



A Simply Grand Plan

As the County of Brant continues to change and grow, the time has come to develop a new Official Plan. *This plan belongs to all of us.*

Question and Answer Summary

A guide to the questions received during the New Official Plan project



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Introduction

This guide has been provided as a summary of questions and comments received during the County of Brant's New Official Plan project. Questions include those that have been received during engagement sessions such as our Virtual Town Hall Meetings, Council and Committee meetings, as well as questions and comments that have been sent directly to staff. To avoid duplication, staff have combined questions that are similar in nature. This summary will be updated as we continue to engage with the public, County of Brant Council and interested stakeholders about the remaining topics of interest. This edition of the Q&A summary has been compiled based on the first three topics of interest, including questions that have been received up until November 2020.

Growth Management

Question	Answer
<p>How will the County address the needs of a growing population? What are the County's plans to address needed services such as sports facilities, parks, transportation, and bridges (both soft and hard infrastructure)? Why isn't infrastructure built prior to new growth and new residents moving to the community? When will infrastructure be put in place?</p>	<p>For the municipality to grow in a fiscally responsible manner, growth needs to pay for growth. Infrastructure is primarily funded by development charges. Every-time a house is built, a certain amount of money is collected by the municipality as a development charge which helps pay for specific services and infrastructure over-time.</p> <p>In terms of new communities, developers of large-scale subdivisions often invest upfront in services such as new parks, school sites, and sports facilities that are later taken over by the respective management. A municipality could pay for services in advance, but this could be a financial risk to the municipality. For example, if the subdivision took an extended period to develop and/or was not developed at all, the municipality would have paid for costly services that would not be used. With the new complete communities' framework from the Province, municipalities will be able to look at a more comprehensive approach to planning communities and having growth pay for growth.</p>
<p>Why can't the County say no to growth and keep things the way they are? When is enough, enough? What is the end goal in terms of growth? Will the County expand until there is no more room left to grow? What are the limits around growth?</p>	<p>When a municipality has no growth, it will inevitably see decline in both population and jobs. The growth and change of our area is impacted by factors far beyond just those within the bounds of the County of Brant. Changes on a world-wide scale all the way down to Provincial and regional changes impact who decides to make the County of Brant home. Growth is important to a viable economy and managing how and where we grow is the key to enhancing the things we love about the County of Brant. There are different ways of managing how and where growth occurs, many of which need to be encouraged by our Official Plan and other land-use planning tools.</p>

Growth Management

Question	Answer
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>Solid growth management policies can encourage growth to happen in certain ways and will help support a 'made-in-Brant' policy solution if development appeals go to the Provincial level.</p> <p>We have several tools in our tool kit to adjust what our growth looks like. Examples include growing by increasing density (adding second units & small apartment buildings), expanding out onto undeveloped lands within an urban boundary (called greenfield development), growing in underutilized areas through infill development (splitting a lot to build a semi instead of a single detached home), and spreading that growth to other serviced areas. New houses also need to be supported by jobs, amenities, and infrastructure such as roads and water services. In terms of building housing, we have enough growth approved such that no expansions to settlement area boundaries may be needed. Determining whether the County should expand its settlement boundaries is part of managing how growth happens. The growth we see now, including the farmlands being converted to residential, was all planned 20 or more years ago. This is part of the reason why planning to 2051 and beyond is so important.</p>
<p>In terms of growth, we have approved enough growth to meet the targets until 2047 and infrastructure improvements are not keeping pace with current growth demands. The rest of the County has benefited from increased servicing, while Paris residents have paid the cost with increased infrastructure and social demand. What other parts of the County</p>	<p>The County's current Official Plan (2012) and the Municipal Comprehensive Review approved a growth management plan to the former 2041 planning horizon. Currently, the County is revising these forecasts to 2051 to update and study the amount of residential and employment anticipated.</p> <p>In the Province of Ontario, most growth is directed to areas with full municipal water and wastewater servicing. St. George is another County of Brant Settlement Area with servicing, and is currently undergoing a Water/Wastewater Class EA to determine future servicing capacity. Burford is a rural settlement area with private servicing (well/ septic), which limits large-</p>

Growth Management

Question	Answer
<p>(e.g. St. George and Burford) can growth occur in the next 5-10 years to significantly limit new construction in Paris? What servicing capacity improvements do these other settlements need to accommodate growth?</p>	<p>scale residential development. In terms of Paris, the Paris Master Servicing Plan was recently completed, indicating that the County has capacity remaining for 10 years (to 2031) to accommodate those approved residential developments, due to wastewater constraints.</p>
<p>How far out does this Official Plan look into the future?</p>	<p>The new Official Plan will cover a planning horizon to 2051, which is a 30-year plan. To better co-ordinate planning for growth across the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region, this Plan provides population and employment forecasts for all upper- and single-tier municipalities in the GGH. These growth forecasts will form a foundational component of the new Official Plan.</p> <p>To ensure the Official Plan incorporates up-to-date forecasting, recent changes to Provincial policies, and any unanticipated land-use matters, it is important for the County to re-visit and update its Official Plan every 10 years.</p>
<p>Will the new Official Plan allow for phasing of growth within the County of Brant to prevent a potential shortage of housing?</p>	<p>Yes. As part of the Official Plan, the County is undertaking a Growth Management Strategy and Phasing of Development Plan to the year 2051. The Province outlines requirement for municipalities to maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years; and Sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 25 years.</p>

Growth Management

Question	Answer
<p>How does the County propose to "control growth" when developers can go through the OMB/LPAT and potentially obtain approvals?</p>	<p>The County's Growth Management Strategy, which will be part of the New Official Plan, will align other plans, policies, and strategies for the orderly and appropriate growth of the County of Brant. As part of the New Official Plan, the Growth Management Strategy and forecasting along with the Phasing of Development will not be appealable to the LPAT. This policy foundation will support our 'case' if a future development decision is appealed to the LPAT.</p>
<p>What do statistics show about home ownership trends, specifically with baby boomers and mortality? Will there not be 1000's of home available in the near future?</p>	<p>Even though a large portion of the County's demographic may be looking to other housing options in the future, which may result in existing inventory becoming available, it will also result in the increased need for different types of housing stock for the senior demographic and those with accessibility needs. We also need to think in terms beyond simply birth and death rates in the County of Brant. Population migration is also increasing, whether it be through immigration or migration from other locations to the County of Brant.</p> <p>Issues the County may face in coming years will be examined through the new Official Plan project. Policies that work to address these issues will be developed for our new Official Plan using statistical growth information, community input, Provincial framework, and Council's decisions for our future growth.</p>
<p>I didn't see what the current employment level is? The Growth Plan targets 26,000 employment by 2051.</p>	<p>Employment numbers for 2020 indicate approximately 16,000 jobs within the County.</p>
<p>Are we currently seeing a false housing market driven by GTA developers and builders? What about real-estate bringing in</p>	<p>In the long-run, the housing market and demand is fundamentally driven by economic forces, but in the short-run, sentiment can drive prices beyond economically sustainable levels. Market demand of housing is based on population growth, financing and economic drivers. The County of Brant does</p>

Growth Management

Question	Answer
<p>people from the GTA? The bubble could burst causing a large drop in value.</p>	<p>expect inward migration or emigration from other municipalities and even Provinces to the area in the next 10 years.</p> <p>Currently, the County has a shortage of resale homes and even new homes being built. There are also limited vacant lots available. As of November 2020, the current Paris MLS® stats indicate an average house price of \$693,511 and 34 new listings in the last 56 days. The County does not expect a false housing market in the next 3 years but anticipates slower growth within 10 years.</p>
<p>What is the difference between a population target and forecast? Are they flexible? Are these limits that you cannot go beyond or is it a requirement that you must reach? How likely is the County of Brant to reach the 59, 000 population forecast given it is 30 years out?</p>	<p>The Growth Plan uses the terms targets and forecasts. A target is meant to be met or exceeded. A forecast is an assessment of future performance and what is predicted to happen.</p> <p>There are two targets set in the Growth Plan, one on intensification and one on density. The County has an intensification target of 15% of new growth to be located in built-up areas. The target on density establishes a minimum density target for new growth in greenfield areas, which is 40 people and jobs per hectare. Greenfield lands are vacant lands on which large-scale subdivisions are typically built. These targets within the Growth Plan are integrated into the forecasting and policy framework for a municipality as it plans for its growth.</p> <p>The population of 59,000 is the minimum forecast established by the Province. This means that we need to plan for this forecast at a minimum, but do not need to exceed it. How we reach that number is up to us. Details on forecasting and growth scenarios will be presented to Council for consideration.</p>

Growth Management

Question	Answer
<p>What is the maximum population we are trying to reach for the County of Brant?</p>	<p>The Province's Growth Plan Residential and Employment Forecasting now provides information to the year 2051. The new horizon is consistent with the long-range planning approach of previous growth plans and better aligns with the land supply requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020. This means we must have a certain amount of land available to support population growth on an incremental basis.</p> <p>The Province provides us with forecasting, including a 'reference forecast' that will help us plan for growth. The 'reference forecast' is considered the most likely to occur if recent trends continue. For residential land needs, the reference forecast predicts a population of 59,000 for the County of Brant in 2051. The current County of Brant population in 2020 is approximately 41,000.</p>
<p>Will urban or rural settlement areas need to be expanded further to accommodate growth? If so, where are expansions anticipated?</p>	<p>The County has a large amount of settlement land designated for future growth. To manage our growth, there may be no need for the expansion of a settlement boundary to happen soon.</p> <p>Council will make decisions regarding these expansions. We must make sure we have a land supply for up to 15 years at any given time for housing. The County has a variety of growth options (denser growth, seniors housing, etc.) and must consider how much land is vacant for development during this process.</p>
<p>The County of Brant is very busy in the spring, summer, and fall months. Will these seasonal fluctuations in population be considered when looking at impacts on infrastructure and investment decisions?</p>	<p>We are working closely with agencies and internal departments to ensure that unique characteristics of the County, such as fluctuations in tourism and seasonal statistical peaks, are reviewed, considered, and incorporated where appropriate within the new Official Plan policy framework. In partnership with our Economic Development and Tourism staff, we'll use these types of</p>

