



REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT NO. DPE.06.25

TO Mayor and Members of Council

FROM Geoff Brooks, Director of Planning and Engineering Services
Carey Herd, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT Former Hospital Lands Official Plan Amendment Process: Draft Policy Directions and Land Use Plan

DATE September 22, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Draft Policy Directions and Land Use Map set out in Schedules 1 and 2 of Staff Report DPE.06.25 be approved for community and stakeholder engagement purposes;

THAT Staff be directed to report back to Council with a summary of input received and a final Policy Directions and Land Use Plan for consideration.

REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to release the draft Policy Directions and Land Use Plan for community and stakeholder engagement. These documents will form the basis for a future Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to bring the Former Hospital Lands (Hospital Lands) into the Norman-Lyndale settlement area and set a policy framework for development of the new community.

Background

The province owns 416 acres of land associated with the former hospital. With a new Volkswagen Canada Battery Cell Gigafactory expected to open in 2027 in St. Thomas,

large and rapid population growth is anticipated. It is anticipated that the new jobs will drive up demand for housing, making speedy provision of housing a priority. To address future housing demand and related community needs, Central Elgin has embarked on a process to bring the Hospital Lands into the settlement boundary through an amendment to its official plan.

Discussion

On May 5, 2025, Council approved the Vision and Guiding Principles for development of the Hospital Lands. Since that time, Elgin County's new Official Plan (2025) was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and is now in force. The County's Official Plan has extended the settlement boundary to include the Hospital Lands. This provides the necessary policy foundation for Central Elgin to proceed with its own OPA.

The Draft Policy Directions and Land Use Plan (schedules 1 and 2) are the next steps toward an OPA for the Hospital Lands. They set out key planning considerations, housing mix and density, commercial and employment opportunities, mobility and transportation, parks and open space, and climate resilience. Building on the Vision and Guiding Principles, they establish a framework to support a complete, connected, and sustainable new community that reflects Council's strategic priorities and aligns with provincial and county planning policies.

Engagement

The Municipality is required under the Planning Act to engage the public when proposing to amend its official plan. On June 23, 2025, Council received information about planned community and stakeholder engagement activities.

Consultation on the draft Planning Directions and Land Use map, will begin immediately upon Council approval as recommended in this report. Activities include:

- A web page with project details and an online survey to launch the week of September 22, 2025
- An Open House on Wednesday October 8, 2025, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM in the municipal office
- Stakeholder workshops will be held on key themes, such as cultural heritage and housing, with dates to be posted at the Open House and on the web page

In addition, staff are currently finalizing plans for presentations to the County's Planning and Growth Committee, and St. Thomas Council, to keep them informed given the regional impact of the new development.

Members of Council are encouraged to attend public events and assist in promoting them through community networks.

Timelines

The goal continues to be to achieve housing on the Hospital Lands as soon as possible to support housing needs created by the new EV Battery Plant:

- The final Policy Directions and Land Use Plan will be recommended for Council Approval in January 2026. Council will also receive a summary about engagement outcomes.
- The draft OPA is planned for Council consideration in February 2026, followed by another round of engagement, including the public statutory meeting currently planned for March 2026.
- Council approval of the OPA is targeted for April or May 2026, with the required County approval shortly thereafter. Once approved, the subdivision and zoning approval processes can immediately proceed.

Several technical studies are also underway that will support the OPA process and future development:

- Water and Wastewater Servicing Feasibility Study
- Growth and Housing Needs Forecast
- Employment Forecast
- Development Charges Study
- Community Needs Assessment


In addition, staff relied upon reports commissioned by Infrastructure Ontario related to:

- Agriculture
- Transportation
- Servicing
- Natural Heritage
- Real Estate Market
- Archaeology


Conclusion

Approval of the draft Policy Directions and Land Use plan for engagement purposes is a key milestone in advancing the OPA for the Hospital Lands. The engagement process will ensure residents, stakeholders and partner municipalities have meaningful opportunities to shape the planning framework for this new community.

Respectfully submitted:



 Geoff Brooks
 Director of Planning & Engineering
 Services



 Carey Herd
 CAO

Schedule 1: Draft Policy Directions
 Schedule 2: Draft Land Use Plan

Central Elgin Hospital Lands
POLICY DIRECTIONS

September 2025



Municipality of
Central Elgin

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out proposed policy directions and a land use plan for redevelopment of the former Hospital Lands in Central Elgin. It builds on the Vision and Guiding Principles approved by Council in May 2025 and will inform a future Official Plan Amendment to Central Elgin's Official Plan. The directions and land use plan will be refined through public consultation in Fall 2025.

