

**WALKERTON  
OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE**

**PLANNING DIRECTIONS  
REPORT  
February 2009**



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## **1.0 WALKERTON COMMUNITY OFFICIAL PLAN**

The Planning Act requires that municipalities prepare an Official Plan and undertake a review every five years. The Act also requires that Official Plans be consistent with Provincial Policy. In the spring of 2008, Council authorized initiation of the Walkerton Community Official Plan Review. The current review is being undertaken over 2008 and 2009 in three phases. Phase I addresses Growth Management, Phase II outlines Growth Options and Phase III summarizes the Planning Issues. These reports will form the basis of Amendments to the Walkerton Community Official Plan.

This report constitutes the completion of Phase II and III of the Official Plan Review process. The Planning Directions Paper will provide a summary of the issues and planning directions recommended in the Growth Management Report and Growth Options prepared in support of the OP review. The report will also examine the remaining policy issues and recommended directions for amending the current Official Plan based on the consultation and comments received. The report will form the basis for the amendment to the Official Plan and provide the foundation for the remaining public consultation sessions.

The report is structured into four parts:

Section 2.0 -The Review Process provides an overview of the Official Plan Review process to date, describing the background papers prepared for Phase I and Phase II and public involvement activities completed.

Section 3.0 - The Background Reports summarizes the issues explored through the background papers completed to date and reiterates the recommended planning directions for each.

Section 4.0 - Other Policy Issues provides an examination of remaining policy issues not addressed through the background papers and recommended directions on each issue.

Section 5.0 - Official Plan Schedules summarizes the required changes to the Official Plan Schedules.

## **2.0 THE REVIEW PROCESS**

Several issues were initially identified in the terms of reference as requiring further review in the preparation of the new Walkerton Official Plan. The issues included the following:

- Existing draft approved plans of subdivision which have not proceeded with registration, with lapsing dates in the spring of 2009;

- Draft plans of subdivision outside the urban settlement boundary;
- Existing vacant residentially designated lands remaining in the urban settlement boundary;
- Demand for senior's housing, multiple units developments; and,
- Assessment of the urban boundary, readjustment and justification.

The Growth Management Discussion Paper and Growth Options Paper and discussions with Municipal and County staff also identified issues requiring further consideration. These issues include the following:

- Conformity with Provincial Policy Statement (2005);
- Conformity with County of Bruce Official Plan;
- Population and Employment;
- Sustainability;
- Infill development and Intensification;
- Economic Development issues;
- Saugeen River Floodplain issues;
- Downtown issues;
- Heritage; and,
- Bill 51 implementation.

Other issues have been identified in the workshop session that was held on November 4, 2008. These issues included the following:

- Preservation of natural attractions, promotion of open space;
- Aging population, housing, health care;
- Sustainable growth;
- Public transportation; and,
- Tourism and Accommodations.

Several strategies evolved from the community workshop held which will help to identify general planning issues to be incorporated into the new Walkerton Community Official Plan.

Analysis of these policy areas is now complete with a discussion documented in the Growth Management Discussion Paper, Growth Options Paper and Public Consultation Report from the first workshop. The remaining policy topics will be examined in this report. This includes the following:

- Servicing;
- Traffic/Parking;
- Accessibility;
- Sustainability;
- Preservation of Heritage Resources;
- Economic Development;
- Special Policy Area in the Historic Downtown; and,
- Monitoring.

The discussion papers have been currently circulated to the Municipality of Brockton Planning Committee and the County of Bruce. Once authorized by Council for release, the papers will be placed on the Community website and the Meridian Planning Consultants website. The reports will also be made available at the Municipal offices and at the County Planning Office. There will be ample opportunity made available for the public to respond to these discussion papers.

The first public workshop was held on November 4, 2008 to solicit comments on the values and issues facing the community of Walkerton. Strategies were also identified for addressing specific issues to be used to guide the background studies and develop policy for the new Official Plan.

A second public workshop consultation is scheduled to occur in March along with workshops and interactive sessions with students from two of the local high schools.

### 3.0 THE BACKGROUND REPORTS

The Growth Management Discussion Paper prepared in November 2008 and the Growth Options Report prepared in December 2008 provide policy direction for the new Official Plan.

#### 3.1 Growth Management

The Growth Management Discussion Paper provides updated population, employment, dwelling unit and floor space forecasts. The report estimates the amount of residential and non-residential land required to meet projected demands so the year 2026 the proposed horizon for the new Official Plan.

