



# Staff Report

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## Planning & Development Services – Planning Division

**Report To:** Committee of the Whole  
**Meeting Date:** May 4, 2021  
**Report Number:** PDS.21.054  
**Title:** Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan 5-Year Update  
**Prepared by:** Shawn Postma, Senior Policy Planner

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.21.054, entitled “Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan 5-Year Update”;

AND THAT Council endorse the proposed Official Plan 5-year review project framework as contained in Staff Report PDS.21.054.

AND THAT Council direct one member of Council being \_\_\_\_\_ to the Official Plan Advisory Steering Committee.

### B. Overview

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The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Official Plan 5-year review process and to seek endorsement from Council on the project components, public consultation process and preliminary project milestones.

### C. Background

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The Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan sets out policies on how land in the municipality can be used and developed. The Plan sets the vision, creates goals and objectives, and provides specific policies on how land in the Town may be used. The Plan directs: where new and existing residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational and other uses are to be located; how lands are to be serviced by roads, water and sewer; and establishes policies on cultural heritage resources, environmental protection, housing, community design and sustainable development.

An Official Plan is a requirement under the Ontario *Planning Act* and is needed to clearly articulate land use planning policies to residents, developers and all other members of the community. The Plan coordinates orderly growth in the Municipality and provides the framework for other implementing Plans and Town Zoning By-law. The Plan establishes specific

policies to implement the goals and objectives of the Plan and to guide development proposals and inform Council for required decisions.

The Plan is created by the Town with input from residents, businesses, stakeholders, aboriginal groups, outside agencies (ie. Conservation Authorities, County of Grey, School Boards, Niagara Escarpment Commission and others), Municipal Staff and Town Council.

The Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan was first approved in October 2007 and reviewed/updated last in June 2016.

The *Planning Act* requires that an Official Plan be reviewed every 5 years. The purpose of a 5-year review is to ensure that the Plan remains current with upper tier planning documents including: Legislative Changes, Provincial Policy, other Provincial Plans and County Policy. It is also an opportunity to update or revise the Plan with recently approved municipal policies, plans, direction and strategies.

## D. Analysis

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### Official Plan 5-year Review Process

The Official Plan 5-year review requires public consultation, public meetings and public input. The Town of The Blue Mountains project milestones which has integrated the minimum *Planning Act* requirements are described below:

1. Information Report to Council (This report)
2. Initiate Pre-consultation with the County of Grey
3. Creation of Project Steering Committee (see later in this report for committee structure)
4. Creation of 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) scope of work to retain consulting services.
5. Secure Consulting Services.
- 6. Public Consultation begins: Awareness Program of Project Start**
7. Preparation of Discussion Papers on Project Components
- 8. Public Open House to consider Discussion Papers and Options on Direction for Official Plan 5-year Review Amendments**
9. Information Staff Report to Council on Discussion Papers, Open House findings and to receive Council direction on preferred options
10. Preparation of Draft Official Plan 5-year Review Amendments / Policies
- 11. Statutory Public Meeting to consider Draft Official Plan 5-year Review Amendments**
12. Planning Staff to Submit a Public Meeting Follow Up Report
13. All Public Comments to be compiled, reviewed, analyzed and responded to
14. Second Draft Official Plan 5-year Review Amendments are refined as necessary
- 15. Second Public Meeting if considered necessary/required.**
16. Planning Staff to complete a Recommendation Report with Final Amendments
17. Council makes a decision to adopt the final 5-year Review Amendments
18. If approved, Notice of Adoption is given by the Town
19. Official Plan 5-Year Review Amendments sent to the County of Grey for approval
20. County Council makes a decision to approve the final 5-year Review Amendments
21. If approved, Notice of Decision is given by the County of Grey

22. 20 day Appeal Period provided in accordance with the *Planning Act*
23. If no appeals received, Amendments come into full force and effect
24. If appeals are received, appeals sent to LPAT for their decision

### Public Consultation

The Ontario *Planning Act* prescribes minimum notice requirements including instructions for public participation. Additionally, the Town's Official Plan has policy related to public participation (O.P. Section E1.6) which states:

"It is a policy of this Plan that public participation be an integral component of any land use planning process and the Town will encourage the involvement of residents, businesses, stakeholders and other levels of Town of government. On this basis, before making any planning decision, Council shall be satisfied that:

- a) adequate public notice in accordance with the Planning Act has been given;
- b) enough information to enable a person to reasonably understand the nature of the proposal and its impacts is available prior to any public meeting;
- c) all public and agency comments have been assessed and analyzed by the Town; and,
- d) their decision will appropriately balance the overall public interest against the private interest expressed in the application.