Why This Matters

The 168-hectare Hospital Lands offer a rare opportunity to share a new, complete community that addresses local and regional needs:

- Supports Central Elgin's strategic goals of affordability, sustainability, investability and good governance.
- Provides space for up to 3,000 new homes and 7,000 new residents, helping to meet Ontario's housing supply targets.
- Responds to population and housing pressures linked to regional job growth, including the nearby Volkswagen EV battery plant.

Community Vision and Structure

The land use concept proposes a well-structured, walkable community with four key elements:

- **Sunset Institutional Corridor:** A zone of institutional, health, education and/or civic uses, contributing to economic resilience.
- **Downtown Mainstreet:** A mixed-use area for retail uses and public life, designed to serve day-to-day needs and to grow with the community.
- **Residential Neighbourhoods:** Compact, diverse housing options with integrated parks, community centre, schools and trails.
- **Connected Street Network:** A transit-ready and active transportation-friendly grid that supports phased growth.

Key Policy Directions

The report includes draft policy directions in 14 areas. Highlights include:

- **Housing:** A range of housing types, tenures and affordability levels, including rental, ownership, affordable, additional needs, and attainable housing.
- **Environment and Heritage:** Conservation of natural features, cultural landscapes and archaeological resources; integration of green infrastructure.
- **Mobility and Servicing:** Transit-ready design, active transportation, access to trails and phased in infrastructure servicing supported by growth funding tools.

- **Community Facilities:** Schools, parks and a community centre centrally located and accessible by walking and cycling.
- **Urban Design and Sustainability:** People-oriented public spaces, inclusive design, and measures to support climate resilience, and low-impact development.

Next Steps

Following consultation in Fall 2025, the policy directions and land use map will be updated and used to prepare a draft Official Plan Amendment for Council consideration early in 2026.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy Directions Report is to lay out the proposed framework and land use plan for redevelopment of the former St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital site (“Hospital Lands”) in Central Elgin. This Report includes the proposed land use development plan together with policies to establish how the plan will be implemented.

1.1 Background and Opportunity

The Hospital Lands in Central Elgin are a transformative opportunity for development of a new community and neighbourhood. The Hospital Lands are a large site located on one of the main routes between the City of London and Port Stanley on Lake Erie. Fronting onto Sunset Drive, the Hospital Lands are part of the entrance to Central Elgin on this main corridor.

There are many elements that make development of these lands a transformative opportunity:

1. The historic investment in the Volkswagen Battery plant in St. Thomas, expected to generate up to 3,000 direct jobs and 30,000 indirect jobs.
2. The urgent need for housing to accommodate the growing workforce associated with the new battery plant and related economic activity.
3. The potential to create a new community that reflects Council’s strategic priorities and the approved Vision for the Hospital Lands while complementing the broader municipality.
4. The opportunity to introduce new services, facilities, and investment that will benefit both current and future residents, within Norman-Lyndale and beyond.

Given current population and employment growth implications of the VW plant, future development of the Hospital Lands is critical to supporting the quick delivery of housing. Fully developed, these lands could accommodate a community in the range of 7,000 residents and up to 3,000 homes. An increase of this magnitude would nearly double Central Elgin’s population, from 13,615 (2021 census) to about 20,000. Ensuring the new community achieves Council’s vision, values, and priorities, and properly manages growth, requires a planning framework to shape development of the Hospital Lands.

It is intended that this new community will have a distinct identity and purpose, complementing the unique character of Central Elgin’s existing communities. Through a comprehensive planning process, it will be thoughtfully integrated into the broader municipal fabric, advancing Central Elgin’s strategic priorities of affordability, livability, sustainability, investability, and good governance. The Vision and Guiding Principles were adopted by Central Elgin Council on May 5, 2025, and these Policy Directions, reflect Central Elgin’s commitment to fostering a vibrant and welcoming municipality that balances urban and rural life while embracing responsible growth.

1.2 Official Plan Amendment Process

Realizing this transformative opportunity begins with updating the Central Elgin Official Plan to permit development of the Hospital Lands. This will be accomplished through an amendment to the Municipality of Central Elgin’s Official Plan, intended to establish the Hospital Lands as an area for growth and to identify how development of the new community will occur.

The Official Plan Amendment (OPA) process was initiated with Council’s approval of the Vision and Guiding Principles for the Hospital Lands (see Section 3). These Policy Directions build on that Vision and set out the proposed land use plan and policy framework that will guide preparation of the OPA. These Policy Directions and the land use plan are provided in draft and will be finalized for approval after community consultation in Fall 2025.

