

This section of the Official Plan deals with the villages of Rodney and West Lorne being the two largest and only fully serviced settlement areas in West Elgin and the most logical and desirable areas to concentrate most of the future growth and development of the Municipality. All proposals and initiatives affecting or related to these settlement areas shall be governed by the goals, objectives and policies of this section to establish conformity with the Official Plan.

Rodney and West Lorne are the largest settlement areas in West Elgin, being situated in the central area of the Municipality south of Highway No. 401. Historically, the two villages developed as separate, incorporated entities before being amalgamated with the neighbouring Township of Aldborough (Rodney in 1993 and West Lorne in 1998).

With an estimated population of 1225 and 1796 persons respectively, Rodney and West Lorne are the only settlement areas in West Elgin serviced by municipal water supply and municipal sanitary sewage systems. As a result, they are best suited to accommodating the majority of West Elgin's future growth in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

Both villages are more or less bisected by a former railway corridor; reminiscent of the key role the railways once played in the settlement and development of the area. As is the case with a number of similar communities, the railway fostered the early development of both Rodney and West Lorne. The use of the railway corridor through West Elgin, however, declined substantially over the years to the point that railway traffic has come to an end and the railway lines abandoned and the tracks removed. Use of the corridor may be suitable and desirable for a trail linking the two villages.

Each village contains a downtown core surrounded, more or less, by residential development. Both downtown cores are relatively compact and provide the villages with a mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses occupying an older and somewhat underutilized building stock on a main street comparable, to greater or lesser degree, to many villages and towns its size and activity in southwestern Ontario. Competition from larger, neighbouring centres has been significant -- witnessed by a number of vacancies and reduced business activity. A remnant stock of heritage buildings and the historic pattern of development provide a distinguishing characteristic. Economic revitalization and improved physical appearance of the downtown cores appear warranted.

Outside the core in West Lorne commercial development is generally limited to a few scattered locations. With respect to Rodney on the other hand, a concentration outside the core may be found on Pioneer Line east of Furnival Road (County Road No. 103) in the south end of the village.

Industry is limited in both villages with Rodney having one relatively large plant and West Lorne having two relatively large plants as well as number of smaller establishments in terms of scale and number of employees. The attraction of new industries to either village has been limited on account of a number of factors including accessibility, visibility and the size and skills of the labour force.

The most dominant land use in the villages is residential which generally surrounds the downtown cores. Single unit dwellings constitute the predominant housing type. A small number of low rise multiple unit dwellings are scattered throughout both villages.

Both villages have large recreational complexes offering both indoor and outdoor facilities. In addition, West Lorne is the location of a separate school, a senior elementary school and a secondary school. There are no schools in Rodney at the present time, although a public school lies just south of the settlement area.

