

STAFF REPORT: **Planning**



REPORT TO: **Mayor and Members of Council**
MEETING DATE: **November 24, 2008**
REPORT NO.: **PL.08.125**
SUBJECT: **County of Grey – Official Plan
Five Year Review**
PREPARED BY: **Peter Tollefsen, Director of
Planning and Cindy Welsh,
Senior Policy Planner**

A. Recommendations

THAT Council does adopt Planning Staff Report #PL.08.125, “County of Grey – Official Plan Five Year Review” for information and review purposes and that this report be forwarded to the County as part of the Town’s official response to the County of Grey - Official Plan Five Year Review.

B. Background

The County of Grey is in the final process of conducting their Official Plan Five Year Review as per the *Planning Act*. The proposed new Official Plan was circulated to Council in August 2008, with the document being discussed at the August 18, 2008, Planning Council meeting. The Town’s comments were forwarded to the County Planning Department for review after that meeting. Since then, the County has received municipal and agency comments in September 2008.

On October 27, 2008, the Town was provided with the changes to the County Official Plan regarding the comments received and advised of an upcoming public open house scheduled for November 18, 2008, and the statutory public meeting, to be held on November 25, 2008. Planning staff were circulated highlights of the modifications of the County Official Plan on October 27, 2008. The highlights provided a comparison of the Town’s August suggestions and the new edition of the County Plan.

On November 14, 2008, the County held a meeting with area planners to provide a summary of the changes that have occurred as a result of discussions with the County Planning Committee and the Province. Staff attended this meeting and as a result, have provided comments below (Staff agree with a number of these changes except as otherwise noted):

- A new section, 1.2 County Restructuring has been added to the County Official Plan which outlines the restructured County system which came into effect on January 1, 2001, with county government and nine local governments.
- A new goal on sustainability being Section 1.5.11 has been added which states “Ensure a policy-led planning system that recognizes and addresses the complex

inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning.”

- Under Section 1.7 Growth Management, the County has recognized the seasonal recreational growth within the County which will be used to determine housing needs and identify priorities for municipal infrastructure.
- Within Section 1.7 Growth Management, the County has included the following sentence within paragraph eleven (11) “Changes to the population projections will not require an amendment to the Plan but will be updated at the time of the next 5-year review”.
- A new section being 1.8 Housing Policy is to be added. Staff are in support of Section 1.8 e) in which the County states in the second sentence “In this regard the County will require that 20% of all housing be affordable,” however the County has not undertaken a planning justification and housing needs study to determine the need at 20%. The County is asking that local official plans include policies and designations to implement these policies, however, no implementation tools have been provided to local municipalities in terms of requiring that 20% of all housing be affordable. The Town is in support of a policy of this type, however, it is recommended that a planning justification study be completed by the County to properly identify the percentage of affordable housing required for the County and local municipalities.
- Under Section 2.1.2 (1), the County will be deleting “wayside pits and quarries, portable asphalt plants” as permitted uses within the Agricultural Designation.
- The Minimum Distance Separation formulae shall be used equally to determine the appropriate setback requirements for both farm and non-farm uses in the Agricultural designation and shall be applied to new non-farm development on existing lots of record.
- Other rural area highlights include permitted uses expanded to include small scale commercial or industrial (new definitions) and wineries.
- Non-farm lot creation within 500 metres of a Primary Settlement Area boundary shall not be considered.
- Under Section 2.3.4 Consent Policies, the County has developed the following policy:

All consents for new lot development shall be no smaller than 0.8 hectares in area, each parcel both severed and retained shall have a minimum lot frontage of 100 metres and a maximum density of two lots may be considered (plus the retained lot), by the consent process, per 40 hectares. The lot density shall be determined based on the original Township lot fabric (i.e. as determined by the original crown

survey) and shall be pro-rated up or down based on the size or the original Township lot. For example in cases where the original Township lot is 80 hectares a maximum of four lots may be considered (plus the retained). Alternatively, where the original Township lots were 20 hectares a maximum of one lot (plus the retained) may be considered.

