



Planning and Building Department

TO: Council

SUBJECT: Official Plan Review: Special Meeting of Council regarding scope

Report Number: PB-38-12

File Number(s): 505-08

Report Date: April 10, 2012

Ward(s) Affected: 1 2 3 4 5 6 All

Date to Committee: N/A

Date to Council: May 7, 2012

Recommendation: COMMENCE the process of reviewing the City of Burlington Official Plan.

DIRECT the Director of Planning and Building to compile and assess the comments received from the Public with the comments received in response to the internal and external scans of the current Official Plan.

DIRECT the Director of Planning and Building to bring forward a scope report for the Official Plan review, such report to include an assessment of all comments received to date and recommendations as to how to address the comments in the work plan for the Official Plan review.

Purpose:

- Address goal or action in strategic plan
 - Establish new or revised policy or service standard
 - Respond to legislation
 - Respond to staff direction
 - Address other area of responsibility
-

Reference to Strategic Plan:

- Vibrant Neighbourhoods
- Prosperity
- Excellence in Government
- N/A

The Official Plan Review will support the creation of more vibrant neighbourhoods by investigating opportunities to enhance policies supporting the creation of complete and healthy communities. The review will ensure that city policy provides for a range and mix of housing, employment, open space and commercial opportunities. As the Official Plan is a foundation planning document, the review will provide a framework for sound city building decisions by council.

Background:

In December City of Burlington Council endorsed a proposed process for the 2012 Official Plan Review presented in PB-87-11 "Introduction to the 2012 Official Plan Review". This report can be accessed at:

<http://cms.burlington.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=19478>

Discussion:**Official Plan**

The Official Plan is a policy document that sets out the city's land use objectives and directions for growth and development for the next 20 years. It identifies land uses, the locations and densities of those uses, as well as urban design and built form issues to be considered in the decision making process. The Official Plan includes policy directions related to many aspects of the city including transportation, infrastructure, natural environment, housing, heritage, open space, the downtown, as well as important social and economic considerations. The plan also describes the tools and programs that will aid council in the implementation of the plan.

The Official Plan has legal status and derives authority from the *Planning Act* which outlines the base requirements of an official plan. The official plan is the key policy tool which permits the City of Burlington to demonstrate regard to matters of provincial interest and align with the policies of the Regional Municipality of Halton. All municipal public works and by-laws must conform to the official plan.

The official plan is developed through planning analysis, research, interdisciplinary collaboration, dialogue within the City, with external stakeholders, and with the public.

The City of Burlington has initiated its next five-year review of the Official Plan and is seeking input from the public, agencies, stakeholders as well as staff within various departments of the City to assist council in identifying the topics and the nature of those topics which may require review. The purpose of the official plan review is to update the Official Plan to the 2031 time horizon.

At this time council has not approved the scope of the Official Plan review, nor has council approved a work plan to accomplish the review. This evening's special meeting of council will allow for the receipt of public comments with regard to any section of the official plan which may require revision.

Purpose of the Special Meeting of Council

Section 26 subsection 3 of the *Planning Act* requires that prior to revising the official plan, council shall hold a special meeting to hear submissions in regard to revisions that may be required to the City of Burlington Official Plan. The *Planning Act* also requires that council shall have regard to any written submissions about revisions which may be required and shall give any person who attends the special meeting an opportunity to be heard on the subject.

This meeting will contribute to an understanding of the elements of the existing official plan that may require revision. In order to ensure that the Official Plan continues to respond to the needs of the community, council relies on comments from the public, agencies and staff within various departments of the City.

Notice of this meeting was given in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. Notice of the meeting was published in the Burlington Post in the City Update section on both March 22 and April 5. The statutory notice is attached as Appendix A.

This special meeting of council represents the minimum public engagement required by the *Planning Act*. The Official Plan Review project will provide future opportunities for public engagement above and beyond those minimum requirements. The first of these additional public engagement opportunities offered were the two open house sessions held on May 1 and May 3. A verbal report on the open house proceedings will be provided at the outset of this meeting. For more details on engagement matters please refer to the communication matters section of the report.

Background

The Official Plan (1994) for the City of Burlington Planning Area was adopted by City Council in 1994 and approved by the Region of Halton in 1997 with modifications. The *Planning Act* requires that the municipality shall, not less frequently than every five years, revise the official plan as required to ensure that it:

- conforms with provincial plans or does not conflict with them;
- it has regard to the matters of provincial interest;
- it is consistent with policy statements issued by the Province.