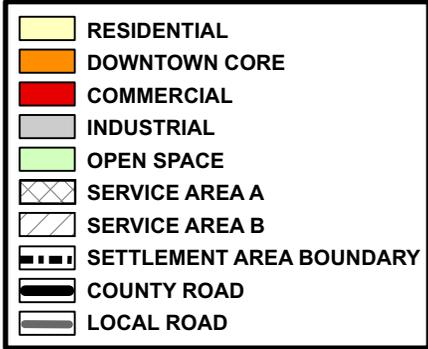
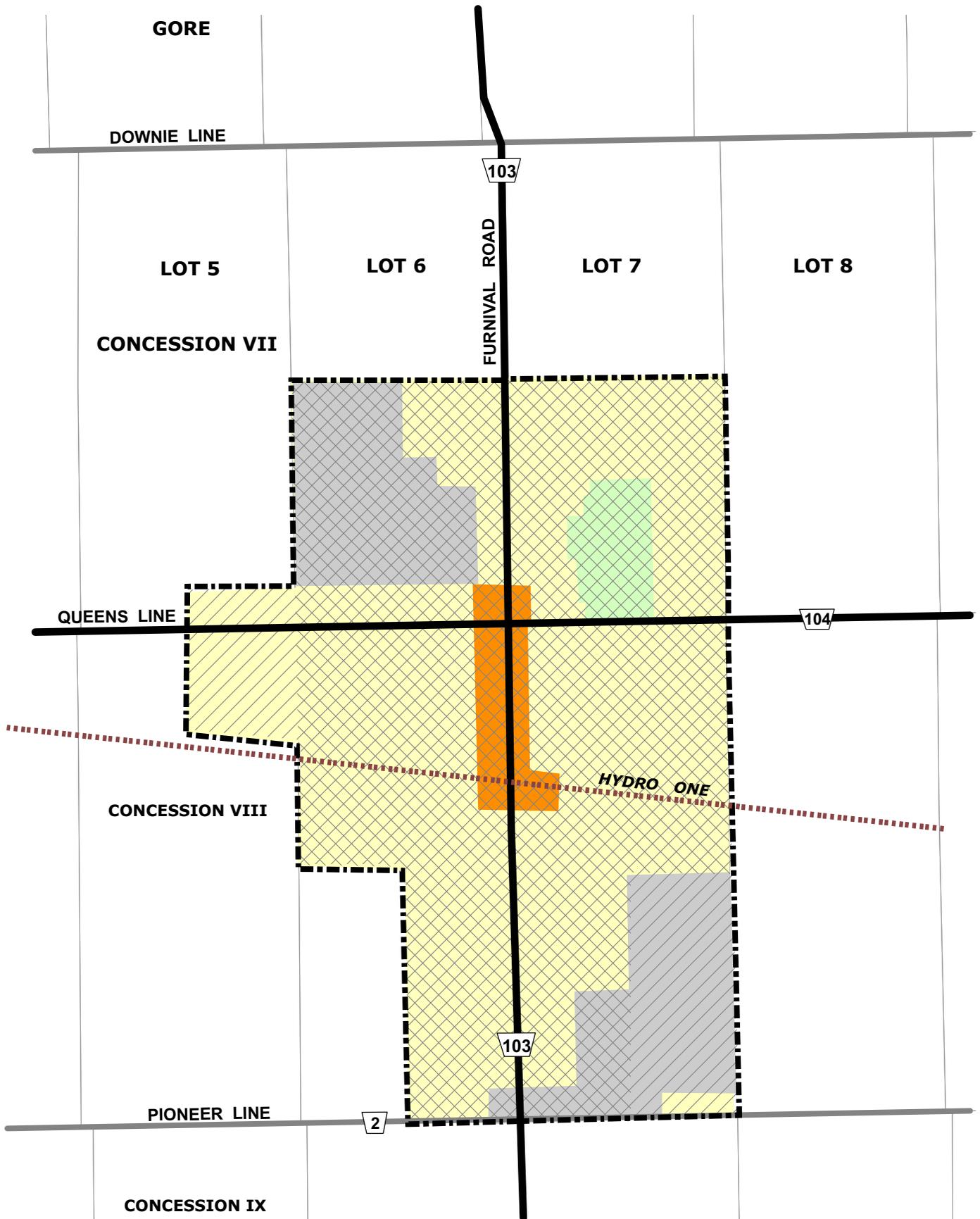
5.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