In developing these figures, the paper makes several assumptions about future growth in the Municipality:

- Based on potentially six growth scenarios, there is potential for growth ranging from nothing to 1,000 people between 2006-2026 for the community of Walkerton. A population growth rounded to 1,000 is to be utilized for the Official Plan review.
- With a population growth of an additional 1,000 persons in the next 20 years to 2026 there will be a need for 561 dwelling units based on a household size of 2.34 for 2026.
- In order to accommodate new potential residential development to the year 2026, approximately 30.7 ha (75.8 ac.) of land is required in Walkerton.
- Based on employment projections for the 20-year period 2006-2026 there is a need for approximately 7-10 ha (17.2-24.7 ac.) additional land for employment purposes in Walkerton.
- Based on the employment inventory of 38.71 ha (95.65 ac.) there is no further designation of employment lands required.
- A development-phasing plan should be included in the Official Plan to stage future development of employment lands to ensure they develop in a sequential manner.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be amended to incorporate and/or address the results of the population and employment growth forecasts as follows:**

- Changing the planning horizon in the Official Plan to 2026 from 2016.

- Replacing the population targets in the Official Plan with the recommended population forecast of 5,905 for 2026 as contained above.
- Identifying 70 / 30 single to multiple (townhouses, apartments etc.) unit split for future residential development.

The Provincial Policy Statement also requires the Walkerton Community Official Plan to address intensification and to provide a range of housing opportunities. An examination of the community identified many opportunities for intensification that would be compatible with the existing character of the community.

To accomplish this there is a need to direct the allocation of a portion of sewage and water capacity specifically to infill and intensification projects in the core of the community. In addition, there is a requirement to ensure that these projects are compatible with the existing character, with special consideration to the historic downtown area.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan policies be amended to incorporate housing intensification policies that:**

- Directing a portion of the water and sewage allocation specifically to infill and intensification projects in the core of the community.
- Ensuring that intensification projects are compatible with the existing character and historic elements in the downtown.
- Establishing a target of 20% to accommodate for residential intensification and redevelopment resulting in 112 units of the 561 projected.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be amended to identify the employment land needs by:**

- Identifying there is sufficient lands currently designated in the Municipality to accommodate future employment land needs.
- Identifying a development-phasing plan in the Plan to stage development in the employment lands.

### 3.2 Growth Options

The Growth Options Discussion Paper examines the status quo option, and a boundary expansion and land exchange option for the community of Walkerton. The report examines the current land use designations with the municipality, the servicing issues, agricultural capability of the lands, compatibility issues and intensification. The report identifies a recommended growth option which expands the current urban area boundary to add additional lands for residential purposes to the south and west of the current boundary and removes existing lands within the existing urban to the north boundary north.

In developing this option the paper summarizes the opportunities associated with the expansion and land exchange as follows:

- The option will immediately provide readily accessible and serviceable lands on the market.
- It will result in a “no net loss” of prime agricultural lands.
- It should result in lower cost housing due to potentially reduced servicing costs.
- There is potential for a greater variety and mix of housing densities and tenure to meet the changing demographics of the community of Walkerton;
- Future residential community will be contiguous to existing residential lands and municipal services in the community.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan Land Use Schedule be amended to:**

- Removing lands located in the northern part of the urban area boundary from the urban area boundary and adding additional lands in the westerly and southerly sections of the community within the urban area boundary as shown on Schedule A Land Use as attached.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Municipality of Brockton seek County Official Plan Amendment to accommodate this urban area expansion and land exchange.**

### 3.3 Workshop Discussion

The first public workshop on the Walkerton Official Plan was held on November 4, 2008. The goal of the workshop was to further explore values and issues that residents feel are important to the community. Despite the very small attendance at the meeting the attendees were able to generate some additional items of discussion to be used to establish strategies and policy direction for the Official Plan review. The following issues were identified:

- Aging population, housing, health care
- Preservation of natural attractions, promotion of open space, trail systems
- Sustainable growth, preservation of trees
- Public transportation
- Accommodations
- Traffic/parking
- Monitoring/Implementation

These issues can be addressed by amendments to the Official Plan through broadening existing land use policy goals and actions and by the provision of further general development policies.

