

Sable Beach Settlement Area GROWTH STRATEGY



Discussion Paper **June, 2010**

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for the Town of South Bruce Peninsula

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
1.1	Physical Context - The Unique Community of Sauble Beach.....	3
2.0	Current Policy Framework and Policy Review	3
2.1	Provincial Policy Statement.....	4
2.2	Bruce County Official Plan & 5-Year Update (BCOP)	6
2.2	Town of South Bruce Peninsula Official Plan (TSBOP)	8
2.3	Town of South Bruce Peninsula Consolidated Zoning By-law.....	9
3.0	Proposed Vision, Direction and Options	10
3.1	Phase 1- Overall Community Vision - Recommendations	10
3.1.1	Downtown Commercial Core.....	10
3.1.2	Residential	13
3.1.3	Bruce Road 8 and Highway 21 Corridor	14
3.1.4	Waterfront	14
3.2	Phase 2-Recommendations for Now or the Future.....	15

SAUBLE BEACH SETTLEMENT AREA GROWTH STRATEGY

DISCUSSION PAPER June 2010.

1.0 Introduction

Cuesta Planning Consultants has been retained by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula in order to develop a "Growth Strategy" for the downtown core of the Sauble Beach Settlement area.

The original request for proposal from the Town identified the following elements to be included (but not necessarily limited to) within the new Growth Strategy;

Development of new servicing policies

Development of new land use designations and policies

Development of new zoning provisions

Development of new site plan control policies

The following introductory report offers an overview of the present planning policy for the Sauble Beach area beginning with a review of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the Bruce County Official Plan and culminating in a review of the policies within the local planning documents which we will propose to amend.

The second portion of this report will seek to build upon the existing policy as well as offer proposed new policy direction which incorporates elements gleaned from various sources, including provincial and municipal planning documents.

Following the public information meeting, this report will be updated to incorporate and reflect the views of the Town council and participating residents of the Sauble Beach area.

1.1 Physical Context - The Unique Community of Sauble Beach

The community of Sauble Beach is located on the shores of Lake Huron at the southwest tip of the Bruce Peninsula. The community is blessed with miles of essentially undisturbed and unpolluted white sand beaches, dynamic and pristine dunes, the Sauble Falls and River to the north of the community and the Saugeen Ojibway Nations (SON) relatively undisturbed lands to the south. The community is approximately 2 and 1/2 hours away from the London regional market, the Kitchener-Waterloo regional market and the Greater Toronto Area market. The community's economy has remained essentially a seasonal, tourist-driven economy, due largely to lack of municipal services. Notwithstanding this lack of servicing, the area in and around Sauble Beach has remained an attractive option for residential builders as evidenced by the percentage of permits granted in and around the Sauble Beach community. Within the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, 67% of all new residential building permits in the last 5 years have been within the boundaries of the former Amabel Township with approximately 30% of those permits being applied for new houses within the settlement area boundaries of Sauble Beach itself.

With full municipal services on the short-term horizon, the large drawing feature of the Lake Huron shoreline as well as the fact that this area of the municipality is not covered by the Niagara Escarpment Commission plan, it can be expected that the Sauble Beach area will continue to grow and expand at a higher rate than originally anticipated in the latest growth and population projections for the County of Bruce as outlined in the County's Official Plan updates and within the County of Bruce Housing Study. Full Municipal services will bring opportunities for mixed development in the downtown and beachfront areas, opportunities for infill development in the residential areas and opportunities for higher density and mixed development along major corridors.

2.0 Current Policy Framework and Policy Review

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Under Section 3 of the Planning Act, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in consultation with other Ministers, may issue policy statements that provide direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The latest Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) came into effect on March 1, 2005 and any decision, by any authority that affects a planning matter, “shall be consistent” with the PPS.

It is appreciated that the PPS is to be read in its entirety and the relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. The PPS contains four major policy areas relating to:

1. *Building Strong Communities*
2. *Wise Use and Management of Resources*
3. *Protecting Public Health and Safety*
4. *Implementation and Interpretation*

For the purposes of this study, Section 1 of the PPS *Building Strong Communities* along with parts of Section 2 *Wise Use and Management of Resources* has been deemed most relevant.