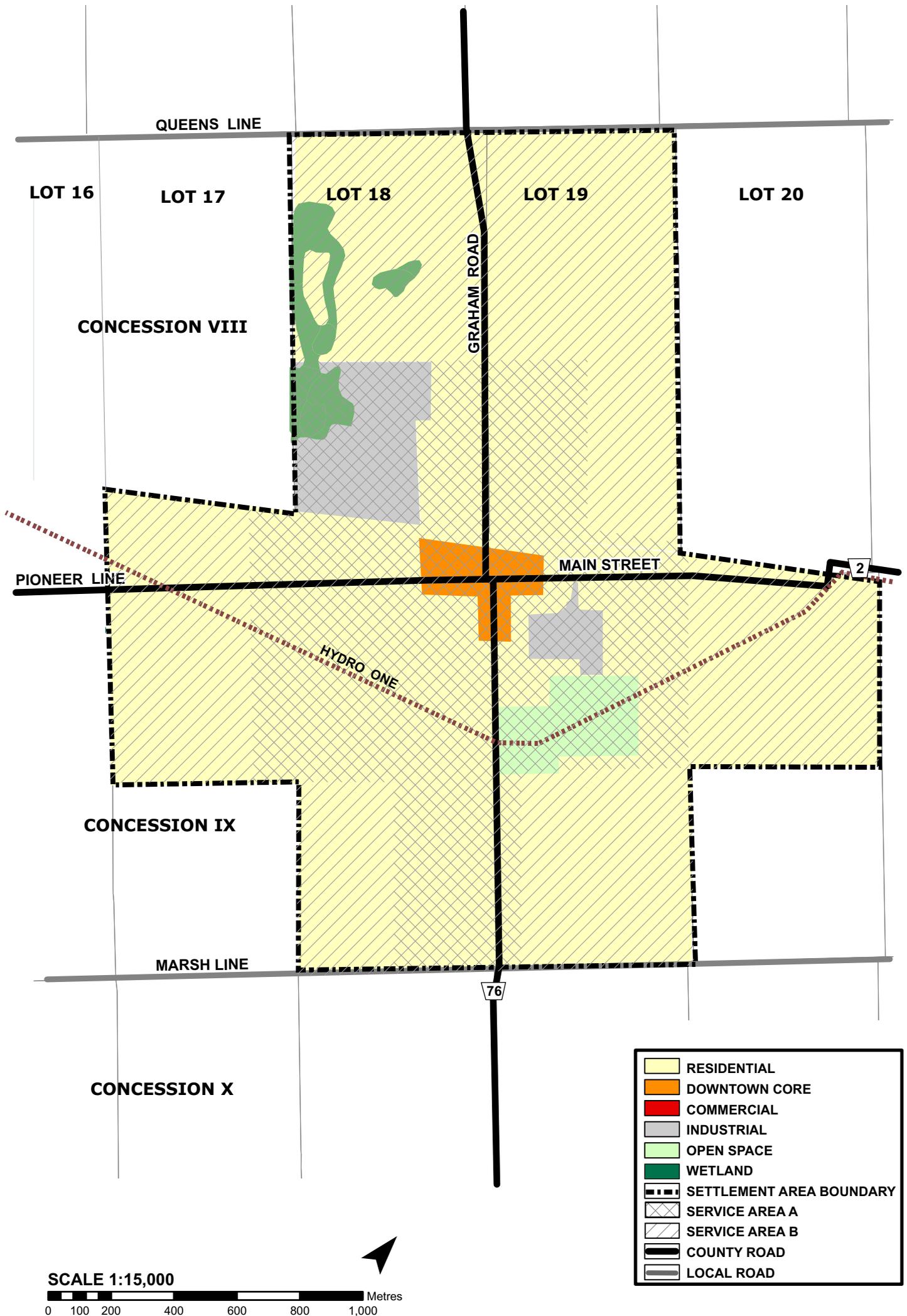
The following goals and objectives shall guide the planning, development, redevelopment and improvement of the 'Village Areas':

- a) To direct the majority of population growth and residential development in West Elgin to the villages;
- b) To ensure development and redevelopment in the villages does not have a detrimental effect on the ability of the Municipality to provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate it;
- c) To create strong, viable, attractive and pedestrian-friendly downtown cores as the primary focus of commercial and social activity in West Elgin with a unique sense of identity and character and offering a range of basic goods and services;
- d) To accommodate land extensive, vehicular-oriented commercial development and other commercial uses not suited to the downtown cores;
- e) To direct industrial development to areas suitable for such purposes and in a manner that does not detract from existing or planned residential and/or commercial development;
- f) To maintain the essential qualities of privacy, quiet enjoyment, public health and safety, and land use compatibility in residential areas; and
- g) To accommodate new institutional uses and retain existing institutional uses to meet the educational, health and spiritual needs of the community.

5.2 RESIDENTIAL

Areas designated for residential purposes in the 'Village Area' of Rodney and the 'Village Area' of West Lorne include existing residential development as well as lands for accommodating future residential development. While residential development has been traditionally, and continues to be primarily, in the form of





low-density single unit dwellings, a demand exists for other housing types to meet the socio-economic needs of the area.

Undeveloped lands designated for residential purposes lie adjacent to existing residential areas to ensure contiguous development and the cost-efficient extension of services. Within existing developed areas, opportunities exist for redevelopment and infilling. The abandonment of the railway lands may free up lands for residential development, amongst other purposes.

5.2.1 Primary Uses

Within areas designated 'Residential' on Schedule 'C' and Schedule 'D', the primary use of land shall be for single unit dwellings. Other dwelling types are permitted including semi-detached dwellings, apartments in houses, townhouses and low-rise small-scale apartment buildings.

5.2.2 Secondary Uses

Secondary uses may also be permitted provided they complement and are compatible with these areas and do not detract from their predominantly residential character. These uses may include churches, schools, neighbourhood parks, nursing and rest homes, garden suites, group homes and home occupations.

5.2.3 Scale, Density and Form

The scale, density and form of new residential development shall respect and be sensitive to the 'small town' character of the villages. At the same time, it is recognized that multi-unit forms of residential development will provide the potential for more affordable housing as well as housing more able to meet the increasingly diverse needs and preferences of the community. To ensure compatibility with existing development, the density and height of new residential development shall be limited.

