

STAFF REPORT:

Planning & Building Services Department



REPORT TO: Planning & Building Committee
MEETING DATE: April 20, 2011
REPORT NO.: PL.11.39
SUBJECT: Official Plan Review –
Background Report
PREPARED BY: Cindy Welsh, MCIP, RPP
Senior Policy Planner

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive staff report PL.11.39 Official Plan Review – Background Report for information purposes.

B. Background

At the April 4, 2011, the Planning and Building Committee considered Staff Report PL.11.35, Official Plan Review – Updated Work Plan. This Report provided an update with respect to the Review and also provided an updated work plan. Further, the Committee requested that a Special Meeting of the Committee take place whereat the Committee, and the public, would have an opportunity to meet the selected Consultant, Meridian Planning Consultants; receive additional information with respect to the Review and the related process; provide further input to supplement the previously approved Terms of Reference and Request for Proposals Document; and, to provide further guidance so as to supplement the role of the Council approved Steering Committee.

In preparation of the Special Meeting, the Consultant has prepared a memorandum (Addendum A) which outlines the following:

- Role of the Official Plan;
- Purpose of an Official Plan Review;
- Study Components; and
- Public Consultation

Phase 1 of the Official Plan Review will be completed between April 2011 and September 2011. Phase 1 activities include background research, issues identification and review of the existing plan. Phase 2 will begin in September 2011 and will run until March 2011 with activities to include plan preparation.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

Managing growth to ensure the ongoing health and prosperity of the community.

D. Environmental Impacts

Not applicable.

E. Financial Impact

The Official Plan Review process was approved as an Operating Project in the 2010 Budget with \$140,000 budgeted for consulting services and \$84,000 for legal services. Meridian Planning Consultants Inc. have been retained at a cost of \$134,387.11 to undertake the Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan Five-year Review.

F. Attachments

A. Meridian Planning Consultants Ltd. Memo dated April 14, 2011.

Respectfully submitted by:

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MEMORANDUM

To: Town of The Blue Mountains Planning & Building Committee
From: Mark Stone, Senior Planner
Date: April 15, 2011
Re: Town of The Blue Mountains – Official Plan Review
Our File No: 4074

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a brief overview of the Official Plan Review, discuss the role of an Official Plan and identify some of the key components of the workplan. The Town is undertaking this Review in accordance with the Planning Act to ensure that the Official Plan conforms to Provincial and County policy. However, this review is also an opportunity for the Town to ensure that the Official Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.

ROLE OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

At a high level, an Official Plan contains goals, objectives and policies to manage and direct physical change and the effects of that change on the social, economic and natural environment of a municipality. An Official Plan also establishes the basic framework for how the community will evolve over time.

PURPOSE OF AN OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

The Planning Act requires that an Official Plan be reviewed at least every five years to ensure conformity with legislation and provincial policy. The main Provincial policy document to be considered in reviewing the Official Plan is the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS states that:

“Long-term prosperity and social well-being of Ontarians depend on maintaining strong communities, a clean and healthy environment and a strong economy. Efficient land use and development patterns support strong, livable and healthy communities, protect the environment and public health and safety, and facilitate economic growth.”

The Review will also involve implementing the County Official Plan and various Town studies that have been completed. This Review is also an opportunity for the Town to

consider current and emerging issues and trends, and to ensure that the Official Plan responds to local priorities, aspirations and changing community needs. This Official Plan Review is not intended to fundamentally change the current policy approach or substantially redesignate properties within the municipality.

The review of the Official Plan is an opportunity for the Town to ensure the policy framework on which the Official Plan is based, in context of the needs and aspirations of the local community, is current, relevant and appropriate. It is also an opportunity to address and support strategies and programs of the Town through land use planning mechanisms.

STUDY COMPONENTS

To ensure that the Official Plan Review takes into account all considerations and issues, and involves the community throughout the process, a two-phase comprehensive workplan has been established.

Phase 1, Background Issues and Review, will focus on understanding:

- the vision, aspirations and concerns of Council and the community
- the current Official Plan
- all relevant studies prepared to date
- relevant Provincial and County policy, and the types of choices and decisions the Town must make
- relevant background information and policy relating to a range of study or theme areas including natural heritage, agriculture, cultural heritage, design and employment

Phase 2, Plan Preparation will focus on preparing policy for the Official Plan.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation with the community is an important component of this project and thus is integrated throughout both phases of the workplan. The consultation workplan involves a variety of methods to outreach to the community including:

- a series of visioning workshops with the community to explore themes, issues and policy areas
- ensuring a transparent and open process
- providing web content that provides a range of information respecting the review, and that is constantly updated
- release of a newsletter in the near future to introduce the project to the community
- exploring opportunities for youth input

The following chart summarizes the Town's consultation workplan.

PHASE 1	
Steering Committee Meeting #1	April 21
Workshops with Town Senior Management and Planning Department	May
Council Workshop	May
Agencies, Boards and Commissions Meeting #1	June
Visioning Workshops (One day) - Public Sessions #1-6	June
Steering Committee Meeting #2	June
Public Meeting #1 - Policy Options and Recommendations - Public Session #7	September
Steering Committee Meeting #3 - Policy Options Presentation	September
PHASE 2	
Vision Preparation and Public Discussion - Public Session #8	September
Steering Committee Meeting #4 - First Draft Review	November
Public Workshops - Public Sessions #9-14	November
Agencies, Boards and Commissions Meeting #2	November
Steering Committee Meeting #5 - Second Draft Review	December
Public Open House and Workshop #3	January 2012
Planning and Building Committee Presentation of Second Draft of Official Plan	January 2012
Meeting with Council	February 2012
Statutory Public Meeting	March 2012

CONCLUSION

We are excited to work with you on this important document for the future of the Town. We also look forward to engaging in dialogue with the Town at this early stage to get a clearer understanding of some of the preliminary goals, objectives and issues that should be considered as we move forward.

Sincerely,



Mark Stone, BES, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner