



Corporate Report

Clerk's Files

Originator's
Files

CD.11 BRA

DATE: August 30, 2005

TO: Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee
Meeting Date: September 19, 2005

FROM: Edward R. Sajecki
Commissioner of Planning and Building

SUBJECT: **City of Brampton Official Plan Review**

RECOMMENDATION: That a copy of the report titled "City of Brampton Official Plan Review" dated August 30, 2005 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be received for information.

BACKGROUND: This report is part of the ongoing program to update City Council on significant planning initiatives in adjacent municipalities.

The current City of Brampton Official Plan was approved by Brampton City Council in June, 1993 and by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in March, 1997.

A Special Meeting of Brampton City Council was held on June 3, 2002 to fulfill the requirements of Section 26(1) of the *Planning Act* which requires that, not less than every five years, a special meeting of council be held to determine the need for a revision to the Official Plan. Based on input received at the public meeting and agency responses, Brampton City Council adopted the staff recommendation that the Official Plan be reviewed, but limited in scope to the following issues:

- Revised long term city-wide growth forecasts;
- Retail Policies;
- Office Strategy;
- Environment and Open Space;
- Urban Design and Development Policies;
- Cultural Heritage Policies; and
- General Housekeeping Matters

PRESENT STATUS:

The long term growth forecasts were revised and approved by Brampton City Council and the Region of Peel through the process of expanding the urban boundary to include North West Brampton. Discussion papers for the other areas, which identify the issues to be addressed and possible changes to the Official Plan, have been completed for public consideration and input. Workshops are being held with stakeholders to obtain feedback on the discussion papers.

COMMENTS:**1. Overview of Discussion Papers****(a) Cultural Heritage Policies**

The Cultural Heritage Policy Review comprises four main components:

- a review of the policies respecting cultural heritage in the Provincial, Regional and local context;
- a review of the recent initiatives undertaken by the City in both a policy and program context in relation to cultural heritage resources, including possible additional cultural heritage policies and programs currently being reviewed at the staff level;
- a review of the cultural heritage policies of other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area including Toronto, Mississauga, Markham and Caledon to identify “best practices”; and,

- recommendations on possible directions with respect to amending the cultural heritage policies of Brampton's Official Plan on the basis of the foregoing analysis.

The Discussion Paper concluded that:

“Brampton Official Plan's existing cultural heritage policies are fairly comprehensive and have generally addressed all of the significant cultural heritage resources which can be found in the City, with the possible exception of cultural heritage landscapes (although it could still be seen as falling within the very broad definition of 'Heritage Resources' under the City's Official Plan). However, more attention needs to be paid to the role of protecting existing cultural heritage resources during the overall development of the City.

Staff is also recommending that the current tactical approach of the cultural heritage policies be improved. In this respect, it is the presentation of the policies, as opposed to the actual policies, that need to be updated in the Official Plan to provide clearer guidelines for City staff and the general public regarding the type of and reasons for actions required.

Other obvious candidates for improved policies are the various implementation tools which can be used to advance the City's cultural heritage programs and related projects. The roles of these various tools such as block planning, community improvement plans, cost sharing, heritage conservation easements, heritage property tax reduction program, and heritage subdivisions should be clearly described and enabled by specific policy.”

(b) Environment and Open Space

There are two components to the Environment and Open Space Review: the policy framework and mapping. The proposed policy revisions are to:

- ensure the policies clearly distinguish between environmental features and recreational open space;
- place more emphasis on the City being a leader in environmental responsibility;
- remove references to outdated documents and terminology;
- provide the policy framework to implement new Provincial initiatives such as the new Provincial Policy Statement and the Greenbelt Plan;
- provide the policy framework to implement new City initiatives such as Brampton's Woodland Strategy, Development Design Guidelines and StormWater Management Guidelines; and
- establish clear guidelines for determining buffers and setbacks from environmental features.

With respect to mapping, the proposed changes are to:

- accurately reflect environmental features and recreational open space;
- ensure the mapping clearly distinguishes between environmental features and recreational open space; and
- removal of the steep slope, hedgerow and Private Commercial Recreation designation from the schedules.

(c) Urban Design and Development Policies

The Urban Design and Development Policy Review comprises four main components:

- a review of the policies respecting urban form/development design in the Provincial, Regional and local context;
- a review of the recent initiatives of the City of Brampton with respect to urban design including the City-wide Development Design Guidelines, the Block Plan Process, Flower City Strategy and Central Area Plan Review etc;
- a review of other municipalities' Official Plans including Mississauga, Toronto, Burlington, Oakville and Markham to identify "best practices" in urban design policies; and
- recommendations on possible directions for enhancing the Official Plan urban form policies, based on the foregoing analysis.

