



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/>	Decision Request <input type="checkbox"/>	Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
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To: Members of Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee (PAC/HAC)

Submitted by: _____
Sara Poirier, Director of Planning and Development

Date: 2024-02-08

Subject: WHMPS and WHLUB Amendment Request: Wind Farm Policies; File# 23-43B

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Part VIII, *Planning and Development, Municipal Government Act*

RECOMMENDATION or DECISION REQUEST

This report is being provided for information purposes only.

BACKGROUND

Property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Opinion <input type="checkbox"/>	Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social <input type="checkbox"/>	Economic <input type="checkbox"/>	Councillor Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
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On November 7, 2023, Steven Hart of Vaughan applied for amendments to the West Hants Municipal Planning Strategy (WHMPS) Section 4.24 to further evaluate wind farm development proposals within the Municipality.

During the PAC/HAC meeting on December 14, the Committee discussed the application. Staff provided an overview of the current wind farms within the WHRM, the policies, regulations, and authorities governing wind farms, and examples from other jurisdictions. More information can be found in the report entitled “*WHMPS and WHLUB Amendment Request: Wind Farm Policies; File# 23-43*” to the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee on December 14, 2023.

Staff requested direction from the Committee on whether amendments to the WHMPS and West Hants Land Use By-law (WHLUB) should be drafted in response to this application and the extent of those amendments. The Committee discussed possible amendments at length and

concluded that they would like to see maps of specific buffer distances from existing dwellings to determine whether any amendments to the wind turbine setback requirements should be considered.

The motion from PAC/HAC to Council was that:

...COUNCIL PROVIDE THE STAFF RESOURCES TO DO A MAPPING EXERCISE TO POINT OUT EXISTING DWELLINGS AND MAP WHERE WIND FARMS COULD BE DEVELOPED USING RADIUS RANGES FROM 1KM, WHICH IS THE EXISTING SETBACK, TO 4KM, WHICH IS A PROJECTED DISCUSSION RANGE FOR POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO SETBACKS.

Council reviewed this recommendation on January 23, 2024 and approved the motion.

DISCUSSION

The Municipal GIS Technician developed the mapping in Attachment A-E by creating buffers from any civic addressing point identified as a residential land use. The maps show buffers of 1-4 km from those residential civic addressing points. The remainder of the Municipality outside of the buffer areas is shown in white. The white areas represent possible siting locations for future large scale wind turbines. The maps also reference the location of existing wind turbines within the Ellershouse and Martock wind farms and the proposed location of wind turbines permitted in the Benjamins Mill wind farm development agreement.

Other Jurisdictions

Staff reviewed the minimum setbacks requirements for wind turbines from residential dwellings in other jurisdictions to provide context to the discussion.

As noted below, some municipalities regulate setbacks based on the height of the turbines. Height of wind turbines has increased in the past decade. For comparison, the wind turbines that were constructed in the Ellershouse and Martock wind farms around 2014, are approximately 100 m. (328 ft.) in height, whereas the height of the wind turbines proposed within the Benjamins Mill wind farm in 2023 are approximately 205 m. (673 ft.).

Additionally, some municipalities listed in the table allow a reduction in the setback requirements if the adjacent property owner agrees in writing to the reduced setback.

Table 1: Setbacks for Wind Turbines in Other Jurisdictions

Municipality	Minimum Setback for Wind Turbines from Residential Dwellings
West Hants Regional Municipality	1000 m. (3,280 ft.)
Municipality of East Hants	4 times the height of the wind turbine