Section 1.1.3 *Settlement Areas* identifies settlement areas as the focus of growth and regeneration within municipalities. Intensification, compact form, mixed use redevelopment and appropriate infrastructure are key elements which must be promoted within urban areas. Planning authorities are to establish minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment and introduce phasing policies which will ensure these targets are met and being met within the appropriately designated areas.

Through this current exercise, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula is being proactive in their approach to this policy-driven task through the creation of new

*Sauble Beach Growth Strategy
Discussion Paper*

servicing policies and new land use policies related to mixed use designations within the downtown core of Sauble Beach.

Section 1.4 of the PPS deals with housing policies. The key components of this policy pertaining to the subject Growth Strategy include maintaining a ten year supply of housing stock, providing a three year supply of serviced housing stock opportunities, an emphasis on infill and redevelopment and finally, an emphasis on the provision of affordable and low-income housing. Particularly relevant to this exercise is the provincial emphasis on infill, redevelopment and housing mixtures. Sauble Beach is currently, and will continue to be, a growing community of transition; transitioning from a seasonal to permanent community with demographical changes occurring simultaneously.

1.5 of the PPS promotes the vitality of Ontario communities by including policies promoting safe public streets, spaces and facilities appropriate for all members of the community, old and young, particularly those members of the community who walk and cycle. Establishment of recreational space, parks, trail and access to shorelines should form part of our Growth Strategy.

The Infrastructure policies found in Section 1.6 of the PPS are of particular importance to the Growth Strategy. Full municipal services are preferred by the province within settlement areas as full services allow for a safe and compact form of urban environment. Developing new servicing policies for Sauble Beach is an essential component of this Growth Strategy and the remaining land use policies and design guidelines will fall out of the servicing strategy.

The Growth Strategy vision and subsequent proposed policies will embody the policies of Section 1.8 of the PPS. These policies emphasize energy efficiency and high air quality. We will seek to achieve compact form, sustainable new development and walkable neighbourhoods with an inviting downtown.

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As indicated at the beginning of this introduction, the main drawing card of the community of Sauble Beach is the unsurpassed beauty of its natural environment, particularly, the shoreline of Lake Huron. One of the key results of implementing full services within the Sauble Beach area will be the protection and enhancement of water quality along this portion of the Lake Huron shoreline. However, these new services will not only bring opportunities to the community but also additional pressures for residential and commercial growth. In order to protect the natural assets of this beach community and manage growth appropriately, the Natural Heritage policies of PPS will be implemented. One of the main purposes of the Growth Strategy is to both protect and promote the natural assets of the Sauble Beach community and surrounding area.

2.2 Bruce County Official Plan & 5-Year Update (BCOP)

The Bruce County Official Plan contains the upper tier policy which guides both the Town of South Bruce Peninsula Official Plan and the associated comprehensive zoning by-law. Bruce County has designated Sauble Beach as a settlement area of both primary (serviced area) and secondary significance (unserviced area) within its latest Official Plan policy updates. The County of Bruce has recently undergone a lengthy review of its Official Plan policy and has adopted new housing policies based on new population projections, demographic data and the Bruce County Housing Study.

The Bruce County 5-year review anticipates the municipalities of Kincardine and Saugeen Shores as the fastest growing communities within the County based primarily on population data and economic factors such as the re-development of the Bruce Nuclear Power Development. The growth scenario also takes into account those areas of the County which are fully serviced and places a higher emphasis on these settlement areas, encouraging growth on full services as per the requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula has been identified as the third fastest growing community in the

*Sauble Beach Growth Strategy
Discussion Paper*

County, however, it should be noted that the County of Bruce did not contemplate municipal services in the Sauble Beach setting at the time of finalizing the updates to the BCOP. With the addition of services within this lakeshore community, it can be anticipated that growth will increase at a faster rate than anticipated within the County plan. It can also be anticipated, that with full services on the short-term horizon for the core downtown area of Sauble Beach, most of Sauble Beach will be redesignated as a primary urban area within the County of Bruce.

