

## Appendix B – Discussion Questions Upper-Tier Official Plans

What the provincial government heard from ERO #025-1099 in fall 2025:

- Official plans for upper-tier municipalities were widely described as most effective when they focus on regional-scale matters, such as growth management, infrastructure and servicing coordination, and cross-boundary environmental or land-use systems. We heard that upper-tier plans should provide broad strategic direction, while lower-tier plans should handle detailed, site-specific implementation, reduce duplication, and improving clarity across the two levels. However, there were concerns expressed about certain instances when the lower-tier municipality does not have its own official plan and an upper-tier municipality’s official plan functions as the lower-tier municipality’s official plan. In these scenarios, official plans for upper-tier municipalities may need to include detailed policies”

What the provincial government is considering for ERO #026-0315:

Proposed modifications for official plans of upper-tier municipalities could include:

- Limiting duplication with official plans of lower-tier municipalities by creating specific land use designations that only apply to official plans of upper-tier municipalities with planning responsibilities. For example, this could mean creating a broader land use designation that would combine the designations of Neighbourhoods, Mixed Use Areas, and Mixed Use Commercial Areas into a “Community Areas” designation.

Question	Staff Comment
<p>In addition to considering a combined “Community Areas” use designation described above, are there other designations that would be useful for upper-tier official plans that would help avoid duplication with lower-tier official plans?</p>	<p>County staff think the terminology being used is not relevant to rural based municipalities.</p> <p>Where a municipality has their own official plan and amendments are made to it, a different approval system should be established to streamline local municipal decisions. This is an example of where streamlining is appropriate.</p>
<p>Are there any parts of the standardized table of contents, schedules, and land use designations outlined in ERO 025-1099 (should read ERO-0300) that would need to be modified or would not apply to official plans for upper-tier municipalities?</p>	<p>County staff do not agree with a standardized provincial prescribed format for official plans.</p>

<p>Are there other considerations we need to take into account regarding the proposed framework for upper-tier official plans?</p>	<p>10 Years ago, there was a shift in legislation away from a “one size fits all” approach to recognize that municipalities across Ontario are diverse and that local context is important. Legislation is once again making a fundamental shift in the way land use planning is practiced.</p> <p>Standardizing official plans will create a significant administrative burden for municipalities with recently approved official plans.</p>