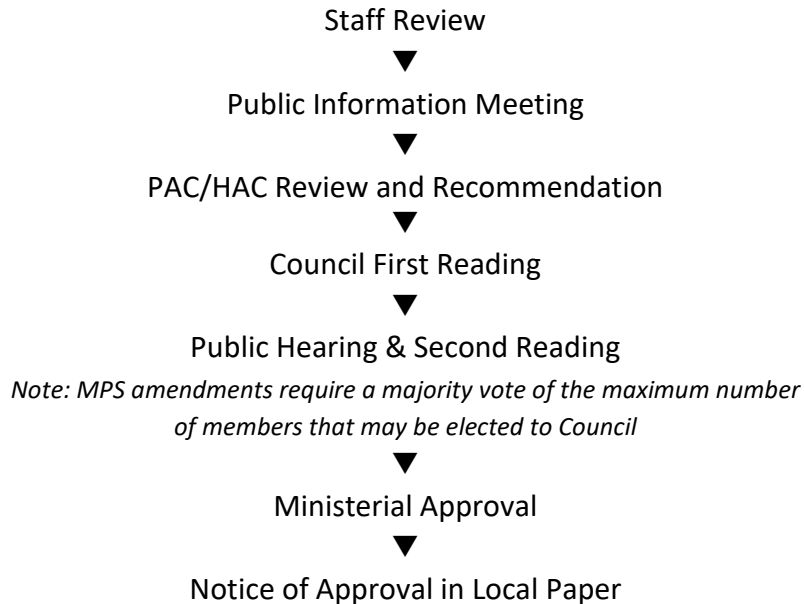
Municipality of the County of Kings	Only permitted in the “Large Scale Wind Turbine Overlay”; the boundaries of the overlay are a minimum of 3 km from dwellings existing on November 15, 2018.
Colchester County	1 km if the wind turbine is 100 m. (328 ft.) in height or less; or 2 km for wind turbines greater than 100 m. (328 ft.). If a wind turbine exceeds 200 m. (656 ft.) an increased setback of 7.5 m. (26.5 ft.) is required for every 1 m. (3.3 ft.) of additional height if the increased minimum setback is necessary to satisfy the maximum ambient degradation noise standard of the By-law.
Municipality of Yarmouth	1000 m. (3,280 ft.) or 6.5 times the height of the turbine, whichever is greater
Region of Queens Municipality	1.5 times the total height of the turbine from all property lines and watercourses
Municipality of the County of Annapolis	Only permitted within a “Wind Resource Areas”; requires a minimum of 1,000 m (3,280 ft.) .
Halifax Regional Municipality	550 m. (1,805 ft.)
Municipality of Cumberland	1000 m. (3,280 ft.) or 3.5 times the height of the turbine, whichever is greater
Municipality of the District of Digby	1000 m. (3,280 ft.)
Municipality of Pictou County	1000 m. (3,280 ft.)
Municipality of the County of Antigonish	1000 m. (3,280 ft.)

MUNICIPAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) for West Hants was developed in 2013. There is no mention of wind development in the MCCAP as the document focuses more on the impacts of climate change on the Municipality versus options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

NEXT STEPS

If Council provides direction for staff to draft amendments to the WHMPS and WHLUB to increase the setbacks required for wind turbines, the process for the amendments would be as follows:



Note: Any applications that are received for wind farm developments prior to Council holding Second Reading on amendments to the setback requirements for wind farm developments would be subject to the current WHMPS and WHLUB requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the Municipality or residents with regard to the filing of this report. There may be financial implications associated with proposed amendments to the WHMPS and WHLUB if additional staff resources, training or specialized equipment is required to evaluate wind projects.

ALTERNATIVES

In response to this report, the PAC/HAC may:

- request Council direct staff prepare a draft WHMPS and WHLUB amendments based on direction from PAC/HAC;
- recommend Council not move forward with this application or any amendments associated with the request; or
- provide alternative direction such as requesting further information on a specific topic.

