



## Official Plan Review Nearing Completion

In April 2011, the City of Peterborough Planning Division launched the Plan It Peterborough Official Plan Review campaign in order to understand the community's vision for how the city should develop over the next 20 years and to identify priorities for potential land-use planning policy to implement that vision.

Since June 2011, City staff met with close to 400 individuals at public open houses, stakeholder workshops, meetings and guest speaking engagements and have received a significant amount of interest, feedback and valuable ideas from the community on how to build a better Peterborough. As the initial phase public consultation phase for Plan It Peterborough draws to a close, the Planning Division has summarized the key messages heard to date in a Draft Directions Report in order to identify strategic opportunities for translating those messages into Official Plan policy.

In fall 2012, the Planning Division will host a Public Meeting at City Council in order to identify for Council potential areas of policy change in the Official Plan and to allow the community voice its opinion on the future of land use planning policy in the city. As part of that meeting, a Final Directions Report will be presented to Council to describe in more detail the feedback received from the community during the first phase of Plan It Peterborough.

To ensure the Final Directions Report comprehensively and accurately reflects the community consultation that has occurred to date, you are encouraged to review the Draft Directions Report which is now available on the City's Plan It Peterborough website at:

<http://www.peterborough.ca/Assets/City+Assets/Planning/Documents/OP+Review+Draft+Policy+Directions+Report.pdf>

Here is an overview of the vision for our community for the future:

## Identification of Five Over-Arching Themes

The input received from the public and stakeholders during the Plan It Peterborough consultation as well as the recommendations and messages contained in the various strategic planning documents completed over the past several years were assessed and can be synthesized into the five over-arching themes as follows. (These themes and the resulting vision are based on community consultation, a review of reports and plans completed by the city as well as organizations such as the Peterborough Social Planning Council, Peterborough County City Health Unit and Sustainable Peterborough. Consideration has also been given to provincial legislation and policy directions when developing this draft.) The themes are as follows:

**1. Complete, Healthy Communities:** Healthy mixed-use neighbourhoods that are part of an integrated, vibrant and diverse community that includes a balance of housing, employment, community services, parks and open spaces all within walking distance;

- Compact and inclusive housing; and,
- Context-appropriate intensification of downtown and commercial corridors.

**2. Environmental Sustainability:** Protect and enhance natural environmental systems, functions and resources over the long term; and,

- Incorporate and promote sustainable development practices and initiatives.

**3. Economic Strength:** Promote economic vitality and provide for a balanced and diverse range of innovative employment opportunities that leverage the City's strengths; and,

- Protect employment areas over the long term.

**4. Unique and Vibrant Places and Spaces:** Enhance downtown vibrancy while preserving heritage quality;

- Recognize and enhance the inherent and unique aspects of Peterborough and create focal points, gateways, experiences and landmarks; and,
- Strive for high urban design standards in the public and private realm.

**5. Connectivity and Mobility:** Plan for transit, active transportation, and pedestrian-oriented development to reduce dependency on the private automobile; and,

- Expand and enhance trail systems to promote connectivity, mobility and accessibility within and between neighbourhoods, employment areas, parks and open spaces.

### Theme 1: Complete, Healthy Communities

Through the Plan It Peterborough process, there has been a considerable amount of support expressed for development that creates more compact, complete and healthy communities. Specifically, Peterborough is envisioned as being a complete community that meets people's needs for daily living throughout an entire life time by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space, while also providing convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non- motorized travel.

Increasingly, the correlation between built form and personal health is being recognized and the development of more 'complete communities' is seen as a means to create healthier communities that promote higher levels of physical activity.

Through the Plan It Peterborough process, participants envisioned creating complete, healthy communities by:

1. Developing mixed-use neighbourhoods that are part of an integrated, vibrant and diverse community that includes a balance of housing, employment, community services, parks and open spaces all within walking distance;
2. Providing a range of housing that is inclusive of all incomes, ages and ethnicities;
3. Context appropriate intensification of existing residential areas downtown and along commercial corridors;
4. Designing connected street networks that are accessible for all modes of transportation;
5. Developing connected green spaces that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities;
6. Promoting neighbourhood/community hubs that provide various activities and services; and
7. Increasing access to local food through support for community gardens and local farmers markets.

### **Major Policy Directions**

The major policy directions for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Complete, Healthy Communities' can be further categorized into:

1. Providing a range of housing opportunities
2. Providing Affordable Housing;
3. Facilitating Appropriate Intensification;
4. Planning For an Aging Population;
5. Supporting Community Infrastructure; and
6. Safe, Inclusive Neighbourhood Design.

### **Theme 2: Environmental Sustainability**

Along with the recent adoption of the Sustainable Peterborough: Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, there has been a considerable amount of support expressed for the City to promote environmentally sustainable growth that enhances the City's natural, social, and economic environment. For this to occur, residents would like the City to plan with a longer term vision that anticipates how the City should transition over the next 50 years. Stakeholders would like the City to consider its Official Plan policies through a 'sustainability lens' that aims to guide the reduction of its environmental impacts, strengthen its social and cultural networks, and increase its economic prosperity. This would contribute to "sustainable development", defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The implementation of the Sustainable Peterborough Plan will play a significant role in contributing to Peterborough's environmental sustainability into the future.