- New definitions of Settlement Areas and specifically Tertiary Areas, within Section 2.6.1, the County is proposing to remove the “Hamlet” designation from its Official Plan. As part of this, Banks, Redwing, Gibraltar and Slabtown will not be identified within the County plan. The Town’s Official Plan designates these areas as Village Centre VCTR. This is a concern of the Agricultural Advisory Committee of a loss to the rural identity.
- With regards to Section 2.7.4 Policies for the Establishment of New Mineral Resource Extraction Operations, this section has been changed by the County from the June 2008 version. The change now implies that only a County Official Plan amendment will be required pertaining to proposed mineral aggregate extraction operations. The Town recommended that “where a Local Official Plan exists, an amendment to establish a new mineral aggregate operation or to expand an existing operation should be required.” Staff are of the opinion the Official Plan Amendment should remain at the local level.

- With regards to Section 5.4 Waste Management, the County has reworded the original section and replaced it with the following:

“The County of Grey supports waste reduction as the best response to managing waste and will encourage all reasonable efforts to reduce and eliminate the production of unnecessary waste. The management and/or ownership of waste management facilities and operations remain the responsibility of local municipalities within the County. Appendix A of the County Official Plan shows the location of open landfill sites as well as the location of known closed and abandoned sites. The County encourages local municipalities to promote mandatory waste diversion programs in order to reduce the amount of waste to be disposed of through landfills. Recycling, waste reduction, waste transfer stations and similar waste management facilities may be permitted in addition to waste disposal activities.”

- The County is proposing new Renewable Energy Policies. The Town is seeking clarification on a number of items within these polices.

- With regards to Section 6.16.1, the County has reworded the original section and replaced it with the following:

“Local municipal councils, under the Planning Act may choose to designate Community Improvement Areas. Identifying a Community Improvement Area shall be carried out through a by-law designating the whole, or any part of the local municipality as a Community Improvement Area. Background studies shall first be

completed and made available to the public outlining the need for the Community Improvement Area. The goal of any Community Improvement Area shall be to foster and co-ordinate the physical improvements and maintenance of older or dilapidated areas of a community.”

- The County is also proposing new Water Taking policies which the Town has commented on. The Town is requesting that a local Official Plan Amendment, if required by the local Official Plan and a Zoning By-law Amendment be required and this should be stated in the County Official Plan.
- With regards to Site Plan Control, the County is proposing to allow Mineral Aggregate Operations to be exempt from this. Town Planning Staff do not agree with this and feel site plan control should still be required.
- The County has also included a First Nation consultation policy.
- Other new policy sections include Maintenance and Occupancy Standards, Community Improvement, Accessory Apartments and Complete Applications.
- With regards to Schedule A, Land Use Designations, the Town provided proposed delineations for the new Recreation Resort Designation Areas. From the review of this mapping, staff have identified two minor mapping errors. The County will be notified of these.
- The County has also included a “Definitions” section, being 6.19.

County Planning Staff will be drafting a response to Staff’s suggestions sent to them in October. Staff plan on attending the November 25, 2008, Statutory Public Meeting to provide the above written comments to the County. Staff are still reviewing the County Plan. Prior to the County adopting the Official Plan 5-year review in January 2009, staff will provide further comments, which have had Council’s input, to the County.

The remaining timeline for the County’s Official Plan five-year review process is as follows:

- November 18, 2008 – Public Open House.
- November 25, 2008 – Statutory Public Meeting
- January 2009 – present to County Council for approval and submission to Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.

C. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan

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

D. Environmental Impacts

There are some proposed new policies in the County Official Plan requiring more impact studies for development which will assist in improvements to the environment.

E. Budget Impact

Amendments will be required to the Town Official Plan when the County Official Plan is improved to bring our Plan into conformity. Staff time to review and prepare the amendments.

F. Attachments

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