



Brant County Council Report

To: To the Mayor and Members of Brant County Council
From: Jennifer Boyer, BES, M.Sc., MCIP RPP, Manager of Policy Planning
Brandon Kortleve, BA, CPT, Planner, Policy Planning Unit
Date: November 3, 2020
Report: RPT-20-190
Subject: New Official Plan Engagement and Feedback Summary
Purpose: For Information

Recommendation

THAT report RPT-20-190 be received as information.

Strategic Priorities

1. Sustainable and Managed Growth
2. Healthy, Safe and Engaged Citizens
3. Effective Communications

Financial Considerations

Completion of the New Official Plan will be undertaken primarily by County staff, with some initiatives completed by external consultants for the Municipal Comprehensive Review and facilitation of public engagement events.

Background

Public and stakeholder feedback is critical to ensure that the New Official Plan will serve our community in the future. Planning staff continue efforts to ensuring the new Official Plan is completed within the timeframes to meet conformity to the Growth Plan by July 1, 2022.

To include as many voices as possible in this important conversation about the future of the planning the County of Brant, staff have completed various public engagement activities that are designed virtually to give the community an opportunity to provide meaningful input during COVID-19.

Public and stakeholder engagement is not only required but continues to be an integral component of the New Official Plan process. The input that is gathered from the engagement activities and consultation will be summarized to inform Council in early 2021.

Report

New Official Plan Engagement Initiatives

The County had cancelled all in-person public consultation events for the New Official Plan that were originally scheduled in late May and June. As part of the revised public engagement initiatives for the Official Plan, County staff will be conducting no in-person large-scale public engagement events until further notice. Several virtual engagement opportunities are being conducted through County-supported technology tools (such as Zoom, GIS, eSolutions, and Bang the Table).

Staff have begun engaging the public and stakeholders on themes, which were presented in detail to Council February 2020 at the Official Plan Education Workshop. These topics are intended to trigger conversations and brainstorming from the community to be incorporated into the Official Plan framework and policies in the following areas:

- Building Healthy and Complete Communities
- Economic Development and Prosperity
- How we Green
- Protecting what we Value
- Planning for Infrastructure
- Transportation and Mobility

As a way to encourage the local County of Brant communities to have their say and join the conversation, the month of October was dedicated to engaging directly with the public and various stakeholders on key trends and topics related to land-use planning policies in the County of Brant. The intent of the public engagement sessions was to:

1. Educate and Inform.
2. Stimulate thinking about complexities and challenges.
3. Drive the public to other tools (surveys, discussion papers) to solicit feedback.

Virtual Engagement Activities

Four virtual engagement sessions were hosted by Planning Staff and facilitated featuring a live presentation by staff. There were two (2) two-hour virtual town hall sessions dedicated to the public with the ability for participants to be involved with the live question and answer session directly on the Zoom platform. Additionally, a two-hour session was held with stakeholders and development industry representatives, as well as a two-hour session with the County of Brant Council. The following successful virtual engagement sessions have now been completed:

October 7, 2020 - Growth Management Virtual Town Hall

October 8, 2020 - Development Industry/ Stakeholder Workshop

October 21, 2020- Building Healthy & Complete Communities Virtual Town Hall

October 22, 2020 – Council Facilitated Workshop

There were also opportunities for other participants and community members to send questions and comments to the officialplan@brant.ca email address and to watch the sessions on the Facebook livestream or on Facebook, YouTube, or the www.brant.ca/NewOfficialPlan webpage after the session had finished recording.

Staff are actively tracking all questions and comments received and will be issuing video and print responses to the common inquiries to ensure that the information is shared beyond the engagement sessions and distributed as widely as possible.

Advertising and Outreach

Staff have continued to invite the County of Brant community to share their thoughts on key trends and topics related to the creation of the new Official Plan. A number of specific opportunities for education and engagement have been undertaken and staff have continued to encourage conversation about the key topics of the new Official Plan through virtual town hall sessions, facilitated workshops, surveys, informative topic videos, discussion guides, and topic summaries. These specific engagement opportunities are explored further below.

