

DRAFT BACKGROUND **REPORT**

MUNICIPALITY OF MCDougALL
OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

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1.0

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Draft Background Report is to provide an overview of the comments received by the community and the comments received of the Province's "One Window" meeting with the various Ministries. This Draft Background Report will also explore possible options for revised and new policy areas for the new Municipality of McDougall Official Plan.

The intention is to use the comments and ideas collected through consultation on this Draft Background Report to further develop an approach to the detail of policy options which have been identified, ensure no critical policy areas are considered in the preparation of the first draft of the new Official Plan. The objective is to complete a comprehensive review of the Municipality's Official Plan to ensure that is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), appropriately implements the statutory requirements of the *Planning Act*. It is important to note that other public consultation sessions will be held following the release of this Draft Background Report, and the Report will remain in draft form until such time it is adopted by Council.

The Official Plan includes polices on how land in the Municipality can be used and deals with a broad range of issues including how, when and where the Municipality will grow, which lands should be protected from development and preserved for their natural character, what lands should be preserved for farmland and natural heritage protection, what services like roads, water and parks will be needed, and how and where land can be subdivided.

The existing McDougall Official Plan was adopted in 2005, was approved in 2006, and was consolidated in 2015. The existing Official Plan was based on eleven guiding objectives:

- To maintain, protect and enhance the natural environment within the Municipality.
- To preserve and improve, the water quality of the numerous recreational water bodies including the Georgian Bay.
- Promoting additional growth in all sectors including residential, commercial and industrial that is sustainable, responsible and in appropriate locations to meet the growing demand that exists in the Municipality.
- To promote the health, safety, convenience and welfare of the inhabitants of McDougall.
- Provide a level of service that is consistent with the basic needs and financial capabilities of the Municipality.
- Ensuring that the provision of services recognizes the principle of "user pay" so that those beneficiaries of any service are responsible for its cost.
- Ensuring the compatibility of land uses.
- Encouraging a road system that is appropriate and efficient for the safe and convenient travel for inhabitants of the Municipality.
- Preserving those elements of the rural character of the Municipality along the major rural roadways.
- Having regard to Section 2 of the Planning Act and be consistent with the PPS.
- Providing directions and principles that protect the features of the Georgian Bay coastline while allowing the promotion of appropriate facilities and programs.

The following sections describe why a new Official Plan is being prepared; the process and work plan for how the Plan will be drafted; an overview of the results of the Provincial “One Window” meeting with various Ministries; and, how the community will be consulted and engaged throughout the process.

DRAFT

2.0

OVERVIEW OF OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

2.1 Why a New Official Plan

An Official Plan is the primary tool for guiding land use planning in a municipality. A municipal Official Plan sets out policies regarding how land in a community will be used and developed by establishing a framework of goals and objectives that direct growth for a 25-year horizon. Although it is focused primarily on land use, the Official Plan must be holistic in its direction by including policy direction pertaining to economic, environmental and cultural themes within the goals and objectives. The goals, objectives and policies that are contained in an Official Plan provide direction to Municipal Council, Staff, landowners, developers and the community.

A number of changes to Provincial policies have occurred since the Municipality's existing Official Plan was approved in 2006. The most notable changes include updates to the *Planning Act*, PPS, and the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (Growth Plan). Modifications to the Official Plan will be made to bring the new Official Plan into conformity with these documents, where necessary. The Municipality is required to be consistent with the PPS and conform to:

- PPS – Provides policy direction on matters relating to municipal planning that are of Provincial interest, and sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The main themes of the PPS include building strong communities, the wise management and use of resources, and protecting health and safety. The PPS was updated in 2020.
- The Growth Plan - Is a planning document that promotes economic development, protection and management of resources and the establishment of community hubs for service delivery. The Growth Plan does not provided details regarding minimum density requirements for people and jobs or the specific growth details that are found in the Province's other Growth Plan.

2.2 Official Plan Update Process

The Official Plan update commenced when a start-up meeting was held with staff on April 22, 2021. The Province's "One Window" meeting coordinated by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) was held on June 2, 2021 and the first required statutory Public Meeting under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* was held on June 23, 2021. The Section 26 Public Meeting is required by the *Planning Act* to provide members of the public an opportunity to provide comments on revisions that may be required to the Official Plan. A presentation was provided to Council and a further

opportunity was provided to members and the public to provide comments on the Official Plan update.