Growth Management

Question	Answer
Will the OP forecasts and targets include visitor/tourism statistics?	statistics and targets to help enhance and improve experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<p>Why is the topic of building a healthy and complete community important and why should we be so concerned with this topic through the New OP project?</p>	<p>Healthy and complete communities are essential components for sustainability and ensuring the County has a balance of jobs, services, and amenities. There are elements that make our communities sustainable such as agricultural, access to green space, our diverse economy, and other things that the County would like to protect and enhance in the future. We know these important value and elements, among many, will assist our communities in becoming complete communities.</p> <p>It is important to ensure that elements in the community (agriculture, natural heritage, cultural heritage etc.) are incorporated back into the communities to suit the needs and values of all our residents.</p> <p>Each of the communities in the County are unique and require great ideas, feedback and creativity from all residents to ensure they are built sustainably, have viability, and have the capacity to support future growth in a way that works for the community.</p>
<p>What is a healthy and complete community really? What does this mean?</p>	<p>A complete community is part of the policy framework within the Province's Growth Plan. All growth must be in the form of healthy and complete communities.</p> <p>When a community is built to facilitate healthy lifestyles and meet the day-to-day needs of individuals throughout all stages of their life, while maintaining public safety and ensuring that the actions and use of land and resources are sustainable to support future generations, then this is a great example of a complete and healthy community. How we obtain those objectives might look</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<i>Continued from previous page</i>	different from community to community but will help us use the Province's framework to create a County of Brant solution.
<p>How are the water and sewer capacity for Brant being considered in the Official Plan development process?</p>	<p>Part of growth management is coordination with complete communities' framework and infrastructure planning. It is necessary to have reliable infrastructure in place to have complete communities. This includes updates to water and sewer systems in public right-of-way. When you have to tear up a road, there is an opportunity to think beyond the hidden infrastructure and consider retrofits for things like active transportation, public space design, low-impact development opportunities, additional density and intensification options, and more green space.</p> <p>Many components of a complete community also updated when infrastructure is updated. The County of Brant relies on its financial planning and capital projects schedule to address these infrastructure updates. Retrofitting the water and sewer in the area is part of the ongoing updates to our infrastructure.</p> <p>The County's Official Plan team is working closely with the Operations group, including during the development of the Transportation Master Plan and Master Servicing Plans for Paris, St. George, Cainsville, and Burford area. Water and sewer capacity are a key component of these ongoing plans and of the new Official Plan.</p>
<p>How can we try and create jobs in the County so that people do not have to commute so far?</p>	<p>The County's current live-work ratio is approximately 27-73%, meaning that approximately 27% of our working population lives and works here. The County is working towards increasing that percentage to 40 or 60% over the upcoming years so more people can both work and live in the County.</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>Using our Official Plan to create solid economic development policies is key to job growth in the County of Brant. This also involves ensuring that lands are available for future development of businesses.</p> <p>The new Official Plan policies will continue to work hand in hand with the Economic Development Strategy in place in the County of Brant to grow a diversified local economy, drive investment, build our core areas, and promote communications and engagement.</p>
<p>Can you point to local examples of complete communities that we might model our community on?</p>	<p>Many local communities have good indicators of what works and what doesn't work to create a complete community. We can use our experiences with development as well as information from our neighbours to determine what might work in the County to make sure every development and settlement is 'complete'.</p> <p>Many municipalities in Ontario (and beyond) have now included healthy and complete community policies and framework into their planning processes. This includes larger Greater Golden Horseshoe cities like Toronto, Markham and Kitchener, and municipalities outside the GGH like the District of Muskoka which includes towns like Gravenhurst, Bracebridge and Huntsville.</p> <p>The County also continues to look beyond our own Province for design considerations, specifically for density and intensification styles (for example, The Netherlands, where they do not have a lot of land but provide a good mix of rural and urban landscapes).</p> <p>Many development projects have complete community aspects that may work if applied to the County of Brant, while many others may not be suitable for us.</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<i>Continued from previous page</i>	We will create a framework that will meet the Province's objectives and suit the County of Brant as we continue to grow.