A number of people attending the first workshop session felt that there was a lack of representation from the entire community. As a result of this comment additional efforts have been made to encourage a greater number of people and greater cross section of the community at further consultation sessions.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan, based on the results of the summary discussion held, be amended to incorporate and/or address the following:**

- Identifying policies within the Residential designation to further address a range and diversity of housing types needed to address the aging household population.
- Enhancing policies to encourage the conversion of single detached dwellings in appropriate locations into multiple units to permit accessory dwelling units for housing for aging seniors.
- Providing a policy to address a continuous trail system of open space along the Saugeen River accessible to the public in the community of Walkerton.

- Encouraging the consideration of public transportation in the community.
- Providing opportunities to improve and enhance the quality of tourist facilities and tourist related business including accommodation in the community.
- Providing a policy to address monitoring and implementation of the Official Plan through required 5-year reviews to ensure the Plan conforms to provincial plans and is consistent with provincial policy statements.
- Providing additional principles, criteria and appropriate indicators that can be tracked to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Official Plan policies. (ie. monitoring mechanisms including sustainability checklists, etc.)

With recent changes to the Planning Act there is a need to examine the role of sustainability in Official Plans. Sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. There are three key aspects of Sustainable Development: the environment, the economy and the community. For Sustainable Development to be achieved each factor must be equally balanced.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan policies be enhanced to incorporate policies promoting more sustainable practices by:**

- Introducing a separate Sustainability section in the Plan with the following principles:
  - Promote activities that respect the quality of the natural environment including land, air and water;
  - Encourage social activities that allow persons to meet their basic human needs and to assist them in achieving their full potential within society;
  - Recognize environmental stewardship and protection as an integral part of the planning and development process;
  - Promote a strong local economy that encourages innovation, is conducive to social progress and is respectful of the environment;

- Apply the “triple bottom-line” assessment, balancing elements of the environment, economy and community, during the planning and development process;
  - Establish and monitor targets for measuring achievement of sustainability goals;
  - Identify and promote actions that can contribute towards a more sustainable municipality;
  - Protect and enhance cultural and natural heritage elements within the municipality; and,
  - Adopt policies, strategies and actions that promote sustainability in all facets of the community.
- Ensuring there are policies on brownfield remediation, affordable housing, air quality, active transportation, light pollution and energy efficiency.
  - Requiring all new developments to satisfy policies requiring development to be sustainable prior to an application being deemed to be complete.
  - Establishing a policy basis to promote sustainable practices including bicycle parking spaces, minimum pervious areas, maximum non-pervious areas, the use of wind-power and other forms of “green” energy, three-stream waste, mixed-use developments and pedestrian amenities.
  - Requiring all newly built, and whenever possible, renovated and retrofit buildings to meet at least a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver or equivalent standard within the community.
  - Promoting green roofs and alternative forms of energy throughout the community.
  - Providing a sustainability checklist to be used for all development applications within the community.
  - Including policies in the Community’s Urban Design Guidelines to specifically address and promote sustainable practices within the community.

- Establishing a policy basis for the adoption of Municipal By-laws to promote environmental practices within the community including a ban on unnecessary use of pesticides, anti-idling, and the use of timers for the lighting of commercial buildings.

There will be another opportunity for further consultation at the second workshop planned, to generate further interest and discussion on significant policy issues for the Official Plan.

## **4.0 OTHER PLANNING ISSUES**

Other planning issues have been brought forward through discussion with staff from the Municipality of Brockton and County of Bruce. The issues have focused on the downtown, heritage related issues, urban design, traffic and parking, economic development, accessibility and sustainability. Amendments are required to further address these issues and to expand upon the current policies in the Walkerton Community Official Plan.

### **4.1 Accessibility**

Accessibility and mobility needs to be a greater consideration in the development and operation of buildings, public spaces and infrastructure within the Community of Walkerton. Ensuring facilities and services are accessible is becoming increasingly important as the population ages and the number of persons with disabilities grows. It also reflects the type of caring and helpful community, which the community aspires.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, prescribes a range of duties that the Provincial government, municipalities and others must undertake to enable persons of all ages with disabilities to enjoy equal opportunity and to participate fully in life and their communities. The Act specifies actions in the areas of facilities, purchasing, service delivery, employment, publications, and transportation. Complementary guidelines and directives are also being prepared. Policy direction aimed at improving access and mobility within the community of Walkerton needs to be included in the Official Plan.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan policies be amended to incorporate accessibility and mobility policies by:**

- Considering undertaking a separate Accessibility and Mobility Section in the Plan with principles.
- Specifying policies for areas such as parking, access, noise, facility design and development review.

## 4.2 Urban Design Guidelines

Currently in the Community of Walkerton Official Plan there are very few policies, which address issues of urban design. The Official Plan should include a section to address urban design considerations.

The Urban Design Guidelines will address issues of potential gateway signage into the Community of Walkerton, protection and enhancement of urban landscapes, sidewalks, parking spaces, dark sky lighting, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, public safety and security and energy efficient design.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan policies be enhanced to provide Urban Design Guidelines in the policies.**

## 4.3 Commercial

The Historic Downtown encompasses the area in the heart of Walkerton along the Saugeen River and extends into an area along McNab Street that has been subject to redevelopment over the past several years. Development in this location has reflected newer larger format type commercial development in contrast to the typical downtown traditional specialty shop development. In an effort to encourage development in this area the current policies permit a wide range of uses. Some of those uses are more appropriate to highway commercial areas than to a historic downtown.

Due to expansive property available and the types of uses that are seeking this location there is a need to examine appropriate Official Plan policies which will better address the type of development which is to be encouraged in this location which is not intended to compete with the traditional downtown core.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be enhanced to provide the policy basis for the preparation of Commercial Core Area policies that will differentiate the true historic downtown, recognize the existing large format commercial enterprise in the downtown and encourage opportunities for further development by:**

- Recognizing the hierarchy of commercial areas within the community including the Historic Walkerton, Commercial Core Area, and Highway Commercial designations.
- Ensuring future development and redevelopment in the McNab location will retain and improve the economic viability of the “Core Commercial Area”.

- Ensuring that all development and redevelopment shall be in keeping with the scale, density, nature and character of existing development.
- Ensuring goods and services to be provided will primarily serve the whole of the community and surrounding market area.
- Ensuring opportunities for a mixture of commercial and residential uses in the Commercial Core Area.
- Ensuring enhance entranceways to the core through appropriate signage, and landscape features.
- Providing direction regarding the conversion of residential uses to commercial uses including detailed design guidelines.

#### **4.4 Heritage**

Currently the Community of Walkerton Official Plan has relatively extensive heritage resource protection policies. Additional policies to be considered in the Official Plan relate to the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Master Plan and Cultural Heritage Impact Statements. Cultural Heritage Impact Statements (CHIS) maybe requested to support an application for development if the affected lands are the site of an identified heritage resource or are located in close proximity to a significant cultural heritage resource or on adjacent lands to a significant cultural heritage resource. The policies further strengthen the protection of heritage resources in the Community of Walkerton.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be enhanced to provide the policy basis for the preparation of expanded Heritage protection policies by:**

- Establishing policy direction for the requirement of a Cultural Heritage Impact Statement (CHIS) to support applications for development on lands affected by an identified heritage resources or in areas in close proximity to significant cultural heritage resources.
- Establishing policy direction for the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Master Plan.

#### **4.5 Special Policy Area**

The primary natural feature in the Community of Walkerton is the Saugeen River and its tributary Silver Creek. Currently the Official Plan applies a “Two Zone Concept” for floodplain protection. New development and site alteration is currently not permitted within the floodway portion of the floodplain. There are flood fringe constraint policies for the Saugeen River and Silver Creek, which

identify under what conditions development is permitted in the area between the limit of the Environmental Protection designation and the Regional Storm Floodline for the two streams. The policies address appropriate flood proofing measures and/or flood damage reduction measures for development in the flood fringe.

A Special Policy Area designation is a planning approach used in specific situations, particularly in communities that have historically existed within the flood plain. The special policy recognition allows for the continued viability of the existing uses through special policies. The policy recognizes that there would be hardship to the community if there were strict adherence to Provincial policy relative to development. A Special Policy Area approach would address more appropriate the development in the historic downtown of Walkerton.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be enhanced to provide the policy basis for the preparation of a Special Policy Area designation for the historic downtown core along the Saugeen River in Walkerton by:**

- Delineating a Special Policy Area in the Official Plan that specifies under which circumstances new development may be permitted and identifying the minimum acceptable level of protection required for new development in the flood way and flood fringe of the Saugeen River and Silver Creek.