Following the review of the Draft Background Study, further opportunities for review comment will be provided. The release of the Draft Background Study will be followed by the preparation of the Draft Official Plan. Opportunities for public review and comment will be provided throughout the preparation of the Official Plan. A project timeline that outlines key milestones is below.



3.0

WHAT WE HEARD AND WHAT HAS BEEN COMPETED

3.1 What We Heard – “One Window” Meeting

The Province’s “One Window” meeting was held on June 2, 2021. The purpose of the meeting was to engage with MMAH and other partner Ministries to ensure various provincial interests are considered and incorporated into the new Official Plan. The Province’s “One Window” meeting was held with several ministries, which are outlined below.

The material and comments provided by the above noted Ministries will be considered and incorporated into the Official Plan update. Overall, the comments from the meeting can be summarized as follows:

- Update policy references and terminology in the existing Official Plan to reflect the latest amendments to the PPS.
- Include wildland fire risk mapping on the new Official Plan schedules.
- New Fisheries Management Plan and two new Forest Management Plans available for reference.

The comments received at the meeting are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (ENDM)

The ENDM’s planning interests are related to the protection of long-term resource mineral supply as set out in Section 2.4 of the PPS and to ensure the protection of human health and safety as it related to human-made hazards as prescribed by Section 3.2 of the PPS.

The PPS states that mineral mining operations, known mineral deposits and significant areas of mineral potential be identified on an Official Plan schedule. The information provided by ENDM will help form the basis of the content of the Official Plan with respect to ENDM’s planning interests. The maps provided by ENDM included the following:

- Mineral Deposit Inventory & Bedrock Geology
- Mining Lands Tenure and Abandoned Mines Information System (AMIS)
- Metallic Mineral Potential Estimation Tool (MMPET) Index

- Aggregate Resources of Ontario (Sand and Gravel)

The information included in the maps listed above will be included in the updated the Municipality's Official Plan schedules to ensure consistency with the Province's most up to date information.

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)

The MECP is responsible for ensuring clean and safe air, land, and water in Ontario; the care and management of Ontario's provincial parks and conservation reserves; and protection of Species at Risk in the province

The MECP interests in land use planning are contained in the PPS which include the following:

- servicing (including potable water, sewage disposal, stormwater management, and solid waste management)
- water quality and quantity (including surface drainage);
- air quality and climate change;
- land use compatibility (including noise, vibration, dust, and odour);
- contaminated sites;
- provincial parks and conservation reserves; and
- species at risk considerations.

While updated policies are required for each of the items listed in the section, particular attention will be given to updating the land use compatibility policies and ensuring policies related to species at risk and water quality are refined to ensure protection of these important resources.

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries (MHSTCI)

The MHSTCI aims to improve quality of life and promoting economic growth by supporting and delivering tourism and cultural experiences, supporting the arts and cultural industries and championing participation in sport and recreation activities across Ontario.

The MHSTCI seeks to bolster Ontario's economy by working with the tourism industry and regional tourism organizations to bring international investment, investing in festivals and events across the province, protecting cultural heritage resources, promoting the arts and the creative economy funding public libraries, supporting community projects and engagement and promoting active lifestyles and participation in sport, recreation and physical activity.

The Municipality is part of Tourism Region 12. The Regional Tourism Organization for the area is RTO12 – Explorers' Edge. Regional Tourism Organizations are funded by the Province to provide services to the tourism industry in the following areas: research, product development, workforce development, investment attraction, marketing and partnerships.

Due to its location along the Highway 400 corridor, McDougall is well positioned for tourism. There are multiple outdoor activity assets including the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, the Park to Park Trail, the Georgian Nordic Outdoor Activity Centre, Parry Sound Golf & Country Club, as well as beaches, parks and several inland lakes.

The MHSTCI has an interest in this review under its mandate to develop policies and programs for the conservation of Ontario's cultural heritage, and in stimulating tourism growth and investment, sport and recreational activities and facilities in Ontario. As an outcome of the Province's "One Window" meeting with the MHSTCI representative, a provided suggested edits and comments from a cultural heritage perspective on the existing Official Plan and the tourism profile. These comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the through the Official Plan update.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)

The MMAH seeks to work with municipal partners and communities to promote the planning, management and investment in community futures. The Ministry also helps to ensure that the land-use planning system is constructed in a way that managers future growth of municipalities.