My son recently graduated and would like to stay in the community, but housing prices are too costly . Even small units in the new condominium(s) being built are way too expensive. Are any new condominiums planned? What is being done to address this issue?	Developing a new Official Plan allows for consideration of policies and initiatives which seek to strengthen attainable housing within the County of Brant. Most recently, staff have undertaken a policy project to implement additional residential units (ARUs) throughout the County of Brant. A key goal through the implementation of these new policies is the creation of housing options such as basement apartments, coach homes, garage lofts, etc. These forms of housing will provide more options for County residents, both as homeowners and those seeking a place to call home. Re-evaluating policies on a regular basis will build flexibility into the existing housing market within the County, allowing a shift for more affordable options to be created, subsidiary housing opportunities for homeowners, and a larger rental and short term accommodation base.
How is the gentrification of these communities being implemented into housing policies and affordability?	<p>The term 'gentrification' generally refers to an influx of more affluent residents and businesses moving into an area with the intent of shifting the neighbourhood's composition. In many cases, this type of change can be very detrimental to the identity and wellbeing of an area and its residents. Gentrification can lead to more issues with things like affordable housing, displacement of long-time residents, and the loss of social and economic diversity.</p> <p>We must consider the intent and objectives of our new housing policies to ensure that they will provide more viable options for <u>any</u> person looking for housing in the County of Brant. By encouraging more viable housing options, the implementation of specific housing policies can work to provide equitable solutions on a County-wide basis to assist residents dealing with, aging parents,</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>children in search of housing, hidden homelessness, racial inequality, and other forms of poverty. Forming a strong base of objectives for new housing policies will be a key factor in how well we can provide the safe and affordable housing options residents are looking for today and into the future.</p>
<p>I don't see age friendly or seniors in the mix of consideration.</p> <p>Will you also be consulting with the GRCOA (Grand River Council on Aging)?</p> <p>How do you ensure complete communities are age-friendly and can accommodate seniors?</p>	<p>Ensuring that there is housing available for seniors is essential to the future of Brant. This will include building retirement homes, community care facilities, various types of units attached to the home where an elderly parent can live etc. The County of Brant's population is getting increasingly older.</p> <p>Ensuring there are local amenities available so that seniors have proper care facilities is also essential to our future planning. This also includes shopping, groceries, and the ability and mobility to allow access to these amenities.</p> <p>Age-friendly communities are part of the complete communities' framework that the County is looking at. The Grand River Council on Aging is part of the Official Plan Stakeholder consultation.</p>
<p>There is a very long wait list for seniors housing within Burford and throughout the County. Will this plan address housing for our ageing population and for vulnerable populations, will it allow for ageing in place?</p>	<p>The new Official Plan will look at aging in place options, what we can do for affordable and attainable housing options, and housing typologies that can help provide equitable housing solutions for vulnerable populations. The County recently completed an agreement with Habitat for Humanity for a single-detached dwelling in the Oakhill area and is actively pursuing other partnerships to create affordable housing.</p>
<p>How can planning of our communities facilitate and promote active forms of transportation (walking, cycling)?</p>	<p>Planning our communities holistically, whether through capital projects, redevelopment of existing areas or communities, secondary plans, or proposal for new subdivision developments, can assist in the incorporation of complete streets. Complete streets form a crucial part of complete communities,</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<i>Continued from previous page</i>	ensuring adequate space for pedestrian, active, and vehicle transportation in the public right-of-way while ensuring safety standards are met.
As a long-time resident of the County of Brant one of the reasons why I love where I live is the number of trails and outdoor areas to enjoy our unique location. I worry with all the development and growth that these areas will be long gone by the time my children have grown. What measures or consideration is being given to protect and preserve the County's natural areas and features such as rivers, creeks, forests, and wildlife?	<p>The County of Brant has many great recreational areas that are very important for the environment, our mental health, and our quality of life. The County currently protects many natural areas through lands that are owned by the County, such as Brant Nature Park in Mount Pleasant and the Lions Parks in Burford and Paris.</p> <p>The County has a great system to build on and seeks to protect significant environmental resources such as forests, wetlands, and prone to flooding. As part of the development process, these lands are usually dedicated to the County of Brant. This provides the opportunity for the permanent protection of these areas and also allows compatible recreation (for example, expanding the County's trail system, providing active transportation and providing the quality of life that residents are seeking). As part of the new Official Plan we will map the natural heritage system and water resource system and create policies to protect those resources as well as tools to compliment these systems with recreational and educational opportunities.</p>
How does this aspect of the OP align with / complement / duplicate the Community Safety and Well-being Plan for the County?	Through Official Plan project will be looking to incorporate and compliment previous objectives undertaken both by other departments (such as with the Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Plan being developed by our Community Services Department) and agencies that will impact the key policy framework for healthy and complete communities in the County of Brant. The new Official Plan will work towards similar goals as the CSWB Plan like enhanced collaboration, planning for efficient service delivery, addressing the