Once finalized, the OPA will be prepared as the next phase. It will incorporate the approved Vision and Guiding Principles, detailed policies based on the final Policy Directions Report after consultation with the public and Council, and the land use plan and associated schedules (for example, transportation). It will reflect input from key stakeholders including Elgin County, the Conservation Authority, the City of St. Thomas, and the School Boards, and others, as well as findings from technical studies and analysis.

In 2024, the Province of Ontario embarked on a process to divest itself of the Hospital Lands, including commissioning a series of studies to identify opportunities for the Hospital Lands. The technical studies prepared for Infrastructure Ontario referred to in this document are not publicly available, but may be provided upon request.

Supporting technical studies commissioned by the Province, along with additional municipal and consultant-led analysis, have informed the Policy Directions. The result reflects a coordinated effort to realize the site’s potential in alignment with local goals and broader regional economic opportunities.

1.3 Reading Guide

This document sets out draft Policy Directions and the land use plan to implement the Policy Directions. It is intended to support discussion and consultation, and may be revised. This document serves as a basis for preparing a future Official Plan Amendment, and will inform future policies and maps to be developed through later steps in this planning process.

References to “will” and “should” are used to convey directions or commitments; “will” is mandatory; “should” is used to identify a direction with some flexibility; “may” is used to indicate greater flexibility or potential options that could be considered.



Where terms such as “the site”, “the lands”, or “the Hospital Lands” are used, they refer to the area identified as the subject of these Policy Directions (**Map 1**) unless otherwise specified.

The proposed Land Use Plan (**Map 2**) is conceptual in nature and intended to illustrate general policy directions. It does not represent detailed land use boundaries, which shall be determined through subsequent planning processes.

2. HOSPITAL LANDS IN CENTRAL ELGIN

2.1 Background

The Hospital Lands area is identified on **Map 1**. The site includes the vacant hospital buildings, the active Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health, an Ontario Provincial Police detachment, and agricultural lands with existing farm buildings. There are also existing soccer fields adjacent to the former hospital complex. The property totals approximately 168.5 ha (416 acres) with approximately 32 ha (79 acres) occupied by the former hospital buildings. The remainder of the site is agricultural, natural heritage, or otherwise undeveloped.



Map 1. Location of the Hospital Lands Area

2.2 History

The Hospital Lands are the site of the closed St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital. The St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital opened in 1939 and was known as the Ontario Hospital, St. Thomas. During World War II, the hospital was used as a military training site before returning to psychiatric care operations. With the conclusion of the war, the hospital re-

opened for services for patients. The hospital continued to operate providing psychiatric services for approximately 2,300 patients at its peak. The agricultural lands to the east of the Hospital Buildings were actively farmed to provide food for the patients and staff at the hospital.

In 2001, the hospital was transferred to the St. Joseph Health System in London for service delivery, who operated the hospital services. The Province of Ontario retained ownership of the site and buildings. In 2013, the hospital was closed as the Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health opened. The hospital has remained closed since 2013, and the buildings have remained vacant since the hospital's closure.

In 2024, the Province of Ontario embarked on a process to divest itself of the Hospital Lands. This process includes a series of studies to identify opportunities for the Hospital Lands. These studies have informed this Report, supplemented by additional analysis undertaken by the Municipality and its consultant team.

2.3 Planning Context

On September 2nd, 2025, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the New County of Elgin Official Plan. One of the key changes in the County's New Official Plan (2025) is the extension of the settlement area boundary which brought the entirety of the Hospital Lands into the Norman-Lyndale settlement area. The Central Elgin Official Plan designates the land as a Special Policy Area with uses limited to the existing hospital buildings/uses. The remainder of the site is designated Agriculture in the Central Elgin Official Plan. Based on the new County Official Plan, the entirety of the Hospital Lands is to be for future growth for housing and jobs.

Norman-Lyndale is one of seven designated settlement areas in Central Elgin. Each of the settlement areas in Central Elgin are distinctive with their own history and community design and development. Norman-Lyndale features a mix of land uses including residential neighbourhoods and large institutional facilities such as the Elgin County and Central Elgin offices and the Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health. Its adjacency to the City of St. Thomas positions it as a logical area for growth.

Detailed information about the planning policy context is provided in Section 2 of the Vision and Guiding Principles approved by Central Elgin Council on May 5, 2025.

