



**Subject: New Official Plan Engagement and Work Plan**

**To: Council**

**From: Development and Legislative Services Department**

Report Number: 2024-172

Meeting Date: September 24, 2024

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**Recommendation:**

That Development and Government Relations Report 2024-172 be received; and

That Council endorse the new Official Plan draft engagement strategy, draft work plan, draft vision, and key directions/objectives as the finalized terms of reference for the remaining phases of the Official Plan (Appendix A).

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement on:

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

The aforementioned are attached in Appendix A. The draft engagement strategy, draft work plan, draft vision, and key directions/objectives will be used to finalize a term of reference for the remaining phases of the New Official Plan project.

This report will also accompany a presentation by Dillon Consulting at the September 24, 2024, Council meeting.

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**Background:**

The City's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 identifies increased 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 measures 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/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:

- Meeting with a Technical Advisory Team on November 21, 2023, to obtain input on key areas of focus for the New Official Plan;
- Launch of a project engagement website on February 14, 2024, to provide information on the Official Plan project;
- 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;
- 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; and
- A Statutory Public Meeting under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, held on June 18, 2024, to receive feedback from the public and Council on the draft vision and draft key directions 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. Appendix A details the preliminary engagement work completed to date and includes the draft vision, draft key directions, draft engagement strategy and recommended work plan for the Official Plan.

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## Discussion:

Based on feedback received from staff, the Technical Advisory Team, the public, and from the Statutory Public Meeting, 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 rural and urban 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 and natural heritage features. 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.*

As a result of the Council feedback received at the Statutory Public Meeting, the draft vision statement has been revised to include 'rural and urban' in the first sentence and adding 'natural heritage features' in the third sentence.

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 key directions will be refined over time and will ultimately translate into key policy directions for the Official Plan as the project moves forward (see appendix A).

The Draft Engagement Strategy (Appendix E of Appendix A attached) includes various forms of community and stakeholder engagement through online and social media platforms, in person meetings, public open houses, workshops, and pop-up events. The strategy indicates where each type of engagement approach is best suited and who the approach targets. The Draft Engagement Strategy will form part of the Terms of Reference that is used to retain consulting services for the rest of the phases of the project.

### Next Steps

Staff will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to retain consulting services for the remaining phases of the New Official Plan project. The work completed to date will inform and provide direction for the new phases of the project. Staff anticipate issuing the RFP in October 2024. Selecting and appointing a consultant prior to year-end and having them commence the next phase of the Official Plan workplan in Q1 of 2025.

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### **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.

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### **Financial Implications:**

The New Official Plan project budget (\$250,000) was approved by Council in 2022 for the 2023 budget year. This project has been added to the Development Charges Background Study as an eligible growth study. Therefore, the cost of this project can be

covered from Development Charges.

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## **Public Engagement:**

Public engagement to date on the project includes:

- Launch of a project engagement website;
- Online survey and interactive map to obtain public input and feedback;
- 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.
- A Statutory Public Meeting under Section 26 of the Planning Act, held on June 18, 2024, to receive feedback from the public and Council on the draft vision and draft key directions for the New Official Plan

As the development of the New Official Plan continues, there will be many more opportunities for the public to provide feedback and get involved in the process.

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## **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. Based on feedback received from staff, the Technical Advisory Team, Council and the public, a draft engagement strategy, draft work plan, draft vision, and key directions/objectives have been developed (Appendix A). Staff is requesting that Council endorse the aforementioned as the terms of reference for the remaining phases of the New Official Plan Project.

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## **Appendices:**

- a. Preliminary Engagement and Work Planning for the New Official Plan

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.