The discussion paper concluded that while the present Official Plan urban form policies are still relevant, they are considered not entirely reflective of the new direction that Brampton is taking in the area of civic design including block planning, the City-wide Development Design Guidelines (DDG), and a commitment to create a high quality public realm. As well, strengthening the role of urban design needs to be clearly stated in the Official Plan and should apply to both private and public sector developments.

Updating and strengthening of some existing policies are also needed to reflect the latest City, Regional and Provincial policies and initiatives, and to provide clear direction to the public on the City's expectations regarding built form and development design. Stronger Official Plan policies are also required to improve defensibility of the City's urban design intentions and requirements at the OMB. These include sanctioning block planning and the DDG to form part of the urban design policy framework.

As well, new policies should be established to support preferred development patterns (e.g. infill/intensification, transit-oriented development, compact development form and mixed-uses) as well as new and potential implementation tools to further advance the objectives of promoting high quality and innovative urban design.

(d) Retail Policies

The Retail Policy Review comprises four main components:

- a review of the policies respecting retail strategy in the Provincial, Regional and local context;
- a review of the retail policies of eleven other municipalities in Ontario to identify “best practices”;
- an overview of retail space trends, retail space inventory, retail space demand and directions of growth; and,
- recommendations on possible directions with respect to amending the retail policies and commercial structure of Brampton’s Official Plan on the basis of analysis in the context of the foregoing components of the review.

The Retail Policy Review Study recommends the following six broad directions to adjust and update the retail policy section of the Brampton Official Plan:

- clarify and refine the retail commercial hierarchy provided in the Brampton Official Plan based on the size and number of anchors;
- give greater emphasis to place-making by emphasizing mixed-use and high standards of urban design;

- identify the general locations for future Regional and District Retail designations in the Official Plan. Designate one additional regional shopping centre and two to three additional district shopping centres each in North East Brampton and North West Brampton;
- explicitly recognize the maturity of the Central Area and the opportunity the Central Area provides to intensify and diversify its land uses;
- limit retail commercial uses within industrial designations to retail warehouses, automotive, entertainment and retail uses ancillary to the industrial use; and,
- consolidate the many retail commercial designations within the secondary plans to provide consistency in all secondary plans and provide a flexible framework that recognizes retail commercial trends and accommodates future growth.

(e) Office Strategy

The Office Strategy Review comprises four main components:

- a review of the policies respecting office strategy in the Provincial, Regional and local context;
- an overview of office space trends, office space inventory, existing office nodes, industrial and Central Area policies relating to office uses and the latest forecasts for office space;
- a review of the office strategy policies of other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area including Toronto, Mississauga, Markham and Vaughan to identify “best practices”; and,

- recommendations on possible directions with respect to amending the office strategy policies of Brampton's Official Plan on the basis of the foregoing analysis.

The review proposed the following directions to improve and update the office strategy of the Brampton Official Plan:

- provide urban design standards in the Official Plan for businesses in industrial areas that contain office nodes;
- examine the office nodes that are underperforming in the City of Brampton and which have limited potential for office development and consider alternative land uses;
- update the Official Plan to reflect the recent employment forecasts by Hemson Consulting;
- incorporate new policies based on staff's review of other municipal Official Plans;
- reconsider the number of designated office nodes in the Official Plan based on the Hemson Consulting employment forecasts;
- redesignate Bram West as a Primary Office Node given the locational attributes of the Mississauga Road corridor north of Highway 407; and,
- refine policies to establish the significance of the Central Area as a major focus for office development.

2. Next Steps

Following completion of the public participation program, Brampton staff intend to prepare Draft Official Plan Amendments for consideration at statutory public meetings at the end of this year.

3. Impacts on Mississauga

Staff is monitoring the City of Brampton Official Plan Review program, have reviewed the discussion papers, and have provided input at workshops. There are no significant changes proposed to the land use policies and designations which might impact Mississauga. While Mississauga Council ultimately supported the expansion of Brampton's urban boundary, the matter has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Further, given that Brampton and Mississauga are buffered by the Parkway Belt West Plan, which includes Highway 407, and because the Brampton land use designations in the vicinity of the Brampton/Mississauga boundary are largely similar to the Mississauga land use pattern, there is unlikely to be any significant land use impact on Mississauga.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: None

CONCLUSION: The City of Mississauga has no further comments on the discussion papers for the City of Brampton Official Plan Review and will continue to monitor the progress of the Brampton Official Plan Review.

Edward R. Sajecki
Commissioner of Planning and Building