Several promotional opportunities have been used to educate and inform the public about the new Official Plan and opportunities to provide input. In collaboration with the Corporate Communications and Marketing Division, the Planning Division coordinated a media release on September 18th, 2020 outlining ways to get involved with the new Official Plan project, and specifically sharing information about the virtual town hall meetings in October. This release was picked up by media outlets including the Brantford Expositor, BScene, and Brant.One News. Information about these virtual town hall events was also included on mobile signs in Scotland, St. George, Burford, and Paris South beginning on September 21 for one month. Information was also included in a county-wide mailout through the Corporate Communications and Marketing Division that was sent out to the over 13,000 households in the County in early October.

With physical distancing requirements in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, planning staff have also approached public engagement in a way that focuses on physically distanced engagement through the engagement opportunities listed below, with added information and opportunities being released on a bi-weekly basis between October 2020 and January 2020. Planning staff recognize that virtual engagement opportunities may present barriers to participation but will ensure that the input received is organized to best reflect the weight of responses based on the demographics of the County of Brant and its various communities. Included below is a summary of the specific engagement opportunities explored thus far:

Website

Our New Official Plan website was re-launched in May 2020 and is the online hub for this project. The page includes a dedicated email address that is monitored by the project team, the ability to sign-up for a digital mailing list, and our staff are listed as direct contacts for telephone calls and walk-in inquiries. Webpages are also being created for each topic of interest that will provide those who are interested in specific topics key trends and information on further specific and related initiatives. As the New Official Plan project and its many facets will present an abundance of new information, this has been done in an effort to create layers and levels to the presentation of information, allowing each participant to engage at the level they choose.

Videos

A Call-to-Action video focusing on growth management in the County of Brant was released on September 28th, 2020. This video focused on informing the public why the Official Plan is a key component in managing growth and served as the launch of our virtual consultation platform in September.

Subsequent videos for each of the topics of interest for this project are being released bi-weekly. These videos will each be approximately one minute in length and intend to pose key questions and trends, trigger conversations and brainstorming, and direct viewers to the New Official Plan website to provide input on the topic. To-date, videos have been released about Growth Management and Building Healthy and Complete Communities to accompany the virtual town hall topics, and the remaining call-to-action videos will be released between November and mid-January. These topics are also being coordinated with other County of Brant departments that will play a large roll in the implementation of the related policy directions.

As noted, the video recordings of the two public town hall sessions have also been made available for viewing. As well, Planning staff intends to provide both video and written responses to common project questions that have been received to date. The video responses will be done in an 'Ask the Planner' format similar to the live question and answer period of the virtual town hall sessions. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that the information and questions received by Staff and Council are comprehensively addressed, weighted based on community demographics, and continue to promote trust and transparency in the public decision-making process. These responses will be provided in advance of the 'As We Heard It' report and Policy Direction phase that will be presented to Council in February of 2021.

Surveys

In addition to the thematic videos, surveys will also continue to be launched bi-weekly into early 2021. Each survey has been created with the assistance of the Corporate Communications and Marketing Division and will accompany the release of the call-to-action videos. These surveys are concise, including 10 or fewer questions, and will also present a starting point for education and discussions about each topic. There will also be opportunities in the surveys for respondents to provide general comments on the topic. At the time of this report writing, two surveys have been released:

September 28, 2020	Growth Management - 187 Respondents
October 16, 2020	Building Healthy and Complete Communities - 221 Respondents

The following upcoming surveys, videos and discussion papers will be soon be launched on the New Official Plan website:

November 2, 2020	Protecting What We Value
November 16, 2020	How We Green
November 30, 2020	Economic Development and Prosperity
January 4, 2021	Transportation and Mobility
January 18, 2021	Planning for Infrastructure

Discussion Guides and Topic Summaries

Discussion guides and topic summaries have been prepared for each of the topics of interest. The discussion guides contain a variety of information on key topics and trends impacting each of the topics. These guides have been prepared with technical information provided by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., who are actively working on the County of Brant's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and Growth Management Strategy, as well as with

input from key County of Brant departments and stakeholders. The guides present thorough information, providing context on the topic regarding the new Official Plan project. These guides range between 10 and 15 pages per topic and are organized by key trends and questions that will be addressed with the policy direction for the new Official Plan.

Topic summaries, a two-page summary of the discussion guides, have also been prepared for each topic of interest. These summaries have been provided for residents, staff, and stakeholders who may prefer concise and high-level summary of the topics. These are being used to pose key questions for feedback, key facts, and targets for our future growth, and to direct readers to alternative ways to get involved with the project.