The 1994 Plan was a comprehensive overhaul resulting in a new Official Plan for the City of Burlington replacing the Official Plan adopted by City Council in 1969 and approved by Halton Region in 1971.

The City initiated its most recent five-year review of the Official Plan in 2002. In 2006, after public consultation, direction reports and consideration of proposed policy modifications, the City adopted amendments to the Official Plan which were subsequently approved with modifications by the Region of Halton in January of 2008. Portions of the Plan have been either deferred or referred to the Ontario Municipal Board. These deferrals and referrals generally relate to specific properties, and as such do not affect the general policy directions of the Plan. Since the Official Plan (1994) was approved there have been over 85 amendments to the Plan. The current Official Plan can be accessed online at: <http://cms.burlington.ca/Page846.aspx>.

Developing the Scope of the Review

In order to determine the appropriate scope of the review staff have been directed to initiate an internal and external scan in order to 'size up' the existing Plan. This work

was initiated in January 2012. To date we have received comments from external agencies, City Council and City staff. The public scan to assist in determining the scope of the review includes two open house sessions held on May 1 and May 3 in addition to this evening's special meeting of council.

Comments received to date (not including comments received on May 1 and May 3) have been categorized and have revealed a list of six interrelated topics as the major areas that the review process and the Plan may need to address. This work has identified that many parts of the Official Plan are functioning well. This initial work has also demonstrated that there are a number of major topic areas that appear to warrant consideration. The major topic areas are listed below to provide an overview of the feedback received to date.

Neighbourhoods: In the past, growth in the City has largely occurred by expanding out to fill our urban boundary. As the supply of undeveloped urban land has decreased toward 'build out', growth has become focused on using existing urban land and infrastructure more efficiently. An opportunity exists to start thinking about our urban area being comprised of related but distinct, vibrant neighbourhoods that are now entering new phases in their respective life cycles.

Downtown: The downtown has been identified as an *Urban Growth Centre* by the Province, and is a priority area to which a portion of new jobs and new residents will be directed. The timing of the Official Plan, *Core Commitment* and the downtown vision reviews present an opportunity to comprehensively review and revise policies within a coordinated vision. Strategic policies in the downtown will offer the opportunity to respond to multiple policy objectives around the *Mobility Hub* identified by Metrolinx (the regional transportation authority), the *Urban Growth Centre*, the waterfront and other complementary initiatives. This work is currently evolving and a process has been adopted by council related to the *Core Commitment*. For more information please see report PB-03-12.

Nodes and Corridors: The connection between land use and transportation is critically important, particularly in intensification areas which are expected to accommodate new jobs and residents over the long term. In 2008 City Council adopted an intensification strategy to demonstrate the City's ability to accommodate new jobs and residents in priority areas. An investigation of the identified nodes and corridors will provide an opportunity to build upon the existing intensification strategy through new policy and implementation approaches. The nodes and corridor work will build on the City Council adopted Intensification Strategy in addition to the GO Station Lands Intensification Opportunities Study and the resulting Official Plan and zoning modifications (2006).

Metrolinx and Mobility Hubs: Metrolinx has identified two *Mobility Hubs* within the City: the downtown Bus Terminal and the Burlington Go Station. *Mobility Hubs* are defined as major transit stations where different modes of

transportation come together seamlessly. *Mobility Hubs* also include the surrounding area where an intensive concentration of living, working and playing is focused. The link between land use and transportation is critical to the realization of *Mobility Hubs*. The review will secure opportunities to raise Burlington's profile in the Region and position the City to leverage programs or funding that may be available for transit and transit oriented development. It should be noted that Burlington has the distinction of being the only municipality in Halton with two identified *Mobility Hubs* (Downtown Burlington and the Burlington GO Station area). The Brant Street corridor connecting these two hubs is a key opportunity for the City.

Movement and Connectivity: The Official Plan Review is being undertaken alongside the Transit Master Plan review and the Transportation Master Plan Review. These three documents will together provide a long term vision for the city's transportation system. The review will provide an opportunity to build on the existing means of moving around the City, which includes roads but also considers paths and other open space corridors. Movement and connectivity as a topic will focus on accommodating walking, cycling, transit, goods movement and the private automobile. A focus on strategically important transportation and transit initiatives and programs and transit oriented development which support the intensification strategy will be critical to the long term success of the City.

