

For Information Only

Official Plan Review Public Input Analysis

Presented To:	Planning Committee
Presented:	Monday, Feb 27, 2012
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Type:	Presentations

Recommendation

For Information

Background:

The City of Greater Sudbury is currently conducting a Five Year review of the Official Plan. On January 23rd, a special meeting of the Planning Committee was held to hear all interested parties with respect to the review.

In the months leading up to the special meeting, Planning and Communication staff organized a multifaceted promotional campaign using print and electronic media in order to give the public a variety of ways to have their comments and issues considered as part of the Five Year Official Plan review.

The promotional campaign and the public meeting were very successful, with approximately 60 written comments and web submissions received to date, along with approximately 30 people making presentations to Planning Committee on the five year Official Plan review.

At the conclusion of the January 23rd Special Meeting, the Planning Committee passed the following:

1. That Staff be directed to undertake a Five Year Review of the City of Greater Sudbury's Official Plan in accordance with the requirements of Section 26 of the Ontario Planning Act;
2. And further that Staff be directed to undertake necessary background studies related to the items outlined in the Report from the General Manager of Growth and Development dated January 10th, 2012 regarding the Five Year Official Plan Review;
3. And further that Staff, as part of the review, be directed to consider any issues or comments related to the Official Plan identified by the public at the January 23rd Special Meeting or through formal submissions to the City, including those issues previously identified by Council.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

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Recommended by the C.A.O.

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Purpose:

In keeping with the resolution passed at the January 23rd Special Meeting, the purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the public input that has been received to this point with respect to the Five Year Official Plan review.

Summary of Public Input to Date

As mentioned, approximately 60 public submissions have been received thus far in addition to the presentations that were made to Planning Committee.

In reviewing and listening to these submissions it is possible to organize them into several broader categories of issues to be considered as part of the Five Year Official Plan review.

It is interesting to note that while some of the comments were very specific in nature, most of them related back to the four key studies that form the backbone of this Five Year Official Plan review. As mentioned in the January 23rd Staff Report, those studies related to:

- Population, Housing and Employment Projections and Land Needs
- Lake Water Quality
- Updating the Transportation Background Study; and
- Water and Waste Water Master Plan

Also discussed in the January 23rd Staff Report was the fact that in addition to the four main studies, a number of local planning issues will be examined, including the issue of rural consents, which was an issue raised by the public.

Finally, there were a couple of issues that were raised that will be indirectly covered by the four main studies, but also merit individual investigation as part of the Official Plan Review process. Namely, climate change and local food production systems.

The following represents a synopsis of the public input that has been received to date regarding the Five Year Official Plan review.

Growth and development:

A number of public submissions dealt with issues of growth and development and, more specifically, the promotion of “Smart Growth”, which emphasizes higher density development along transit corridors, more efficient use of space and reusing existing underutilized sites (i.e. brownfields). The current Official Plan does already promote this type of development; however, as part of the five year review, the current wording will be evaluated to determine if there are areas where it can be strengthened. Additionally, any new Provincial Policy related to growth and development will be reviewed and incorporated into the Official Plan where appropriate.

The topic of rural consents was also raised by the public, both in favour of changing policies to allow more and by those who want further restrictions to prevent rural lot creation. As mentioned in the January 23rd report, the issue of rural consents is one that will be analyzed as part of the Official Plan review.

Some other comments received specifically dealt with ensuring that there was sufficient sewer and water capacity available to allow communities to grow over the next 20 years, namely Capreol.

The issue of where and how the City of Greater Sudbury will grow and develop over the next 20 years is one of the most important topics of the Five Year Official Plan review, and as such forms the basis of one of the four major studies that will form the backbone of the review. With this in mind, the City is proceeding with a Water and Waste Water Master Plan to provide an integrated infrastructure planning and policy framework. In order for the Official Plan to accurately guide development in the City for the next 20 years, this study will provide crucial information by evaluating existing infrastructure, analyzing the gaps in the current system and estimating future demand in terms of water and wastewater infrastructure.

Urban Expansion:

A number of site specific requests were received from property owners to expand the Living Area designations in the Official Plan to include their properties in order to allow new development.

In order to properly evaluate these requests, the Official Plan review will study the current developable land supply against future growth to determine if there are sufficient lands within the existing designations.

As with the question of how the City will grow over the next 20 years, another important issue is what kind of residential and commercial demands will the future population of Greater Sudbury place on the existing land supply?

The Population, Housing and Employment Projections and Land Needs Study will estimate future population, housing and employment growth, together with their corresponding land needs, in the City of Greater Sudbury from 2012 to 2032. The projections will be developed at a city-wide and community level and include a low, middle and high scenario. The population and household projections will also be extended beyond the standard 20-year planning horizon to 2042 to provide an initial picture of what local housing market conditions could look like at that time. The projection will inform various other aspects of the Official Plan Review program.

