

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: December 7, 2023
To: Mayor and Council
From: Adam Betteridge, Director of Building and Planning Services
Report Number: COU23-136
Attachments: 1. "Background Review Report" dated October 2023, WSP Canada Inc.; and
2. "Phase 1 Background Report" dated October 19, 2023, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Title: Special and Public Meeting – City of Stratford Official Plan Five-Year Comprehensive Review

Objective: To initiate a five-year review of an Official Plan, the Planning Act requires that a special meeting of Council, open to the public, be held to discuss revisions that may be required to the Official Plan. This report, along with the Consultant's report and presentation, accompanies the Special Meeting for the purposes of initiating the five-year review.

This Special Meeting will allow Council, Staff, and the City's Consultants to obtain preliminary feedback from the public and interested stakeholders on land use matters to be considered during the Official Plan Review process.

Background: The Official Plan functions as a legal document that guides growth and development in the City. The City's existing Official Plan was adopted by Council in 1993 and was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in 1994. It was comprehensively updated through Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 21 in 2015, which was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in 2016. The current Official Plan contains goals, objectives and policies that provide direction on growth and development in the City to the year 2033.

At its Regular Meeting of June 28, 2021, Council considered Report No. PLA21-010 and directed Staff to proceed with initiating the Five-Year Review of the Official Plan.

At its Regular Meeting of May 9, 2022, Council considered Report No. PLA22-012 entitled "Five Year Review of the City of Stratford Official Plan, Draft Workplan and

Public Consultation Framework”, and directed Staff to move forward with the Official Plan Review and issue a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for consulting services.

The RFP process was conducted in early 2023, with three firms submitting proposals. A committee consisting of three Members of Council and two staff representatives reviewed and evaluated the submissions received. At its Regular Meeting of April 11, 2023, Council considered Report No. COU23-048 and selected WSP Canada Inc. (“WSP”) to assist the City with the review.

Analysis: The Planning Act (Sec. 26) requires the City to update its Official Plan at least every five years. The City completed its most recent review of the Official Plan in 2015. The Official Plan Review provides an opportunity to confirm the community’s vision for the future and respond to recent and emerging changes in Stratford.

The purpose of the Official Plan Review is to update the policies of the Official Plan to conform to Provincial planning policies and legislation. As part of the Official Plan Review, a Land Needs Assessment will be completed to ensure that the City is planning for future population, job, and housing growth. The Official Plan Review process will develop forward-thinking policies to guide land use, growth, and development over the next 25 years.

More information, including how public consultation is proposed, is provided in the attached “Background Review Report” prepared by WSP. A presentation by WSP will occur at the Special and Public Meeting.

Notice of the Special and Public Meeting was issued in accordance with the Planning Act. As of the date of writing this report, the following comments have been submitted:

- Bell Canada: no specific comments or concerns at this time; asked to be circulated on any future materials and/or decisions related to this matter.
- CN Rail: provided detailed comments with the following (summarized) requests:
 - That the Official Plan acknowledges the importance of the rail infrastructure;
 - Include a definition for Major Facilities, Major Goods Movement Facilities and Corridors, Rail Facilities and Sensitive Land Uses;
 - Add rail facilities and influence areas to a schedule;
 - Policy direction should clarify that new developments would be required to meet the Provincial Policy Statement requirements for the long-term protection of Rail Facilities; and,
 - Policy direction should clarify that new developments would be required to meet the Provincial Policy Statement requirements for land use compatibility with respect to major facilities.
- Mike Sullivan, Resident, Stratford:
 - Interest in the Land Needs Assessment that will be conducted as part of the review process, this given there was a large annexation from Perth

South. Expressed that the large annexation was neither necessary or done in an open and transparent manner.

- City method of public notice and engagement (City website/social media and two Town Crier postings in the Beacon Herald) is not wide enough for this important process: "Something as important as deciding what the official plan will be for the next 5 years deserves more publicity than that";
- Secondary Plans (two) need to be revisited due to how old they are (25-30 years): "With the need for affordable housing and the need to reduce car dependency, both these Secondary Plans need to be revisited."

The Director can provide the following responses to the above: For Bell Canada and CN Rail, their comments are standard, agency-focused comments that will be reviewed and addressed as part of the review process. For Mr. Sullivan's comments, the Director has already responded directly to Mr. Sullivan advising that: a draft "Land Needs Assessment" is expected in early 2024; the Director recognizes Mr. Sullivan's suggestion for broader outreach, however the City notices align with the prescribed guidelines, and follows the notification procedures as required by the province's Planning Act. The City remains dedicated to maximizing community awareness within our existing framework and appreciates Mr. Sullivan's continued engagement in this process; and, the Secondary Plans are to be addressed as part of the Official Plan Review.

Ensuring that the Official Plan is current and meeting the needs of the City is imperative: the Official Plan sets targets for growth and development that are tied to growth-related infrastructure planning and financing.

A fiscal analysis of growth scenarios will be completed as part of the City's growth plan conformity work as part of the process.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The Official Plan Review includes costs associated with consultant services and community engagement and was initially included in the 2023 approved budget at an estimated cost of \$150,000. The funding of the Official Plan is 90% from growth studies in development charges, and 10% from internal sources. Financial impacts in 2023 are nominal.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The Official Plan Review will carry into 2024, and is expected to be completed in the first quarter ("Q1") of 2025. Accordingly, unspent planned expenditures and the available funding from the initial \$150,000 have been included in the 2024 draft budget. Based on new information and pricing, the estimate has been increased to \$205,000, with \$184,000 coming from the development charges, and the remaining shortfall of \$21,000 from the tax levy in 2024.

Link to asset management plan and strategy:

There are no direct linkages to the City's asset management plan and strategy based from the recommendations and/or information provided in this Report, however, having an updated Official Plan that aligns with the City's asset management plan and strategy, and vice versa, ensures that future growth and development is consistent with the efficient utilization and maintenance of municipal assets, optimizing their long-term sustainability and functionality.

Legal considerations:

There are no direct legal considerations that pertain to the recommendations and information provided in this Report.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**Mobility, Accessibility and Design Excellence**

Improving ways to get around, to and from Stratford by public transit, active transportation and private vehicle.

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Alignment with One Planet Principle:**Health and Happiness**

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Land and Nature

Protecting and restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Sustainable Water

Using water efficiently, protecting local water resources and reducing flooding and drought.

Local and Sustainable Food

Promoting sustainable humane farming and healthy diets high in local, seasonal organic food and vegetable protein.

Travel and Transport

Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport.

Zero Carbon Energy

Making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the "Background Review Report" and associated presentation by WSP Canada Inc. for the City of Stratford Official Plan Review be received together with the accompanying "Phase 1 Background Report" of Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.;

THAT Staff be directed to proceed with the Section 26 Official Plan Review as outlined in the WSP "Background Review Report" and this report entitled "Special and Public Meeting - City of Stratford Official Plan Five-Year Comprehensive Review";

AND THAT Council hears all interested parties with respect to the Official Plan Five-Year Comprehensive Review.

Prepared by: Adam Betteridge, MPA, MCIP, RPP, Director of Building and Planning Services

Recommended by: Adam Betteridge, MPA, MCIP, RPP, Director of Building and Planning Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer