



4.0 OFFICIAL PLAN MAJOR POLICY DIRECTIONS

The Staff Report – Plan It Peterborough Progress Update – received by Council on April 30, 2012 provided five themes that were predominant throughout the public and stakeholder consultation. This section will provide a more detailed discussion of these identified themes and provide recommended major policy directions on how each of these themes could be addressed in the Official Plan.

4.1 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.

The **Major Policy Directions** for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Complete, Healthy Communities' can be further categorized into the following subthemes of:

4.1.1 Providing a Range of Housing Opportunities



A key component of a complete community is the ability to provide residents with a variety of housing choices that suit their housing needs throughout all stages of life. Stakeholders expressed that all people should be able to access housing regardless of their social or economic background.

4.1.2 Providing Affordable Housing

The urgent need for more affordable housing in Peterborough has been expressed during the consultation as a large proportion of the City's households are currently spending a significant amount of their incomes on housing costs. Stakeholders identified that providing more affordable housing in the City will require additional policy flexibility and significant political leadership on the part of the City.

4.1.3 Facilitating Appropriate Intensification

It was expressed during the public consultation that the City should develop as a more compact community that makes better use of its existing built up areas through redevelopment and intensification. People expressed the need to limit the outward growth of the City as a way to preserve its surrounding agricultural land and existing natural resources. However, stakeholders also stated that development within existing built areas should occur in a manner that is contextually appropriate and only targeted to certain areas of the City.

4.1.4 Planning For an Aging Population

Peterborough's population is the oldest of any Census Metropolis Area in Canada according to the 2011 Census and will age dramatically in the coming decades. Stakeholders expressed the need to more strategically plan to address the issues and opportunities associated with this aging population.

4.1.5 Supporting Community Infrastructure

Community infrastructure refers to lands, buildings, and structures that support the quality of life for people and communities by providing public services for health, education, recreation, socio-cultural activities, security and safety, and affordable housing. These services should be available to all residents regardless of age, ability, interest, cultural background or income level. As Peterborough grows, the need was expressed that the City must ensure that an appropriate range of community infrastructure is planned to meet the community's needs and to foster a complete community. Stakeholders would like Peterborough to be a community where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual potential.

4.1.6 Safe, Inclusive, Healthy Neighbourhood Design

The need to design neighbourhoods to be more healthy, inclusive and accessible to all age groups, especially children and seniors was identified by stakeholders. Residents expressed the particular desire for neighbourhood public spaces to be more effectively designed in order to foster a greater sense of community that creates healthier, safer, and more pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods.



4.2 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.

The **Major Policy Directions** for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Environmental Sustainability' can be further categorized into the following sub-themes of:

4.2.1 Protect, Enhance and Expand Natural Areas/Green Spaces

Of great importance to stakeholders is the need to protect, enhance, and expand connections within and between the City's natural areas and green spaces in order to maintain their ecological health. These are considered to be integral to the quality of life that City residents currently experience.

4.2.2 Promote Sustainable Building Design and Green Energy

Stakeholders would like the City to promote and encourage sustainable building design in all development and to support green, alternative energy forms. The City should establish the goal of minimizing the amount of energy the community



uses while maximizing the production of local, dependable sources of renewal energy. In this way the City would be looking to do its part in reducing its contributions to climate change while increasing its ability to adapt to climate change conditions.

4.2.3 Protect the City's Urban Forest

The City recently adopted an Urban Forest Strategic Plan as a way to protect, conserve, and enhance the City's urban forest. The recommendations contained in this Plan should be looked at for integration into the City's Official Plan.

4.2.4 Planning for Access to Local Food

Through the Plan It Peterborough process it grew evident that there is a growing interest and movement in the community to grow and purchase and increase access to local food. As a result, the need to provide further support for urban agriculture and a local, sustainable food system was identified. Stakeholders would like residents to be able to feed themselves sustainably with local, healthy foods.

4.2.5 Greening Industrial/Employment Areas

Promoting existing and new industrial parks and employment areas to become greener and more environmentally efficient would significantly help the City in becoming more environmentally sustainable over the long-term. Stakeholders expressed the significant opportunity that exists to leverage business growth in green businesses and alternative energy. The City should explore the potential for the development of eco-industrial parks, which are defined as industrial parks in which businesses cooperate with each other and the local community in an attempt to reduce waste and air pollution, efficiently share resources such as information, materials, water, energy, infrastructure, and natural resources, and help achieve sustainable development with the intention of increasing economic gains and improving environmental quality.

4.2.6 Sustainable Servicing Infrastructure and Waste Management

A sustainable servicing infrastructure system is important to stakeholders as they expressed that it should be the goal of the City to make use of its water in a way that enhances its quality and quantity, ensuring that future generations will be able to use it to drink, fish, and swim. Stakeholders would also like to see the greater use of waste management practices that promote an efficient use of resources and reduce the amount of waste that we generate.

4.3 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.