As a result of the Bruce County Housing Study, a number of the housing policies within the plan are proposed to change. A major policy revision which has been incorporated into the Bruce County Official Plan through its 5-year update relates to Section 4.4.4.2 "General Housing Policies". The new emphasis within this section relates to affordable and accessible housing in the form of lodging and rooming houses, apartments on the upper levels of downtown core buildings, accessory apartments, garden suites and secondary suites. A need to provide transitional and affordable housing for seniors and those with lower annual incomes became apparent through the housing study with 30% of new housing to be geared toward affordable housing developments within the county. Policies recommending financial incentives to developers, development of municipal funding and acquisition of lands for affordable housing projects have also been proposed by the County.

Throughout this Growth Strategy process, it will be key to keep these new housing policies within our area of focus as we determine the long-range vision for the Sauble Beach community.

Another relevant policy section of the official plan which has been updated within the 5-year review is Section 5.3.8 "Seasonal to Permanent Residential Conversions". Within our Growth Strategy, it will be necessary to evaluate areas outside of the downtown core (serviced) that are most appropriate for conversion.

Appropriate zoning must be applied to those areas with a possible septic system program being implemented as well.

Other elements of the Bruce County Official Plan which will be considered throughout this process will be policy areas dealing with natural heritage issues.

2.2 Town of South Bruce Peninsula Official Plan (TSBOP)

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula Official Plan designates Sauble Beach as a primary settlement community within the municipality to which growth has been directed (2.3.3) However, the same policy section provides a cautionary and descriptive note in regard to Sauble Beach and to the seasonal nature of its population. Section 2.3.4 "Development Concept" identifies the settlement area of Wiarton as the primary focus of residential development as it is the only area currently fully serviced.

We would anticipate that this growth study will consider amendments to this policy in order to identify Sauble Beach as a primary focus of permanent residential growth.

Section 4.6.2 of the Official Plan identifies areas of the Town designated for Residential purposes. As most of the downtown area of Sauble has been designated Shoreline Development area, it can be anticipated that newly serviced areas will be re-designated to a mix of Residential and Future Residential. There may be an opportunity at this time as well, to develop preliminary development concepts in regard to the Sauble Beach Secondary Plan Study Area. These concepts may form the basis of a 5-year review of the Town's Official Plan.

As mentioned above, the current designation for the residential areas of the core of the Sauble Beach settlement area is Shoreline Development Area. In general

*Sable Beach Growth Strategy
Discussion Paper*

terms, seasonal and some permanent residential uses are permitted within this designation, however there is an emphasis on seasonal residential uses with larger lots and on-site servicing. Preservation of the shoreline and protection of the water is also emphasized within this policy section. It will be necessary to review policies in regard to minimum lot size, on-site servicing and seasonal to recreational conversion requirements. Again, re-designation of certain areas within the Shoreline Designation area may be required. It is also possible to look at re-designating certain logical areas of the residential downtown core to a Future Residential designation.

Other policies which will need to be considered within the Town of South Bruce Peninsula Official Plan will be those of Open Space and Natural Heritage when contemplating future development along the shoreline.

2.3 Town of South Bruce Peninsula Consolidated Zoning By-law

Recently, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula has undergone an update to and consolidation of the former Town and Township Zoning By-laws and this updated policy was reviewed as part of this exercise. Any proposed zoning provision modifications and additions outlined within this Discussion Paper and finalized following public and agency comments, will be incorporated into By-law 122-2009, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula Consolidated Zoning By-law.

The current zoning for the downtown core is C1A (Seasonal Commercial) and R2. There is also an Open Space zone which is reflective of a municipal park area in the downtown area. The seasonal commercial zoning generally permits the same uses as the general commercial zone with the main difference being that the seasonal commercial zone has a minimum lot area and frontage while the general commercial zone does not. Once again, the seasonal commercial zoning provisions have been written with unserviced lands in mind.

The Residential area in the downtown is entirely zoned R2 Seasonal residential with a minimum lot area intended for on-site services. This report will recommend adding some new permitted uses, such as granny flats, accessory apartments and seasonal accommodation uses to this zone as well as a reduction of the lot area provisions in fully serviced sections. R3 zoning will also be considered in sections of the serviced residential core.

R3 and R4 zoning will be proposed for the Bruce Road 8 and Highway 21 intersections with some extension of these zones along provincial highway 21.

3.0 Proposed Vision, Direction and Options

3.1 Phase 1- Overall Community Vision - Recommendations

The future of Sauble Beach will be dramatically re-shaped with the advent of servicing within the downtown core area. Commercial uses and higher density, permanent residential development will revive and rejuvenate the downtown core and maintain vitality throughout the year with less seasonal fluctuation in the population and economy. The end result, if properly managed, will be a sustainable and attractive community which takes into consideration the existing and future residents of the area.

