



Staff Report

Planning & Building Services – Planning Division

Report To: COW - Operations, Planning and Building Services
Meeting Date: February 3, 2026
Report Number: PBS.25.003
Title: Information Report – Community Design Guidelines
Prepared by: Diksha Marwaha, Senior Planner, Planning & Building Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PBS.26.003, entitled “Information Report – Community Design Guidelines”

B. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Community Design Guidelines project and to update the council about the next steps and project schedule.

C. Background

Community Design Guidelines are an implementation tool that provides direction for achieving the community design objectives and policies of the Official Plan. The guidelines offer detailed guidance to shape the built form and public realm in a manner that enhances the quality of life for current and future residents of the Town of The Blue Mountains. The guidelines are grounded in, and intended to reflect, the vision, objectives, and principles established through the Official Plan.

The Official Plan establishes the Town’s Community vision, objectives, and land use concept, while the Comprehensive Zoning By-law regulates land use and development standards. The Community Design Guidelines complement these tools by expressing design expectations and providing direction to support well designed development across the public and private realms.

The first edition of the Town-wide Community Design Guidelines was completed in 2012. Since then, the Town has updated key policy documents, including the Official Plan (2016), the Comprehensive Zoning By-law (2018), and most recently, the Draft Official Plan through the 5-Year Review process.

In light of these changes, the Town’s Community Design Guidelines Update project is intended to align the Town’s design guidance with the Draft Official Plan and the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. The updated Community Design Guidelines will build on the guidance established in the

2012 guidelines and reflect the policy direction of the Official Plan and the regulations in the Zoning By-law.

Community Design Guidelines Update Document

The updated Community Design Guidelines will build upon and expand the general design direction established in the existing 2012 guidelines, policy direction of the Official Plan, and the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. The guidelines will apply primarily within the Town's Settlement Areas, where residential, commercial, and recreational uses are concentrated.

The Community Design Guidelines will provide guidance, standards, and general concepts related to building typologies, site planning, and landscape and open space design. The guidelines are intended to assist applicants in the preparation of development proposals and to support the Town in reviewing and assessing the design aspects of development applications.

The guidelines are not intended to function as policies or regulatory standards. They will be applied in a flexible manner that allows for creativity in design and alternative approaches, while still ensuring that development contributes to the overall vision for the Town's communities.

The Community Design Guidelines are intended to be used in conjunction with other Town policies, by-laws, plans, and initiatives, including the Official Plan, Comprehensive Zoning By-law, Engineering Standards, and other applicable documents.

Project Schedule, Milestones and Next steps

The Town retained SGL Planning and Design Inc. to update the existing 2012 Community Design Guidelines and to prepare a Community Design Checklist to support the preparation and review of development applications.

The Community Design Guidelines project was initially started concurrent with the Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan Review. As the Official Plan Review was underway, there was some uncertainty with the future policy direction particularly on Building Heights and Density requirements. These two components have been confirmed through the adopted Official Plan and now it is appropriate to continue to finalize Draft Guidelines.

Outlined below is a summary of the key project milestones achieved to date, as well as those anticipated:

Project Kick-off:	Q1 2023
Background Review and Analysis:	Q1 2023
Information Report to Council:	We are here
Draft Community Design Guidelines:	Q2 2026
Public Engagement and Feedback:	Q2 2026

Final Community Design Guidelines and Draft Checklist:	Q3 2026
Targeted Council Adoption:	Q4 2026

Conclusion

As the Town continues to grow, the Community Design Guidelines will support developers and Town staff in creating inclusive, well-designed communities that retain the Town's unique small rural character. The draft guidelines are expected in Q2 2026, with public engagement providing an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to review and provide feedback. The final guidelines and draft checklist are planned for completion in Q3 2026 and targeted for Council adoption in Q4 2026.

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

Guidelines related to natural features will be updated and enhanced to align with Provincial policies and the Town's policies. These updates will help ensure development respect and integrate natural systems within the community.

F. Financial Impacts

There are no new financial implications arising from the planned actions in this report. The cost of the Community Design Guidelines Update project is covered within the existing budget.

G. In Consultation With

Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning

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 Diksha Marwaha, planning@thebluemountains.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Diksha Marwaha
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PBS.26.003 Information Report - Community Design Guidelines.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 25, 2026

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

Shawn Postma - Jan 25, 2026 - 6:09 PM

No Signature - Task assigned to Tim Murawsky was completed by delegate Shawn Postma

Tim Murawsky - Jan 25, 2026 - 7:55 PM