MUNICIPALITY OF PICTOU COUNTY

AGRICULTURAL LANDS POLICY

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRAFT AMENDMENTS

IMAGINE MOPC

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Municipality of Pictou County has recently adopted its first-ever Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw, bringing comprehensive land use planning to the municipality for the first time. Because past planning efforts faced strong opposition, particularly from the agricultural community, the new plans were intentionally designed with a "light touch". However, the Province has since directed the Municipality to update these documents to better protect agricultural land and align with provincial policy, with changes required by Summer 2026.

The goal of his project is to produce a set of amendments that sufficiently protect agricultural lands while giving land owners some flexibility.

Engagement was held in the Winter of 2026 to get preliminary input from the community.

PROJECT TIMELINE

PROJECT INITIATION + OPTIONS
Winter 2026

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT
Winter 2026

DRAFT AMENDMENT + ENGAGEMENT
Spring 2026

FINAL AMENDMENT + ADOPTION
Summer 2026

WHAT WE HEARD

During the first phase of engagement in Winter 2026, we received input from residents and stakeholders detailing their priorities for the protection of agricultural lands in Pictou County.

Overall, we heard strong support for protecting agricultural land and recognizing its importance to the community. At the same time, many people emphasized the need for balance—policies should protect farmland without making it harder for farmers to operate, limiting landowners' options, or affecting property values.

Participants also said that protecting farmland needs to go hand-in-hand with better support for farmers. This includes directing new housing away from farmland, offering financial and program supports when possible, and taking a more flexible, practical approach to how agricultural land is defined and managed.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

The following pages outline the proposed amendments to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw. These are a **DRAFT** and subject to change based on feedback from residents and direction from Planning Advisory Committee and Council.

The proposed amendments aim to:

- Protect agricultural soils over the long-term by limiting the uses permitted in the new Agriculture Potential (A1) Zone
- Prevent future land use conflicts between agriculture and other uses
- Direct residential development away from the County's best agricultural soils
- Retain some flexibility for rural landowners to develop their properties

To learn more about the project, please visit: **speakupland.ca/pictou-county-agriculture**

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AGRICULTURAL LANDS POLICY

DRAFT AMENDMENTS

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There are 4 key amendments being proposed:

1. Creating a new zone - the Agriculture Potential (A1) Zone
2. Continuing to restrict topsoil removal
3. Creating a Limited Subdivision Overlay that reduces land fragmentation on active farms and Class 2 soils
4. Including policy support for non-planning tools

Read on for more details about each proposed amendment - and don't forget to share your feedback on the project website (see below, or scan the QR code in the bottom righthand corner).

1

Create a New Agriculture Potential (A1) Zone

What is Proposed?

The most impactful of the proposed amendments is the introduction of a new Agriculture Potential (A1) Zone. This Zone would have a more limited range of land uses compared to the Rural General (G1) Zone. It would apply to lands that meet **BOTH** of the following criteria:

- Defined as "agricultural lands" under the Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Agricultural Lands:
  - Class 2 soils, Class 3 soils, actively-farmed Class 4 soils, and lands with specialty crops (blueberries, orchards, etc.).
- Currently zoned G1.

It would **exclude**:

- Small lands less than 1 acre;
- Areas of coastal development.

Additionally, there are adjustments for lots that are between 1 and 5 acres for administrative simplicity.

Why is it Important?

An Agriculture Potential Zone helps protect land that is suitable for farming— whether it is currently used or could be in the future—by limiting incompatible development and reducing conflicts with non-farm uses.

It also signals that agricultural activity is expected in the area, including typical farm operations and related impacts such as noise, odours, and machinery.

PERMISSIONS

The following pages outline the differences between the proposed A1 Zone and the existing G1 Zone.
The following scheme is used:

"P" means the use is allowed in that zone, as long as it follows all the rules in the Land Use Bylaw.

"PC" means that the use is allowed in the zone, subject to additional conditions specific to that use, such as limits on size or location.

"DA" means the use is allowed, but the developer must go through the development agreement process described in Subsection 4.3 of the Municipal Planning Strategy.