3.1.1 Downtown Commercial Core

Within the downtown commercial core, the following proposed changes are under consideration;

*Sable Beach Growth Strategy
Discussion Paper*

- 1) *During installation of services, the narrowing of the main street and widening of the pedestrian and cycle paths. A separate cycle path can be installed alongside the pedestrian walkway either at the pedestrian or street level. Widening these areas will provide for additional seating areas which would include municipal park benches as well as possible private patio areas and restaurant seating.*
- 2) *New policies should be considered for accessory residential units in the back and upper portions of store fronts where feasible. This would allow for balconies and rooftop patios (eyes on the street), increase intensification in the area, provide more convenient residential locations for an aging population, as well as provide additional income opportunities for the downtown business owners.*
- 3) *Amendments to the Zoning By-law should be considered in regard to lot area requirements, lot coverage requirements as well as frontage requirements.*
- 4) *Consideration should be given to look outs and vistas in this area with increased setback for new development along east and west corridors*
- 5) *A TSBOP policy driven emphasis on roofed rental accommodation should be implemented*
- 6) *Housing policies which encourage development of affordable and accessible housing should be included in the TSBOP. The TSBOP should accurately reflect the latest direction of the BCOP.*
- 7) *Grant Programs for facade improvements for downtown merchants should be implemented*
- 8) *Grant Programs for Granny Suites and other affordable and accessible accessory dwellings should be implemented*
- 9) *Consideration may be given to adapting more lenient consent policies where infill situations could occur in the downtown core.*
- 10) *Community Design Guidelines should be developed which would include:*
 - a) *Human Scale Development; i.e., low profile development close to the beach so that the connection between the beachfront and the commercial core and side streets is maintained*
 - b) *Opportunities for second level apartments in the downtown where appropriate and feasible*

Sauble Beach Growth Strategy
Discussion Paper

- c) *Human scale Development i.e.. Opportunities and encouragement of patios, balconies and awnings in the downtown and beachfront areas*
- d) *Additional opportunities for public seating areas such as benches and picnic tables*
- e) *Grant Programs and Opportunities for Permanent Public Art & Sculpture along the main street and waterfront which will create unique and permanent landmarks within the community*
- f) *Allocation of additional east-west pedestrian pathways along east-west corridors in the residential zones*
- g) *Grouping of public and private utilities, waste facilities, bike parks along the main corridors of downtown to improve visual clutter*
- h) *Creating a sense of place in individual portions of the downtown via signage, logos and flagging on streetlights, etc. Creation of a Sauble Beach identity through a logo or a design theme. The logo or design theme would then be used in all signage, identification of focal points in the downtown area and in open space areas. Signage must be user friendly (directional signage) and consistent. Signs, lights and logoed/themed flags can be used to identify specific focal points and landmarks.*

Design elements and retro theme as identified in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula Community Design Toolkit for the Sauble Beach Community should be incorporated in public spaces, new commercial development, facade renewal and signage. The design elements outlined in the toolkit can also be applied to accommodation and residential development where desirable.

- i) *Policies should be developed within the TSBOP which encourages municipal acquisition of land for Open Space, Open Space corridors, Public Realm Space, Focal Points and Public Rest Areas with picnic areas and municipal parking.*
- j) *Policies should be developed which encourage the use of native species landscaping and shade trees should be encouraged in the downtown area where feasible and appropriate.*
- k) *There would appear to be a general trend toward Cape Cod style and bungalow type residential and rental accommodation development in the downtown area. Building and site plan requirements in the downtown commercial areas should include an emphasis on maintaining consistent setbacks, building heights and*

materials. Similar signage should also be used along the main streets of downtown.