The MMAH provided the most recent data for the 2019 household incomes, affordable housing prices and rents, and market prices and rents. The information provided will be used to inform policy direction in the Municipality's Official Plan.

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNF)

The MNDMNF oversees and a variety of sectors including natural heritage features, non-renewable resources, natural hazards, crowned land management, forest management and site assessments.

As part of the Province's "One Window: meeting with the MNDMNF, an information package was received from the Ministry's representative. The information package received included comments and policy direction on deer habitat assessment, fish habitat mapping, potential hazardous forest types mapping and natural resource values mapping. The mapping provided by the Ministry is intended to be incorporated into the Municipality's Official Plan schedules.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

OMAFRA aims to support the growth of Ontario's agri-food sector, provide business support to farmers, ensure sustainability of agriculture through research and innovation, expand agriculture in the north, enforce and improve food safety and strengthens Ontario's rural communities.

Through the engagement process, OMAFRA indicated that there are no significant agricultural resources within the Municipality. OMAFRA provided some high level considerations from the Ministry's perspective regarding the McDougall Official Plan, which include ensure Minimum Distance Separation is accounted for in areas outside of settlement areas and ensuring appropriate permitted uses are allowed outside of settlement areas such as agriculture, agriculture-related, on-farm diversified uses, normal farm practices. One additional minor textual change that will be incorporated through the Official Plan update will be renaming "secondary uses" to "on-farm diversified uses" in order to be consistent with the PPS.

Public Comments

At the time of this Draft Background Report, there have been written comments received on the Municipality's Official Plan update. The Municipality received comments from the Lorimer Lake Association, which in general, seek to request policy direction relating to lot creation on Lorimer Lake and the inclusion of lot standard provisions for new lots fronting onto Lorimer Lake. These comments will be taken into consideration and discussed further with Municipal Staff.

3.2 Public Consultation and Engagement

We welcome your suggestions and comments on the proposed policy directions identified throughout this Draft Background Report. Your comments and ideas will help inform the preparation of the new Official Plan for the Municipality of McDougall.

A review period of four (4) weeks will be provided to review the Draft Background Report prior to taking a further report to Council summarizing what we have heard. As mentioned above, this Report will remain in draft form and comments are encouraged throughout the process.

Please refer to the Municipality's Official Plan update website for further details on the submission of comments and the deadline for submissions.

The link to the website is: <https://www.mcdougall.ca/p/official-plan-review>

As the Official Plan update process progresses, there will be additional opportunities for you to participate in the preparation of the Municipality's new Official Plan. Other opportunities include the following:

- Public comment period;
- Public open house meeting; and,
- Statutory Public Meeting.

4.0

THE PLANNING ACT

4.1 Background

The *Planning Act* is Provincial legislation that sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. It describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them. The *Planning Act* provides basis for considering provincial interests, establishing local planning administration, preparing Official Plans, community improvement, regulating and controlling land uses through various tools, the subdividing of land, and more.

The *Planning Act* requires Council to regularly update the Official Plan to ensure that the Plan implements any changes to the PPS or Provincial plans. The Official Plan update is also an opportunity to ensure the Official Plan continues to address local priorities and changing community needs. The new Official Plan will guide all land use planning and development decisions in the Municipality for the next 25 years.

Before updating the Official Plan, the Municipality must consult with the approval authority and with the prescribed public bodies regarding the revisions that may be required. The Municipality must hold a special meeting of Council, open to the public, to discuss the revisions that may be required (the Province's "One Window" meeting and the Section 26 Public Meeting have been completed).

The Municipality must also host an open house information session and at least one Public Meeting with respect to the proposed new Official Plan. The Municipality has considered a public engagement strategy that goes above and beyond the minimum requirements of the *Planning Act*. Furthermore, the Municipality must engage with Indigenous communities throughout the process of preparing the new Official Plan.

Once Council adopts the Official Plan, it is submitted to the MMAH for final review and approval.

