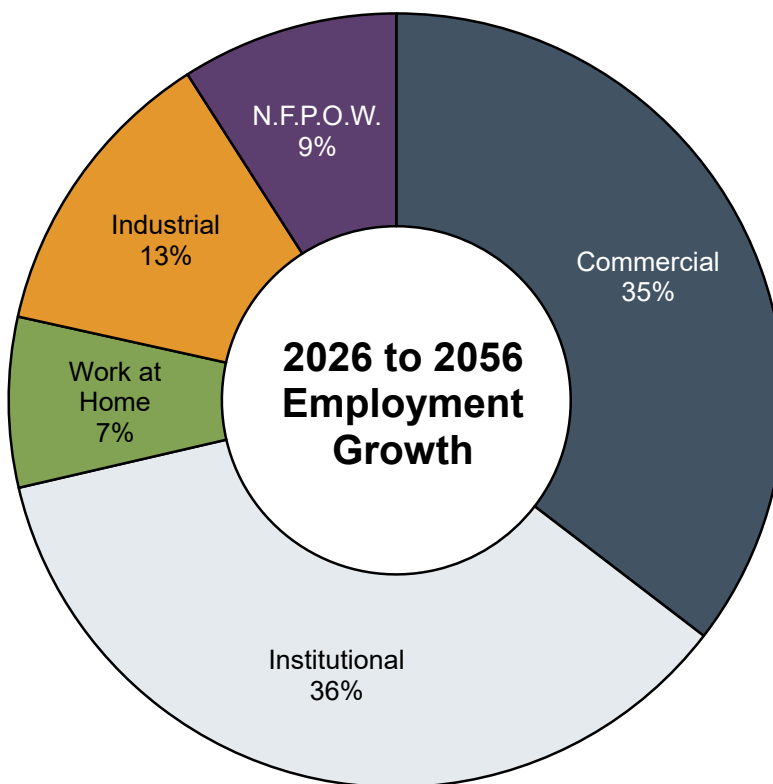
Note: Figures have been rounded. Total employment figures include work at home and no fixed place of work.

Source: 2011 to 2021 derived from Statistics Canada place of work data; forecast prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

The figure below displays the share of growth by industry during the 2026 to 2056 forecast period. Land-based commercial, industrial, institutional and primary employment sectors are anticipated to account for approximately 84% of employment growth over the forecast period. The N.F.P.O.W. and work at home employment categories are forecast to comprise the remaining 16% of employment growth.



Figure 5
City of Pembroke
Share of Employment Growth, 2026 to 2056



Notes: Figures have been rounded. N.F.P.O.W. means no fixed place of work.
Source: Forecast prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

With respect to employment growth by major employment sector, the following observations have been made:

- **Primary Employment** – Employment in the primary sector (i.e., agriculture and other resource-based industries) has historically remained stable and is expected to remain steady over the forecast period. As of 2026, there are approximately 30 primary jobs. Over the next 30 years, primary employment is expected to remain steady by 2056, accounting for less than 1% of the City's total employment growth.
- **Industrial Employment** – Future growth in industrial employment in Pembroke is expected to grow by 240 jobs between 2026 and 2056, representing 12% of the overall employment increase. Growth in industrial employment is expected to

