



Subject: Statutory Public Meeting New Official Plan

To: Council

From: Development and Legislative Services Department

Report Number: 2024-134

Meeting Date: June 18, 2024

Recommendation:

That Planning and Development Report 2024-134 be received as information.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the New Official Plan process and to receive feedback on the draft vision, draft key directions, and draft key considerations for the New Official Plan from City Council and the public.

Background:

The City's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 identifies increase housing options as one of the strategic pillars. The goal of the pillar is to: develop policies, by-laws, and processes that provide more and diverse (form and tenure) housing options. One of the measure's of the goal is to update the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

Dillon Consulting was retained in late 2023 to initiate the necessary public engagement required for the preparation of a New Official Plan under section 26 of the *Planning Act*. The primary outcome of the preliminary engagement work is to prepare a scope of work and terms of reference for the New Official Plan that can be used as a guiding compass for the project.

The following has occurred to date on the project:

- Launch of a [project engagement website](#) on February 14, 2024, to provide information on the Official Plan project;
- Meeting with a Technical Advisory Team on November 21, 2023, to obtain input on key areas of focus for the New Official Plan;

- The development and launch of an online survey and interactive map to obtain public input and feedback to inform the Official Plan vision, priorities, key directions, and Engagement Strategy. The survey was open from February 16, 2024, to April 17, 2024; and
- An Open House, held on March 27, 2024, to inform the public about what an Official Plan is and obtain their input on priorities for the New Official Plan.

Overall, 34 respondents completed the survey, and 151 comments were placed on the interactive map. Approximately 60 people attended the Open House. Attendees provided feedback on post cards, through an exercise where they placed dots on their top five priorities for the Official Plan and through comment forms. A detailed report summarizing the feedback to date will be brought forward to Council at a later date.

Discussion:

Based on feedback received from staff, the Technical Advisory Team, and the public, a draft vision statement and draft key directions for the New Official Plan were prepared by the consultant. The vision statement describes the desired future state of the City of Port Colborne that will be promoted through the Official Plan policies.

The following is the draft vision statement for the New Official Plan:

Port Colborne is a thriving, vibrant, and diverse lakefront community that is rooted in our cultural heritage and the natural landscapes of Lake Erie. Our community is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to all ages and abilities. We work together to build a community that is walkable with a thriving downtown, complete streets, and varied and affordable housing options, while protecting our farmland. Inspired by our commitment to maintain proper infrastructure, we also plan for parks, green spaces, and community gathering spaces ensuring a healthy community for current and future generations. We have places to work and promote economic development, tourism, and arts and culture that support our community. Port Colborne is a growing community, and our Official Plan creates a strong foundation to support future growth.

The draft key directions for the New Official Plan will help to establish the direction and objectives for the Official Plan policies based on community priorities. The draft key directions are proposed at this stage, to gather additional feedback and input from Council and the public. The key directions will be refined over time and will ultimately translate into key policy directions for the Official Plan as the project moves forward.

The draft key directions are as follows:

1. Promote and support a broad range of housing options including affordable housing;
2. Enhance and optimize our green spaces and parks;

3. Growth management by planning for amenities, community facilities, infrastructure and utilities;
4. Promote economic growth and employment, tourism, commercial, and industrial areas;
5. Preserve and enhance community design;
6. Preserve agricultural land; and
7. Protect the environment, sourcewater, and plan for climate change.

Dillon Consulting completed a Growth Analysis Study for the City in 2023 and determined that the City's growth is anticipated to exceed what the Region allocated to the City through the new Niagara Official Plan. The Growth Analysis Study, identified and recommended the following key considerations and directions for the City to consider as part of the Official Plan process:

- Define and implement the City's vision for growth;
- Establish a robust urban hierarchy that identifies priority areas for growth and an intensification strategy through the Official Plan review process;
- Identify policy opportunities to diversify the City's housing stock;
- Develop a framework for assessing compatibility of redevelopment and intensification at the periphery of identified Intensification Areas, Nodes, and Corridors and other priority areas for growth; and
- Align the employment lands planning framework with the economic development strategy for the City

Next Steps

Dillon Consulting and staff will receive feedback at the statutory public meeting on the draft vision, draft key directions, and key considerations and directions noted above. Based on all the feedback to date from staff, the Technical Advisory Team, Council, and the public a report prepared by Dillon Consulting will be brought forward to Council for consideration with recommendations on:

- An engagement strategy to guide future phase of the New Official Plan;
- New Official Plan work plan;
- Vision and key directions/ objectives for the New Official Plan; and
- Finalized Terms of Reference for the remaining phases of the Official Plan

The report is anticipated to be brought to Council in July or August of 2024.

Internal Consultations:

Staff from Economic Development and Public Works are participating on the Technical Advisory Team that are helping to guide the Official Plan process.

Public Engagement:

The Statutory Public Meeting was advertised in the Welland Tribune on May 11, 2024 and digitally on the global news website (and targeted to Port Colborne residents) from May 14 – 16, 2024 in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act.

The Statutory Public Meeting was also advertised on the City website and through the City's social media channels.

Financial Implications:

The New Official Plan project budget (\$250,000) was approved by Council in 2022 for the 2023 budget year.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Environment and Climate Change
 - Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Increased Housing Options
 - Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure
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Conclusion:

Since late 2023, Dillon Consulting has been working on a New Official Plan for the City of Port Colborne. Staff will receive feedback at the statutory public meeting on the draft vision, draft key directions, and key considerations and directions noted above. Based on all the feedback to date from staff, the Technical Advisory Team, Council, and the public a report prepared by Dillon Consulting will be brought forward to Council for consideration

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Landry, MCIP, RPP
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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.