Public Open Houses shall be required for major municipally-initiated planning programs and studies, such as Secondary Plans and Zoning Bylaw reviews.

In all other instances, notification to the residents of the Town of public meetings held by Council shall be given in accordance with the procedures of the Planning Act."

The Notice of public meeting procedures for the Town have also previously been vetted by the Communication Committee on October 28, 2019 and endorsed by Council per Staff Report PDS.19.124. Below are the public Notice procedures for an Official Plan Amendment:

- Notice to every person or public body who provided us with a written request.
- Notice to all the persons and public bodies as prescribed in the regulation.
- Notice by personal service or ordinary mail to every owner of land within 120m of the subject land and by posting a sign.
- Notice by posting in an advertisement in a local newspaper.
- Notice by posting on the Town's webpage as part of the "weekly e-blast".
- Notice by posting on the "Municipal Information & Notices" bulletin board located in the Town Hall gallery.

The Town's Procedural Bylaw recognizes the important role community engagement has in the municipality's governance and decision making. As such, there are opportunities embedded within Committee and Council agendas whereby citizens and stakeholders are given the

opportunity to speak to Council. These are commonly referred to as either deputations or statements made during a public comment period.

However, it is critical to understand that any written or oral comments from any member of the public on the Official Plan 5-year review be provided at or before the statutory public meeting. Comments may be received after the public meeting and will be considered prior to a decision of Town Council, but it is important to receive comments at the Public Meeting because it ensures those comments are heard by everyone participating in the Public Meeting and are considered comprehensively. All comments received are collected and form part of the planning file records.

### Enhanced Public Consultation

In addition to the above Public Consultation requirements, Town Staff will be creating a new project page on the Town's website for regular project updates and where additional information is made public and accessible for the public to review at their own convenience.

Public surveys are a great tool to understand the strength and weaknesses of different areas of our Town. Surveys will be promoted by the Town and will target all age groups, permanent/seasonal residents as well as visitors. Surveys will comprise of multiple choice questions and open text answers to gain a strong database and variety of opinions.

Target group engagement can bolster the information gained through surveys by directly speaking with the Schools and Students, Agricultural Community, Tourism Operators, Development Industry, Recreation Groups, other Municipal Departments, Committees of Council, and others.

Getting out into the Public with information booths at summer/fall community events to promote, raise awareness and seek feedback on the Official Plan Review project will be a fun and interactive way to speak with residents and visitors on various themes. COVID restrictions may influence the feasibility of this pursuing this option in person.

### Project Steering Committee

The Official Plan 5-year Review Project Steering Committee is an internal working group comprised of one member of Council, Town Planning Staff and County Planning Staff. The role of the Committee is to advise Staff and Council on first level direction and to scope options to be considered through the research stages of the project. Decisions and acceptance of recommendations will remain with Council.

### Project Timeline

The Official Plan 5-Year review is estimated to take approximately 1-year to complete based on the project scope and barring unforeseen legislative changes or project inclusions through the life of the project. Initial stages of the project include defining the project scope and components and preliminary public consultation. Substantial work is then begun and completed to develop discussion papers to review, evaluate and recommend direction on project components that will then be incorporated into the 5-Year review amendment documents.

## Project Components

It is important that Council confirms the direction on the project components at the beginning of this review process so that a project scope, deliverables, timeline and budget can be maintained. New information and issues will come forward and are to be expected. However, major changes or shifts to the project components are more difficult to absorb into the project. Below is a summary of the major project components:

### Project Inclusions:

1. Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) Review
  - a. PPS 2020 in effect. Current Plan policies are based on PPS 2014. Official Plans are required to be consistent with Current Provincial Policy.
2. County of Grey Official Plan Review
  - a. Recolour Grey approved in June 2019. Current Plan policies are based on the 2012 County Official Plan. Official Plan is required to conform to the County Official Plan.
3. County of Grey Growth Management Review
  - a. The County of Grey is undergoing a Growth Management Study for the County. The Town will utilize this data and further refine it to update our Town wide Growth Projections (including employment), Service Area Growth Projections, Inventory of lands available for development, Inventory of Future Secondary Plan Areas, for both population numbers and unit numbers.
4. Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) Review
  - a. The NEP was Approved in June 2017 and last updated in July 2020. The Official Plan is required to not conflict with the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Updates including Amendments and policy changes since approval will need to be reviewed.
5. Town Municipal Plans/Projects
  - a. Generally includes the following: Corporate Strategic Plan, Community Improvement Plan, Community Design Guidelines, Leisure Activities Plan, Transportation Plans (County, Town and Active Transportation), Source Water Protection Plan.
6. Town Planning-related Strategies/Policies/General Practice
  - a. Generally includes the following: Tree Preservation/Removal Bylaw Update, Community Design Guidelines Update, Updated Town Engineering Standards, Role of Draft Plan Conditions, Cannabis Policy Update, Residential Intensification Minimum and Maximum density policies, Public Consultation Provisions, Clarksburg Interim Development Potential prior to Municipal Services , Clarify Severance Servicing policies , clarify/update Parkland Policies (new parks, cash-in-lieu, parkettes), Community Planning Permit System, Commercial Lands and Industrial Lands Assessment / Needs, and Telecommunication Towers.
7. Adjacent Municipalities Review
  - a. Collingwood, Clearview, Grey Highlands and Meaford have recently (or are actively working on) Official Plan updates. Simcoe County is also completing a Municipal Comprehensive Review. Area Official Plans and relevant information

can also be reviewed for cross border benefits, policy strategies and alignment of goals and objectives.

8. Housekeeping Items
  - a. A number of potential minor modifications and revisions have been identified for better direction or clarification. These items have been flagged through the use of the current Official Plan since its approval.
9. Internal Town Departments Presentations and Review
  - a. Draft Amendments to the Official Plan to be shared with other Town Departments to ensure all Department specific policy direction and completed Plans are reviewed as part of the 5-year review.

Project Exclusions:

1. Official Plan 5-year Review is not a New Official Plan. Corporate Strategic Plan identifies that a new Official Plan to be started in 2026.
2. Redesignation of Future Secondary Plan Areas for new Development lands. Growth needs analysis will occur as part of the Official Plan 5-year Review project. If additional lands are required to accommodate forecasted growth, separate secondary planning projects/initiatives would be considered.
3. Any site-specific Amendment requests made by private property owners unless otherwise allowed for consideration by the Council.

**E. Strategic Priorities**

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**1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

**2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

**3. Community**

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

**4. Quality of Life**

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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Environmental policies will be updated to current Provincial Policy, Provincial Plans, County Plan in consultation with the Conservation Authorities. More detailed environmental impacts will be considered in future staff reports.

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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The Town of The Blue Mountains 2021 Budget includes \$410,000 for the Official Plan 5-year review project. The Budget will cover a portion of Salary and Benefits for in house work as well as utilizing outside consultants for some discussion papers related to the project components identified in this report.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Trevor Houghton, Manager of Community Planning

Nathan Westendorp, Director of Planning & Development Services

Councilor Jim Uram, Planning and Development Services Chair

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report will be the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre at a future date. Please refer to the Public Consultation sub-sections of this report. Specific timing of certain events will be confirmed after project details have been finalized with the Steering Committee and Project Team

Upon Council endorsement of this report, Planning Staff will be preparing updates to the Town Website to include a page on the Official Plan 5-year Review Project.

Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Postma, [planning@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:planning@thebluemountains.ca)

## **J. Attached**

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1. Nil

Respectfully submitted,

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Senior Policy Planner

Trevor Houghton, MCIP RPP  
Manager of Community Planning

Nathan Westendorp, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development Services

For more information, please contact:  
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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PDS.21.054 Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan 5 Year Update2.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 28, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Trevor Houghton - Apr 26, 2021 - 11:34 AM**

**Nathan Westendorp - Apr 27, 2021 - 2:39 PM**

**Shawn Everitt - Apr 28, 2021 - 7:53 AM**