



Staff Report

Planning & Development Services – Planning Division

Report To: COW-Operations, Planning and Development Services
Meeting Date: May 16, 2023
Report Number: PDS.23.028
Title: Official Plan 5 Year Review Project Update Report
Prepared by: Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.23.028, entitled “Official Plan 5 Year Review Project Update Report”;

B. Overview

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Official Plan 5 Year Review Project.

C. Background

Planning Staff provided an update on the Official Plan 5 Year Review project through [Staff Report PDS.23.018](#). The report also includes details on Phase 2 project modifications including additional background research work, increased public engagement and Council involvement, and the elimination of the Steering Committee. The Committee of the Whole discussion requested additional information on also incorporating a Housing Needs Assessment and further work on Community Character.

[Staff Report PDS.23.018](#) identified that the above project changes do result in an increase to the project budget that are covered by cost savings found in Phase 1 of the project and by utilizing a portion of the project contingency budget. The addition of the Housing Needs Assessment is also being considered under a [May 15, 2023 Staff Report](#) to Committee of the Whole.

The Housing Needs Assessment will be to provide an understanding of the housing requirements of current and future residents and assist in the development of policies that increase the supply of affordable and attainable housing in the community.

The provision of affordable and attainable housing is increasingly important for the well-being of communities across Ontario as housing becomes more expensive and out of reach for many residents. This trend is even more evident in the Town of the Blue Mountains where a large seasonal population and relatively high house prices have made it difficult for many residents

(particularly those in the services industry) to attain adequate housing. Recognizing this, as part of the ongoing Official Plan Five-Year Review, the Town is now looking to update its 2016 Housing Needs Assessment to reflect current housing conditions and incorporate policies into the Official Plan that will increase the supply of affordable housing in the municipality.

The Town has received a proposal from Parcel Economics who is already part of the Project Consulting Team previously completing work on the Phase 1 Growth Allocations and Fiscal Analysis Background Paper.

The following sections of the report provide additional project updates on:

- Background Papers
- Community Design Guidelines
- Community Engagement
- Community Survey

Figure 1 (near the end of this report) also provides an info-graphic on the Official Plan Phase 2 Timeline and Details.

Background Papers

Eleven different Background Papers are being prepared as part of Phase 2 of the Town's Official Plan Review. The Background Papers are divided into key topics and themes and are structured to provide research and supporting data, consider previous comments received, and provides options and recommendations for updating the Town's existing policies. The following provides an overview of the topics and analysis covered within each Background Paper.

Environment and Climate Change:

The Environment and Climate Change Background Paper provides a review of existing Town policies and the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, as well as current Provincial and County environmental and climate change policies and plans. It sets out key challenges and options for climate change policies based on local projections and demographics and socio-economic conditions. The Background Paper provides recommendations for policies relating to climate change mitigation, reflecting green energy priorities, transportation, building sustainability and other innovative options to consider.

Infrastructure and Servicing:

The Infrastructure and Servicing Background Paper includes a review of The Town's Municipal Master Plan for Town-wide Water Distribution Systems, as well as current Provincial and County direction for servicing. The Paper assesses whether it is necessary or appropriate to incorporate new direction from current policy documents with the overall objective to advance the Town's objectives, encourage smart development, servicing implementation and promote innovation.

Agricultural and Rural Lands:

The Agricultural and Rural Lands Background Paper comprehensively evaluates current County and Town Official Plan policies for rural and agricultural lands, with a focus on permitted uses, severances, farm size requirements, and lot additions. The Paper also provides a review of County split designation policies and examines current Town policies for the appropriateness of permitted uses, required updates regarding the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formulae and opportunities to enhance agri-tourism, eco-tourism and cultural-tourism in agricultural and rural land use designations. Following a review of current policy, recommendations are provided to ensure policy compliance with upper-tier planning documents and provide opportunities to enhance the agricultural sector of the Town.

Commercial and Employment Lands:

The Commercial and Employment Lands Background Paper builds upon the findings of the Phase 1 Growth Management Strategy and provides recommendations for updates to align with Provincial and County policies. It includes an inventory of existing and vacant commercial and employment lands within the Town and policy options to encourage shovel ready sites to support growth of the Town's commercial and employment sectors. The Paper also includes an analysis of the existing Bruce Street/Marsh Street Commercial Corridor policies based on lands that have been developed since policy implementation, providing recommendations for alternative policy options.

Building Height Study:

The Building Height Study was developed in response to public input from Phase 1 of the Official Plan Review and the need to further evaluate where taller buildings may be appropriate in the Town and how they should be accommodated. Using mapping and graphic analysis, the study analyzes opportunities based on the draft intensification criteria set out in the Phase 1 proposed Official Plan amendment. It reviews opportunities for taller buildings using site modelling within the Community Living Area, Thornbury Downtown Area (along Highway 26 corridor and outside of the Downtown Core), as well as the Residential Recreational Area.