Some examples of sections within the *Planning Act* that have been updated since the current Official Plan was adopted and approved, are discussed in the following sections.

5.0

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (2020)

The PPS was most recently updated in 2020 and contained several modifications related to land supply, housing and environmental protections, among other matters.

The following amendments have been made to the PPS as it relates to land supply:

- Long Term Planning Horizon: Increased from 20 to 25 years
- Housing Land Supply: Increased from 10 to 15 years
- Serviced Residential Land Supply: 3-year supply continued with new policy enabling single tier municipalities to increase requirement to up to 5 years

Consistent with recent modifications to the *Planning Act*, several changes have been made to the PPS with respect to addressing the need for market-based and affordable housing options. Additionally, enhancements to various policies within the PPS have been made directing planning authorities to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate.

As it relates to stormwater management, new policy has been incorporated into the PPS requiring planning authorities to integrate stormwater planning with planning for sewage and water services, ensure optimization, feasibility and financial viability of systems, and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate. Further policy direction has also been incorporated into the PPS with respect to locating infrastructure and public service facilities near natural hazards and the role of existing technical guidelines when directing development from hazardous lands.

Additionally, new policy for planning authorities to engage with Indigenous communities and consider their interests when identifying, protecting, and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

As part of the Official Plan update, each section of the PPS has been reviewed to ensure consistency is achieved. Furthermore, it is noted that several definitions in the PPS have also been updated. Existing terminology and definitions within the Official Plan will also be reviewed, and updated where required, to ensure consistency with the PPS.

6.0

GROWTH PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO (2011)

The Growth Plan is a planning document that promotes economic development, protection and management of resources and the establishment of community hubs for service delivery. The Growth Plan does not provide details regarding minimum density requirements for people and jobs or the specific growth details that are found in the Province's other Growth Plan.

The new Official Plan will form the foundation for decision makers in protecting the environment, and guiding future development, public works, and capital investment. The decisions of Municipal Council must conform to the Official Plan.

Through the Municipality's Official Plan update, conformity with the Growth Plan must also be reviewed. The Growth Plan was released in March 2011 and is intended to provide guidance to align provincial decision-making and investment for economic and population growth in Northern Ontario.

The Growth Plan is a 25-year plan that provides policies and guidance around key growth management goals including:

- Diversifying of traditional resource-based industries.
- Workforce education and training.
- Integration of infrastructure investments and planning.
- Tools for Indigenous peoples' participation in the economy.

The Growth Plan also encourages the development or service hubs in the north so that housing and service delivery can occur in a coordinated manner.

7.0

PLANNING ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED PLANNING APPROACH

7.1 Growth Management

The PPS and the Growth Plan provide directions on a range of policy matters that impact how the Municipality should grow and/or change and how that growth and change should be managed by the new Official Plan.

Growth and development in McDougall, like that in the broader Parry Sound District and northeastern Ontario has been slow, focused and reflective of the broader economic trends. West Parry Sound specifically, as noted on the WPSEDO website, *"has nearly 2000 businesses; and 30 of those businesses employ 50 people or more. With a population that swells from 20K to 100K seasonally there are people to build for, and a large, competitive construction workforce to help you build, with over 20% of the workforce employed in trades in the West Parry Sound District."* As noted in the Parry Sound CFDC report, while demographic growth and change may have remained steady, there has been regular and consistent investment in the community as evidenced by building permits and construction values over the past six years. A total of over \$55,000,000 in construction and development has taken place in McDougall over the past six years, with a yearly average of \$9.3 Million in construction occurring. While demographic change has been limited, significant investment and development has occurred in McDougall and will continue to occur during the life of the new Official Plan.

The population of McDougall has held steady from 2006 to the 2016 Census at just over 2,700 full time residents. Parry Sound District overall has grown from 35,226 persons in 2006 to 42,824 persons in 2016. Growth rates between the three most recent census dates were +1.6% and +3.0% respectively.