Mobility:

One of the more popular topics in the input received was that of active and automobile based transportation. In general, these issues centred on:

- Proposed roads around Laurentian University and the future Maley Drive extension;
- Providing a better transportation network for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Managing the traffic levels on Howey Drive and Bancroft;
- Street design;
- Better public transportation; and
- Parking issues.

Transportation was identified as a major issue facing the City of Greater Sudbury over the next 20 years and as a result it was decided to include an update to the Transportation Background Study as part of the Five Year Official Plan review process.

This update will take a comprehensive look at how we, as a City, move around and how our mobility methods and needs will change over the next 20 years. The focus of this update study will be to provide

recommendations on current and future transportation routes and also means of transportation, including non-motorized so that we can better balance our mobility system.

Water:

Given the number of water bodies within the City of Greater Sudbury, it was not unexpected that a number of comments would deal with protecting and preserving these natural resources and Ramsey Lake in particular. The comments received revolved around:

- Water protection;
- Improving watershed planning policies;
- Water Quality monitoring;
- Controlling shoreline development;
- Inspecting septic systems around lakes;
- Including the Vermillion River and Ella Lake in the Lake Water Quality Program;
- Reviewing existing storm water management practices;
- Including a schedule of storm water management facilities in the Official Plan;
- Providing tertiary treatment at waste water treatment facilities;
- Eliminating bypasses at all waste water treatment facilities;
- Addressing hydro electric power on the Vermillion River;
- Maintaining the Fairbank Lake Special Policy Area; and
- Focusing on protecting and enhancing the water quality of Ramsey Lake and the Ramsey Lake watershed.

Given these amazing natural resources and amenities that the City has, it is important to make sure that we preserve and enhance what we have for current and future residents. To that end, the City is developing a watershed-based water quality model to provide scientific input into the development of land-use policies related to shoreline development, which will be incorporated into the Official Plan.

In addition to the Lake Water Quality Study that is taking place, the Nickel District Conservation Authority and the City of Greater Sudbury have been working together for several years to develop a program which protects municipal drinking water sources in accordance with the Ontario Clean Water Act. The recommendations of this Source Protection Plan will be incorporated into the Official Plan, where applicable, after its approval by the Ministry of the Environment.

Food System/Agriculture:

As seen in other parts of Ontario and North America, many of the comments received reflected a desire by community for stronger policies related to promoting and protecting local food systems in the Official Plan. In general, there was a desire expressed to:

- Promote local food production;
- Increase the size of the agricultural reserve;
- Support urban agriculture (i.e. community gardens);
- Encourage the creation of small mixed production farms (e.g. 10 ac);
- Allow small scale chicken farming in urban areas (in appropriate locations);
- Expand the agricultural policies to include a list of permitted processing ventures in agriculture and rural areas; and
- Allow more opportunities for local food producers to market and sell their produce.

The issue of local food production is a growing trend in Canada and the world and will be critical to ensure

that the City's population has access to locally grown nutritious foods over the next 20 years.

Natural and Built Heritage:

The public input received also indicated a desire for additional Official Plan policy related to natural and built heritage protection. These comments dealt with matters such as:

- Protecting wetlands;
- Preserving the Lake Laurentian Conservation Area;
- Investigating the possibility of a tree cutting by-law;
- Updating the natural heritage system values;
- Designating the Vermillion River as a Natural Heritage Feature; and
- Designating the Lily Creek/Robinson Lake area as a natural heritage feature.

Climate Change:

A number of comments and presentations focused on the need to address the issue of climate change in Official Plan policies. The opportunities presented included planning for larger and more intense storm events, droughts, along with promoting more mixed use and energy efficient developments.

Public Notice Requirements and Development Standards:

In addition to the broader policy comments received, there were also some comments that related to technical aspects regarding how the City processes planning applications and notifies neighboring residents. Additionally, there were comments presented related to developing and strengthening urban design guidelines, the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) methods, along with the promotion of more energy efficient construction practices.

Conclusion:

The City of Greater Sudbury has commenced a Five Year Review of the City's Official Plan. One critical early step in the process was to hold a special meeting under the Planning Act to hear all interested parties with respect to any revisions that may be required.

Prior to the public meeting, staff organized a multimedia promotional campaign to make the public aware of the Five Year Review process and to solicit input on issues that should be considered. There was a good response to the campaign, with over 60 comments received along with approximately 30 presentations made at the meeting.

In analyzing the comments from the public, many of them pertained to issues that will be addressed by the four main studies that form the backbone of the Official Plan review, namely, Transportation Background Study update, Population Growth, Employment and Land Needs, Water and Waste Water Master Plan and Lake Water Quality. Additionally, other local planning issues such as rural consent policies were also slated to be examined as part of the review.

Other matters raised correlated with planning trends that are taking place in the Province and further abroad, including climate change and local food systems. These are important issues that will be addressed through this review.

In summary, there was a good amount of public input received to date with respect to the Five Year Official Plan review. It is anticipated that additional comments and requests will come forth as the process continues

over the next year. Most of the comments received relate to issues that will be addressed through the four main studies that form the backbone of the Official Plan Review. Other local planning issues will also be addressed as the process moves forward.