



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Blair Nelson, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Planning and Growth Management

Meeting Date: February 17, 2026

Report: Budget Request for Coldsprings Growth Area Planning Study, Report IPGPL26-015

Subject

A report to recommend the pre-commitment of funds for the Coldsprings Secondary Planning Study.

Recommendation

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report IPGPL26-015, dated February 17, 2026, of the Commissioner of Infrastructure, Planning and Growth Management as follows:

That a \$375,000 budget amount for each of the 2027 and 2028 Capital budgets for the Coldspring Growth Area – Planning Studies be pre-committed.

Executive Summary

- On February 3, 2025, Council:
 - re-instated draft plan of subdivision approval for Plans 15T-05503 and 15T-10504 in the Coldsprings Area;
 - directed staff to prepare, for Council's approval, a strategy for financing and implementation of the development-charge eligible infrastructure works required to support Plans of Subdivision 15T-05503 and 15T-10504 by February 3, 2026; and,

- directed staff to prepare, for Council's approval, a Secondary Plan for the Coldsprings Planning Area, that satisfies the Official Plan's requirements for the Coldsprings Special Study Area;
- On December 8, 2025, Council deferred a request for \$375,000 to be included in the 2026 budget for the Coldsprings Growth Area - Planning Studies, Project Reference No. 17-053 to 2027. The 2026 budget request also included a request to pre-commit an additional \$375,000 in the 2027 budget to bring the total project budget to \$1,000,000.
- Staff is requesting that a \$375,000 budget amount for each of the 2027 and 2028 Capital budgets for the Coldspring Growth Area – Planning Studies be pre-committed to bring the total project budget to \$1,000,000.
- Alto High Speed Train is currently consulting communities on potential route and station locations, including Peterborough. Undertaking studies to support a Coldsprings Secondary Plan now will allow the City to work with Alto to identify options for preferred routes and station locations and establish an infrastructure and land use plan to maximize both Alto's benefit to the region and the region's benefit to Alto.

Background

Alto High-Speed Train is currently consulting communities on potential route and station locations, including Peterborough. Alto was first announced by the Prime Minister on February 19, 2025, with stations planned for Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Montreal, Laval, Trois-Rivières and Québec City. Alto is set to revolutionize travel in the Toronto to Quebec City corridor with trains reaching speeds of 300 km/hr; significantly reducing travel times, supporting economic growth, improving labour and student mobility, reducing road congestion and improving access to housing. With estimated travel times of 40 minutes to Toronto and 80 minutes to Ottawa, Alto's potential benefit to the Peterborough region cannot be overstated.

In planning for routes and station locations, staff expects Alto will need to prioritize efficiency both in terms of overall system operation and ease of construction. To that end, staff anticipates that locations relatively unencumbered by significant urban development and natural heritage constraints will be preferred by Alto. In Peterborough, the Coldsprings Planning Area is one such area and may be selected by Alto as a possible option location for the station.

The Coldsprings Planning Area is located at the southern limit of the City and is approximately 307 hectares (760 acres) in area. The area is bounded by the Otonabee River and Matchett Line to the west, Highway No. 7/115 to the north, Bensfort Road/Wallace Point Road to the east and Driscoll Road to the south. The area is mostly rural/agricultural in character with some natural heritage areas of local and/or provincial

significance. The Coldsprings area has direct access to Highway 7/115, is physically proximate to the Peterborough Regional Airport, and has direct arterial road access to Lansdowne Street East. While the Official Plan identifies Coldsprings as an area for future development within the City and although Council has re-instated approval for two residential draft plans of subdivision in the north portion of the area (plans 15T-05503 and 15T-10504), the Official Plan requires a secondary land use plan to be prepared for the area. A Secondary Plan will establish appropriate urban structure, delineate land use boundaries, and provide urban design guidelines and development policies that will guide the area's long-term development.

In February 2025, concurrent with re-instating draft plans of subdivision 15T-05503 and 15T-10504, Council directed staff to prepare a Secondary Plan for the Coldsprings Planning Area that satisfies the Official Plan's requirements for the area. At the same time, Council also directed staff to prepare a strategy for financing and implementing infrastructure works required to support the re-instated plans of subdivision by February 3, 2026 (studies completed between 2004 and 2010 had identified the need for significant infrastructure investments to support the re-instated plans and the broader Coldsprings planning area).

In December 2025, staff had requested that the 2026 budget include \$375,000 and an additional pre-commitment of \$375,000 in the 2027 budget for the completion of planning studies and a secondary plan in the Coldsprings Growth Area (Project Reference 17-053). At that time, the 2026 budget request was deferred to 2027. If approved the request would have increased the total project budget to \$1,000,000 (\$750,000 + \$250,000 previously approved).

With Alto planning to serve Peterborough, the City has a unique opportunity to proactively plan for Alto's integration in the community by working with Alto to identify options for a preferred route and station location and by assessing the City's infrastructure and land use planning needs to maximize Alto's benefit for the City and region.