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Question	Answer
<i>Continued from previous page</i>	housing needs of vulnerable groups, and planning to encourage healthy lifestyle opportunities.
How can we integrate our green spaces and active transportation networks so that cyclists and pedestrians do not have to compete with cars?	Part of the Official Plan process will look at protecting green spaces and encouraging recreational uses through active transportation. Parks staff are working to ensure parks and facilities are connected to trails through master planning initiatives. The County is looking towards a full Complete Streets framework with a Transportation Master Plan. Work will begin on the Transportation Master Plan after the Official Plan has been updated.
I understand that currently as per provincial guidelines a change in zoning pursued by the county (not the specific landowner) for a PIN (through the official plan) simply requires a newspaper article as a notice of a zoning change to specific PINS. Is there a better way to inform the public and specifically the landowner stakeholders to changes to their historic zoning? More direct contact to the landowners may help increase the stakeholder input into these decisions.	<p>Circulation methods, timelines and notice requirements are all regulated through provincial legislation under the Planning Act. The Province sets the minimum that we need to do, and we can use those standards to help improve our public engagement.</p> <p>Zoning changes, whether initiated by a private property owner or by the County of Brant, are all a public process under the Planning Act. When the review of the County's Comprehensive Zoning By-Law begins (after the New Official Plan is created, because we have to make sure our Zoning By-law is up to date), there will be public engagement involved with the process to ensure that each property owner's rights are taken into consideration and that education is available to property owners about their rights for land-use.</p> <p>With that said, feedback from the community on ways in which the County can improve upon notification, engagement and public consultation is always helpful as we continue to review and update our processes. We are looking at ways to provide more transparency and education in the land-use planning process in the County of Brant, including through municipally initiated projects like the new Official Plan.</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<p>It's wonderful we have an environmental planner but what about a heritage planner? I thought that was in the budget. When will that person be hired?</p>	<p>The County of Brant Development Services Department has recently introduced a newly formed Policy Division team. This team, while also working on the new Official Plan, will be exploring specific policy-related topics that will include strengthening our heritage conservation policies. With several dedicated Planning staff now working on policy and implementation, this change in the organization of planning staff will provide more dedicated support to topics like heritage, environment, affordable housing and much more.</p>
<p>Does the County have plans to integrate ideas and collaborate with the Brant County Health Unit?</p>	<p>Yes, the County is working with The Brant County Health Unit who is part of the Official Plan consultation. The Health Unit is working on developing policies for Healthy Communities. Part of the discussion paper available online (sections regarding health, age friendly development, access to food, environmental concerns, and socio-economic concerns) was created with the Health Unit.</p>
<p>We have serious traffic congestion. Why weren't new roads or a by-pass built around downtown Paris, prior to building new homes?</p>	<p>Traffic, parking and transportation options are all a continued concern for County of Brant residents. Development can take several years from the start of the process, and in some cases, it can take decades. That time needs to be filled with proactive planning on how to deal with the new traffic generated from growth. Because building takes place in phases, road improvements do not necessarily need to be ready right away. This would be too expensive for the municipality to undertake without the guarantee of development that we get when things are already in process. Traffic studies are done as a part of planning for new developments and those studies can lead to road improvements over time.</p> <p>Along with the Official Plan the County is updating the Transportation Master Plan to improve transportation systems, traffic flows, parking, complete streets, and active transportation networks for the County so that they are consistent</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>with the County's Growth Management Strategy to the year 2051. This includes looking at opportunities for a by-pass and to reduce traffic congestion in downtown Paris.</p> <p>It will also include a framework from the Province's Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan and Metrolinx Transit Planning to the year 2071. In addition, the County is working with Brantford on a Joint Transportation Study managing traffic flows and transportation solutions between the two municipalities.</p>
<p>How can the county improve traffic flow through the downtown core? Alternately, how can traffic be reduced through the downtown core / Grand River Street North?</p>	<p>As mentioned in the question above, this has been a critical concern for the community throughout the Official Plan consultation, as well as in many other projects the County is currently undertaking. The County of Brant Operations Department recently completed an Environmental Assessment for the planning of transportation improvements specifically through the Grand River Street North corridor. This study has provided several solutions to help address these traffic concerns as we continue to grow. There is more information available at www.brant.ca/EA or by contacting publicworks@brant.ca.</p>
<p>The County of Brant currently does not have any bicycle lanes and many areas lack pedestrian infrastructure. How can we ensure both new development and existing areas have an integrated active transportation network that is separate from vehicular traffic?</p>	<p>The County of Brant has initiated a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) which will look to include both active and more traditional forms of transportation throughout the County of Brant as we continue to grow. This plan will also work in conjunction with our Parks and Recreation staff who look at connectivity of our parks and public spaces, as well as opportunities for active transportation methods.</p> <p>The new Official Plan project will seek to incorporate the objectives established within the Transportation Master Plan once completed, as well as build on these principles into the future and throughout the years to come.</p>