Summary of Initial Findings

A summary of the initial findings and key trends from the engagement and consultation process thus far have been included below.

Growth Management

- Over 60% of respondents have identified themselves as residents of Paris
- The largest cohort of respondents have lived in the County of Brant for over 20 years (56%)
- The responses were spread between older age groups, with 47% of respondents between ages 35 and 54, another 35% between the ages of 55 and 74, but only 15% identifying themselves as 34 years of age or younger.
- When asked if they would prefer greenfield development, infill/ intensification development, or a mixture of both, younger cohorts favoured infill and intensification, and older cohorts favoured greenfield development, but the majority of respondents would prefer a mixture of both.
- Residents of Paris favour a mixture of these two development types, whereas residents of St. George expressed interest in both a mixture and an emphasis on greenfield development.
- Over half of the respondents wish to see a broad range and mix of housing in new neighbourhoods, as opposed to developments with similar or relatively similar housing types.
- Respondents from Paris and Burford noted that low and mid-rise apartments with 4 stories or lower were considered more appropriate than townhouse and rowhouse developments, whereas respondents from St. George showed no preference between the two.
- While Single Detached Housing received the plurality of votes from all respondents, forming 30% of the overall choices, it received the majority of votes by respondents from Burford where over 56% of these respondents believe Single Detached housing is an appropriate form of housing for the area.
- Common trends and comments regarding housing types include a desire for mixed-uses, low and mid-rise apartments, and modest and affordable options.
- When asked what respondents wish the County of Brant to focus on with the new Official Plan to 2051, key topics such include community and green space, trails, traffic, farmland and environmental protection, river access, infrastructure planning, housing options, and downtown charm.

Building Healthy and Complete Communities

- This survey has received more respondents than the Growth Management survey
- When it comes to streetscaping, respondents have expressed a need to focus less on vehicles and parking, and present opportunities to balance landscaping, pedestrian / active transportation options. They've also expressed the desire not to see drastic changes, but steady and balanced change
- Over 60% of respondents expressed a keen interest in living and working within the same community, with over a quarter of those respondents looking for more active transportation opportunities for their commute.
- Access to green spaces and natural features, as well as public amenities and community hubs were noted as the most important components of a healthy and complete community, chosen by over 30% of respondents. Access to fresh and affordable local food was the third most chosen component.
- When asked what kind of housing respondents would most like to see over the next 20-30 years, the least preferred type was high-rise apartments with 5 stories in height or more.
- Over a quarter of respondents have active transportation methods available to them to commute to work, but an additional 22% would like to see these options improved.
- In order of desired protection, respondents chose the environment, agriculture, cultural heritage, and jobs and services as priorities when planning for the future.

Next Steps and Upcoming Initiatives

As staff continue to actively collect feedback from the community, we are also tracking noted barriers to participation that may be impacting the information that is being collected. These barriers, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching audiences who may not frequently access the internet, providing information to audiences in a variety of formats, and educating the public on the importance of the New Official Plan project, are examples of the barriers being considered by staff during this project. As the New Official Plan project continues, staff will be working to further address these barriers to promote equity and transparency with the data collection and will adjust engagement opportunities, as necessary. Beyond engagement with the general public, staff will continue to engage with stakeholder groups, agencies, indigenous communities, and various community groups throughout this process.

As staff continue to collect comments and topic-based feedback, this engagement will work to shape Official Plan policy directions to be presented to County of Brant Council for discussion and decision in 2021. This feedback will also play a crucial role in the completion of the New Official Plan and its submission to the Province of Ontario for approval. The County will continue to conduct community engagement throughout the New Official Plan process to inform, consult, and involve the community in the development of the new Official Plan. Staff also continue daily with site specific inquiries, telephone calls and meetings with the public, developers and consultants related to land designations and land conversion requests.

The revised Official Plan work plan outlines the next steps in the project schedule and completion of technical studies to ensure we meet our timelines to the Province. The Province has stated that there will be *no extensions* to meet the July 1, 2022 date for conformity to the Growth Plan. The next major milestone in the Official Plan Work Plan is the December 8, 2020 – Special Meeting of Council on Growth Management Scenarios.

Interdepartmental Considerations

Separate virtual public engagement sessions will be held in conjunction with the Operations Department for the County's Transportation Master Plan, Master Servicing Studies, such as Burford Water and Wastewater, and Cainsville Class EAs.