Community Infrastructure: The term *community infrastructure* is a relatively new term in the planning dictionary and is a key component of the provincial policy direction for *complete communities*. The term refers to the lands, buildings and structures that support the quality of life for people and communities by providing public services for health, education, recreation, socio-cultural activities, security and safety, and affordable housing. The official plan review will investigate existing *community infrastructure* and opportunities to promote collaboration among City departments and other levels of government to enhance our ability to provide services to support development and vibrancy of neighbourhoods.

Process

Once all public comments in response to this special meeting of council are received and assessed, the scope report will be prepared. The report if approved, will then form the basis for the overall work plan.

The review approach requires that council approve the scope report and subsequently the work plan report prior to undertaking various studies and research. As new draft Official Plan policies are prepared, additional meetings will be scheduled to consider the new draft policies. Notice of these additional meetings will be published in newspapers and on the City of Burlington website (www.burlington.ca/opreview).

Financial Matters:

As was proposed in PB-87/11 the Official Plan and the Zoning By-Law Reviews will be undertaken simultaneously. The Capital budget process included a forecast of \$400,000 in 2012 and \$400,000 in 2013, for a total of \$800,000 for the two projects. Information and advice regarding the Zoning By-law Review will be provided later in 2012. It is understood that this aggregate amount will be spent over the duration of the two projects. The duration is dependent on scope and other timing considerations to be determined in detailed work plans. Any funds not invested will be returned to the capital funding sources for investment elsewhere.

Other Resource Impacts

As the Official Plan Review is a City-wide endeavour, an accountability structure within Planning and Building, an accountability structure across all City Departments, and appropriate oversight by senior management form important components of the official plan review.

Communication Matters:

As referenced above, communication and engagement related to the Official Plan review has been ongoing since the beginning of 2012. In PB-87/11 council directed the undertaking of an internal and external scan for the purpose of sizing up the existing Official Plan. The purpose of all engagement so far has been to: advise of the initiation of the review; communicate the opportunities for involvement in the Official Plan review process; and receive input from internal and external stakeholders about the elements of the Plan that may require review. The internal scan and external scan are described briefly below for your information.

Internal Scan

Within the City an accountability structure has been developed including a number of committees and working groups made up of individuals from across the corporation. Each of these groups has had an opportunity to meet and provide comments regarding the areas of the Official Plan which may require revision. Throughout the Official Plan review process these committees and working groups will have a direct role in the review and will act as key sounding boards on policy research and directions. Within the Planning and Building Department ongoing consultation continues with the Development Review team which provides valuable insight from an implementation perspective.

External Scan

The external scan has a number of components. The scan began with a mailed notice to the prescribed agencies and follow up meetings with the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Region of Halton and Conservation Halton. We have received several submissions which will assist in informing the scope of the review.

The public external scan has included two open house opportunities on May 1 and May 3 (a brief outline of the session outcomes will be provided in this evening's opening comments). Tonight's special meeting of council is an opportunity for members of the public to provide submissions (both written and oral) regarding components of the plan which may require revision.

Next Steps

The findings of both the internal and external scans will be presented in the upcoming report on scope. This report will provide a high level overview of the findings of the scope exercise and the emerging thought on the engagement approach. The overall process map for the Official Plan review is included as Appendix A.

Conclusion:

The five year review of the Official Plan is a major undertaking. Careful consideration of public comments early in the process will assist staff in preparing a scope of review that responds to the comments received during the internal and external scans. This careful assessment will allow us to determine the appropriate resources required and to gain a realistic understanding of the time required to complete the review.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Enns, MCIP, RPP
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Reviewed by:
Alan Gummo, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Policy and Research

Appendices:

A. Overall process for the Official Plan review

Notifications: (after Council decision)

Name	Mailing or E-mail Address

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Approvals:

*required

*Department

City Treasurer

General Manager

City Manager

	To be completed by the Clerks Department
Committee Disposition & Comments	
	01-Approved 02-Not Approved 03-Amended 04-Referred 06-Received & Filed 07-Withdrawn
Council Disposition & Comments	
	01-Approved 02-Not Approved 03-Amended 04-Referred 06-Received & Filed 07-Withdrawn

Appendix A

Overall process for the Official Plan review

City of Burlington Process for an Official Plan Review

October, 2011