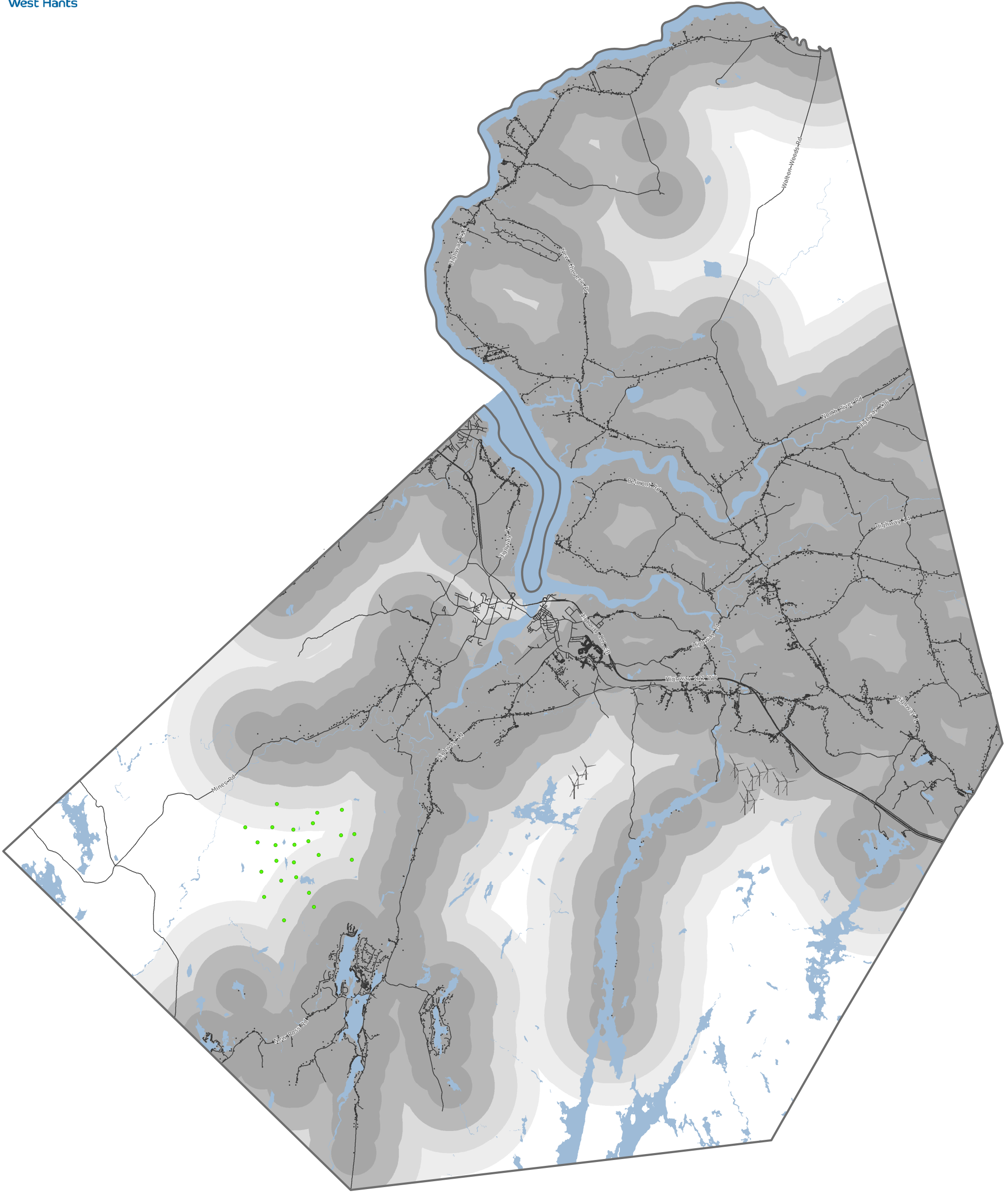
ATTACHMENTS

- Figure 1 Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points
- Figure 2 Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points – 1 km
- Figure 3 Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points – 2 km
- Figure 4 Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points – 3 km
- Figure 5 Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points – 4 km

Report Prepared by: _____
Sara Poirier, Director of Planning and Development

Report Reviewed by: _____
Mark Fredericks, Senior Planner

Report Reviewed by: _____
Alex Dunphy, Planner



Km Radius from Civics

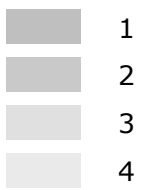


Figure 1

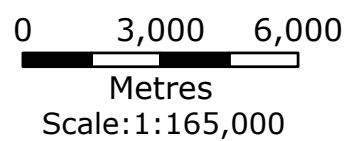


Base data derived from the Nova Scotia Property Records Database (NSPRD) and the Nova Scotia, Geomatics Centre (NSGC), Copyright Her Majesty The Queen in Right of the Province of Nova Scotia.

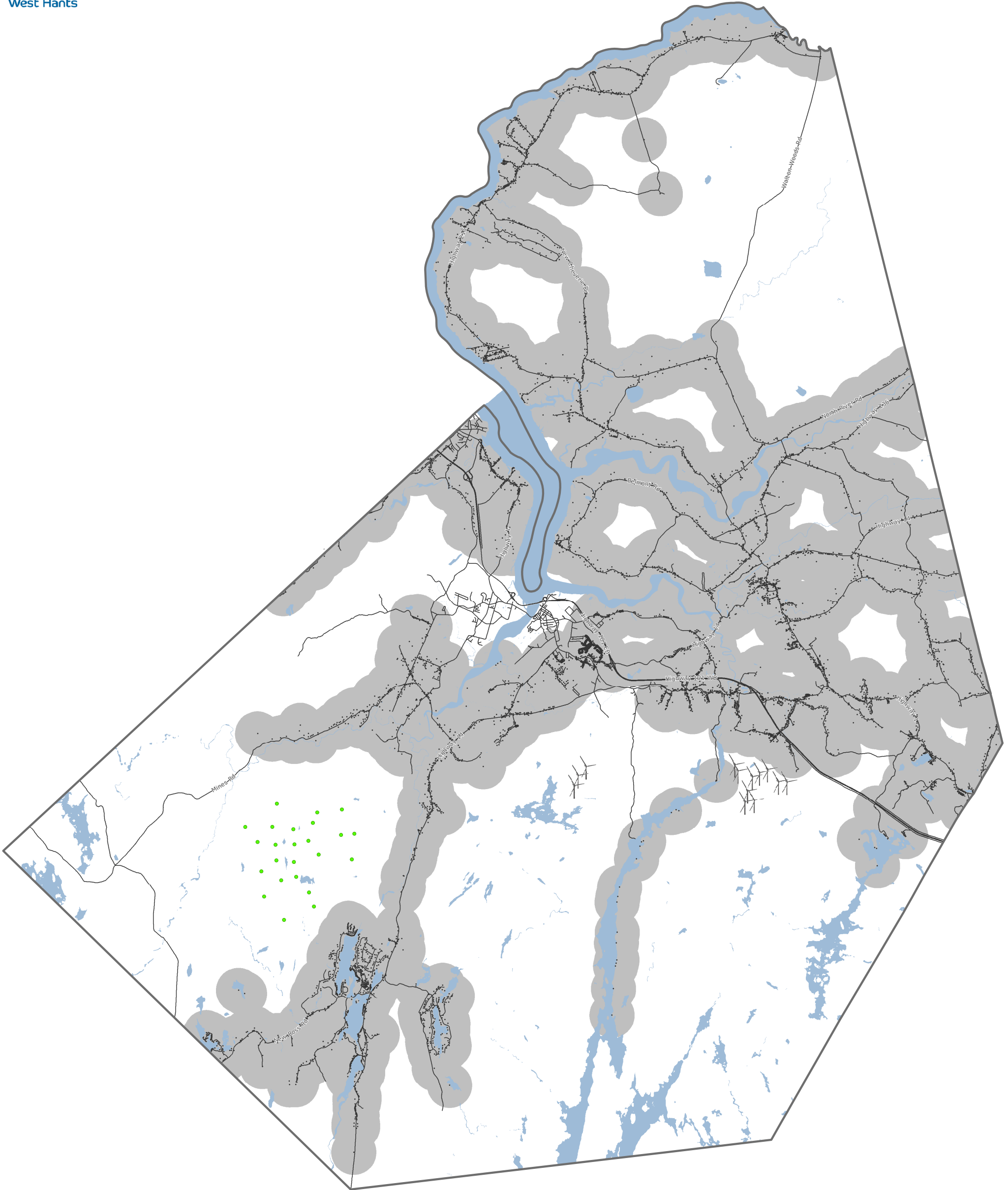
This map is a graphical representation only. It is not a land survey and is not intended for used for legal descriptions or to calculate exact dimensions or area.

Prepared by: West Hants Regional Planning and Development Department January 2024

Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points



- Civics
- Estimated Benjamin Mill Wind Turbine Locations
- Wind Turbines 2023
- Municipal Boundary
- Communities
- Roads
- Water