"-" means that the use is not permitted in that zone.



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AGRICULTURAL LANDS POLICY

DRAFT AMENDMENTS: PERMITTED USES

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COMMERCIAL USES		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Accommodations	**P**	P
Agritourism	**P**	P
Animal Care	**P**	P
Auto Body Shop	**-**	-
Automobile Fueling	**-**	P
Automobile Repair	**-**	P
Automobile Sales and Rentals	**-**	-
Automobile Washing	**-**	P
Banks and Financial Institutions	**-**	P
Campground	**PC**	PC
Commercial Recreation – Indoor	**-**	-
Commercial Recreation – Outdoor	**-**	-
Craft Food and Beverage Production	**P**	P
Display Court	**-**	-
Drinking Establishment	**P**	P
Farm Machinery Sales and Service	**P**	P

COMMERCIAL USES (Con't)		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Display Court	**-**	-
Drinking Establishment	**P**	P
Farm Machinery Sales and Service	**P**	P
Farmers' Market	**P**	P
Garden and Nursery Sales & Supplies	**P**	P
Heavy Equipment Sales and Rentals	**-**	-
Kennel	**-**	-
Marina	**P**	P
Marine Recreation Provider	**P**	P
Office	**-**	P
Personal Service Shop	**-**	P
Private Club	**P**	P
Racetrack	**DA**	DA
Restaurant – Drive-thru	**-**	-
Restaurant – Eat-in	**P**	P
Restaurant – Take-out	**P**	P

COMMERCIAL USES (Con't)		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Retail Lumber and Home Improvement Yard	**P**	P
Retail Store	**-**	P
RV Park	**-**	-
School – Commercial	**-**	-
Self-storage Facility	**-**	-
Service and Repair Shop	**P**	P
Shooting Range – Indoor	**-**	-
Shooting Range – Outdoor	**DA**	DA
Tour Operator	**P**	P
Wholesale	**-**	-

RESIDENTIAL USES		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Boarding (Rooming) House	**P**	P
Dwellings – 1 or 2 units per lot	**P**	P
Dwellings – 3 or 4 units per lot	**-**	P

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DRAFT AMENDMENTS: PERMITTED USES

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RESIDENTIAL USES (Con't)		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Dwellings – 5 to 8 units per lot	-	-
Dwellings – more than 8 units per lot	-	-
Nursing Home	-	-
Residential Care Facility	-	-
Small Options Home	**P**	P

OTHER USES		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Agriculture-related Uses	**P**	P
Cemetery	**P**	P
Fishery-related Uses	**P**	P
Forestry-related Uses	**P**	P
Hobby Livestock Farms	**PC**	PC
Livestock Operation	**PC**	PC
Mineral-related Uses	-	-
Parking Lot	-	P
Parks and Playgrounds	**P**	P
Public Recreation	**P**	P

INDUSTRIAL USES		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Abattoir	**P**	P
Building Supply and Equipment Depot	**P**	P
Hazardous Industrial Uses	-	DA
Heavy Equipment Repair	**P**	P
Heavy Industrial Uses	-	DA
Light Industrial Uses	**P**	P
Recycling Depot	-	P
Scrap Yard	-	DA
Solar Collector System – Large-scale	**P**	P
Solid Waste Disposal	-	-
Transportation and Logistics	**P**	P
Warehousing	**P**	P
Workshop	**P**	P

OTHER USES (Con't)		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Public Transportation	**P**	P
Telecommunications Towers	**P**	P

INSTITUTIONAL USES		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Community Centre	**P**	P
Correctional Facility	-	-
Cultural Facilities	**P**	P
Daycare Centre	**P**	P
Emergency Services	**P**	P
Funeral Home	**P**	P
Government Uses	**P**	P
Hospital	-	-
Interpretive Centre	**P**	P
Medical Clinic	**P**	P
Place of Worship	**P**	P
Post Office	**P**	P
School - Academic	**P**	P
School – Post-secondary	**P**	P

OTHER USES (Con't)		
Use	**A1**	**G1**
Trails and Conservation	**P**	P
Water Access	**P**	P