2.3.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of seeking to change the designation of the Hospital Lands is to achieve the following:

- Extend the Norman-Lyndale Settlement Area boundary to include the full extent of the Hospital Lands, conforming to the County's New Official Plan (2025);
- Establish a land use plan to guide future development of the lands;

- Adopt policies to support the phased and coordinated implementation of development;
- Address Provincial and County requirements for planning, infrastructure, and phasing of the development of the Hospital Lands; and,
- Set out the framework for how the Plan will be implemented over time.

2.4 Organization of the Policy Directions Report

This Policy Directions Report identifies key issues and opportunities for the future of the Hospital Lands. This includes addressing housing and jobs, community services such as parks, infrastructure (roads, stormwater management, water and wastewater), natural heritage, built heritage, and more. The Policy Directions in this Report are not final. Input and feedback are welcomed and will be part of the future engagement in the Fall of 2025.

3. VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Vision

Developing a vision and guideline principles for the Hospital Lands began with an analysis of existing conditions and drivers of change, including changes in planning policies, current and projected growth, and the VW manufacturing plant's opening. The vision is also informed by priorities expressed through a facilitated workshop with Council, and by policy review and technical analysis.

On May 5, 2025, Central Elgin Council approved the Vision and Guiding Principles to guide redevelopment of the Hospital Lands. Council established the foundation upon which the Policy Directions and Land Use Plan were developed. The Policy Directions and Land Use Plan reflect Council's aspirations, address provincial policies, and support a complete, liveable and sustainable community.

The Vision provides a statement of Central Elgin's long-term aspirations for the Hospital Lands. It serves as a unifying guide for future decisions, setting the overall direction for policies, planning, design and development.

VISION FOR THE HOSPITAL LANDS

Central Elgin's newest community will be a thriving and inclusive place to call home. Designed for all ages and generations, it will offer a diverse range of affordable and accessible housing options. This community will promote healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship, anchored by a traditional main street with vibrant local businesses. It will feature parks and community services that prioritize people and their day-to-day needs. The community will create jobs to support financial sustainability in Central Elgin.

3.2 Guiding Principles

This Vision is supported by four Guiding Principles, which envision the area as a distinctive, liveable, connected, and sustainable community.



4. COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

4.1 Community Design Basis

Building on the Vision and Guiding Principles for the Hospital Lands, the Land Use Plan (**Map 2**) identifies how the Hospital Lands are to be planned and developed. The Land Use Plan outlines important foundational elements that serve as the basis for building neighbourhoods for people of all ages and abilities, and implementing the Guiding Principles identified in the Vision and Guiding Principles adopted by Council. These foundational elements of the community design are key to creating the Land Use Plan for the Hospital Lands, as detailed in this Report.

The foundational elements of the new community are the Sunset Institutional Corridor, a new Downtown Mainstreet, Residential Neighbourhoods, and an Integrated Street Network. A Land Use Plan (**Map 2**) has been developed to show how these elements come together to inform the overall layout of the community and show how they work together to create a complete, connected, technology ready and sustainable place. Its design is intended to support phased development aligned with infrastructure servicing and market demand, to protect environmental and cultural features, and to ensure all residents will have access to parks within a 15-minute walk from their home. The purpose of the proposed Land Use Plan (**Map 2**) is to ensure the appropriate land use designations for the development of the Hospital Lands as a Distinctive, Liveable and Affordable, and Sustainable Community.

4.1.1. Sunset Institutional Corridor

The Sunset Institutional Corridor consists of the existing uses – vacant hospital buildings, the Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health, and broader transportation and community connections to the Elgin County Office Building, Parkside Collegiate Institute (in St. Thomas) and John Wise Public School (also in St. Thomas). The existing area of the vacant Hospital Buildings will be for future institutional uses to support the broader community in this area of Elgin County.

4.1.2. Downtown Mainstreet

The Downtown Mainstreet will be the commercial focus of the new neighbourhood. This will be a mixed use street with main floor commercial uses and residential units above. Proper connections between buildings and the street are required to ensure the Downtown Mainstreet is highly walkable and inviting, with enhanced landscaping that will create a welcoming environment. Sufficient space will be provided to support some larger commercial uses such as a grocery store. The Downtown Mainstreet will serve as a community focal point that fosters social interaction and reinforces a strong sense of place.

4.1.3. Residential Neighbourhoods

Residential neighbourhoods will form the largest part of the new community. These residential neighbourhoods will offer a diverse mix of housing types, ranging from single-detached dwellings to multi-unit apartment buildings, as well as different housing tenures including rental and ownership housing. Housing options will be provided to meet a variety of income levels, including both Affordable housing and Attainable market housing, as described in the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.

