



## **The Municipal Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie**

**BY-LAW NO. 30-2003**

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### **BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT THE 2002 MUNICIPAL HOUSING STATEMENT FOR THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE**

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**WHEREAS** Section 3(1) of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.13 as amended provides the Minister, or the Minister together with any other Minister of the Crown, may from time to time issue policy statements that have been approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on matters relating to municipal planning that in the opinion of the Minister are of provincial interest, and

**WHEREAS** the Provincial Policy Statement as revised dated February 1, 1997 requires under Section 1.2.1 thereof that municipalities shall have regard to a full range of housing types and densities to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents of the *housing market area* as described therein, and

**WHEREAS** Official Plan Amendment No. 16 was enacted under By-law No. 121-1992 by the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of May 1992 and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs on July 27, 1993 to implement policies to guide the provision of housing in the Town of Fort Erie and to implement the requirements of the policy statement through the introduction of housing policies which identify the Town's intent with regard to the sufficient supply of lands for residential use and encouraging a range of housing types, and

**WHEREAS** C.N. Watson and Associates Ltd. was engaged on or about June, 2002 pursuant to Section 2.2.2 of the Purchasing and Tendering Policy to undertake completion of the new Municipal Housing Statement, and

**WHEREAS** Report No. PCS-10-2003 was approved at the Council-in-Committee Meeting of February 3, 2003 directing that a by-law be presented to adopt the 2002 Municipal Housing Statement as prepared by C.N. Watson and Associates Ltd. dated November 27, 2002 and that staff be authorized to initiate the land budget component of the Town's new Official Plan utilizing the findings of the Municipal Housing Statement and the methodology identified therein, and

**WHEREAS** it is deemed expedient to adopt the 2002 Municipal Housing Statement for the Town of Fort Erie as annexed hereto as Schedule "A" to this by-law;

**By-law No. 30-2003**  
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**NOW THEREFORE** the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie hereby enacts as follows:

1. **THAT** the 2002 Municipal Housing Statement dated February 7, 2003 for the Town of Fort Erie be and it is hereby authorized, approved and adopted.

**READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND FINALLY PASSED THIS 10<sup>th</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2003.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**MAYOR**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**CLERK**

I, the Clerk, Carolyn J. Kett, of The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie hereby certify the foregoing to be a true certified copy of By-law No. 30-2003 of the said Town. Given under my hand and the seal of the said Corporation this day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2003.

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**TOWN OF FORT ERIE  
MUNICIPAL HOUSING  
STATEMENT**

**FINAL REPORT**

February 7, 2003

**P L A N N I N G   F O R   G R O W T H**



**C.N. WATSON  
AND ASSOCIATES LTD.**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1992, the Town of Fort Erie undertook a Municipal Housing Statement Study to review economic, demographic and social information as it pertains to providing an array of housing types and range of housing prices. These forms of studies were undertaken to address the Provincial housing affordability guidelines of the time. This analysis of the trends in the Town's social economy provides valuable insights which assist the Town in incorporating recommendations in its Official Plan. However, in view of its age, the changing character of the community, and current Provincial policy, an update to the MHS was deemed necessary.

C.N. Watson and Associates Ltd., was retained in the spring of 2002 by the Town to undertake an update to the 1992 study. The overall objective of the MHS was to undertake an analysis of the demand and supply factors affecting the Town's housing market with the goal of producing sustainable housing production targets and determining future residential land requirements. The policies considered in the 2002 MHS are to be incorporated into the New Official Plan for the Town. The conclusions and recommendations of the study are summarized below.

### Demographics Characteristics

- Fort Erie's historical population growth ranks fifth in the Niagara Region at 21.0% between 1986 and 2001, this was higher than the average rate for the Niagara Region over the same period which was 10.9%.
- The Town's 2001 age distribution is marginally higher for the seniors' category (55+) and the youth category than in Niagara at 28% and 24% respectively, while the adult category is marginally lower. The seniors' category is significantly higher in Fort Erie and Niagara when compared to Ontario as a whole.
- In regards to housing types, low-density housing types (single and semi-detached) represent 87% of the housing stock. Medium and high density represent 6% and 7% respectively.
- The Fort Erie urban neighbourhood provides the most diverse housing stock, where medium and high density represent 22% of the total housing mix. Ridgeway and Crystal Beach neighbourhoods have the next highest amount of medium and high density housing with 15% and 11% respectively. The remaining communities of the town are predominantly low-density housing.

- In addition to the permanent housing stock, Fort Erie has a considerable number of seasonal units (1,567), of which, 81% or 1,272 are of foreign ownership (predominantly American). The estimated 2001 population of these foreign (primarily U.S citizens) owned seasonal units is 2,300 persons, out of a total seasonal population estimate of 2,800. It is estimated that actual seasonal visitors to Fort Erie i.e. those who occupy seasonal units but are not the primary owner, may significantly higher than 2,800 as only the assessed population from owned seasonal units was used. It should be noted that approximately half of the foreign owned dwelling units are located in Crystal Beach.