5.2.4 Infilling and Minor Extensions

The majority of new development is expected to take place through infilling and minor extensions and rounding out of existing development. Such development shall normally occur by consent where new building lots are being proposed and a plan of subdivision is not considered necessary given the number of lots being created and the nature of any extension required to municipal services and streets. An agreement with the Municipality shall normally be required where municipal services are being extended or a new street is being created.

5.2.5 Natural Heritage Features

Natural heritage features shall be protected and development and site alteration on adjacent lands shall ensure there are no adverse impacts on such features or their ecological functions in accordance with Section 3 of this Plan.

5.2.6 Plans of Subdivision

In evaluating plans of subdivision, the following factors shall be taken into consideration:

- a) integration with neighbouring development,

- b) preservation and enhancement of site amenities,
- c) protection of natural heritage features,
- d) housing types, forms and density,
- e) availability and adequacy of municipal services,
- f) traffic circulation to facilitate maintenance and to ensure safety,
- g) effective, sensitively integrated and easily maintained stormwater management,
- h) well designed, located and readily maintained amenities (e.g. sidewalks, lighting, tree planting, parkland),
- i) energy conservation through design, and
- j) walkability.

5.2.7 Apartments in Houses

The creation of additional dwelling units in existing dwellings shall be permitted in areas zoned for these purposes subject to the following conditions:

- a) compliance with the Ontario Building Code,
- b) adequate yards outdoor amenity space and on-site parking,
- c) compatibility with neighbouring dwelling types, and
- d) maintenance of the quality of the streetscape.

5.2.8 Medium Density Housing

Medium density residential development in the form of townhouses, low-rise apartments and other forms of multiple unit housing shall be encouraged. Preference shall be given to:

- a) sites with direct or proximate access to a County Road;
- b) sites in proximity to the 'Downtown Core', schools and/or parks and open space; and
- c) sites which due to their size, configuration or neighbouring land uses are considered suitable for such purposes.

Municipal services shall be available or capable of being made available. Intrusions into existing residential areas of predominantly single unit dwellings shall be discouraged and compatibility with the character and design of neighbouring development expected. Appropriate buffering and setbacks shall be provided where necessary to ensure compatibility. Standards regarding housing types, density, height, parking and landscaped open space shall be addressed in the Zoning By-law. Site plan control shall apply.

5.2.9 Housing Mix

Development proposals for large undeveloped parcels shall incorporate a range of housing types and densities, as permitted by this Plan, unless it is capable of being demonstrated that market, servicing, site conditions and neighbouring land use dictate otherwise.

5.2.10 Zoning

The actual uses permitted shall be specified in the Zoning By-law as well as the standards that would apply to buildings and structures. The actual uses shall be specified in the Zoning By-law in a manner that ensures orderly and compatible development and minimizes the potential for conflicts between existing and future uses.

5.3 DOWNTOWN CORE

Areas designated as the 'Downtown Core' in Rodney and West Lorne comprise the historic main streets of the villages. In Rodney, the 'Downtown Core' lies generally along Furnival Road (County Road No. 103) between Albert Street to the north and Main Street on the south, and includes lands lying on the east side of Jane Street. In the case of West Lorne, the 'Downtown Core' lies generally along Pioneer Line (County Road No. 2) and Graham Road (County Road No. 76), in the, more or less, geographic centre of the Village being bounded by the former railway corridor to the north, Elm Street to the south, Argyle Street to the east and Ridge Street to the west. While commercial uses tend to dominate, institutional and residential uses contribute to the mixed-land use character and multi-functional role of the 'Downtown Core' in both villages.

Similar to many rural villages and towns in southwestern Ontario, the downtown cores of Rodney and West Lorne have struggled economically in recent years, reflected by vacant storefronts and undeveloped and underutilized properties. Extensive commercial development in the south end of London easily accessed via Highway No. 401 is believed to be a key factor. Nevertheless, opportunities are evident for redevelopment, infilling and the conversion of residential uses to commercial uses. Policies of the Plan aim to encourage economic and social vitality, diversity and uniqueness, a mix of land uses, compact development, pedestrian-friendly amenities and conveniences, and the preservation and enhancement of the historic streetscape.

5.3.1 Primary Uses

Within areas designated 'Downtown Core' on Schedule 'C' and Schedule 'D', a wide range of commercial uses shall be permitted including retail stores, restaurants, specialty shops, financial institutions, business and professional offices.