Km Radius from Civics

1

Figure 2



Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points 1 Kilometer

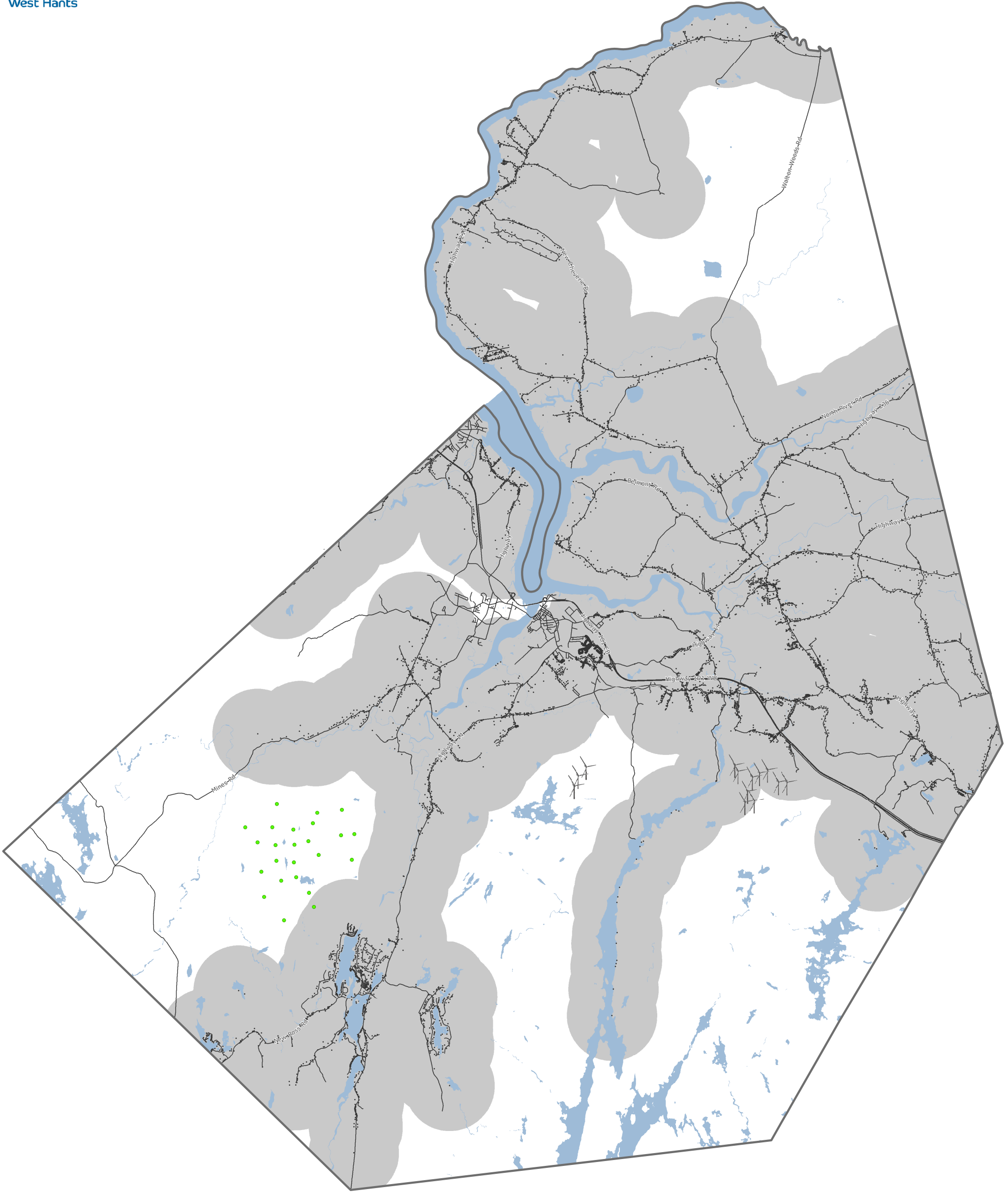
0 3,000 6,000
Metres
Scale: 1:165,000

- Civics
- Estimated Benjamins Mill Wind Turbine Locations
- Wind Turbines 2023
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- Communities
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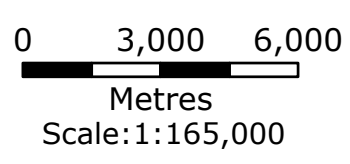
Km Radius from Civics