The **Major Policy Directions** for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Economic Strength' can be further categorized into the following subthemes of:

4.3.1 Supporting Innovative Employment Opportunities

As the City's local economy shifts away from its reliance on traditional manufacturing in a more knowledge-based, creative economy, there is a need to support more innovative forms of employment. This would allow the City to better leverage its competitive advantages. For instance, the presence of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Trent University, and Fleming College provides an opportunity for synergies and opportunities in research and innovation that could be capitalized upon for new business and employment growth.

4.3.2 Protecting Employment Areas

Peterborough must have sufficient employment areas available to sustain future employment growth. In recent years, retail trade has gained prominence as an employment sector in Peterborough with the introduction of a number of big-box style retailers and the current expansion of Lansdowne Place mall. Like in many other municipalities, the rise of big box retailing has created pressure to convert industrial and office commercial lands for retail purposes. Municipalities must protect and preserve employment areas and the Growth Plan for the GGH provides strict policy governing the conversion of such lands to non-employment uses.

4.3.3 Foster and Strengthen Partnerships

In an increasingly knowledge-based economy, the City should strategically look to leveraging economic growth through the fostering and strengthening of partnerships within and between institutions and major employers such as Trent University, Fleming College, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

4.3.4 Promoting and Supporting Tourism



Peterborough is attractive as a destination for tourism due to its natural environment and richness of its lakes, trails, parks and proximity to cottages. Stakeholders identified tourism as a potential growth sector with opportunities to further capitalize on the City's cultural and natural heritage features and vibrant downtown.

4.3.5 Developing a 'Business Brand' for the City

The City has an excellent quality of living and is well positioned as a regional hub for business and shopping. However, stakeholders expressed that a "business brand" that markets and promotes Peterborough as an excellent community for businesses to invest in and for people (particularly immigrants) to locate to is not very well established. There are concerns that Peterborough is viewed as only a blue collar town and a marketing campaign that promotes its emerging knowledge economy should be undertaken in order to better position the City to attract professionals and research and innovation. There is a need to create a brand that would emphasize Peterborough's competitive advantages that set it apart from other cities.

4.4 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.

The recommended **Major Policy Directions** for the Official Plan under the theme of 'Economic Strength' can be further categorized into the following subthemes of:

4.4.1 Revitalizing Peterborough's Downtown

The downtown is a valuable asset and key destination for business and employment and was identified by many to be their favourite place within the



City. The need for the City's downtown to remain a focus for redevelopment and revitalization was therefore emphasized.

4.4.2 Achieving a High Level of Urban Design

Urban design is the collective term used to describe the process of designing and shaping cities, towns and villages. Whereas architecture focuses on individual buildings, urban design addresses the larger scale of groups of buildings, of streets and public spaces, whole neighbourhoods and districts, and entire cities, with the aim of making urban areas more functional, attractive and sustainable. Stakeholders expressed their desire to have the City planned to achieve a high level of urban design with age-friendly policies to improve the look and feel of Peterborough while enhancing the accessibility of places for youth and seniors. While the City's Official Plan currently does not provide any specific urban design guidelines, the City has Site and Building Design Guidelines for the downtown that are in need of updating.

4.4.3 Preserving and Enhancing Our Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage resources are the roots of the community. They may include structures, sites or landscapes that either individually or collectively are of historical, architectural, archaeological or scenic value. Cultural heritage resources may also represent intangible heritage such as customs, ways of life, values and activities. Residents would like these cultural heritage resources to be preserved and enhanced as they paint the history of the City and provide identity and character while instilling pride and contributing to economic prosperity.

4.4.4 Supporting Arts and Culture

Peterborough recently adopted its first Municipal Cultural Plan which focused on the role of arts and culture in creating a more livable, sustainable community. Stakeholders would like the City to support, sustain, and promote a wide breadth of community cultures.

4.5 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.

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

4.5.1 Promoting Active, Alternative Modes of Transportation

It was strongly expressed through the public and stakeholder consultation that residents would like priority to be placed on expanding and enhancing the City's trail networks in order to promote active, alternative modes of transportation while creating a healthier, sustainable community.

4.5.2 Promoting Pedestrian-Oriented Development

Pedestrian oriented development provides clear, comfortable pedestrian access to commercial and residential areas and transit stops. It is achieved through a combination of design practices that support compact, mixed-use development, traffic calming measures, and a mix of housing types. Stakeholders expressed that this transition to pedestrian- and transit-oriented development would help eliminate quality of life impediments such as congestion and air pollution, loss of open space, costly road maintenance and public health services, inequitable distribution of economic resources, and loss of sense of community.

4.5.3 Incorporating Accessibility into New and Existing Development

With Peterborough's rapidly aging population, stakeholders expressed the need to incorporate accessibility into new and existing development. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) became law in 2005 to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards in key areas of daily living. Stakeholders stated that in a more accessible built environment, people will be able to live independently or at least with less need for assistance in order to complete the normal activities of daily living.

4.5.4 Improving Road and Major Transportation Connections

Stakeholders would like to see transportation improvements that would provide more efficient connections both within the City and to surrounding areas in Peterborough County and the Greater Toronto Area. This is because efficient transportation networks are seen as a key driver for business retention and growth.