5.3.2 Secondary Uses

Other uses that enhance and strengthen the identity, diversity and function of the 'Downtown Core' such as institutional and residential uses shall also be permitted and encouraged as well as small scale, low impact industrial uses.

5.3.3 Development and Redevelopment

Compactness of the 'Downtown Core' shall be encouraged and strengthened and intrusions into predominantly residential areas discouraged by preventing undue extensions while encouraging redevelopment, infilling and the conversion

of existing non-commercial uses to commercial uses. New buildings and improvements and additions to existing buildings shall be designed in a manner to enhance and complement the core's heritage character and compact nature through the use of compatible building materials and features, and facade heights and building setbacks consistent with the historic development of the core. Vehicular parking shall be encouraged on-street and at the rear of buildings accessible to pedestrians by walkways. Signage may be controlled by guidelines and/or a sign by-law adopted by the Municipality.

5.3.4 Pedestrian and Commercial Focus

To maintain and strengthen the vibrancy and pedestrian friendly nature of the 'Downtown Core', the conversion of ground floor commercial space to residential space, the closing of front entrances to the street, the establishment of drive-in or drive-through facilities and similar changes shall be discouraged.

5.3.5 Residential Uses

While commercial uses dominate the 'Downtown Core', dwelling units contribute to the character and activity of the core, offer an alternative use for upper storeys in commercial buildings and provide a desired location for those wishing to reside in the 'Downtown Core'. Single unit dwellings that remain are potential candidates for conversion to commercial purposes while still retaining a residential component. New residential units in the form of apartments over ground floor commercial uses and as a component of mixed-use developments shall be encouraged where they will not detract from, or be in conflict with, business activity at street level.

5.3.6 Core Area Improvements

Enhancement of the 'Downtown Core' in terms of public amenities, façade restoration, sidewalks, parking, street lighting, tree planting, maintenance and other measures shall be undertaken or otherwise facilitated by the Municipality in consultation with business owners, property owners and the community in general. Where lands are being developed or redeveloped, opportunities for upgrading the public realm shall be considered.

5.3.7 Zoning

Permitted uses in the 'Downtown Core' shall be specified in the Zoning By-law in a manner that allows a broad range of uses to encourage diversity and vitality while minimizing the potential for conflicts between uses. Development standards shall ensure compact development by establishing high maximum lot coverage, minimum setbacks for buildings and structures and relief from parking requirements where appropriate.

5.4 COMMERCIAL

Unlike the 'Downtown Core', areas designated 'Commercial' are essentially commercial as opposed to mixed use in character. Development is space extensive with buildings well setback from the street and property lines with lands reserved for on-site parking and outside storage. Pedestrian amenities are limited. The designation includes existing commercial development as well as lands considered suitable to accommodate future commercial development unsuitable to the 'Downtown Core'.

5.4.1 Primary Uses

Within areas designated 'Commercial' on Schedule 'C' and Schedule 'D', the primary use of land shall be for commercial uses which cater to the needs of the automobile, the travelling public and single purpose shopping trips. Typical uses include motor vehicle sales and services, garden supply outlets, sale of bulk goods and certain types of convenience retail and service outlets.

5.4.2 Form of Development

Development will be characterized primarily by buildings set back from the street and outside areas for parking, outside storage and display. Efforts will be made to internally link adjacent development to minimize vehicle entrances and enhance public safety.

5.4.3 Zoning

The actual uses shall be specified in the Zoning By-law in a manner that ensures orderly and compatible development and minimizes the potential for conflicts between existing and future uses. Development standards shall allow for outside storage and display and the provision for on-site parking shall be required.

5.5 INDUSTRIAL

Lands designated 'Industrial' within the 'Village Areas' are serviced or readily capable of being serviced by both the municipal water supply system and the municipal sanitary sewage system. Access to and visibility of these areas is restricted and the proximity of residential development requires measures be taken to mitigate the potential for adverse impacts

5.5.1 Primary Uses

Within areas designated 'Industrial' on Schedule 'C' and Schedule 'D', industrial uses and uses having requirements or exhibiting characteristics similar to industrial uses shall be permitted provided they do not generate unacceptable levels of noise, vibration, odour and/or particulate matter which would adversely affect adjacent non-industrial areas. Such uses may include activities engaged in the manufacturing, fabricating, assembling and processing of materials, goods or products; warehousing and storage; repair, servicing and maintenance operations, automotive related uses and transportation terminals.

