

Wellington County Official Plan Review Virtual Special Meeting of Council - Meeting Summary

Background

The County of Wellington is currently reviewing its Official Plan (OP) to complete a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and a 5-year review of its Official Plan as specified under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. An MCR is part of the OP review process. It establishes a long-term vision and planning framework for a municipality that fosters a sustainable approach to future residential growth and economic development. The County is doing this to prepare for additional population and employment growth and ensure that the updated OP supports healthy, compact and complete communities in Wellington as directed through A Place to Growth: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

On June 29, 2021, County Council and Staff engaged with community members at a Special Meeting of Council, to learn and discuss areas of community interest that should be reviewed through the Official Plan Review. This meeting is required under Section 26(3)(b) of the *Planning Act*.

Meeting Promotion

Public notice regarding the Virtual Special Meeting of Council was published two times through the Wellington Advertiser in accordance with Section 26(4) of the *Planning Act*. Notice was given once in the May 6, 2021 issue and a final time in the May 13, 2021 issue. The meeting was also promoted through the County's social media platforms to raise awareness.

Members of the public who wished to join the Virtual Special Meeting of Council were required to register in advance with the County Clerk's Department. Individuals could also join the meeting by calling in by phone.

Meeting Overview

The virtual Special Meeting of Council was held on June 29, 2021, with a purpose to:

- Provide information on the Official Plan review process; and
- Offer an early opportunity for the public to provide input on topics that should be considered through the Official Plan Review.

The meeting presentation was publicly posted in advance on the County of Wellington's Official Plan Review website Plan Well to allow participants the opportunity to review beforehand or follow along if they joined the meeting by phone. In total, 14 members of the public registered for the meeting.

The Chair started the meeting with an introduction and overview of the agenda and process for asking questions. Aldo Salis (Director of Planning at the County of

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Wellington) provided introductory remarks and a brief context to the County's Official Plan Review process. Sarah Wilhelm (Manger of Policy Planning at the County of Wellington) delivered a presentation on the following topics of the Official Plan Review:

Live Well

- Complete and Healthy Communities
- Housing
- Consultation and Coordination

Grow Well

- Growth Management
- Transportation

Sustain Well

- Agricultural and Rural Areas
- Climate Change
- Natural Heritage, Flooding and Water

Following the presentation, the meeting Chair opened the meeting to the public and members of Council to receive feedback and comments. A summary of the discussion is provided in the following section.

What We Heard

The following key themes were identified in submissions received from members of the public who deputed during the Special Meeting:

- A deputant identified that Centre Wellington has already accommodated much of the County's growth and that community resources and facilities (such as water supply, community centres, seniors housing, etc...) are becoming increasingly stressed.
- A deputant identified they had submitted a letter on behalf of multiple landowners in support of expanding urban settlement boundaries.

The following key themes were identified through the Special Meeting of Council during general discussion between Councillors and staff:

- Allocation of growth should be mindful of local capacity for services to accommodate it
 - Broadly there were concerns about the speed of growth and the impact this is having on community services across the County.
 - One Councillor identified the desire to see more growth allocated to Mapleton in response to planned infrastructure improvements to support water supply and wastewater servicing.

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- Desire to see a greater diversity of housing mix, including fully accessible housing types. A concern was identified regarding the size of new residential units.
- Concerns were raised regarding the Secondary Settlement Area designation of Aberfoyle and Morriston, and the Agricultural System and Candidate Areas in Puslinch – concerns focused on limited control the County has over these areas.

Staff also responded to questions raised during the meeting. Questions are marked by a 'Q', and answers are marked with an 'A'.

Questions from Members of the Public

Q: I understand that the County has completed a request for submissions related to Employment Area conversions. Will the County be requesting a settlement area expansion as well?

A: The County's consultants are currently working on the land need assessment. This will provide an overview of land needs in the County. Submissions will be requested later for proposed urban boundary expansion where a process will be developed to review and evaluate those requests.

Questions from Councillors

Q: Can you clarify the introductory comments on the Official Plan's local conditions and needs?

A: The County Official Plan provides policies which respond to unique local circumstances (e.g Mennonite transportation). All decisions made through the Official Plan Review will comply with Provincial policy. Provincial approval is required for these local conditions and needs policies.

Q: There is an existing Town of Erin OP policy related to commercial water bottling facilities. Will the County be developing any specific policies related to commercial water takings as part of the MCR?

A: If Council has an interest in staff developing policies related to commercial water takings we can investigate that further. This may be a challenge give case law on the subject.

Q: What are the implications of water and wastewater limitation on the growth the County will be allocating to municipalities?

A: County staff are currently working with an engineering firm to assess the capacity of municipal infrastructure and identify any critical issues.

Q: The Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility indicates that a mix and variety of housing includes accessible housing. How do we require this type of housing?

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A: Accessibility legislation is generally applicable to public sector developments. The Provincial Policy Statement provides an enabling framework to municipalities to facilitate the mix of housing options. County staff can review this matter further to determine what our options are.

Q: What is a candidate area?

A: Candidate areas exist where we have Secondary Agricultural designations already. This includes Puslinch, Erin and Minto. The areas identified as Prime Agricultural in our Official Plan will remain as Prime Agricultural.

Q: What is the County's Plan for addressing deficiencies identified through municipal master plans that don't align with the growth allocations produced by the County?

A: County staff have been working closely with Centre Wellington and the Risk Management Official regarding growth and services in Centre Wellington. The servicing issues that have been identified in Centre Wellington are related to water infrastructure as opposed to a lack of water supply.

Q: The Haudenosaunee declared a moratorium on development in the Haldimand Tract. What is the County's Plan to respond to this moratorium?

A: We plan to prepare an Indigenous engagement guide to outline our approach to Indigenous engagement as part of the Official Plan review process. Broadly, the moratorium on development is a legal question.