Parks, schools, and trails are important to supporting the success of residential neighbourhoods. The location of parks and schools and their connections to where people live will be appropriately designed and provided, creating a safe environment for walking, cycling, and driving.

4.1.4. Integrated Street Network

A well-designed, connected, and efficient street network is fundamental to a community's structure as it ensures safety for pedestrians and all road users, supports local businesses by attracting customers, and provides convenient access to homes, parks, open space, and essential services.

The street network establishes the framework for future transit routes and supports densities that make transit work better. The street layout provides connections to the County road system – supporting good access for residents, workers, and visitors. Active transportation is included in all street designs ensuring safe movement for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and drivers.

4.2 Land Use Plan and Policies

4.2.1. Land Use Plan

The Central Elgin Official Plan includes land use schedules, policies, and criteria to guide development in the municipality. Community land use policies are provided for each urban and rural settlement area to address unique circumstances and land use planning considerations.

4.2.2. Provincial Planning Statement and Recent Provincial Legislation

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) sets out the policy direction for matters related to land use planning and development. It outlines a vision for Ontario that supports a full range and mix of housing options, employment and services, cultural heritage, transit-supportive development, natural heritage protection, protecting aggregate resources, supporting agriculture, climate change mitigation, and Indigenous engagement and reconciliation. Municipal plans and policies must be consistent with the high-level policy direction set out in the PPS.

The Policy Directions for the development of the Hospital Lands will be consistent with the PPS. Given the significance of the Hospital Lands' development to the Municipality and the Province of Ontario, the Policy Directions reflects the principles for large and fast-growing municipalities outlined in the PPS. The minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare will be the foundation for this growth.

4.2.3. Elgin County Official Plan

The County's Official Plan sets out the broad policy framework in guiding planning and development throughout the seven local municipalities in the County. Local Official Plans and By-laws are required to conform with the policy framework of the County's Official Plan. Detailed development policies are provided in the local Official Plan.

The County adopted its New Official Plan in 2024, which replaced the previous 2013 Official Plan, and sets out the planning framework to manage growth and land-use throughout the County to 2054. The County's New Official Plan was approved, with modifications, by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on September 2nd, 2025, and is now in full-force and effect.

The focus of the County's New Official Plan includes:

- directing the majority of growth to settlement areas which supports the efficient use of land and infrastructure;
- protecting prime agricultural areas;
- facilitating compact, pedestrian-friendly, complete communities that centre around a vibrant main street;
- supporting downtown, main streets, and waterfronts;
- supporting economic development opportunities;
- ensuring an adequate supply of residential land and a mix of housing types;
- preserving the agricultural and rural character of the County;
- establishing an integrated transportation system that safely and efficiently accommodates various modes of transportation;
- facilitating community and recreational uses and opportunities;
- protecting the Natural System and ecological features and functions;
- protecting natural resource deposits;
- directing development away from natural and manmade hazards; and,
- protecting and conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

In addition to this, the County's New Official Plan now identifies the entirety of the Hospital Lands as being within the Tier 1 Settlement Area in Central Elgin. The Policy Directions for the Hospital Lands will conform with the policies of the County's approved 2025 Official Plan.

4.2.4. Central Elgin Official Plan

The Central Elgin Official Plan is the primary land-use document that provides the framework for growth, development, and protection of built and natural heritage resources in the municipality. The Official Plan provides the following goals for urban settlement areas:

1. Provide the focus for sustainable urban development;
2. Provide sufficient designated and serviced lands to accommodate projected growth;
3. Provide commercial, community, and park facilities to serve residents;
4. Encourage a compact urban form and mix of uses and promote active transportation and transit-supportive development;
5. Encourage complete, healthy, and safe communities that promote climate resilience and protection of the environment.

Within the Central Elgin Official Plan, the Hospital Lands are designated Special Policy Area 1 – St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital, and Agricultural for the remainder of the lands located east of the hospital buildings. The Special Policy Area 1 designation only permits existing uses until the ultimate use of the site has been established through an Official Plan Amendment. In determining the ultimate use of the site, adaptive re-use of the vacant hospital buildings is encouraged, where feasible.

5. POLICY DIRECTIONS

Official Plan policies address land use planning considerations, unique circumstances, and a multitude of topics regarding growth and development, such as transportation, cultural heritage, infrastructure and servicing, and urban design. The Policy Directions set out below, and the land use designations contained in the Land Use Plan (**Map 2**), when approved, will establish the foundation for development of the Official Plan Amendment to permit re-development of the Hospital Lands.