3.1.2 Residential

New policy directions for the residential areas of the community should include the following:

- 1) *An emphasis on affordable housing and accessible housing, particularly, senior's accommodations. Secondary suites and granny flats shall be promoted, in keeping with the proposed upper tier official plan policies. Grant programs in this regard should be implemented. Consideration should also be given to municipal acquisition of lands for affordable and accessible publicly initiated housing projects*
- 3) *An emphasis on safety and sustainability should be incorporated into policies. This would be reflected in minute details such as site plan control guidelines (building material, handi-capped accessibility) as well as large scale municipal endeavours such as appropriate street lighting requirements.*
- 4) *Neighbourhood developments shall be encouraged to incorporate neighbourhood amenities within the new residential cluster or to ensure locations are chosen with amenities within walking distance for residents.*
- 5) *Infill developments and larger neighbourhood developments should be encouraged to retain the most attractive and consistent elements of the surrounding existing residential development. This could include details such as setbacks, landscaping and facade materials*
- 6) *Alongside retention of character and consistency, connectivity should be encouraged and shall include safe and walkable pedestrian corridors, the extension and retention of existing trails, natural bike and pedestrian pathways and street patterns throughout the downtown commercial and residential core.*
- 7) *Identification and retention of natural focal points, look outs and vistas will be encouraged.*
- 8) *Deeper setbacks along east and west corridors will be employed in order to protect views toward the water*

- 9) *Appropriate areas of the downtown residential areas will be re-zoned to the proposed R3 zone or a similar new zone in order to facilitate the above noted policies. The new zoning would permit additional residential uses and professional office in the residential areas. Accessory units, seniors' accommodations and neighbourhood uses shall be permitted.*

3.1.3 Bruce Road 8 and Highway 21 Corridor

- 1) *Higher profile development shall be encouraged along the main corridors of the community which include Bruce Road 8 and Provincial Highway 21.*
- 2) *Residential Zoning in this area should be amended to include R3 and R4 zoning which allows for more intense residential development as most permanent amenities (Drugstore, Grocers, Bakery, banking, etc) are located in and around these areas.*
- 3) *Landscaping and Themed Signage should be developed along the east, north and south boundaries of the Sauble community in order to symbolically demarcate the community boundary and create a pleasing entrance to the Sauble Beach downtown.*

3.1.4 Waterfront

- 1) *Commercial Designations and Zoning which allows for mixed development should be extended along the shoreline. Uses shall include rental accommodations, restaurants, shops, eco-tourist ventures and water based commercial activities.*
- 2) *Low building profile development shall be promoted in these areas in order to protect the visual gateway and connection to the shoreline*
- 3) *Pedestrian pathways shall be developed along the shore road as well as public seating areas. Opportunities for the municipality to provide shaded seating on the east of the road should be considered.*
- 4) *A permanent boardwalk should be developed along the shore, with appropriate lighting and signage. Focal points and lookout areas should be protected with opportunities for eco-tourism and cultural*

heritage information spots to be grouped in these areas as well (tourism nodes). Public seating should also be provided. The permanent boardwalk could also be an area for permitted vendors and would be an excellent area for public art and sculpture opportunities. Attractive signage (streetpole) could be used along this area to demarcate it as a unique area of the downtown. Any permanent structures in this area would be subject to applicable policy and legislation, particularly the Town of South Bruce Peninsula By-law 122-2008. Any proposed development should also have regard for the direction and recommendations provided within the Natural Heritage Inventory. Any agreements or outstanding issues between the Town and SON related to the shore should also be taken into consideration prior to development.

- 5) *During consideration of any development within this area, there must be adherence to the natural heritage policies of the PPS, the BCOP and the TSBOP. Protection of the resource, the water, the beach and the dunes will prevail. Sustainable design should also be incorporated into the design of this public corridor/space.*
- 6) *Vistas and Look outs along the shoreline shall be identified and protected.*

3.2 Phase 2-Recommendations for Now or the Future

- 1) It is recommended that the municipality conduct a natural heritage inventory within the shoreline area in order to adequately protect this area and its resources. A focus on development of environmentally sound access to and use of the beach and protection of the dune feature is recommended.
- 2) It is recommended that a pedestrian and cycle trail network be developed along the shoreline to the north incorporating the Sauble falls and river area. Neighbourhood pathways should also be promoted. Trail networks should be developed in conjunction with the SON. If not already initiated, extension of the existing boardwalk must be developed alongside the shoreline trail network.

*Sauble Beach Growth Strategy
Discussion Paper*

- 3) It is recommended that the municipality acquire land for open space, municipal parking and picnic/ rest areas and affordable housing opportunities.

