



Staff Report

Planning & Development Services – Planning Division

Report To: Committee of the Whole Meeting
Meeting Date: June 7, 2022
Report Number: PDS.22.074
Title: Official Plan 5 Year Review – Information Report
Prepared by: Shawn Postma, Senior Policy Planner

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.22.074, entitled “Official Plan 5 Year Review – Information Report”;

B. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the status of the Official Plan 5 Year Review project.

C. Background

Council endorsed the project Terms of Reference in December 2021 through Staff Report [PDS.21.152](#). The Town Official Plan Review Steering Committee released a Request for Proposals in January 2021 with three interested firms responding. The successful candidate was confirmed in March 2021 with work beginning immediately.

A dedicated website has been launched at www.theblueprint.ca including identification branding and logo. A Project Timeline is included to track the progress/status of the project, additional information is provided, and a subscriber contact list has been created to keep those interested with up to date with project updates.

A Public Survey was released during the month of April with 25 questions seeking feedback on Phase 1 project components. Questions were designed to seek feedback on the current Town Vision, Goals and Objectives, Growth Management, Density, Housing, the Environment, Transportation and Agriculture. 595 responses were received, and Town Staff prepared a [Survey Results summary document](#) that was released on May 13, 2022. In general, the survey responses see a positive and optimistic future for the Town. Survey questions were presented for Phase 1 to understand how the community feels about the Town currently, how well growth and development has been managed in the past, and what the Town should focus on into the future.

A number of common themes were identified:

1. **Community character** is important. The Town of The Blue Mountains should: retain its small town feel, remain a unique place in Ontario, emphasize our natural areas that make our Town great.
2. **Community Connectivity** where neighbourhoods, communities, towns and hamlet areas are well connected to one another, to public parks, to active transportation, and to shoreline, scenic areas and other open space areas
3. **Housing Affordability** continues to be a priority, and has been unsuccessful since the last Official Plan update. Improved mix of housing types at a range of price points is required.
4. **Growth Management** received mixed results. Approximately half responding that growth should stop or be slowed, and half responding that growth can be managed better in consideration of land consumption, density, height and housing types.
5. **Recreation and Tourism** opportunities in the Town are successful, and that the Plan can build on that success with complimentary development and new business opportunities.

Additional questions requested feedback on the current Vision and Goals & Objectives. A strong majority (88%) felt as though the current vision statement of the Official Plan remains relevant. When asked further to describe the vision of the Town for the next 25 years, responses also added a stronger focus on environmental protection and affordability. Regarding Goals & Objectives, the survey asked respondents to evaluate the success of various issues, and to identify other key issues that were not listed. The results help to inform what policy areas are working well, and which ones require further work.

A number of questions were asked about character, neighbourhood design, and vision for growth for each service area from Lora Bay to Craighleith to our Rural Areas. Community connectivity rated very high with access to public spaces. Mixed opinions were provided on what priorities and opportunities exist for each service area community

Final questions involved some general feedback on the Environment, Agriculture, Transportation, Concerns, Opportunities and Final Thoughts. In summary:

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Environment | - | Protection and preservation of existing woodlands and watercourses |
| Agriculture | - | Farmland long term protection and agricultural/rural business supports |
| Transportation | - | Expansion of existing sidewalk/trails network |
| | - | Provide enhanced active transportation opportunities |
| Concerns | - | Economy: Housing, jobs, increased costs, balanced community |
| | - | Development: Growing too fast, overcrowding of existing facilities/amenities, too much density |
| | - | Environment: loss of environmental significant lands, green space, farmland, habitat |

- Opportunities
- Going Green: Active transportation, sustainability, environmental protection and promotion
 - Tourism: Embrace as a world class destination, create an identity as a unique place, capitalize on outdoor activities, and area features
 - Local Heritage: become a model Ontario community, preserve the past and bring elements into the future, enhance existing heritage/charm

In addition to the summary of survey results mentioned above, the [full survey results](#) including 225 pages of data is also available for viewing on the project website.

Background Papers have been prepared for the Phase 1 project components:

- Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives
- Community Structure
- Growth Management
- Density / Height
- Housing
- Housekeeping changes

Background Papers provide research and identify opportunities that will direct the future policy updates. The Papers review current Town policy, Provincial and County policy, industry best practices, comparable municipalities and the Phase 1 April 2022 survey results. A number of opportunities and options for policy direction are discussed and will be shared with the public through Public Information Sessions and Public Outreach on June 1 and June 5. The Papers along with feedback from the Public will then inform Staff and its consultants in developing the technical policy updates and changes to the Official Plan.

The technical updates will then be shared through a future Public Open House and Public Meeting for comment and consideration of the Public anticipated for July 2022. An information report or recommendation report can then be presented to Council for a decision on the Phase 1 Official Plan updates prior to the County of Grey providing a final decision.

The Official Plan Review project remains on schedule and on budget. The anticipated completion date for Phase 1 of the project remains at August 2022.

D. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

E. Environmental Impacts

Environmental impacts are a significant component to the Official Plan Review. Enhancements to the Town Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals and Objectives are being considered for the natural and built environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and to incorporate opportunities identified under the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

F. Financial Impacts

The Town of The Blue Mountains 2022 Budget includes \$410,000 for the Official Plan 5-year review project. The Budget covers the Salary and Benefits for in house work as well as utilizing outside consultants for expertise on Background Policy Papers related to the project components identified in this report. The budget accommodates the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project only. Phase 3 is subject to future Council and Budget consideration for 2023.

G. In Consultation With

Trevor Houghton, Manager of Community Planning

Official Plan Steering Committee members

H. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Postma, planning@thebluemountains.ca

The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a Public Meeting which took place on July 12, 2021. Those who provided comments at the Public Meeting, including anyone who has asked to receive notice regarding this matter, has been provided notice of this Staff Report.

The topic of this Staff Report will be the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre in accordance with the following schedule:

- June 1, 2022 – Public Information Session #1 (Thornbury)

- June 4, 2022 – Public Information Session #2 (Craigleith)
- Summer 2022 - Public Open House
- Summer 2022 - Public Meeting

Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Postma,
planning@thebluemountains.ca

I. Attached

1. Nil

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Postma, RPP MCIP
Senior Planner

Trevor Houghton, RPP MCIP
Manager of Community Planning

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PDS.22.074 Official Plan 5 Year Review - Information Report.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	May 20, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Trevor Houghton - May 20, 2022 - 11:50 AM