5.1 Housing and Residential Neighbourhoods

Providing housing for people who call Central Elgin home is fundamental to the success of the new community on the Hospital Lands. This includes housing for current residents as well as future residents looking to move to Central Elgin. Analysis of the current housing market and expected job growth in Central Elgin and St. Thomas demonstrate the need for more housing supply and a greater range of housing choice to meet the needs of current and future residents.

The Policy Directions for housing are as follows:

1. Provide a range of housing choices through low, medium, and high density housing choices.
2. Low density housing is defined by:
 - a. Single-detached, semi-detached, duplexes, triplexes and townhouse buildings;
 - b. A height of 3-4 storeys;
 - c. A density of approximately 25-40 units per hectare;
 - d. Generally located within the interior of the neighbourhood.
3. Medium density housing is defined by:
 - a. Higher density housing including fourplexes, townhouses (such as stacked townhouses) and apartment buildings up to 6 storeys;
 - b. A minimum height of 3 storeys;
 - c. A density of approximately 40-75 units per hectare;
 - d. Generally located on collector roads and adjacent to the Sunset Institutional Corridor.
4. High density housing is defined by:
 - a. Apartment buildings up to 8 storeys;
 - b. A minimum height of 4 storeys;
 - c. A density of greater than 75 units per hectare;
 - d. Located at the intersection of collector roads and the County roads with access only from the collector roads.
5. Ensure that a mix of housing options is provided through the above policies as well as:

- a. Supporting innovative housing types (e.g. modular housing, timber frame construction);
 - b. Supporting Affordable and Attainable housing;
 - c. Supporting Additional Needs Housing;
 - d. Supporting a range of housing tenure: rental, ownership, co-operatives;
 - e. Requiring new low density housing provides additional residential unit opportunities through the construction process;
 - f. Using innovative planning tools to streamline approvals for housing.
6. Incorporate child care centres into the residential neighbourhoods.
 7. Focus residential areas around parks, schools, and a community centre.

5.2 Downtown Mainstreet

The Downtown Mainstreet will be the community focal point, designed to be walkable and vibrant, while featuring a mix of uses that support local businesses and public spaces for people to gather and socialize. The Downtown Mainstreet will provide services such as restaurants, day-to-day retail stores, a grocery store, drug store, bank(s), professional services such as dentists and doctors, and more, to serve residents of the new community.

Recognizing that it may take several years for new community to reach the population needed to support a full commercial main street, interim uses will be permitted in the early stages of development that will serve residents as the community grows. Buildings intended for these early uses will be designed with flexibility so they can transition to permanent main street functions over time. For example, while the long-term plan includes a grocery store, smaller-scale food retailers will be encouraged in the early stages to help meet the day-to-day needs of residents.

The Policy Directions for the Downtown Mainstreet are as follows:

1. The Downtown Mainstreet will be a commercial core with:
 - a. Ground floor commercial uses that front onto the street;
 - b. Enhanced design for building facades, entrances, and well-proportioned windows that provide greater interest from the street;
 - c. Enhanced landscaping to create an inviting street;
 - d. Sidewalks and pedestrian access from the street to the buildings;
 - e. Parking at the rear of the commercial uses;
 - f. Residential units and/or office units above the commercial uses;
 - g. A height of 3-6 storeys.
2. Highway commercial uses such as big box retail, automobile dealerships, and large retail plazas will not be permitted.

5.3 Sunset Institutional Corridor

The Sunset Institutional Corridor includes existing institutional uses on both sides of Sunset Drive and includes the existing vacant Hospital Buildings. These existing institutional uses reinforce the significance of Sunset Drive as the institutional precinct in the community.

The Sunset Institutional Corridor is intended to support a broad range of institutional uses that align with provincial infrastructure priorities. While health care and related facilities are anticipated, the goal is to also attract institutions that contribute to community well-being, workforce development, and long-term economic resilience. Potential uses could include education and training centres, public administration, research and innovation facilities, and non-profit or private institutions delivering essential public services. The Policy Directions for the Sunset Institutional Corridor are as follows:

1. New institutional uses will be located either within or on the lands of the current hospital buildings; and
2. High quality architectural design will be required, including landscaping and building design.

5.4 Archaeological Sites

The proposed Land Use Plan identifies areas that have archaeological interest. These areas are important to the history of the Hospital Lands, consisting of Significant Indigenous archaeological resources and Euro-Canadian resources.