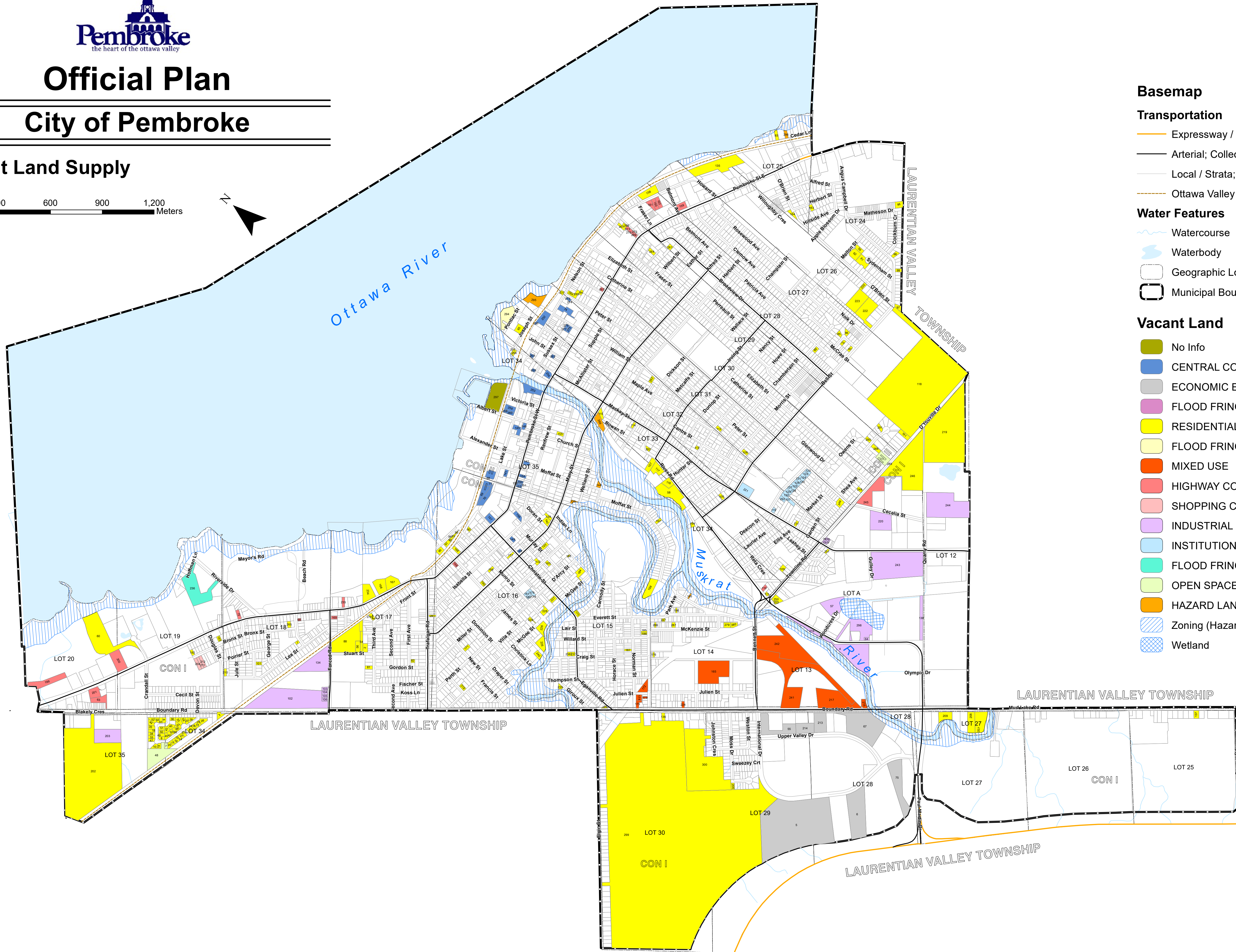
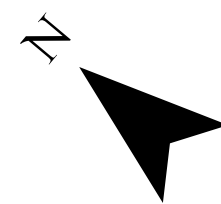


Official Plan

City of Pembroke

Vacant Land Supply

0 150 300 600 900 1,200 Meters



Basemap

Transportation

- Expressway / Highway
- Arterial; Collector
- Local / Strata; Local / Street
- Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail

Water Features

- Watercourse
- Waterbody
- Geographic Lot Fabric
- Municipal Boundary

Vacant Land

- No Info
- CENTRAL COMMERCIAL
- ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE
- FLOOD FRINGE CENTRAL COMMERCIAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- FLOOD FRINGE RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED USE
- HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- SHOPPING CENTRE COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- FLOOD FRINGE INSTITUTIONAL
- OPEN SPACE
- HAZARD LAND
- Zoning (Hazard Mapping)
- Wetland