The New Official Plan, coordination of public engagement, and technical background studies of the Municipal Comprehensive Review are being fully coordinated with other County departments for their input and analysis.

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Brandon Kortleve, BA, CPT, Planner, Policy Planning Unit

Reviewed and

Submitted by: Pam Duesling, MAES, MCIP, RPP, Ec.D., CMM3, General Manager of Development Services

Attachments

1. Brant Official Plan Work Plan & Schedule v.5 October 2020

Copy to

1. Heather Boyd, Director of Council Services, Clerk
2. Jennifer Mayhew, Planning Administrative Assistant
3. Senior Management Team
4. Mark Eby, Director of Infrastructure
5. Melissa Connor, Director of Communications and Public Relations

In adopting this report, is a bylaw or agreement required?

By-law required (No)

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk (No)

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? (No)



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
Phase 1: Commencement and Strategic Planning	July 2019 to October 2019	Work plan and schedule Consultation & engagement strategy Budget Background Research & Technical Work Consultant Retainer for MCR	Initial Consultation Meetings with Agencies (MMAH, OMAFRA, Ontario Growth Secretariat, GRCA, Health Unit) Internal Staff strategic discussions	Complete
Special Meeting of Planning Advisory Committee	November 5, 2019	Official Plan launch report and presentation	Open to the public	Complete
Burford Master Servicing Open House	November 6, 2019	Official Plan part of public engagement	Open to the public	Complete
Agricultural Advisory Committee	January 20, 2020	Official Plan launch report	Open to the public	Complete
Council Education Session on the Official Plan	February 4, 2020	Mayor and Council will participate in an Official Plan workshop after the presentation to Council on the Official Plan. Discuss roles and responsibilities, deliverables, consultation events. Toolkit for Council and the Mayor to reach out to citizens at various engagement events.	Committee of the Whole Open to the public	Complete



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
	March 2020	Report on Growth Management Forecasting	Committee of the Whole Open to the public	Complete
	March 4, 2020	Councillors' Coffee Chat	Council	Session #1 complete
<u>Phase 2:</u> Background Studies and Identification of Issues	November 2019 to October 2020	<p>Development of Discussion Papers on Policy Themes/key Issues will be released for public consultation in March 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Healthy and Complete Communities • Economic Development and Prosperity • Transportation and Mobility • Planning for Infrastructure • Protecting what we Value • How we Green <p>Draft Technical Summaries (MCR): -Draft Growth Management Strategy - Residential Land Needs Assessment -Housing Options and Analysis -Employment Land Analysis -Population projections, density and intensification targets.</p>	<p>Discussion Papers posted online</p> <p>Survey of Discussion Paper questions on the website</p> <p>Formation of Technical Working Groups</p> <p>Start of Internal and External Stakeholder Meetings</p> <p>Targeted Stakeholder Meetings</p> <p>Booking of Public Open Houses/ Engagement Events throughout March to May on Phase 2.</p>	In Progress



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
Council Meeting (Planning)	August 4, 2020	Official Plan Work Plan Update & Proposed Amendment to the Growth Plan Forecasting to 2051	Committee of the Whole Open to the public	Complete
Council Meeting (Planning)	September 1, 2020	New Official Plan Revised Consultation and Engagement Initiatives	Committee of the Whole Open to the public	Complete
Council Meeting (Planning)	October 6, 2020	Official Plan Update & Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan – Growth Forecasts	Committee of the Whole Open to the public	Complete
<u>WEBSITE LAUNCH</u>	September 2020	www.brant.ca/NewOfficialPlan	Official Plan Information and Engagement; Thematic launch, surveys, Discussion Papers, Municipal Comprehensive Review	Complete, In Progress
Public Engagement Consultation Events	October 7, 2020	Public Virtual Town Hall Growth Management	Virtual sessions and online engagement will form majority of consultation platform moving forward.	Oct. 7 - Complete
	October 8, 2020	Development Industry & Stakeholder Virtual Workshop		Oct. 8 – Complete
	October 21, 2020	Public Virtual Town Hall Building Healthy & Complete Communities		Oct. 21- Booked
	October 22, 2020	Council Education Workshop		Oct. 22 - Booked
Council Meeting (Planning)	November 4, 2020	As We Heard It Report (consultation on Phase 2 Policy Themes)	Committee of the Whole Open to the public	Report in progress