### **Economic Conditions**

- On average, household income in Fort Erie is lower than in the Region of Niagara average. Over the 1995 to 2001 period average household income in Fort Erie increased at an average annual rate of 1.99%, the lowest increase in the Region of Niagara. Household income was \$47,000 in 2001, ninth place when ranked against the other ten Niagara Region municipalities (slightly higher than Port Colborne).
- New single-detached house prices in Fort Erie had the highest overall increase (52.2%) for the 1994-2001 period, which in large part can be attributed to a recent influx of housing sales from foreign purchasers in the Crystal Beach area. The median increase for Niagara Region municipalities was 31.5%. Average house prices for single detached were \$193,000 in Fort Erie, below the Niagara CMA average of \$227,000.
- Regarding employment by place of work, there are more people who work (11,330) than there are jobs within the Town (10,160). Hence, a net out-migration occurs for employment. In comparison, 7,130 people live and work in Fort Erie (70%). The majority of Fort Erie residences who work outside of Fort Erie, work in Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, or Welland (815, 610, and 245 respectively).

### **Existing Housing Market**

- The housing target group has traditionally been mixed between first time homebuyers, families and seniors, however, the current market appears to be slightly weighted towards seniors.
- It is anticipated that largest demand for housing will continue to be for single-detached bungalow units, however, there appears to be an emerging demand for quality/luxury semi-

detached and town house units. According to local realtors and builders there is currently too large of a gap regarding housing type selection between single-detached units and apartments.

- Generally, marketability does not vary considerably from neighbourhood to neighbourhood within Fort Erie. Almost all of Fort Erie's developable areas are marketable according to local realtors.
- Housing costs for the majority of homebuyers in Fort Erie do not exceed 30%, on mortgages which average over \$100,000. However, it is believed that the supply of lower end housing is rapidly drying up in Fort Erie. Generally, it is believed that increased housing prices reflect increased prosperity in the area.
- Purchasers coming from out of town (i.e. GTA where housing prices are considerably higher) are attracted to Fort Erie for reasons such as; lot size and housing style, climate, the slower pace atmosphere of Fort Erie, access to recreation and access to the U.S border. Price is also a key issue but not the only determining factor for this market group.

### **Supply Analysis**

- Table ES-1 summarizes the units in the development process for the Town by status of application and unit type, as of July, 2002. Of the total 2,656 units currently in the development process, 351 units (13%) are registered but not built, 887 units (33%) are draft approved, and 1,418 units (54%) units have been proposed as conceptual plans of subdivision. In addition, there is a supply of approximately 12,750 designated residential units within the Fort Erie urban boundary, based on a net density assumption of 15 units per hectare.
- It is noted that not all designated lands are (or will be) serviced with water and sewer. The Town should consider establishing priority development areas within these designated lands.



TABLE ES-1  
FORT ERIE, T  
SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATED LANDS AND UNITS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Stage of Development	Density Type			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
Registered Not Built	275	76	0	351
% Breakdown	78%	22%	0%	100%
Draft Plan Approved	792	95	0	887
% Breakdown	89%	11%	0%	100%
Conceptual Plans of Subdivision	998	420	0	1,418
% Breakdown	70%	30%	0%	100%
Total Units in Development Process	2,065	591	0	2,656
% Breakdown	78%	22%	0%	100%
Designated Urban Lands	10,200	1,275	1,275	12,750
% Breakdown	80%	10%	10%	100%
Grand Total Residential Supply Potential	12,265	1,866	1,275	15,406
% Breakdown	80%	12%	8%	100%

Source: Fort Erie Community Planning and Development Services Department, July 2002

- According to July, 2002 supply figures provided from by the Town of Fort Erie, there is a considerable over supply of designated residential land within the Fort Erie urban boundary. Based on an average annual unit estimate of 165 per year over twenty-years, the Town has an estimated net surplus of approximately 12,100 units (or 73 years) (see Table ES-2).
- It is estimated that the supply of designated lands will be significantly reduced due to environmental and other physical constraints, however, a considerable over supply of residential lands is still expected to remain within the Town's urban boundary.

### Demand Analysis

- Based upon the background data gathered for the Town (i.e. historical building activity, interviews with realtors/developers, the current 2002 forecast provides for a annual average housing demand of 150 permanent new units per year, plus 15 new seasonal units, for a



municipalities to encourage affordable housing within the municipality, it has become more difficult to regulate this. Hence, several of the recommended changes reflect this direction.

- In regards to land supply, consideration should be given to reviewing all urban residential lands through the Official Plan Update, in conjunction with engineering work and financial affordability. Furthermore, consideration should be given to establishing priority development areas within the urban boundary. This would allow for orderly growth within urban areas while keeping servicing costs at a minimum. Policies should also be established to identify the process and conditions on which the municipality may consider applications outside of the priority development area and/or, outside of the urban boundary. As part of this evaluation criteria, a fiscal impact assessment should be considered to ensure that any deviation from the Official Plan must be financially viable from the municipality's perspective.