5.5.2 Secondary Uses

Uses that are compatible with industrial uses, make use of existing buildings not required for industrial purposes or are well suited to areas designated 'Industrial' may be permitted.

5.5.3 Services

Development shall be serviced by the municipal water supply and municipal sanitary sewage system or similar level of services.

5.5.4 Buffering and Screening Measures

To ensure industrial development does not detract from or conflict with existing or planned residential development; adequate buffering, screening and/or setback measures will be required. Site plan control shall apply.

5.5.5 Natural Heritage Features

Natural heritage features shall be protected and development and site alteration on adjacent lands shall ensure there are no negative impacts on such features or their ecological functions in accordance with Section 3 of this Plan.

5.5.6 Zoning

The actual uses shall be specified in the Zoning By-law in a manner that ensures orderly and compatible development and minimizes the potential for conflicts between existing and future uses.

5.6 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and public open space are generally limited to two instances in Rodney and West Lorne. In each settlement area, there may be found the main recreation complex capable of accommodating a variety of active and passive recreational activities. This includes the Fairgrounds and Community Centre in Rodney and the West Elgin Sports Centre and Arena and Miller Park in West Lorne. Smaller-scale or neighbourhood parks on the other hand are generally non-existent. Cemeteries contribute to the open space character of both settlement areas.

5.6.1 Primary Uses

Within areas designated 'Parks and Open Space' on Schedule 'C' and Schedule 'D', the primary use of land shall be for public parks, natural areas, outdoor recreation facilities and cemeteries.

5.6.2 Secondary Uses

Secondary uses may include buildings and structures appropriate to park-like setting such as community centres, arenas and similar indoor facilities.

5.6.3 Natural Heritage Features

Natural heritage features shall be protected and development and site alteration on adjacent lands shall ensure there are no adverse impacts on such features or their ecological functions in accordance with Section 3 of this Plan.

5.6.4 Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks may be established to meet local needs or to otherwise contribute to the form and character of the community. While such facilities may be established in all land use designations, they shall be zoned as 'Open Space' in the Zoning By-law.

5.6.5 Acquisition of Parkland

Future parkland shall primarily be acquired through dedications as a condition of lands being subdivided or otherwise developed, or through purchase using monies received from cash-in-lieu of providing parkland in areas where parkland is not considered necessary or appropriate, or where the lands available for dedication would be insufficient in size or deficient in terms of location. Lands proposed to be dedicated for park purposes shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- a) proximity to existing parks and open space,
- b) proximity and access to users,
- c) size, shape, topography and drainage,
- d) development and maintenance costs,
- e) potential for expansion, and
- f) contribution to community form and character.

5.6.6 Land Ownership

Where lands designated 'Parks and Open Space' or are zoned accordingly are in private or quasi-private ownership, such designation does not imply that these lands are necessarily free and open to the general public or that these lands will be ultimately acquired or always maintained by the Municipality or any other public authority as open space. It is expected that these areas will be used and maintained as open space as long as conditions permit and that development of adjoining lands will be undertaken in such a manner which complements and ensures the long-term protection of these areas as open space.

5.6.7 Zoning

The actual uses permitted shall be specified in the Zoning By-law in a manner that ensures orderly and compatible development and minimizes the potential for conflicts between existing and future uses.

5.7 INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional uses include public and quasi-public uses serving the educational, health and social needs of the community. Typical uses include churches, schools, libraries, nursing and rest homes, community centres, quarters of community organizations and clubs, health clinics, and government buildings and offices. They are often found throughout the community and, depending on their scale, are generally compatible with most uses.

5.7.1 Primary Uses

Institutional uses shall include public and quasi-public uses and uses with characteristics similar to institutional uses. Typical institutional uses in the 'Village Areas' include churches, schools, day care centres, community centres, quarters of community organizations and community clubs and government buildings. Funeral homes, due to their characteristics similar to churches, may also be considered an institutional use.

5.7.2 Secondary Uses

Secondary uses may include a dwelling or dwelling unit along with an institutional use if such dwelling is necessary to the operation and/or maintenance of the institutional use.

5.7.3 Areas Permitted

Institutional uses shall be permitted in all land use designations subject to an amendment to the Zoning By-law upon due consideration of:

- a) compatibility of the proposed use with neighbouring uses,
- b) protection of natural heritage features,
- c) avoidance of hazardous lands,
- d) availability and adequacy of municipal services,
- e) site suitability,
- f) adequate off-street parking, and
- g) adequate buffering and landscaping.