Transit and Transportation:

The Transit and Transportation Background Paper provides options and recommendations for policy updates based on the Town's updated Transportation Master Plan, as well as the County's Complete Transportation Systems and Official Plan policies for transportation and County-wide transit systems. Based on current best practices, the paper also sets out options for new parking requirements.

Parks and Open Space:

The Parks and Open Space Background Paper reviews the Town's existing policy direction; the updated County Official Plan and policies for parks, recreation and tourism; recommendations from the Leisure Activities Plan; and current Parkland Dedication policies. A number of policy options and recommendations for updates are set out.

Source Water Protection:

The Source Water Protection Policies Background Paper provides options and recommendations for policy and mapping updates based on the Saugeen, Grey Sauble, Northern Bruce Peninsula Source Protection Plan; the South Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the Grey County Official Plan to ensure conformity with Provincial requirements.

Cannabis Policies:

The Cannabis Policies Background Paper provides an overview of the Town's existing Medical Marijuana policies and an analysis of policy updates required to align with the introduction of the Provincial Cannabis Act and Regulations in 2018 which set out new permissions for the growing of recreational cannabis. The Paper outlines a best practice review of policies from other recently updated municipal policies as well as options for the Town to consider in order to permit, regulate and control the use throughout the Town's agricultural and employment land use designations.

Indigenous Engagement:

The Indigenous Engagement Policies Background Paper sets out recommendations for the updated Official Plan to implement new policies that recognize traditional territories of indigenous communities and improve collaboration on land use issues and involvement in land use decisions. The Paper includes a review of the applicable Provincial legislation to ensure conformity, as well as the Grey County Official Plan consultation policies.

Community Planning Permit System:

The Community Planning Permit System Background Paper summarizes the current planning context within which a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) can be developed. A CPPS is a land use planning tool available to municipalities, administered through a Community Planning Permit By-law (CPP By-law), that combines Zoning By-law Amendments, Minor Variances, and Site Plan applications, into one single application and approval process. The Paper highlights how other municipalities have approached the creation and implementation of a CPP By-law and provides an overview of the required and recommended policies to be implemented within the Official Plan to encourage and guide implementation.

Housing Needs Assessment

Will review key provincial and municipal housing documents including the Provincial Policy Statement, the Draft Provincial Planning Statement, Grey County Official Plan, Town of the Blue Mountains Official Plan and zoning by-law, and housing strategies to establish the policy context governing housing and affordable housing in the Town of the Blue Mountains. We will also review definitions of affordable/attainable as well as the implications of recent Provincial housing legislation (Bill 23, Bill 109).

The draft Background Papers will be released to the public in late spring/early summer prior to the numerous Official Plan engagement events planned for Summer 2023. The bulk of the

Background Papers will be released in groups based on similar topic areas which will correspond with the 4 different Public Information Centres planned.

Community Design Guidelines Update

In tandem with Phase 2 of the Official Plan Review, the Town is in the process of updating their existing Community Design Guidelines. As the Background Papers are currently being prepared, so is the ongoing review of the current Guidelines as well as community design best practices and a preliminary analysis of community character.

A crucial element to updating the Community Design Guidelines is seeking public input on the types of desired design elements in the public and private realm, built form and open space improvements, as well as understanding the elements that make each community and area unique. The Phase 2 Official Plan Survey is scheduled to be released late spring/early summer and will seek further community feedback into the Community Design Guidelines. A Community Design Workshop is also proposed following the Official Plan Public Information Centres.

Community Engagement

Engagement on the Phase 2 Background Papers and future policy development is planned for June and July 2023. The following Public Information Centres are proposed:

1. Agriculture and Rural Lands
2. Transportation, Infrastructure and Servicing
3. Environment and Climate Change, Parks and Open Space, Source Water Protection and Indigenous Engagement
4. Second Review of Housing, Density and Height

