

For Information Only

Official Plan Review

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Recommendation

For information only.

Financial Implications

The Official Plan Review Project can be funded from capital envelopes existing for this purpose.

Background

Shortly after amalgamation, the City of Greater Sudbury set out to replace the 1978 Official Plan for the Sudbury Planning Area and 12 other land use planning policies with a single, consistent, efficient and effective policy framework in the form of a new Official Plan (the Plan).

The Plan was developed over a four-year time period, involving several technical background studies, considerable consultation and extensive policy harmonization. It establishes goals, objectives and policies to manage and direct physical change and its effects on the social, economic and natural environment for the next 20 years. In doing so, it speaks directly to:

- where new housing, industry, offices and shops will be located;
- what infrastructure and services, like roads, water mains, sewers and parks will be needed;
- when, and in what order, parts of the community will grow; and,
- community improvement initiatives.

The Plan was adopted by City Council in 2006 and modified and approved, with modifications by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in 2007. The Ministry's decision on the Plan (and the Plan) was appealed in its entirety to the Ontario Municipal Board (the Board). The Board heard the appeals and issued three decisions on the Ministry's decision and the Plan between December 2007 and April 2008. The majority of the Plan came "into effect" with the last of these three decisions.

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Section 26 of the *Planning Act* (the Act) requires that municipalities revise their official plans at least every five years after the official plan first comes into effect to ensure that it:

- conforms with provincial plans (e.g. growth plans) or does not conflict with them, as the case may be;
- has regard to matters of provincial interest articulated in Section 2 of the Act;
- is consistent with provincial policy statements issued under Section 3 of the Act; and,
- its policies dealing with areas of employment (including, without limitation, the designation of areas of employment and policies dealing with the removal of land from areas of employment) are confirmed or amended.

The City of Greater Sudbury is legally required to review and revise its Plan by April 2013 to meet the above requirements. The review also provides an important opportunity to review and adjust the plan from a local perspective, to ensure that it continues to reflect local interests. Unlike other official plan amendments dealt with by the City, amendments made pursuant to Section 26 of the Act must be submitted to MMAH for approval.

Purpose

This report provides a preliminary introduction to the Official Plan Review Project prior to its formal launch later this year.

Discussion

Scope of the review

The context within which land use planning occurs has changed considerably since the Plan was adopted by Council in 2006. Some of these changes affect the way that we should plan our community. The review will examine these changes.

At a minimum, the review must address those matters itemized in Section 26 of the Act. The review will examine the Plan's conformity with the *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario* (which came into effect on March 3, 2011), its regard to any new matters of provincial interest named in Section 2 of the Act; and its consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (the PPS). The province is reviewing the PPS. The consultation phase of the PPS review process is complete. The timing of the release of the proposed changes is not known. Staff will continue to monitor this process.

The review provides an opportunity to look at the Plan in light of changes to legislation, policy and regulation since adoption to determine if any policy changes are required. Some key changes at the provincial level include *Green Energy Act*, the *Clean Water Act* (and associated source water protection planning process) and the *Endangered Species Act*. Similarly, some key developments at the local level include the new Fiscal Sustainability Plan, a revised Community Economic Development Plan, an updated Earth Care Action Plan, a new Biodiversity Action Plan, a new Greenspace Advisory Panel Report and a new Downtown Master Plan and Town Centre CIP. There have also been many new developments in the last five years. Examples include the new North Rim and Totten mines, the continued exploration at Victoria, the new onsite regional hospital and ongoing developments at the Airport, to name a few.

The review also provides an opportunity to look ahead at how population and employment in the community could grow and change and to assess the adequacy of the city's land supply, the type and mix of

development products that are being delivered to market, and implications for the city's infrastructure and service network.

The review also provides an opportunity to examine our land use policies and plans in light of changing trends (e.g. climate change and peak oil) and expectations (e.g. community's desire to provide more balanced infrastructure that facilitates active transportation, as well as the desire to further protect the environmental and recreational values of our lakes and rivers).

Resourcing the review

We currently anticipate that planning service staff will lead the review, in consultation and with the assistance of staff from other divisions and sections (e.g. roads and transportation, water and waste water, environmental initiatives and housing).

We also anticipate that Planning Committee will be interested to serve as the "Steering Committee" for the review. This is consistent with the process followed for the new Official Plan.

We further anticipate that we may need to retain some outside resources to update and/or to undertake key technical background studies as part of the review. We currently see these studies including:

- updated population forecasts (including housing and employment supply and demand);
- updated transportation background study (including active transportation); and,
- new lake capacity study.

The above-referenced studies need to be initiated before the formal launch of the review later this year in order to meet the legislated five year review deadline. These studies can be funded from existing budget envelopes established for this purpose. In the coming weeks, these opportunities will be advertised and concluded in accordance with the Purchasing By-law.

There may also be a need to update the existing housing study, in response to the *Housing Services Act* (2011). This new piece of legislation has received Royal Assent but has yet to be proclaimed. When proclaimed, it will require that municipalities prepare local housing and homelessness plans. Such plans should be integrated with the Official Plan. The new *Housing Services Act* would also add a new matter of provincial interest to Section 2 of the *Planning Act* and require that municipalities amend their Official Plans to include policies to permit second residential units on a property. Staff will continue to monitor this piece of legislation.

The review will also be integrated with the city-wide water waste water master plan that is being developed.

Timing of the review

We currently foresee the review formally beginning in the third quarter of this year and ending in the second quarter of 2013. The review and individual background studies will be supported by a comprehensive and integrated community engagement strategy and communications plan.

Conclusion and next steps

The City of Greater Sudbury is required to review and revise its Official Plan by April 2013. The review will be formally launched later this year, with a special public meeting to discuss the revisions that may be

required. In the meantime, some technical background work will be initiated this quarter to meet the legislated five year review deadline.