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

Question	Answer
<p>The County has a great network of trails, how can we get these better integrated into residential areas so we can help people to get to places and amenities?</p>	<p>The County does have a Trail Master Plan that we are working with. It is closely related to our Transportation Master Plan and helps us integrate these planning aspects together so that they look at all aspects of transportation, including recreational trails. There are approximately 30 recommendations in the Trail Master Plan and many touch upon access and connectivity of trails.</p> <p>The County is also developing a cycling network as part of the Plan. There are 6 distinctive routes in the County that people can use to get around the County and to outside communities, and these will continue to be improved in the future.</p> <p>When it comes to new development, connectivity is considered to ensure subdivisions are connected to each other and to trails, For example, the Rest Acres Road corridor will have 3 metre multi-use trails on each side of the road.</p>

Protecting What We Value

Question	Answer
<p>The visual appeal of our historic communities is extremely important. Are there plans to better protect the heritage look and feel of our many communities throughout the County of Brant? Specifically, when considering new development and the overall design? To what degree can the Official Plan address some of these issues?</p>	<p>The County's Heritage Committee has a desire to push heritage to the forefront with new developments and existing built-up areas. There are a lot of tools related to heritage protection available to the County through the Ontario Heritage Act (using designations and conservation districts), and the Planning Act (design guidelines to enhance heritage, in certain areas or the entirety of the County). It will be important to set out the tools, priorities and objectives related to heritage in the Official Plan. This will be the key to put the proper effective heritage conservation tools into action for our future..</p> <p>For example, if residents want to see a greater level of protection for our downtown buildings, a heritage conservation district protecting the County's downtowns from demolition is an option. Heritage granting and designations to encourage property owners to keep up the look of their heritage buildings are also options. There are many opportunities available, and this Official Plan will be a way to create a foundation to encourage heritage in the County.</p>
<p>How does the County ensure there are parks, amenities, and recreation facilities in the new subdivisions as part of a complete and healthy community?</p>	<p>As part of the Planning Act, all new developments are required to give the County land or provide cash-in-lieu of land that is then used to create parks. Currently, in the new subdivisions that are large enough, the County is taking land for parks. Within the last 5 years, the County has gained approximately 200 acres of land to develop either natural spaces for trails or to build new community parks.</p> <p>The County works collaboratively to ensure that all departments are involved with pre-consultation meetings for development, and through that process the County looks at where schools should be placed, where parks should go, what</p>

Protecting What We Value

Question	Answer
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>the street networks may look like, and all the engineering considerations underground as well. For example, in St. George, in five or ten years down the road, the County is planning what a community school will look like so that community recreation as well as trails and parks will be incorporated into this addition to the community.</p>
<p>What is the County doing currently and what will we do in the future to address climate change?</p>	<p>The County has been a great leader when it comes to climate change. In November 2019, County Council had confirmed its commitment to combat climate change, joining many municipalities throughout Ontario in declaring a climate emergency. Not only has the County declared its commitment, but the County has also created many action items to address climate change.</p> <p>Brant Renewable Energy is an enterprise created by the County to conserve water, utilize solar energy, etc. The County has worked with residents to better inform them on renewable energy. The County has been a leader in providing solar energy at many of the County's facilities such as the Burford Arena and the Brant Sports Complex.</p> <p>The County is also undertaking the Paris Flood-risk Mitigation Strategy for Downtown Paris, an area that is subject to flooding of the Grand River and the Nith River. Many of the flood mitigation structures are outdated and the strategy identifies the issues and possible solutions to reduce the possibilities for flooding and the impact of flooding on existing buildings.</p> <p>The County has also created a Downtown Master Plan. This Plan focuses on Downtown Paris and identifies where beautification can be added, such as street trees and green roofs, which enhance the Downtown Core while also absorbing rainwater during intense storms. This area of Downtown Paris specifically is located within the flood plain of the Grand and Nith and will need</p>

Protecting What We Value

Question	Answer
<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>Careful consideration as we plan for the future of climate change impacts and mitigation.</p> <p>Many municipalities have design guidelines regarding energy and water conservation which sets out both voluntary and mandatory standards depending on the type of development. The County can look towards developing guidelines to encourage conservation by including these tools in our new Official Plan. As part of the County's Official Plan, policies can be implemented regarding water and energy conservation and other initiatives such as retaining street trees. The Official Plan will set our objectives and help us decide what needs to be protected and what can be done to fight climate change.</p>
<p>When new areas are developed how can we ensure heritage structures, which are green and affordable structures, are retained in new development areas?</p>	<p>Some municipalities retrofit older buildings to be part of an office which can later become part of a residential use or mixed-use. While working around existing buildings can be a challenge, this can be a good way to integrate older structures into new development and create a sense of place that honours the historic identity of an area.</p> <p>One of the tools available to us is Heritage Designations under the Heritage Act. If the property or structures have heritage significance, the County can work with the property owner towards a Heritage Designation. This designation will prevent demolition of the building and help provide requirements for preservation.</p>
<p>Will the Official Plan provide specific targets for enhanced heritage protections that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Legal Heritage Register; • An Archaeology Master Plan; 	<p>Heritage protection is a very important factor when talking about land-use planning, especially in communities where residents identify strongly with their history and heritage. Having specific targets in the new Official Plan will help</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Downtown Paris Heritage Conservation District (HCD); • HCDs in Mount Pleasant, Burford, St. George, Oakland/Scotland; and • Heritage Grants/Programs for improvements that enhance heritage attributes. 	<p>provide transparency and positive cumulative impacts for several topics of interest, including heritage conservation.</p> <p>Many heritage projects are currently underway, as well as scheduled to get started soon, including the formal heritage register, heritage conservation districts, design guidelines and consideration for other programs that will complement our rich cultural history. With the feedback from our community members, the County of Brant Heritage Committee, and our County Council, we will be able to create the framework for strong heritage conservation targets and policies to improve on the work being done in the County of Brant and protect our cultural heritage resources for the long term.</p>
<p>Why is our agri-food network a concern? When I drive through the County of Brant we seem to have tons of farms and places to grow and produce food.</p>	<p>A sustainable agri-food network provides fair living for growers and processors and promotes local self-reliance and environmental sustainability. If we do not work to preserve and protect this key component within the County of Brant issues like food shortages and ready access to locally grown produce could become a reality. Land use planning must consider the protection and conservation of local food production capacity for long-term sustainability. Policies that enhance the local agri-food system can help create a complete community that is self-sufficient and economically successful.</p>
<p>Why are we so concerned with the protection and preservation of the agricultural areas?</p>	<p>There is a need for continuous un-fragmented agricultural land base in order to properly support the County's agricultural systems which support our food network as well as the County's diverse economic structure. By creating policies which protect the division of the County's prime agricultural lands and divert growth back to settlement areas, compatibility issues between land uses within our rural areas can be avoided.</p>