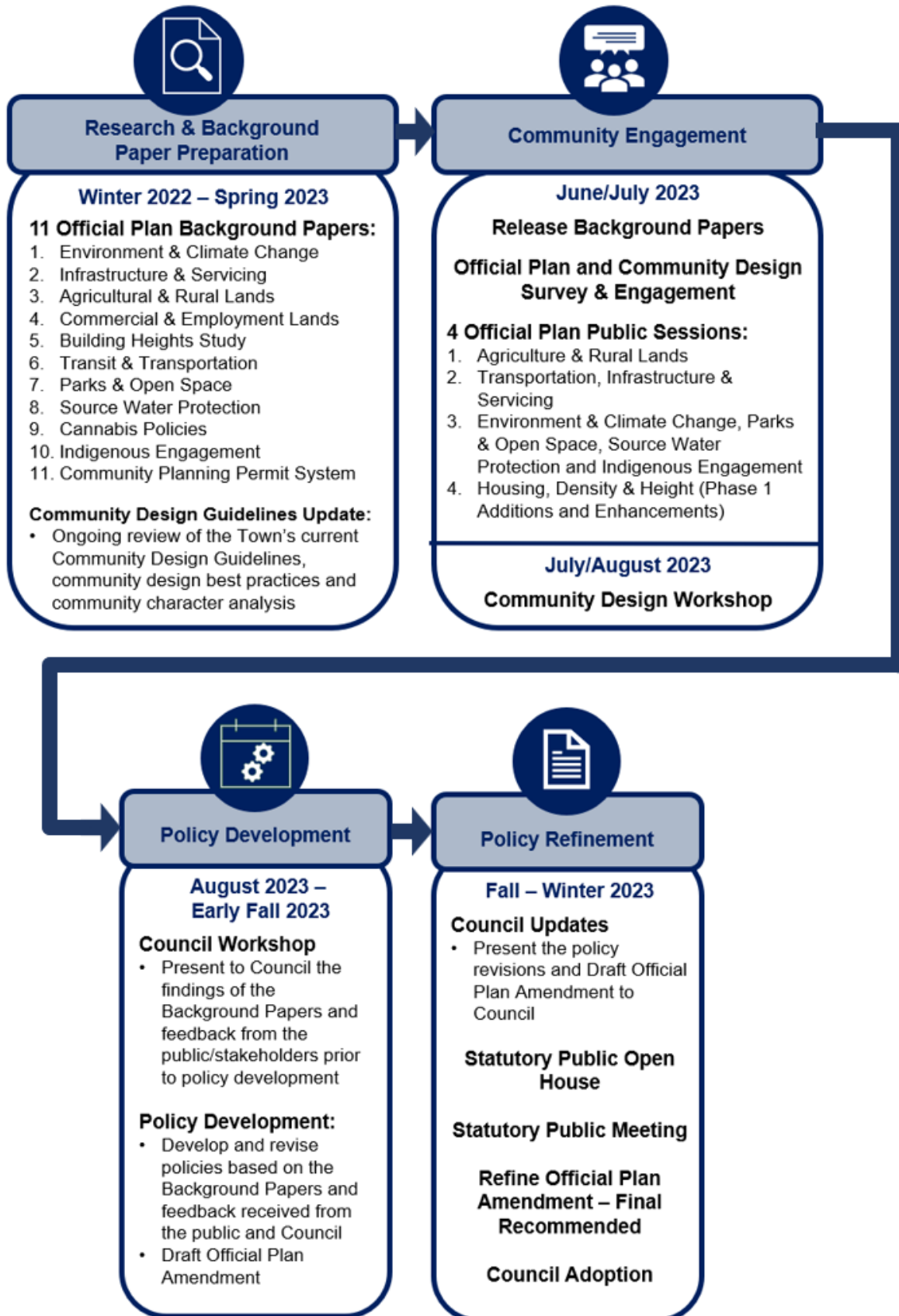
The Background Papers will be released and posted to the Town's website in groups based on topic area prior to each PIC event. This will ensure that each group of topics is presented separately to the public and individually focused on at each PIC. The Town's website will also see upgrades to allow opportunity to directly submit comments on specific topic areas.

Community Survey

The Phase 2 Official Plan Review and Community Design Survey will run for the duration of the summer Community Engagement timeline to ensure ample opportunities for participation. The previous Official Plan Survey at the beginning of Phase 1 received an overwhelming response and provided key direction on a number of Phase 2 topics. Based on the success of the Phase 1 Survey and valuable responses received still relevant to the work to come, the upcoming Phase 2 Survey will focus on further analysis on key topics of interest to the public such as community design, affordable housing, density and height, climate change and the environment.

Following the Public Information Centres and online engagement, a Council Workshop is proposed to be held to present the findings of the Background Papers and provide a more fulsome review of the feedback received from the public and stakeholders, prior to beginning policy development and refinement.

Figure 1: Official Plan Review Phase 2 Timeline and Details



D. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

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

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 policies will be updated and enhanced to current Provincial Policy, Provincial Plans, and the County of Grey Official Plan. Consultation will be received from the Grey Sauble and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authorities. More detailed environmental impacts will be considered in future staff reports.

F. Financial Impacts

The current upset fee limit for the project is \$235,000 which includes contingency fees. With the proposed revisions, an additional \$34,000 in new costs will be required for Phase 2. These new costs can be accommodated within the existing budget as Phase 1 of the project was completed under budget with an overall savings of approximately \$12,000. Should Council endorse the recommendations within this report, the contingency fee will be utilized and be reduced by \$22,000 for a new contingency total of approximately \$36,000. Council will consider the addition of the Housing Needs Assessment through the May 15, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

G. In Consultation With

SGL Planning and Design Inc.
Adam Smith, Director of Planning and Development Services

H. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a previous Public Meeting, Public Open House and two Public Information Centres which took place in June, July and August 2022 for Phase 1. Phase 2 also proposes a Public Meeting, Public Open House and five Public Information Centres. Notice of this report has been posted to the project website and circulated through

our project subscribers list. Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning at planning@thebluemountains.ca

I. Attached

1. Nil

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Postma
Manager of Community Planning

For more information, please contact:
Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning
planning@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 248

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PDS.23.028 Official Plan 5 Year Review Project Update Report.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	May 4, 2023

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

Adam Smith - May 4, 2023 - 8:53 AM