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DRAFT AMENDMENTS: LOT STANDARDS

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Standard	Lot	A1	G1
Min. Lot Area (m2)	Sewer-serviced Lot	2,700	350
	Unserviced Lot	2,700	2,700
Min. Lot Frontage (m)	Sewer-serviced Lot	15	12
	Unserviced Lot	15	15
Min. Front Setback (m)		6	6
Min. Rear Setback (m)	Main Buildings	8	8
	Accessory Buildings	4	4
Min. Side Setback (m)	Main Buildings	4	4
	Accessory Buildings	4	4
Min. Flankage Setback (m)	Main Buildings	6	6
	Accessory Buildings	6	6
Max. Building Height (m)	Main Buildings	12.2	12.2
	Accessory Buildings	8	8

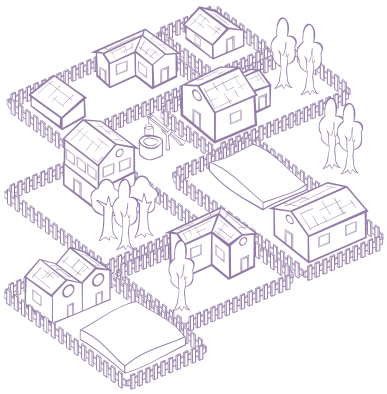
PERMISSIONS

The table to the left outlines the lot standards for the proposed A1 Zone and the existing G1 Zone.

New development can only move forward if it follows either an approved development agreement or the requirements outlined in the table.

WHAT ARE LOT STANDARDS?

Lot standards (also called zone standards) are the basic rules that guide how land can be developed in a specific area. They set minimum requirements for lot size and frontage, place height limitations on buildings, and regulate how far buildings must be set back from property lines. Through these standards, consistent and appropriate development is ensured.



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2

Restrictions on Topsoil Removal

What is Proposed?
Existing restrictions will continue on all agricultural lands as defined by the Statement of Provincial Interest. The regulations are as follows:

- **5.5.1(a)** Topsoil removal shall be prohibited except for removal that is incidental to a permitted use and except for excavation associated with the construction of buildings and infrastructure.
- **5.5.1(b)** A specific list of properties with existing topsoil removal businesses are exempted.

Why is it Important?
Restrictions on topsoil removal were identified as critical to the protection of agricultural soils in the County by both residents and stakeholders, including the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

3

Limited Subdivision Overlay in A1 Zone

What is Proposed?
The overlay would apply to Class 2 soils and active farms in the A1 Zone and would limit subdivision to 1 lot per area of land (as it existed on August 28th, 2025) per year.

Exceptions include the following:

- Boundary adjustments that don't create new lots;
- Lot consolidations;
- Subdivisions creating lots larger than 10 hectares (25 acres), under the assumption that such lots would be for resource purposes.

Why is it Important?
Limiting residential subdivision is an important step in reducing potential land use conflicts in areas with agricultural alnds. It also prevents the fragmentation of these lands, which is important for the long-term viability of farming in Pictou County.

4

Encourage Support for Non-Planning Tools

There are many factors outside of municipal control that affect the viability of farming, such as the aging demographics of farmers and shifting financial supports for activities such as land clearing.

Because of this, language in the Municipal Planning Strategy would express Council's support for programs such as agricultural land trusts.