- 4) It is recommended that partnership opportunities are explored with SON in regard to cultural and natural heritage policies and projects

Respectfully submitted,

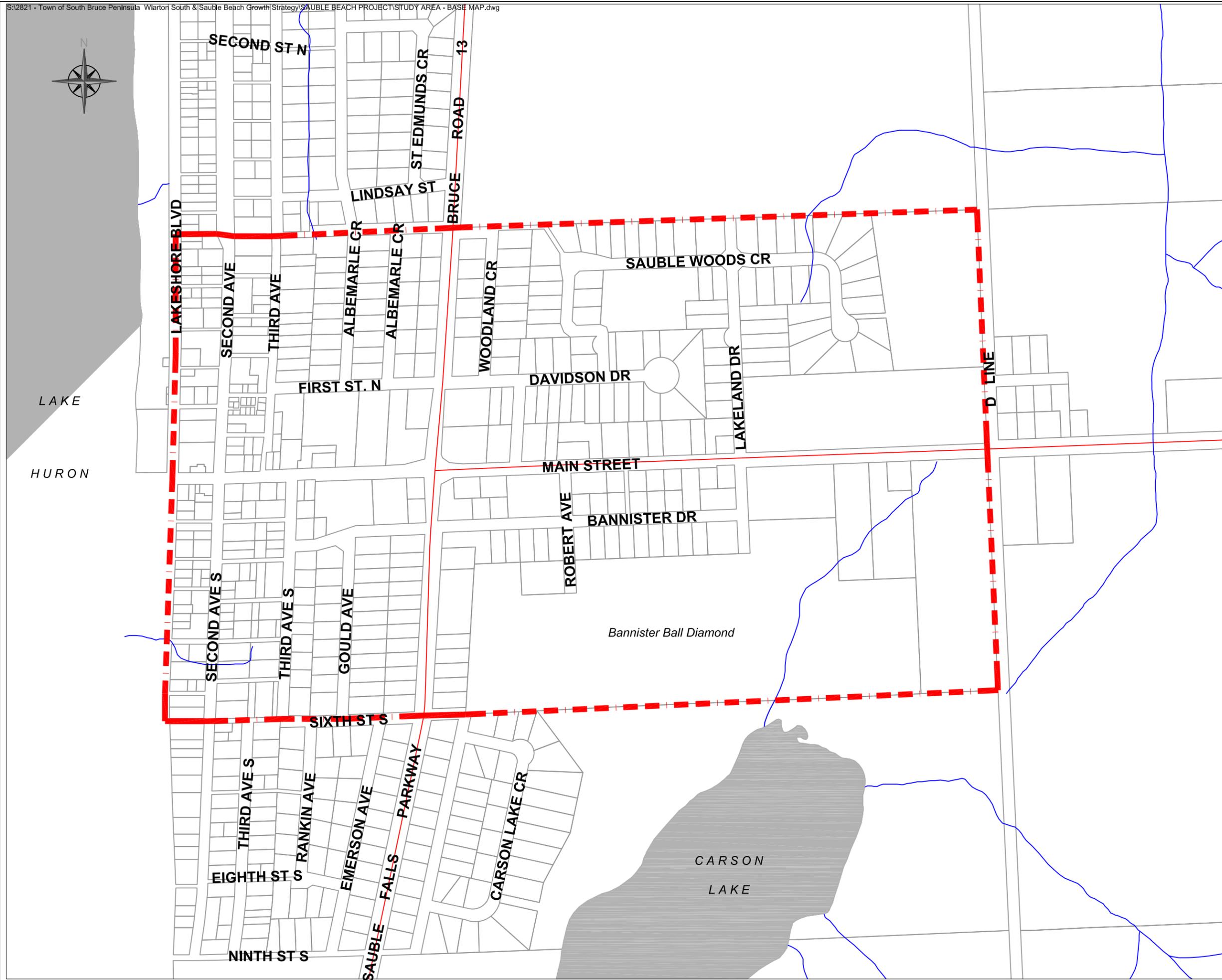

Genevieve Scott
Cuesta Planning Consultants Inc.



GROWTH STRATEGY FOR THE SAUBLE BEACH CORE AREA

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

TOWN OF SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA
COUNTY OF BRUCE



LEGEND



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MAP 1 - STUDY AREA BOUNDARY