Ministry of Finance's latest population forecasts for Ontario to 2046 continues to tell the story of significant growth in southern Ontario and slow and steady growth in the Parry Sound District. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is projected to be the fastest growing region of the Province, accounting for over 55% of Ontario's net population growth to 2046. The GTA's population is projected to increase from 7.1 million in 2020 to 10.0 million in 2046. The region's share of total Ontario population is projected to rise from 48% in 2020 to 49.8% in 2046.¹ The population of Northern Ontario is projected to grow slowly over the projection horizon, with a slight increase of 3.7%, from

811,000 in 2020 to 841,000 by 2046. Within the North, Northeastern Ontario (including Parry Sound District) is projected to see population growth of 23,000 or 4%, from 569,000 to 592,000 to 2046. Northern Ontario's positive natural increase offset part of the losses it experienced through net migration. However, while the North has recently seen modest net migration gains, its natural increase has turned negative.

So, what does this mean for McDougall? Investment and development will continue to occur in the Municipality throughout the life of the new Official Plan, likely focused in the community of Nobel, the smaller community of Waubamik, and in the many waterfront areas located on Georgian Bay and on the many inland lakes and river systems. How the Municipality plans for and manages this growth and change in the main areas of human settlement in the community and as defined by the land use structure and policies of the new Official Plan will be critical to delivering the quality of life and a quality natural environment that residents and property owners expect. Strong growth and settlement policies will be required in the new Official Plan. Strong shoreline development policies and water quality guidelines will also need to be considered. Other forms of development, including resource based development such as aggregate extraction operations, will also require close review and scrutiny to ensure the limitation on land use conflicts and impacts through careful planning and mitigation.

The following policy directions are intended to encompass the Municipality's Growth Management Strategy, including housing and employment, as well as supporting infrastructure.

- Update the Goals and Objectives of the Municipal Official Plan
 - The goals and objectives for the new Official Plan should be updated and refined regarding protecting resource and rural area by managing growth and development and directing the majority to the defined Settlement Areas while permitting local appropriate rural development.
 - Strengthen the objectives to support Settlement Areas as complete communities and directing commercial and industrial development to the settlement areas.
 - Consider refining the residential lot creation policies in the rural areas of the Municipality to ensure that they continue to support a strong settlement growth management strategy but permit limited lot creation opportunities within a prescribed policy framework.

- Update housing policies within new Official Plan
 - The new Official Plan should incorporate a separate policy framework regarding housing choice and options, housing targets and housing affordability.
 - Intensification policies regarding second and accessory units within single, semi and townhouse dwellings should be considered for incorporation in the new Official Plan.
 - The new Official Plan should consider policy incentives to encourage and promote affordable housing projects within the defined settlement areas.

- Review existing employment lands and areas to ensure properly identified and designated in the new Official Plan
 - All employment areas and employment lands should be confirmed and identified in the schedules to the new Official Plan.

- Policies for rural employment and rural-resource based recreational employment uses should be enhanced
 - Enhance policies to guide the development and redevelopment of existing rural employment uses.
 - Enhance land use compatibility policies to limit and/or mitigate impacts on sensitive land uses and restrict such uses adjacent to existing employment areas and uses.
- Review and update policy framework for stormwater management matters
 - Provide policy support for best practices in stormwater including green infrastructure and low impact development that considers the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.
 - Ensure that policies are provided that focus on building sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including full life cycle costs, and options to pay for these costs over the long-term.

7.2 Rural Areas

The policy directions for the Rural Area are intended to provide guidance related to rural lands, the rural economy and aggregate resources.

- Broadening the permitted uses in rural areas to support and serve the rural and agricultural community.
 - Permitted uses should be reviewed and refined to ensure they are consistent with and reflective of the language used in the PPS; definitions have been provided in the PPS to clarify the meaning of agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses.
 - Policies will also be required to implement the permitted uses and identify what criteria must be met in order to establish an agricultural-related use or on-farm diversified use.
- Continued focus of rural and agricultural land uses in the 'Rural' designation.
 - The permitted uses in the 'Rural' designation should be reviewed, consideration for environmentally compatible recreational and tourism uses should be contemplated in accordance with the PPS.
 - Consistent with provincial guidance, the policies of the Municipal Official Plan should be reviewed and updated to provide clear circumstances under which appropriately scaled industrial and commercial uses could be contemplated in the 'Rural' designation.
- Residential development should continue to be limited on 'Rural' designated lands.
 - Focusing development in the Municipality's Settlement Areas will promote their vitality and protect the rural economy through the preservation of rural lands.