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
Special Meeting of Council Section 26	December 8, 2020	As required by Section 26 of the Planning Act, Convene a Special Meeting of Planning Advisory Committee on: Summary of draft Technical Background Information.- Municipal Comprehensive Review and Draft Growth Management Scenarios	Committee of the Whole Open to the public Members of the public are invited to make verbal or written submissions for the Committees' consideration.	Booked
<u>Phase 3:</u> Preliminary Policy Directions	December 2020 to March 2021	Finalization of Technical MCR Reports and policy directions on: - Growth Management Strategy -Land Needs Assessment -Settlement Area Boundaries -Housing Supply Options -Employment Lands Analysis -Community Structure Analysis -Market Analysis Results of Discussion papers and recommend policy directions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Healthy and Complete Communities • Economic Development and Prosperity • Transportation and Mobility • Planning for Infrastructure • Protecting what we Value • How we Green • Natural Hazard and Resource policies 	Circulate to Commenting Bodies and Agencies on draft Technical Background Studies. Public consultations on the high level policy directions will occur through to November 2020: Community Roundtables; Stakeholder Engagement, Workshops. <i>What we Heard</i> Summary and Report based on consultation and engagement events. Continue with Technical Working Groups Internal and External Stakeholder Meetings	



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
		Infrastructure and servicing draft policy recommendations Transportation Master Plan draft policy recommendations		
Special Meeting of Planning Advisory Committee	February 2021	Convene a Special Meeting of PAC to recommend that Council give direction to table a draft Official Plan in September 2021, under Section 26 of the Planning Act. Preliminary policy directions to be in the Growth Management strategies and settlement boundary review. Total population, total housing and intensification/density targets. Employment Lands concepts and total jobs to 2041	Meeting open to the public. Advertised as a public meeting.	
Phase 4: Prepare a Draft Official Plan	February 2021 to June 2021	A draft Official Plan will be prepared during this time, based on policy directions approved by Council at the January 2021 Special Meeting of PAC. Prepare First Draft Official Plan which will include: New sections of the Official Plan with policy text prepared. Schedules for Settlement Areas. Land Use Designations/ Changes Mapping Updates, Schedules, Site-specific amendments	Consultation ongoing, Open House Submit to County staff, Agencies, and Province of Ontario for review and comments.	



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
Special Meeting of Planning Advisory Committee	June 2021	Convene a Special Meeting of Planning Advisory Committee for the statutory public meeting required under Section 26 of the Planning Act on revisions that may be required to the Official Plan.	Meeting open to the public.	
Circulation and Review of the Draft Official Plan	June to August 2021	Following tabling of the draft Official Plan, a 90-day statutory circulation to the public, technical agencies and Ministry		
<u>Phase 5:</u> Prepare Final Official Plan	September 2021 to November 2021	Final Official Plan will be prepared based on draft Official Plan consultation and comments/revisions Additional requests for review from public and stakeholders (site specific, schedules, policies). All Official Plan Amendments (schedules) to be completed Land Use Schedules and Mapping.	Statutory Public Open Houses will be held throughout September to November 2021 (more than one anticipated) Public consultations will continue through to February 2022.	
Statutory Public Meeting/ Special Meeting of Council	December 2021	Convene a meeting of Planning Advisory Committee for the statutory public meeting required under the Planning Act, Section 17, subject	Adequate notice and information, including a copy of the proposed plan, is made available to the	The Ministry has up to six months to review and approve the Official Plan.



NEW OFFICIAL PLAN WORKPLAN & SCHEDULE

Phase/ Meeting	Dates	Deliverable	Consultation and Engagement	Status
		<p>to such sessions as are required, to receive submissions from public delegations in respect of the adoption of the new Official Plan.</p> <p>Presentation to Council for Adoption Council adopts new Official Plan.</p>	<p>public in advance of the public meeting.</p> <p>Following adoption by Council, the Plan will be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.</p>	
<p>Provincial Approval of the County of Brant New Official Plan</p>	<p>By July 1, 2022</p>	<p>Approval by the Ministry is expected by July1, 2022.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p>Implementation of the Official Plan</p>	<p>Fall 2022 to 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Zoning By-law Update • Secondary Plans for Settlement Areas • Implementation Guidelines • Municipal By-law Updates 	<p>Through Planning Act processes and public engagement on special projects</p>	