Staff view Coldsprings as an ideal location to consider for Alto because of its large area, proximity to existing transportation facilities, and its relatively unencumbered land use pattern. Accordingly, staff is requesting that 2026 budget request to support the completion of planning studies and a secondary plan in the Coldsprings Growth Area be activated now by pre-committing \$375,000 in each of the 2027 and 2028 budgets. Pre-committing budget funds to this project now will enable staff to prepare study terms of reference and procure a multidisciplinary consulting team to assess a variety of issues including:

- land use patterns, designations and built form;
- connectivity with the remainder of the city;
- urban design and sustainable design;

- natural heritage;
- cultural heritage and archaeology;
- transportation, including transit and active transportation;
- municipal infrastructure;
- public service facility requirements;
- development phasing;
- water resources, including surface and groundwater, watershed and subwatershed studies and stormwater management plans;
- demographics; and
- economic development opportunity.

Alto has the potential to dramatically alter the City's long-term growth outlook, development pattern and infrastructure need. These studies will provide a strategy for financing and implementing the infrastructure required for Coldsprings using new development forecasts thus addressing Council's direction to staff from February 2025. Additionally, these studies will also identify the need and potential financing options for additional infrastructure enhancements that may be required or desired to support a possible Alto station option.

Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar: Growth & Economic Development

Strategic Priority: Position the City as a destination of choice for claiming its fair share of innovative business and people in Ontario.

Proactively working with and planning for Alto, a once in a generation nation-building project, will help make Peterborough a destination of choice for people and business in Ontario.

Strategic Pillar: Community & Well-being

Strategic Priority: Support opportunities for multi-modal transportation including walking, cycling and transit services.

Proactively planning land use and infrastructure to integrate with Alto will help ensure people can efficiently use transit to move both within the City and to other major destinations beyond.

Engagement and Consultation

The completion of planning and infrastructure studies and a secondary plan will require significant consultation with the community, adjacent municipalities, Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous communities, landowners and other stakeholders as well as any subsequent Environmental Assessments required for new infrastructure.

Budget and Financial Implications

Approval of this report will pre-commit each of the 2027 and 2028 budgets for \$375,000 to support completion of Coldsprings Growth Area - Planning Studies. Pending the outcome of these studies, significant development charge-eligible infrastructure investments are expected to be required for supporting both the short-term and long-term buildout of the Coldsprings planning area.

Based on previous studies, the 2022 Planning Area-Specific Development Charges Study estimates that approximately \$27,000,000 (approximately \$38,400,000 in Q3 2023 dollars) worth of area-specific development charge eligible infrastructure is required to service the Coldsprings area.

The 2024 Amended City-Wide Development Charges Background Study (June 2025) included a gross cost estimate of approximately \$70,500,000 for several anticipated transportation network improvements associated with development of the Coldsprings area.

Additionally, the 2022 Transportation Master Plan identified the need for additional study and a Class Environmental Assessment to identify transportation network improvement needs to support build-out of the Coldsprings area which is estimated to cost \$600,000 in the 2024 Amended City-Wide Development Charges Background Study (June 2025).

The 2024 Peterborough Utilities Commission Development charge Background Study estimated a total capital cost of approximately \$7,230,000 for water infrastructure upgrades to service the Coldsprings area.

Upon completion of planning studies for the Coldsprings Growth Area, the various Development Charge Background Studies may need to be updated to reflect the recommended servicing and road network improvements.

Additionally, Class Environmental Assessments or other infrastructure planning studies/processes may be required. Funds for any required studies will be sought in future capital budgets. The City will seek cost sharing with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) for any infrastructure planning studies that seek to improve MTO infrastructure.

Once all servicing and road improvements required for the development of the Coldsprings Area are confirmed and included in the City's Development Charge By-laws, their design and construction will be included in future Capital Budgets as necessary.

Should developers for Coldsprings wish to accelerate construction of necessary infrastructure improvements to facilitate development, Coldsprings-area developers may need to enter into agreements with the City to front-end such costs.

The ability for the land uses to support the full life-cycle costs of the required infrastructure will be contingent on the types of land uses ultimately approved.

Conclusion

Alto is planning to serve Peterborough with high-speed train service between Toronto and Quebec City. By proactively completing planning studies and a secondary plan for the Coldsprings area, the City can work with Alto to identify options for preferred routes and station locations and establish an infrastructure and land use plan to maximize both Alto's benefit to Peterborough and vice versa. Staff is requesting that \$375,000 be pre-committed for each of the 2027 and 2028 Capital budgets to support the completion of planning studies for the Coldspring Growth Area (Capital Budget Project Reference No. 17-053).

Submitted by,

Blair Nelson, BEng, P.Eng
Commissioner, Infrastructure, Planning and Growth Management

Contact Name:

Brad Appleby, RPP, MCIP
Director, Planning, Development and Urban Design
Phone: 705-742-7777 Ext. 1886
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755
Email: bappleby@peterborough.ca