- Limited opportunities for rural infill development should be reviewed.
- Review and update consent policies to permit local appropriate rural residential lot creation.
 - As part of establishing a hierarchy for residential development, the consent policies should be reviewed to ensure that new multiple lot creation is directed to settlement areas and that consents permitted in the 'Rural' designation are limited and subject to a prescriptive set of criteria.
- Development of a supportive agri-tourism and eco-tourism framework
 - Provincial policies permit the establishment of agri-tourism and eco-tourism uses in the Rural area that are resource-related and are compatible with rural land uses.
 - Enabling policies should be developed to promote opportunities to diversify the local economy through the development of agri-tourism and eco-tourism opportunities in Rural areas.
- Continued recognition of the importance of aggregate resources in the Municipality.
 - Protection of aggregate and potential aggregate resource areas for existing and future extraction from incompatible land uses will be important in ensuring the continued availability of this economic resource for the Municipality, as well as contribute towards minimizing short and long term land use conflicts.
 - Development of more comprehensive land use compatibility policies to ensure that existing and future operations are suitability buffered from adjacent land uses.
 - Consideration of additional policies for facilities secondary to aggregate uses, as well as a detailed policy framework for site rehabilitation, should be undertaken as part of the new Official Plan.
- Review areas in the Municipality with aggregate potential.
 - Review aggregate operations to ensure that all lands with aggregate potential are captured through the new Official Plan.
 - Official Plan update should confirm the requirements for aggregate extraction to be realized on lands designated aggregate potential.
 - Aggregate Resource potential overlay designation should be reviewed and refined to ensure it does not extend into existing built-up areas or areas where sensitive uses predominate.
 - Refinement of the aggregate potential overlay should also be considered as part of the new Official Plan. Use of an overlay designation would enable recognition of an underlying land use designation in the absence of aggregate uses.
- Identify areas where aggregate extraction is not permitted in the Municipality in accordance with Provincial policies.
 - The PPS contains provisions that outline where new and/or expansions to mineral aggregate operations are not permitted. New policies will need to be implemented in the new Official Plan to ensure consistency with these policies.

- Require an Official Plan Amendment for all proposed new aggregate operations. Require a Zoning By-law Amendment for expansions to exiting operations.

7.3 Protection of Natural Heritage Features

As it relates to the natural environment, the PPS broadly seeks to protect natural features and areas for the long-term. Accordingly, provincial policy directs for the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems should be maintained, restored, or where possible improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features. In accordance with the above directions, development is restricted in certain features, and their adjacent lands, unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.

Within the PPS, “natural heritage features and areas” mean significant wetlands, significant coastal wetlands, other coastal wetlands, fish habitat, significant woodlands and significant valleylands, habitat of endangered species and threatened species, significant wildlife habitat, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, which are important for their environmental and social values as a legacy of the natural landscapes of an area.

“Natural heritage system” is defined as a system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and supports natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of native species, and ecosystems. These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. The Province has a recommended approach for identifying natural heritage systems, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.

The current approach in the Municipal Official Plan broadly seeks to protect and enhance natural heritage features. While the current Municipal Official Plan recognizes the importance of natural heritage features, there is opportunity to strengthen policies and ensure consistency in accordance with the policies of the PPS and to create a natural heritage system as required by the PPS.

- Update language in New Official Plan for policy consistency with the PPS.
 - Consistency in identifying and naming natural heritage features should be applied in the new Official Plan. The language and policies of the Growth Plan regarding protecting what is valuable in the water resource and natural heritage systems, and in key hydrologic features and areas and key natural heritage features should be reflected in the New Official Plan. A review of the Province’s Natural Heritage Reference Manual, which provides guidance on the identification and significance of natural heritage features and areas is being undertaken as part of this review.

- Review and update Environmental Impact Study requirements and policies.
 - A review and update of the Environmental Impact Study requirements should be undertaken to ensure consistency with provincial directions.
- Review and update hazard provisions to ensure consistency with provincial policy.
 - While the current Official Plan generally restricts development on hazardous lands, further clarity and consideration should be given to the provisions established in the PPS, which provide instances in which development can be contemplated and certain uses which are prohibited from development in hazardous lands and sites.
- Consideration of the impacts of climate change and the risks associated with natural hazards.
 - The current Official Plan makes no reference to climate change. Policies should be implemented in the new Official Plan which acknowledge climate change and the potential for increased risk associated with natural hazards including managing wildland fire risk.