Important Reminder

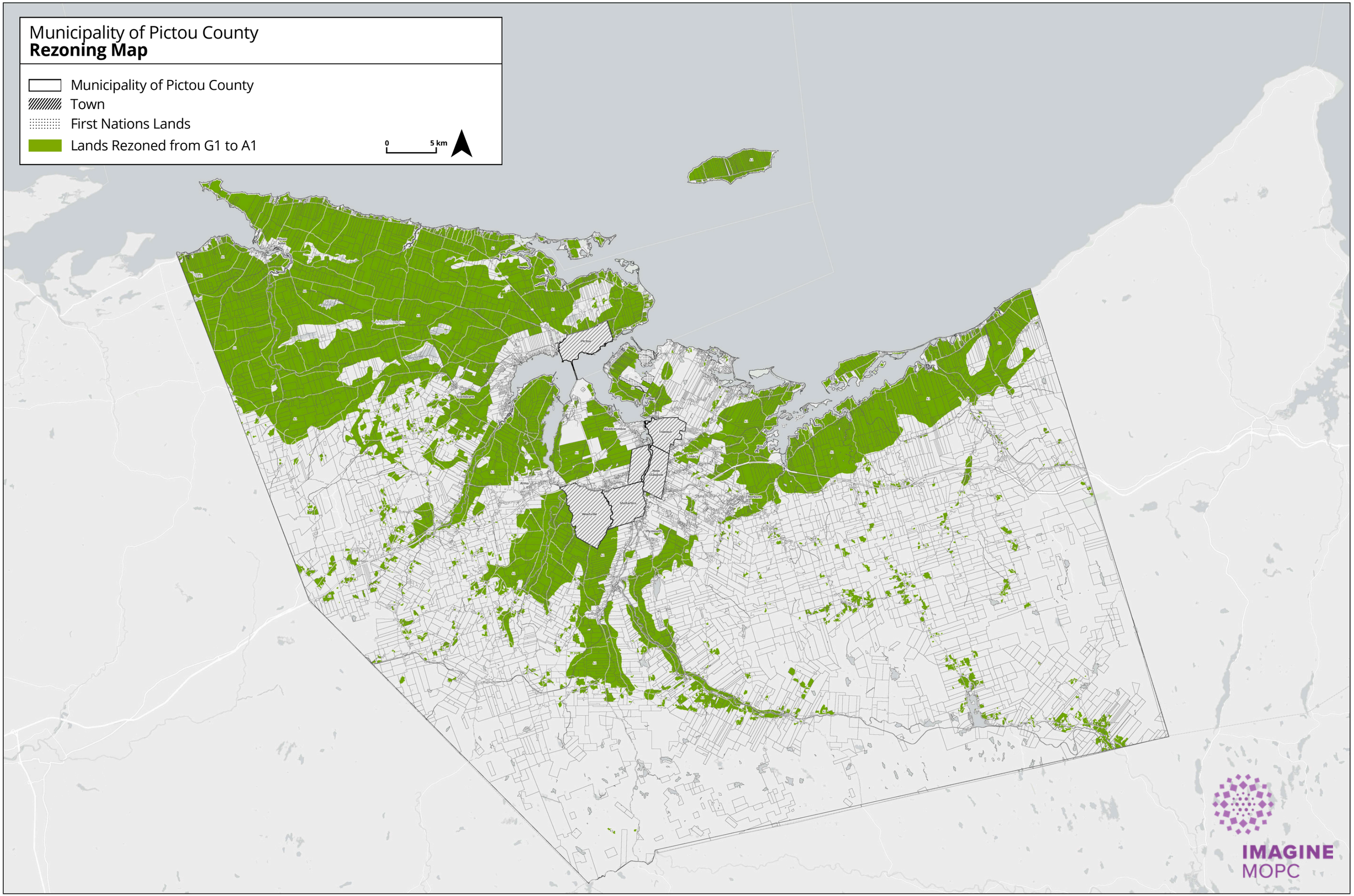
Planning documents are "living documents". They are able to evolve and adapt as circumstances change. While these amendments introduce protections for agricultural lands, there exists the possibility to strengthen them in the future, if deemed appropriate.

To learn more about the project, please visit: **speakupland.ca/pictou-county-agriculture**

Municipality of Pictou County
Rezoning Map

- Municipality of Pictou County
- Town
- First Nations Lands
- Lands Rezoned from G1 to A1

0 5 km



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LUB Schedule 'C'