The Policy Directions for Archaeological Sites are as follows:

1. Significant archaeological sites identified are to be protected. Access to these sites should be restricted;
2. Ensure any significant archaeological sites are identified and protected as the new community grows and develops.

5.5 Schools and Community Centres

Schools and community centres are important to neighbourhoods, communities, and their residents. These are places for people to gather, learn, play and grow as a community.

The Policy Directions for Schools and Community Centres are as follows:

1. Identify sites and locations for schools and a community centre;
2. Ensure schools and community centres can be accessed from all parts of the new community by all modes of transportation.

5.6 Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space are a critical part of building great neighbourhoods for people. They provide different types of recreational and leisure activities for people of all ages and abilities, while promoting a healthy and active lifestyle. New parks and open space are integrated into the proposed Land Use Plan.

The Policy Directions for Parks and Open Space are as follows:

1. Provide a full range of parks from small parks to larger community-based parks;
2. All homes are to be within 15 minutes' walk to a park;
3. Provide connections from the street to parks and trails;
4. New neighbourhood parks will be a minimum of 1.0 hectare;
5. Community parks that serve the broader area for uses such as sports fields will be a minimum of 4 hectares;
6. Ensure that parks and open space areas are designed for people of all ages and abilities, with a mix of passive and active recreational facilities and a range of small-scale complementary uses (cafes, vendors, kiosks), while providing comfort for users, incorporating placemaking elements such as furniture, public art and more, lighting and clear sightlines for safety and usability.

5.7 Natural Environment

The Natural Environment is important to sustainability and protecting water, birds, animals, plants, and trees. It is important to incorporate the Natural Environment features in the development of the Hospital Lands to ensure these features are protected and are connected to the rest of the community.

The Policy Directions for the Natural Environment are as follows:

1. Incorporate maps of natural environment features based on the work completed by the Province of Ontario;
2. Ensure connections between the natural environment, trails, schools, parks, and the community centre;
3. New development in the vicinity of natural environment features must assess and incorporate protection of these features;
4. A detailed Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will be required to determine the extent of the natural heritage features and whether development and future road connections will be permitted.

5.8 Built Heritage

The existing vacant hospital buildings and land comprise a significant cultural heritage resource within the community which includes the buildings as built heritage resources,

the surrounding landscape, and the archaeological resources that remain on the property.

The Policy Directions for Built Heritage are as follows:

1. Establish conservation goals for the Hospital Lands;
2. Where warranted, update and/or re-evaluate the heritage property and update the designation by-law in keeping with Provincial requirements;
3. Require a Conservation Plan to ensure the long-term conservation, preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage resources that are to be retained;
4. Consider preservation and adaptive reuse of cultural heritage resources prior to consideration of demolition.

5.9 Urban Design

Urban design refers to a series of policies and choices to build quality developments and great public spaces, to encourage the overall attractiveness of the community. It is comprised of collective design elements such as the streetscape, public spaces, building and architectural features, landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, and more. Excellent urban design supports a unique and vibrant community that is safe, pleasant, and easy to get around.

The Policy Directions for Urban Design are as follows:

1. Prioritize the following elements of great places:
 - a. People-oriented and human-scaled design;
 - b. Inclusivity for people of all ages and abilities;
 - c. Incorporation of placemaking elements; and
 - d. Safety enhancement through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
2. Design streets to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists through the appropriate provision of wide, well-shaded, and connected sidewalks, street trees, lighting, safe crossings, and dedicated cycling infrastructure;
3. Incorporate exterior public spaces for people at the community centre, in the Downtown Mainstreet, at all schools, and all medium and high density housing sites;
4. Incorporate signage and public art that references the agricultural roots of the community. Collaborate with the community to recognize Central Elgin, the new opportunities arising from the VW Battery Plant and to celebrate through names, signage and public art.

5.10 Sustainability / Climate Change

The design of the new community can play an important role in responding to climate change and promoting long-term environmental sustainability. The development of the

Hospital Lands will have a focus on integrating sustainable design strategies into the community.

The Policy Directions for Sustainability / Climate Change are as follows:

1. Support the planting and long-term maintenance of street trees and native vegetation within the public realm to provide shade, enhance microclimate, mitigate local heat island effects, improve air quality, and reinforce the community's green character and increase climate change resilience. Encourage the use of water-efficient and drought-resistant landscaping across the Hospital Lands;
2. Require best management practices for the management of stormwater, including the use of low-impact development (LID) measures (bioretention, infiltration trenches, green roofs).