7.4 Approach to Water Quality

Water quality is an important consideration when it comes to updating the Official Plan. The Official Plan should include policies that require the consideration of water quality impacts in the review of all development applications. The Official Plan should promote the replacement of historic septic systems with modern systems and encourage vegetation retention in shoreline areas.

7.5 Shoreline Structures

Shoreline structures (docks and boathouses/boatports) are important as they provide access to shoreline lots. When carefully placed and designed, they can fit into the landscape with minimal impact to shoreline views, vistas and character.

It is important that the Official Plan provide policies to be considered in evaluating *Planning Act* applications to permit larger shoreline structures than permitted by the Zoning By-law.

Additional policies may be provided to address minimum setbacks for new septic systems on shoreline properties. The Municipality has the ability to include a policy framework that only permits new septic systems that are a minimum setback from the shoreline.

It is recommended that policy direction be provided in the Official Plan to require the implementing Zoning By-law to include a minimum setback for the treatment components of new septic systems from the shoreline, which it currently does not include. Common minimum setbacks for new septic systems is between 20 and 30 metres from a shoreline. The new Official Plan should also include policies that promote the replacement of existing septic systems recognizing that new systems enhance water quality.

7.6 Short Term Rentals

Short term rentals have become a point of contention for municipalities throughout Ontario. In some cases, land owners rent out their residential properties on a short term basis. In some cases neighbours have expressed concerns related to the intensity of use and nuisances, such as noise, garbage and parking.

The Official Plan should provide policy direction that encourages the Municipality to undertake a review of Short Term Rentals. The Official Plan Review should also establish enabling policies that enable the Municipality to develop a licencing program, and zoning program to distinguish between dwellings that are purpose built or purpose used Short Term Rentals and those instances where individuals rent their cottage out periodically through the course of the year.

7.7 Cannabis

Since the legalization of cannabis there is a need for municipalities to establish a land use planning framework to ensure cannabis operations are compatible with surrounding land uses. Cannabis production can occur indoors or outdoors; in industrial areas or in rural areas.

Cannabis production facility buildings generally contain the following components:

- a controlled entrance providing reception and security;
- an office;
- growing areas;
- processing areas;
- a lab for testing the quality of the product;
- packaging;
- secure storage;
- shipping;
- mechanical facilities; and,
- facilities for staff including change rooms, washrooms.

It is recommended that the Official Plan include policy direction that recognizes cannabis production facilities as an agricultural use where they occur in Rural areas (indoor or outdoor) and as an industrial use when they occur in an industrial building.

The new Official Plan should also provide direction to the Zoning By-law to establish locational and operational requirements such as minimum separation distances from sensitive land uses, minimum lot sizes, site plan requirements, dark sky lighting requirements and buffering and screening requirements.

7.8 Site Plan Control

Section 21.05 of the current Official Plan contains a policy that provides some direction on Site Plan Control. It is recommended that this section be updated to provide additional direction to the Municipality to update the Site Plan Control By-law to identify additional categories of uses where site plan control is to be applied.

Additionally, the Official Plan should identify the site considerations to be included in a site plan control agreement and provide direction on securities in order to ensure that agreements are appropriately implemented.

7.9 Partial Servicing

The Municipality has areas that are partially serviced with municipal water systems and individual on-site sewage systems. The Official Plan should include policies requiring new development in these areas to be connected to municipal services and provide policies for the expansion of these systems.

7.10 Cultural Heritage

Section 16 of the existing Official Plan includes policies regarding Cultural Heritage. Updated policies should be implemented to ensure that the Official Plan conforms to the cultural heritage policies found in the PPS. In addition, policies should be included that encourage engagement and consultation with local Indigenous communities on land use planning matter and applications.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

A number of tasks have been completed to date since the start of the Official Plan update process in April, 2021. The intent is to collect comments on this Draft Background Report and to summarize those comments in a subsequent document. The information received through this process and then at the proposed open house will contribute to the formation of policies within the new Official Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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