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<p>As the County continues to grow, what measures will be taken to protect the County's natural features such as rivers, forests and wildlife?</p>	<p>The County is currently undergoing a comprehensive mapping exercise that identifies where natural features (woodlands, wetlands, rivers, etc.) are located. Various sources such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Conservation Authorities are providing information (for example, information regarding Species At Risk). This information is being gathered and mapped. The mapping may highlight linkages between natural features and go beyond the natural heritage system that the province has mapped. This mapping may help indicate how we can create a County Natural Heritage System that promotes natural connections.</p> <p>Creating policies to protect natural features is another important measure. At present, the County does have a low forest coverage in settlement areas (approximately 14%). Policies should be created to protect and increase forest coverage (for example, increasing forest coverage to 30% as recommended by Environment Canada). When trees need to be removed, replacement trees may be an option. During the review of Development Applications and Site Plans, landscaping and green infrastructure may also be options to help with climate change, enhancing the natural environment, and aesthetics. During the development process, it will be necessary to see what can be done to create a better natural heritage system.</p>

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Question	Answer
<p>What plans are there to become an environmental leader as the county in either the province, the country, or the world? To what degree do you want to become an environmental leader and what plans are there to bring that to fruition?</p>	<p>The County recently created the new position of an Environmental Planner to add expertise to protect natural areas to our planning and policy staff.</p> <p>One of the first projects the environmental planning position has initiated is a review of the County's Tree Conservation By-Law with the goal of promoting good forestry practices and determining the ways individual trees in settlement areas should be protected.</p> <p>One of the best strategies for protecting the environment is for a municipality to have clear policies that outline what and how features will be protected. When policies are unclear, it is difficult to protect features through the development process.</p> <p>In 2017, the Growth Plan created better protection for the environment, in which the Province mapped a Natural Heritage System. The Growth Plan builds upon the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Plan and Greenbelt Plan. Through the Growth Plan, permanent protection has been provided for the environment outside of settlement areas as most development is prohibited in (or within 30 metres of) woodlands, wetlands, and fish habitat. It sets clear policies. The mapping and policies will be integrated into the new Official Plan.</p> <p>As part of the new Official Plan, the County will need to determine how to protect natural features within settlement areas. The Provincial Policy Statement does not provide for the permanent protection of natural features, as policies provide a minimum standard, allowing for development subject to demonstrating no negative impacts. Municipalities such as the Region of Waterloo and the City of Guelph have gone beyond this minimum standard by establishing policies that do not permit development within natural areas and that require minimum buffers.</p>

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How is farmland being protected , as a place on the outskirts of the Greenbelt and subsequently, how will farmland be protected and affordable for future generations of farmers, and the current generation of young farmers?	<p>To ensure agricultural lands, agricultural lands systems and agri-food networks are protected, the Growth Plan is stipulating that growth is to be directed back to settlement areas, areas that are already built up and have the infrastructure in place to support the growth. A line has been drawn around our settlements, called a settlement boundary, that works to protect farmland beyond that boundary. This direction helps reduce the fragmentation of agricultural systems in general.</p> <p>The County will look to create policies and direction that do work to ensure the agricultural system in the County of Brant is protected and not fragmented. Conversion of these lands for development make it difficult for the farming community to practice the farming activities they need to carry out. These policies will help set objectives for protecting our farmland, and will work to assist our Economic Development staff with opportunities to assist our farming community and agricultural economy.</p>
How can you accommodate new/young farmers that want to provide local food by farming?	As a remnant of past planning policies that allowed farmland to be divided, there are many under-sized agricultural parcels in the County. These smaller parcels could be an opportunity to provide education, research and on-farm diversified uses that can help our agricultural communities sustain themselves. Our Economic Development staff work directly with the agricultural community to find ways to best support farmers new and old.
My wife and I live on a large farm and would like to retire in a few years but need income for retirement. We would like to sell	Protection of prime agricultural policies through the PPS would not permit the creation of new residential lots in agricultural areas. There is a need for continuous un-fragmented agricultural land base in order to properly support