Agricultural Overlays Map

Municipality of Pictou County

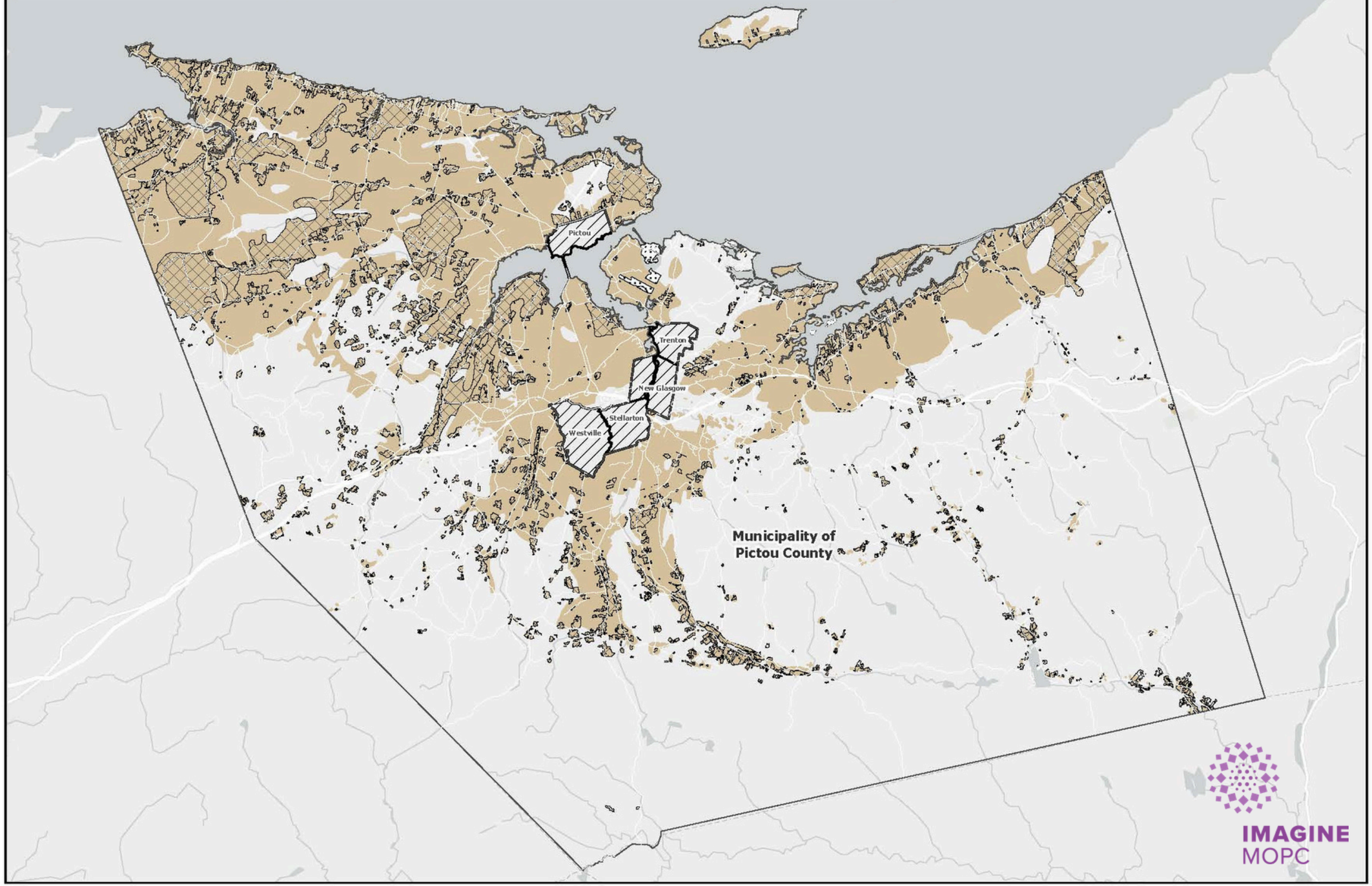
Town

First Nations Lands

TSO - Topsoil Overlay

LSO - Limited Subdivision Overlay

0 5 km

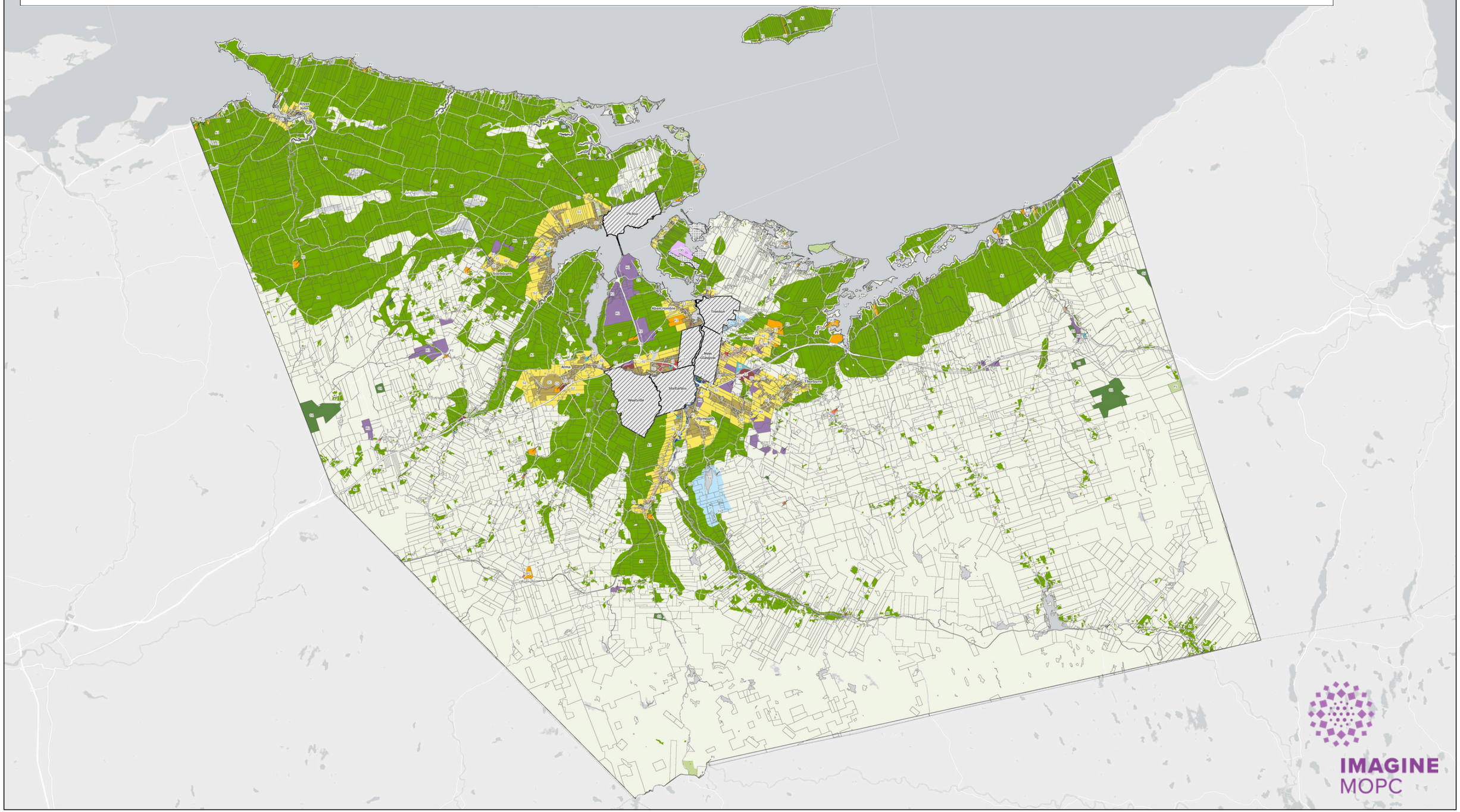


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Municipality of Pictou County
Zoning Map

CC	Community Core	C3	Rural Commercial	O1	Conservation	F1	Floodway		Town
RC	Residential Community	P2	Commercial Recreation	P1	Parks and Open Space	CDD	Comprehensive Development District		First Nations Lands
C1	General Commercial	M1	Industrial	G1	Rural General	S1	Shoreline		
C2	Highway Commercial	I1	Institutional	G2	Rural Mixed Use	A1	Agricultural Potential		

0 5 km



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