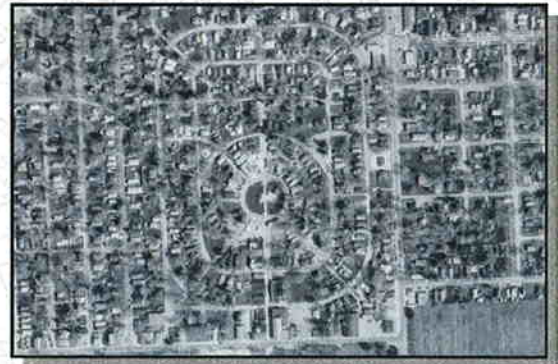


# Crystal Beach Neighbourhood Plan

## Volume 1: Background Report The Context for Decision Making

TOWN OF FORT ERIE COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
APRIL 2005



TOWN OF FORT ERIE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRAM  
"ENVISIONING GREAT COMMUNITIES"

*Public Grounds and  
Amusement Park*

# Crystal Beach Neighbourhood Plan

## Volume 1: Background Report The Context for Decision Making

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# Crystal Beach Neighbourhood Plan

## Volume 1: Background Report The Context for Decision Making

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Crystal Beach Neighbourhood Plan Background Report presents a summary of existing conditions and trends in the community, in support of the Neighbourhood Plan being produced by the Town of Fort Erie. The intent of this report is to assist municipal staff and the Community Focus Group to understand the dynamics of Crystal Beach as a community: its past, present and future. It provides a compilation of the information available relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan program, especially the land use component, to assist in preparing informed recommendations on future development direction. Several areas of interest are reviewed in this report, and a brief summary of each is outlined below.

### Major Issues in the Crystal Beach Neighbourhood

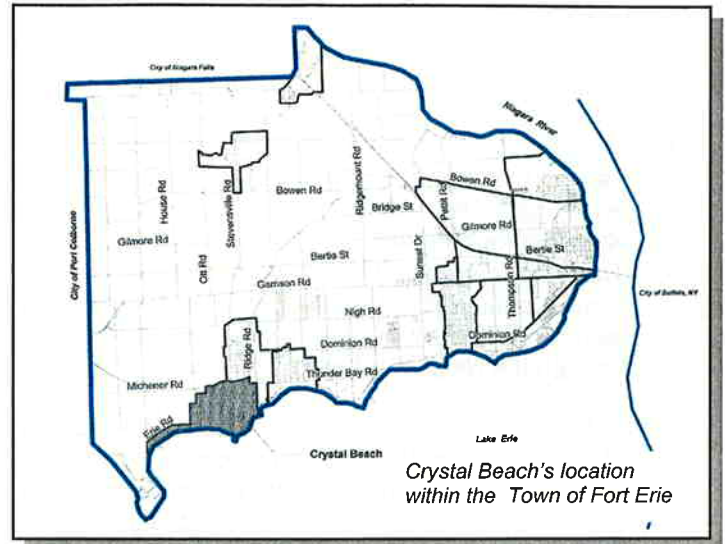
- There are a number of issues identified by residents as in need of study and improvement in the Crystal Beach area, including urban design and character, residential/commercial rehabilitation assistance, the establishment of a formal Business Improvement Area, and the development of a Master Plan for Bay Beach.

### Demographics

- The population of Crystal Beach is stable
- The age structure of Crystal Beach reflects the baby boom era and their children
- There is a markedly lower proportion of residents in Crystal Beach who have immigrated from outside Canada compared to all of Fort Erie
- A lower number of Crystal Beach residents are highly educated compared to the rest of Fort Erie
- The unemployment rate in Crystal Beach is higher than that of Fort Erie, the metropolitan area, the province and the country.
- Household income in Crystal Beach is 20% lower than that of Fort Erie as a whole.

### Housing Trends

- The housing stock in Crystal Beach is almost exclusively low-density (singles and semi/duplexes)
- Over 70% of dwellings are owned rather than rented
- Over 60% of the housing stock was constructed before 1960, less than 5% was constructed after 1991
- The average dwelling price in Crystal Beach is \$105,000, half of the provincial average.



### Land Use Planning

- The Crystal Beach Neighbourhood contains a diverse range of land uses ranging from Residential to Commercial, Institutional and Open Space
- 67% of the land in Crystal Beach is used for residential purposes
- 19% of the neighbourhood is comprised of vacant or underutilized lands
- 6% of the neighbourhood is comprised of commercial and institutional lands
- 8% of the neighbourhood is devoted to public and private parkland
- The draft New Municipal Official Plan will designate areas for Environmental Protection (no development) and Environmental Conservation (controlled development) throughout the Crystal Beach Neighbourhood, in order to protect the natural features of the area, especially the shoreline.



For over 100 years, beach-goers have flocked to the waters of Lake Erie and the white sands of Crystal Beach.

### Parks and Open Space

- There are 9 municipal parks in the Crystal Beach neighbourhood, comprising a total of 44 acres of open space.
- Although there is an excess of “community level” parkland, there is a deficiency of “neighbourhood level” parkland which will be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan
- There are currently 3 waterfront parks, two of which contain sandy beach. A Master Plan for the development of the Bay Beach property will be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Schools

- The Crystal Beach Neighbourhood is serviced by both the public and separate school boards, with each having an elementary school located within the area
- High school students attend school in Ridgeway and Port Colborne, while post secondary students attend college/university locally in Welland and St. Catharines, as well as outside the region.

### Cultural and Natural Heritage

- The Town has a rich cultural heritage dating back over 11,000 years
- Modern settlement of Crystal Beach began in 1888 with the purchase of 30 acres of lakefront property by John E. Rebstock. Mr. Rebstock’s religious camp soon grew into the Crystal Beach Amusement Park, which was the impetus for settlement of the village
- Some areas of Crystal Beach, especially the lakefront area, display a high potential for the discovery of archeological resources. These areas will be recognized in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Draft New Municipal Official Plan
- The Point Abino Wetland Complex, a Provincially Significant Natural Area, is located on the periphery of the neighbourhood and is considered a resource for the Crystal Beach community. The neighbourhood plan will recognize this area, and it will be protected through policies in the Draft New Municipal Official Plan and Provincial Policy Statements

### Transportation

- There is one Regional Highway in the Crystal Beach Neighbourhood (Michener Road/Farr Avenue) and three other municipal roads which serve as arterial roadways. In addition to this there are 5 collector roads under Town jurisdiction and several kilometres of local and private roads.
- Fort Erie Transit serves the Crystal Beach community with 5 runs per day in each direction, connecting with the urban area of Fort Erie and the shopping

districts along Garrison Road

- There is no inter-city bus service from Crystal Beach, however Greyhound and Trentway-Wagar operate motorcoach service from Fort Erie. No intercity passenger rail service is provided to Fort Erie or Crystal Beach, with the nearest terminals located in Buffalo, NY and Niagara Falls, ON.
- The Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan identifies two on-road bicycle routes in Crystal Beach, which will be recognized in the Neighbourhood Plan. Additional connections throughout the neighbourhood and to the Friendship Trail will be explored through the Neighbourhood Plan process.



*The core area of Crystal Beach is laid out in this unique radial pattern which has its origins as a religious camp. The central circle was designated as a place of worship, and campsites were laid out on paths that radiated from the central focus area.*