Figure 3



Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points
2 Kilometer

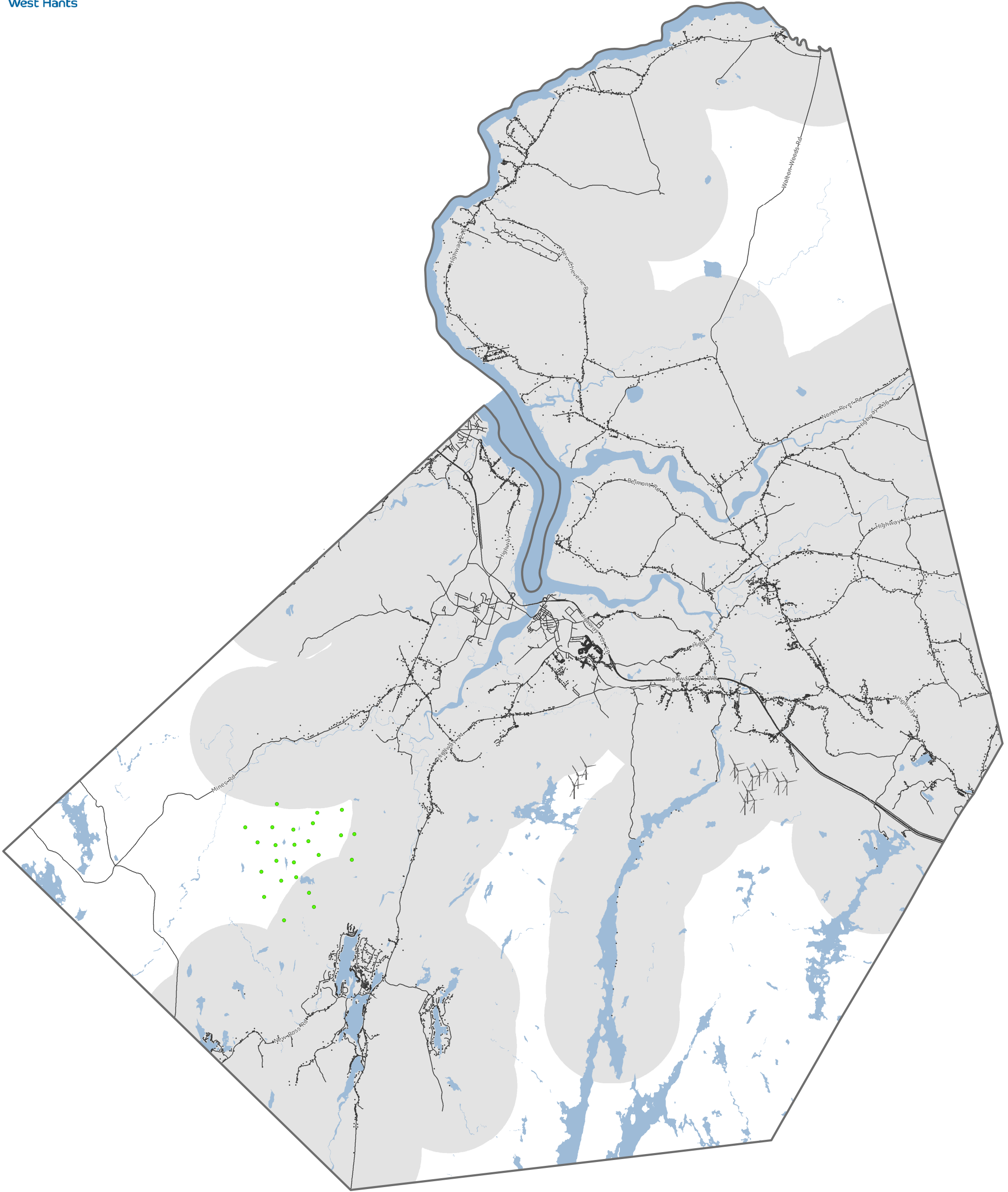


- Civics
- Estimated Benjamin Mill Wind Turbine Locations
- Wind Turbines 2023
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Km Radius from Civics

3

Figure 4



Buffers from Residential Civic Address Points 3 Kilometer

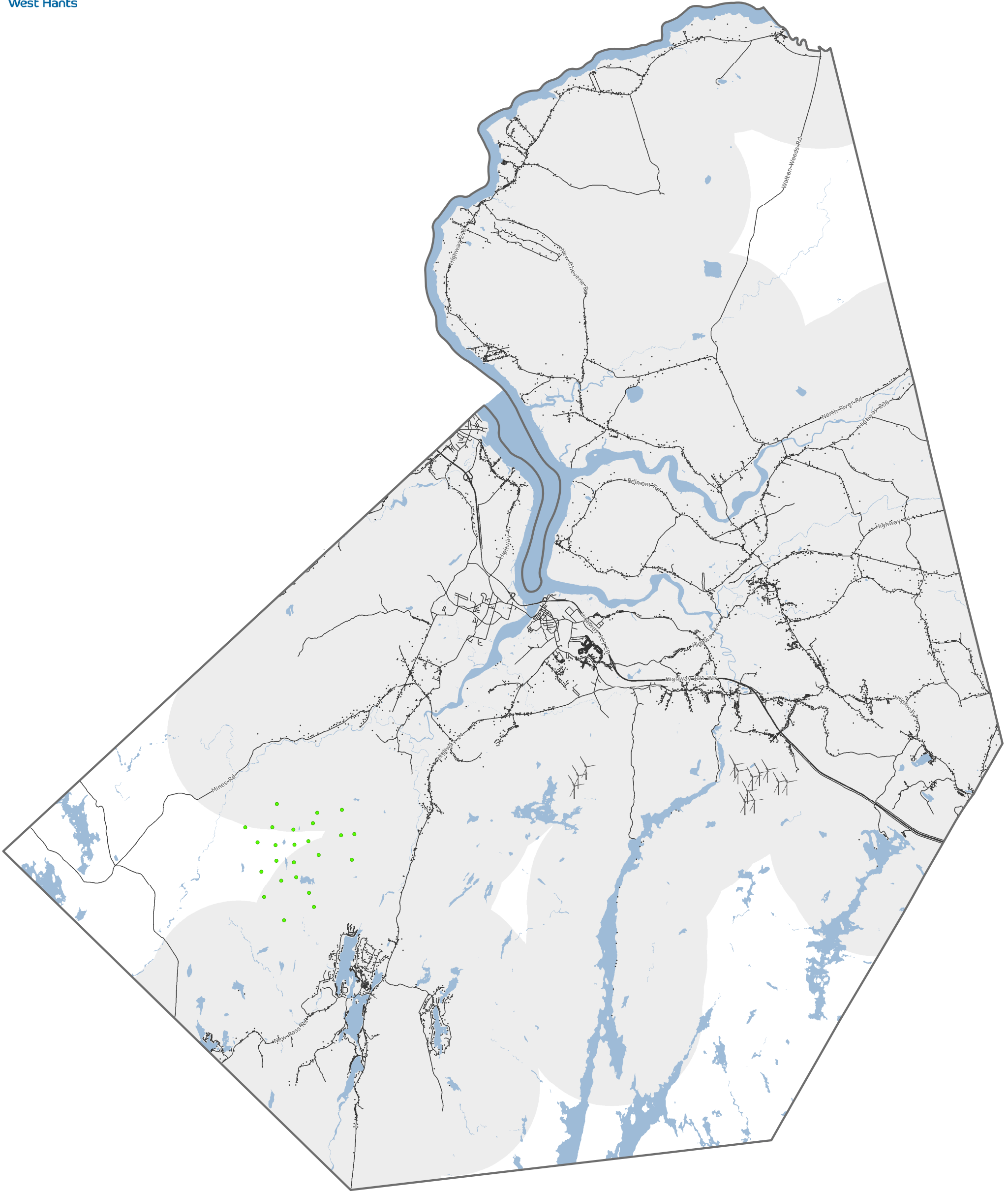
0 3,000 6,000
Metres
Scale: 1:165,000

- Civics
- Estimated Benjamins Mill Wind Turbine Locations
- ✶ Wind Turbines 2023
- ▭ Municipal Boundary
- - - Communities
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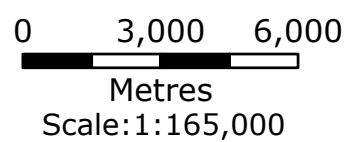
Km Radius from Civics



Figure 5



**Buffers from Residential
Civic Address Points
4 Kilometer**



- Civics
- Estimated Benjamins Mill Wind Turbine Locations
- Wind Turbines 2023
- Municipal Boundary
- Communities
- Roads
- Water

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