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Question	Answer
<p>most of the farm as we don't want to maintain the land. We would like to sever a small residential lot that we can build a modest home on so we can stay in the area. Can policies be created to make it easier to create new non-farm residential lots in agricultural areas?</p>	<p>the County's agricultural systems which support our food network as well as the County's diverse economic structure. By creating policies which protect the division of the County's prime agricultural lands and divert growth back to settlement areas, compatibility issues between land uses within our rural areas can be avoided.</p> <p>While severances may not be an option in our agriculture areas, staff are actively working on policy opportunities that can assist our residents with aging-in-place in rural areas. We've recently updated our housing policies to allow additional residential units in agricultural areas. We've included requirements in the policies to keep buildings clustered on farms, as well as ensure well and septic servicing is safe for our residents. This provides more options for folks who may want to down-size on their own property, or provide housing for other people who may want to live on the property. More information about this initiative can be found by visiting www.brant.ca/ARU.</p>
<p>Does the government mandate the amount of farmland that has to be preserved? When I drive into Paris I get sick seeing the amount of farm land and forest that has been converted into housing over the past few years.</p>	<p>Through provincial legislative framework set out within <i>A Place to Grow: Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe</i> municipalities within Ontario are obligated to direct growth back to established and existing settlement areas. This works to preserve and protect the agricultural areas, mainly the agricultural systems and agri-food network. In Paris, for example, the current settlement boundary was established as far back as 20 years ago, with the farmland in the boundary being slated for eventual development. The land-use planning process can take decades before we see development come to fruition, and that is why it is important to stay engaged with community land-use planning policies. We are seeing the current growth from development decisions made years ago, with the current economy, provincial policy, and population changes pushing our growth. It is important to have policies that</p>

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<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>manage and time growth appropriately, protecting the agricultural areas by encouraging density and intensification, and controlling the need to expand a settlement boundary further into agricultural land.</p>
<p>As land keeps on being grabbed up for development, how will environmental and agriculturally important land be respected and be further incorporated into the towns of the County, (such as community gardens and increasing food sovereignty through the allowance of chickens)? How will communities be developed sustainably for integrated communities, including business and residential in the same area to reduce transportation issues in the future?</p>	<p>Inclusion of policies to protect what we consider valuable assets to our communities will be essential through the new Official Plan project. For example, this will be an important consideration when reviewing the existing settlement areas and boundaries and how we can accommodate a population of 59,000 residents by 2051.</p> <p>Focusing on mixed use policies will be a key component of building healthy, complete and sustainable communities. These policies will help keep compatible uses together and encourage more options for housing that will help us accommodate our forecasted growth. Within these mixed use and residential policies will be opportunities to encourage community food production, home-based businesses, localised public spaces, and the like. These opportunities will be further explored when we implement the policies of the new Official Plan with things like the new zoning by-law or economic development initiatives.</p>
<p>Healthy forests are valuable to me. What is the County doing to protect Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)?</p>	<p>Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) are areas that have been identified and mapped by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. They are areas that have gone through intensive surveys and studies. They provide unique representation of life science areas that are related to vegetation communities, and wetlands. For example, Pinehurst Lake is a life science ANSI.</p> <p>These areas do need to be protected, as stated in the Provincial Policy Statement, and are also mapped in the Official Plan. The current Official Plan does not contain many policies regarding ANSI's and does not get into much</p>

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Question	Answer
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How can we encourage the protection of natural heritage lands, waterways and wildlife corridors in the rural area?	<p>Through Official Plan engagement and the development of a Tree Conservation By-Law, there has been a lot of great feedback from the community about environmental protection. It is important that the County leads by example by managing forests and actively carrying out good forestry practices on County lands.</p> <p>The County has received a lot of requests about tree planting programs. Many municipalities have initiatives to work towards doubling the tree canopy or dedicating a few days a year to give out trees. Having staff that can provide stewardship advice to the community is beneficial.</p> <p>To protect our resources, it is important to have clear policies, such as a strong Tree Protection By-Law that promotes good forestry practices and preventing clear cutting of our forests. If clear cutting is occurring, replacement trees should be planted.</p> <p>The Official Plan needs to identify where development is appropriate and what needs to be protected. These measures can go a long way in protecting our natural areas.</p>
We had a survey earlier where many respondents on this call wanted single family homes or country estate properties . How will this be reconciled with the need to	By incorporating clear policy direction into our new Official Plan that will direct growth to existing settlement areas within the County of Brant, we can preserve and protect both our agricultural and natural heritage systems. Planning for our future will always have trade-offs and our Official Plan will identify where development is most appropriate. It may be the case that the

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<p>protect agricultural lands, natural areas and promote intensification?</p>	<p>creation of new estate property developments becomes less common in an effort to save our rural lands. This will provide an opportunity to create policies to try and accommodate a wider range of housing types throughout the County that will appeal to more people but will also not develop land unnecessarily.</p> <p>Inclusions of policies that consider a range of different housing types and densities, and encourage a mix of housing to be incorporated within both new and existing communities, will ensure that there are housing options to meet our community needs in the years to come.</p>
<p>What is the status of the Heritage Register? How do we protect heritage buildings in the rural areas?</p>	<p>The Heritage Register is an ongoing project of the Heritage Committee, building an inventory of heritage structures in the County. This is a tool under the Heritage Act available to us and is more of a management tool rather than an actual protection tool. The cultural value is flagged and gives more notice if there will be a demolition so that we can consider the value of the structure and its heritage attributes.</p> <p>For stronger heritage consideration, working towards heritage designation can enact protections for structures. It is important to inform the public about what this means as there are many incorrect notions about the implications of a heritage designation on a property owner.</p> <p>The County may grant incentives for heritage and work together on strategic initiatives such as working with the Economic Development Department on Community Improvement Plans. There are many tools that play into the protection aspects and having the right ones in place will be important with this new Official Plan.</p>