5.11 Mobility

Mobility options influence how we move through and access housing, jobs, recreation, and other opportunities in the community, which is a key factor that directly impacts healthy and active lifestyles, as well as the structure and land-uses in a community. A complete community supports a multi-modal transportation system that includes active transportation and transit, with regard for complete streets and a compact, pedestrian-oriented built form. The development of the Hospital Lands should ensure an integrated mobility network that contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, promotes walkability, safety, transit-readiness, and a pedestrian-oriented environment, and reduces reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Mobility on the Hospital Lands must also be future focused – planning for and implementing innovative mobility options as this community grows and develops.

The Policy Directions for Mobility are as follows:

1. Implement an approach to the streets that facilitates and integrates various modes of transportation, while designing for safe, efficient, and economic movement of different road users;
2. Promote an integrated active transportation network which provides for safe, convenient, and direct multi-use paths, walking routes, and cycling routes.
3. Facilitate a transit-ready approach by:
 - a. Building densities that support transit;
 - b. Incorporating transit into street design such as transit shelters, infrastructure to support transit, and more;
4. Provide for on-street parking on various road types in a manner that ensures alignment with the transportation, land-use, and urban design objectives for the Hospital Lands;

5. Ensure that the planned road network connects to the existing road system in order to facilitate linkages between existing and future neighbourhoods, and existing developed communities;
6. Establish a grid road network in order to minimize travel distances and improve connectivity;
7. Incorporate connections to existing and planned trails;
8. Incorporate opportunities for emerging and new technology in transportation into the mobility options;
9. Plan and design a comprehensive and integrated active transportation network that provides safe and continuous linkages between key destinations.

5.12 Water and Wastewater Servicing

There are existing water and wastewater services provided to the vacant hospital buildings on the Hospital Lands. These services, however, are not sufficient to service full build out of the Hospital Lands. Ongoing work includes addressing how water and wastewater servicing is to be provided including an overall financial plan for the required infrastructure.

The Policy Directions for Water and Wastewater Servicing are as follows:

1. Ensure infrastructure is developed in a manner that minimizes social and environmental impacts, and considers long-term maintenance, operational, and financial requirements;
2. Finalize the overall system design for water and wastewater to service the full build-out of the Hospital Lands;
3. Require all development in the Hospital Lands to be connected to the water and wastewater systems;
4. Develop an allocation policy to utilize water and wastewater servicing; and
5. Identify how development will be implemented through phasing so that infrastructure, capital and growth are tied together.

5.13 Stormwater Management

How stormwater is managed is key to protecting people, property, and infrastructure. Stormwater can be a resource in development through the use of stormwater ponds that connect the overall community. Stormwater management also addresses how stormwater is dealt with on individual properties to lessen the overall impact on the surroundings, and as a method to use the water as a resource for site landscaping. Development is to be designed to conserve water, use stormwater as a resource for landscaping and irrigation, and to integrate with protection of the Natural Environment.

The Policy Directions for Stormwater Management are as follows:

1. Develop stormwater management facilities to be naturalized facilities, and incorporate native planting to help support pollinator species, and enhance biodiversity;
2. Design stormwater management facilities to support key features and ecological functions of the Natural Environment;
3. Design stormwater management facilities as part of the overall active transportation system, providing connectivity to trails, community facilities, and parks.

5.14 Phasing and Financial Tools

The Hospital Lands are a large site that will develop over several years. Coordination of development is very important to ensure the new development aligns to the infrastructure servicing plans, addresses the financial requirements for servicing, and includes provision of community services such as parks, trails, active transportation, commercial areas, technology needs, and overall connectivity to the broader community.

The Policy Directions for Phasing and Financial Tools are as follows:

1. Implement the planned growth in accordance with a Phasing Schedule. The Phasing Schedule will be developed in alignment with the water and wastewater servicing plans and related capital financing plans;
2. Provide flexibility in phasing to ensure adequate land, infrastructure, technology needs and community services are available to achieve the overall vision and principles of the Hospital Lands Plan. Changes to phasing will require approval from Central Elgin Council but will not require an amendment to the Phasing Schedule;
3. Require future landowners to enter into agreement(s) to share the costs of the major infrastructure projects and associated studies and plans required for the development of the Hospital Lands which are not otherwise covered by Development Charges;
4. Update the Development Charges Background Study and By-law to incorporate the required projects to implement the Hospital Lands Plan;
5. Work with residents and developers to minimize construction impacts in this community;
6. Complete a Community Benefits Strategy and By-law to comply with Provincial requirements.

