



Official Plan Review

Our Town, Our Plan

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY OFFICIAL PLAN FIVE YEAR REVIEW PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Saturday, June 18, 2011

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Beaver Valley Community Centre, 58 Alfred Street, Thornbury

Public Workshop Details:

38 participants attended the June 18, 2011 public workshop.

Themes Explored:

The following themes were explored as part of the public workshop:

1. Agriculture.
2. Natural Heritage and Hazard Lands.
3. Commercial and Employment Lands.
4. Growth Management, Intensification, Transportation and Design.

These themes were explored through table-facilitated discussion of three questions being:

1. What theme-related issues, challenges and opportunities should be considered?
2. How might the range of issues/challenges/opportunities be best addressed in the updated Official Plan?
3. Ten years from now how would things be different compared to today — what would your ideal future look like?

AGRICULTURE

1. What theme-related issues, challenges and opportunities should be considered for agriculture?

- Facilitate multi-generational living on farms.
- Encourage and improve chance of agricultural lands staying agriculture for the long-term.
- Encourage opportunities to allow for younger generations to take over farming operations.
- Encourage wine production.
- Need to review definition of small scale agriculture-related uses.
- Develop and encourage agri-tourism opportunities.
- Encourage sustainable farming for future production.
- Need for flexibility with specified limits and language in the Official Plan should be inclusive.
- Environmental concerns relating to pesticides – long term environmental effects.
- Reduce conflicts between rural and agricultural residents and uses.
- Encourage agricultural economic development.
- Support local agricultural producers by buying local.
- Develop watershed policies for agricultural lands.
- Need for farmers to generate additional sources of income during the winter months.

2. How might the range of issues/challenges/opportunities be best addressed in the updated Official Plan?

- Allow for roadside vending.
- Allow wineries, tours of the facilities and small on-site eating facilities.
- Review minimum farm size requirements.
- Remove and/or reduce restrictions on sale of agricultural products.
- Review permitted uses in the Agriculture Designation.
- Allow for secondary agricultural related uses.
- Allow for agricultural economic diversity.
- Agriculture-related uses must be based on agriculture.
- Need to ensure that tourism does not negatively impact agriculture.

3. Ten years from now, if agriculture within The Blue Mountains were more the way you would like it to be, how would things be different compared to today — what would your ideal future look like?

- Promote agriculture as a tourist attraction.
- More food being produced locally.
- Have ability for small co-op farm gate vending markets.
- Greater connection between agriculture community, urban community and seasonal residents/tourists.
- Reduce encroachment into agriculture areas.
- Maintain local abattoirs.
- Embrace sustainable projects.
- Diversity in crops.
- Protect small farms.
- Limit residential growth in and near agricultural areas.
- Tourism that respect agriculture.
- Value added products.

NATURAL HERITAGE AND HAZARD LANDS

1. What theme-related issues, challenges and opportunities should be considered?

- Climate change and the effects on hazard areas.
- Updated and better defined natural heritage and hazard lands mapping.
- Designated significant natural features.
- Potential to tie into tourism and be accessible.
- Update language from late 1980's to use current technology.
- Explore challenges with buffers and connectivity.
- Ensure public access to beaches and rivers.
- Natural heritage system should be developed and utilized.
- Expand protection and access to natural heritage.
- Enhance karst protection.
- Develop public ownership policy for along the waterfront.

2. How might the range of issues/challenges/opportunities be best addressed in the updated Official Plan?

- Define what is an adequate buffer.
- Identify environmentally sensitive lands.
- Education.
- Update mapping.
- Require fencing policies for natural corridors.
- Maintenance, protection and enhancement of natural heritage features.
- Include educational uses and activities as a permitted use in Hazard designations.
- Include policies for the maintenance, protection and enhancement of natural heritage features, connectivity and forest management.
- Ensure minimum buffers are respected & not marginalized.
- Provide transparency in policies for water management.
- Require sustainable landscaping.

3. Ten years from now, if things relating to natural heritage and hazard lands within The Blue Mountains were more the way you would like them to be, how would they be different compared to today – what would your ideal future look like?

- Assist the Niagara Escarpment Commission in advocating to protect the natural environment.
- Plan to replace and expand number of trees in the Town and along roadways.
- Education.
- Consistency.

- Tourism.
- Wetlands.
- Recognize sensitivity of land use.
- Stewardship programs.
- Identification and protection of corridors/linkages.
- Protection of shoreline.
- Complete a comprehensive greenland study.
- Ensure natural areas in service areas are protected and preserved.
- Watershed and aquifer protection.
- Need for a natural sand beach from a tourism perspective.
- More public ownership and access to the waterfront along with preservation of associated natural features.
- Need policies to encourage re-plantings of trees and stewardship.
- Address conflicts between natural species/features and agriculture.
- Have an appropriate balance between natural heritage and tourism.

COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT LANDS

1. What theme-related issues, challenges and opportunities should be considered?

- Tourist targeted.
- Diversified mix.
- Emphasis on tourism – more on services – local market.
- Official Plan and zoning need to be in harmony to allow for integration.
- Lack of serviced land.
- Lack of infrastructure.
- Lack of public transportation.
- Lack of commercial “soft services” meaning zoning to allow professionals in residential areas.
- Home based small businesses.
- Additional broadband for high tech industries.
- High tech educational industry.
- Develop a Centre of Excellence.
- Consideration of a regional commercial perspective where the Official Plan recognizes commercial lands outside of the municipality.
- Need flexibility built into the Official Plan for home based small businesses.
- A level of commercial needs to be able to be designated in different designations of the Official Plan.
- Allow for a mix of residential units above commercial.
- Ability to keep uniqueness of existing commercial.
- Attractive businesses.
- Good built form to attract businesses.
- Suggestion that perhaps the cause of Development Charges being too high is that there is too much infrastructure and facilities being built in the Town.
- Concern with shift from local sources to Big Box.
- Expected increased taxes will negatively impact businesses.

2. How might the range of issues/challenges/opportunities be best addressed in the updated Official Plan?

- Need more flexibility regarding the changing economy.
- Encourage diversity in economy to encourage higher income jobs.
- Streamline process for approvals.
- Need a regional approach.
- Reduce the number of commercial designations in the Official Plan.
- Keep wording that new commercial development should not hinder existing commercial development.
- Need to anticipate businesses that could locate here.
- Encourage telecommunicating.

- Expand broadband into rural areas.
- Need to allow employment and commercial opportunities that are linked to attainable housing.
- Need for visitor-friendly businesses versus office-type uses in the Thornbury core.
- Incentives – tie Development Charge reductions to the number of new employees created by a business.
- Provide “shovel ready” land – consider property tax breaks for new businesses in the first few years.
- Need for local affordable housing for those in the service industry.
- Craigeith area is very fragmented with a lack of focus due to ownership and need for additional development in the area.
- Need for better dialogue between residents, businesses and Council.
- Tourism accommodation in Thornbury makes sense if limited to bed and breakfasts but not a hotel which is not feasible or realistic.

3. Ten years from now, if things relating to commercial and employment lands within The Blue Mountains were more the way you would like them to be, how would they be different compared to today — what would your ideal future look like?

- Maintain small town commercial.
- Infilling in commercial areas.
- Need a way to make transportation available and affordable such as partnerships with Blue Mountain Resorts and the Town.
- Local people can buy what they need in local shops and get services here.
- Green Centre of Excellence – educational service.
- Green builds for sustainability.
- Image maintained.
- Broader product diversity but not through big box format.
- Commercial and residential mix.
- Encourage small business enterprise in the community.
- Need to be recognized for something unique in the community.
- Permit professional offices along Bruce Street as long as built form is maintained.
- Regenerate business areas.
- Prevent gentrification.
- Need for Town support of businesses and economic development.
- Vision suggested whereby there are two parts of Town:
 - The Blue Mountain Village and area as a recreational destination and Thornbury, Clarksburg and other areas which focus on the small town feel, environmental resources and heritage.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT, INTENSIFICATION, TRANSPORTATION AND DESIGN

1. What theme-related issues, challenges and opportunities should be considered?

Growth Management

- Need clarification regarding growth numbers.
- More comprehensive planning.
- Avoid urban sprawl.

Intensification

- Community connectivity and how everything connects.
- Intensity versus community character.
- Need to discourage monster houses.
- Environmental challenges of intensification.

Transportation

- No mention of bikes in transportation.
- Need bike policies and policies for pedestrians.
- Need for active transportation.
- Need to address flexibility for how people with disabilities get around on trails, etc.
- Accessibility.
- Ensure services and amenities are walkable.

Design

- Healthy mix of residential designations.
- Sustainable design.
- Intensification and affordable housing are tied.
- There are limits on the ability of many landowners to provide accessory apartments.
- Any type of community or urban design guidelines should not restrict flexibility in design.
- More specific policies for built environment.

2. How might the range of issues/challenges/opportunities be best addressed in the updated Official Plan?

Growth Management

- Secondary plans that are more specific to community plans.
- Exact density figures and limitations which will lead to transition zones from low density to higher density.
- Need delineations.

- Allow incremental change in intensity from one area to the next.
- Community land trust.

Intensification

- Progressive, positive, urban development.
- Higher density.
- Mixed use development.
- Smaller lot sizes which will lead to less infrastructure.
- Allow more innovation.

Transportation

- Need policies regarding public transportation.

Design

- Community Design Guidelines.
- Specific policy plan for built environment which consider sustainable practices.

3. Ten years from now, if things relating to growth management, intensification, transportation and design within The Blue Mountains were more the way you would like them to be, how would they be different compared to today — what would your ideal future look like?

Growth Management

- Maintain small town character.
- Have limitations on growth.

Intensification

- Diversity of homes to have range of owners and renters.
- Reasonable density with reasonable design.
- Housing where people work.
- Consider creating neighbourhood communities where everything is within walking distance and services provided locally.

Transportation

- Ability to walk and bike around.
- Discourage traffic.
- More public transportation in and outside of region.
- Sustainable transportation.
- Have options for public transit.

Design

- Good mix of housing.
- 60% of built environment in retro-fit.