Through the Plan It Peterborough process, it was more specifically envisioned that Peterborough would grow in an environmentally sustainable manner by:

1. Protecting and enhancing its natural environmental systems, functions and resources over the long term;
2. Incorporating and promoting sustainable development practices and initiatives;
3. Supporting urban agriculture and providing more opportunities to grow food locally;
4. Supporting green, renewable energy sources and promoting energy conservation and waste management;
5. Protecting the City's urban forest;
6. Positioning the City to address issues of climate change while maintaining its air and water quality;
7. Promoting existing and new industrial parks and employment areas to transition to become more environmentally efficient; and
8. Developing a sustainable servicing infrastructure system.

### **Major Policy Directions**

The major policy directions for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Environmental Sustainability' can be further categorized into the following subthemes of:

1. Protect, Enhance and Expand Natural Areas/Green Spaces;
2. Promote Sustainable Building Design and Green, Alternative Energy;
3. Protect the City's Urban Forest;
4. Planning for Access to Local Food;
5. Greening Industrial/Employment Areas; and
6. Sustainable Servicing Infrastructure and Waste Management.

### **Theme 3: Economic Strength**

There is a desire to create more employment opportunities in Peterborough and particularly, to create more stable full-time jobs to offset today's prevalence of contracted work. It was noted that there needs to be more of a balance between both residential and employment growth to ensure that the community does not become solely a commuter or retirement area. Stakeholders want Peterborough to remain a community where people can have opportunities to both live and work. The City should aim to create and retain prosperity by providing investment and employment opportunities within sustainable local and global markets.

Specific recommendations on how Peterborough can strengthen its local economy include:

1. Promote innovative employment opportunities that leverage the City's strengths in an increasingly knowledge-based, creative economy;

2. Develop and promote a 'business brand' for the City as its local economy shifts further away from a focus on traditional manufacturing;
3. Protect employment areas over the long term by maintaining supply of employment land and employment infrastructure;
4. Create a more integrated community with more live/work opportunities and local neighbourhood employment opportunities;
5. Foster and strengthen partnerships between post-secondary institutions and major employers to facilitate economic growth; and
6. Promote and support tourism.

### **Major Policy Directions**

The major policy directions for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Economic Strength' can be further categorized into the following subthemes of:

1. Supporting Innovative Employment Opportunities;
2. Protecting Employment Areas;
3. Foster and Strengthen Partnerships;
4. Promoting and Supporting Tourism; and
5. Developing a 'Business Brand' for the City.

### **Theme 4: Unique and Vibrant Places and Spaces**

People expressed the strong desire for Peterborough to maintain and enhance the unique characteristics of the City that currently enable residents to enjoy a high quality of life. During the consultation, it was expressed that residents want Peterborough to maintain the distinct identity that presently distinguishes it from cities in the Greater Toronto Area. To preserve and enhance Peterborough's unique identity, it was expressed that development should occur in a careful and balanced way. The implementation of the City's Municipal Cultural Plan will play a significant role in the creation of unique and vibrant places and spaces in Peterborough.

Specific recommendations to create and enhance unique and vibrant places and spaces include:

1. Sustaining a vibrant downtown with new development that preserves its heritage value and supports existing stores and destinations;
2. Recognizing and enhancing the inherent and unique aspects of Peterborough and creating focal points, gateways, experiences and landmarks;
3. Preserving and celebrating Peterborough's cultural and natural heritage; and
4. Striving for high urban design standards in the public and private realm.

### **Major Policy Directions**

The recommended major policy directions for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Economic Strength' can be further categorized into the following subthemes of:

1. Revitalizing Peterborough's Downtown;
2. Achieving a High Level of Urban Design;
3. Preserving and Enhancing Our Cultural Heritage; and
4. Supporting Arts and Culture.

### **Theme 5: Connectivity and Mobility**

Stakeholders would like Peterborough to have a transportation network that is efficient and accessible to all modes of transportation. The City recently updated its Major Transportation Plan which provides a 20-year plan for improvements to the City's road, trail, and cycling networks. The plan places particular emphasis on promoting and supporting active and alternative modes of transportation, reflecting one of the main desires coming out of the Plan It Peterborough consultation.

Specific recommendations for planning Peterborough's transportation network include:

1. Plan for transit, active transportation, and pedestrian-oriented development with less focus on the private automobile; and
2. Promote connectivity, mobility and accessibility within and between neighbourhoods, employment areas, parks and open spaces.

### **Major Policy Directions**

The major policy directions for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Connectivity and Mobility' can be further categorized into the following subthemes:

1. Promoting Active, Alternative Modes of Transportation;
2. Promoting Pedestrian-Oriented Development;
3. Incorporating Accessibility into New and Exciting Development; and
4. Improving Road and Major Transportation Connections.

### **CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS**

This report sets out the overall vision for how the community would like Peterborough to grow and develop over the next 20 years. It presents and summarizes the policy directions for each of the five key themes that were predominant throughout the Plan It Peterborough consultation and in the various strategic planning documents. A series of Official Plan Amendments will be prepared to address each of these themes and translate these general directions and overall community vision into specific Official Plan land use policy. This process will also provide numerous opportunities for more focused public input and stakeholder consultation.

For more information about our InfoNotes contact: Dawn Berry Merriam at 705-743-5915 or email [dawnbm@pspc.on.ca](mailto:dawnbm@pspc.on.ca).