#### **4.6 Servicing**

Future growth for the Community of Walkerton is dependent on the availability of sanitary sewage and water services. The current Official Plan identified a water supply capacity sufficient for the planning period to 2016, which was predicted to service a population of 5,636. The sewage treatment system was identified as having a capacity equivalent of 7,200 persons. With the projected population of 5,905 up to the year 2026, there will be sufficient sewage capacity, however, there will be a shortage in available water supply.

There will be a requirement for the community to undertake an Environmental Assessment to explore expansion of the water treatment facility five years prior to requiring the extra capacity (2011) or examining new or supplementary supplies. The community should also be promoting enhancements to the treatment and distribution systems to improve the aesthetic quality of the supply, provide additional storage and extend watermains to unserved areas including new residential area to be included in the urban area boundary.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be enhanced to provide the policy basis for the preparation of the following:**

- A Class Environmental Assessment to detail required actions and costs to improve the quantity of water for the community five years prior to requiring the capacity to serve the population to 2016.

#### **4.7 Transportation**

Given the modest population growth that is expected over the next twenty-year period (1,000) it is not anticipated that new traffic problems will arise. The community is well served by a good municipal road system, as well as two major County Roads, 4 and 2 that traverse Walkerton in a north/south and east/west direction providing more than adequate access to the community. The main traffic concern in the community is congestion in the downtown at peak hours.

In keeping with the proposed sustainability policies the public works policies in the Official Plan should reflect the desire to construct municipal roadways and other services in a manner that implement the sustainability objectives. This means providing for more natural infiltration than might have historically been provided for, increasing the number of green areas, including street trees and providing the necessary facilities for active transportation such as bicycle facilities, trails and opportunities for potential future transit. In addition the intent to develop a waterfront trail system along the Saugeen River throughout the historic downtown should be clearly depicted in the Official Plan schedules.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan policies be amended to incorporate transportation policies that:**

- Promoting initiatives, including actions by the community to modify road patterns to better manage access from the two main County Roads.
- Requiring enhanced facilities for walking and cycling to encourage active transportation.
- Adding the location of trails and complementary policies including land acquisition and trailhead development.
- Including sustainability elements providing additional green areas, street trees, providing for active transportation with bicycle facilities, increased trails and opportunities for potential future transit and consideration of appropriate traffic calming measures.

## 4.8 Natural Heritage

Environmental policies in the current Official Plan address the protection of a healthy environment by minimizing air, water and land pollution and identifying the wise use of the areas natural resources. The current policies do not adequately address the protection of water resources, or natural heritage features or emerging environmental issues such as brownfield development, contamination, energy efficiency, air quality and light pollution.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be amended to reflect the wise protection of natural heritage and water resources in the Community by:**

- Considering policies to minimize impervious surfaces through the development process.
- Requiring any land use proposal having the potential to impact water quality or quantity to submit a hydrogeological study at the time of application.
- Encouraging protection of linkages and corridors when assessing development applications and seek to create a comprehensive trail system along the entire Saugeen River frontage.
- Establishing a target for woodland coverage for the community as part of the community's tree preservation and enhancement approach.
- Ensuring there are urban design policies to encourage the maintenance of the rural character of Walkerton through further tree planning, enhancing parks, and avoiding sprawling development patterns.
- Ensuring there is a process outlined for the development of areas where soil contamination is known or suspected.

**Directions: It is proposed that the Walkerton Community Official Plan be enhanced to provide the policy basis for the preparation of separate but implementing documents including the:**

- Preparation of a Heritage Conservation District Plan;
- Preparation of Accessibility Transition Plan.
- Policies to enable the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan for the downtown area.

- Once completed these documents will provide for additional policy direction in the Official Plan.

## **5.0 OFFICIAL PLAN SCHEDULES**

Official Plan Schedules will be updated with new mapping based on the most recent data sources.

Base on the recommendations of the Growth Management Report and Growth Options report the Land Use Schedule A will be updated to include lands immediately on the outskirts of the current boundary within the boundary as well as lands which form part of the boundary expansion and land exchange. Schedule A will also identify transportation corridors within the community.

A new Schedule A-1 will provide the boundary of the defined Special Policy Area for the historic downtown area of Walkerton along the Saugeen River and Silver Creek. The schedule will also be updated once information becomes available through the Saugeen Conservation Authority to reflect the revised flood elevations of the Saugeen River.

## **6.0 SUMMARY**

This report outlines the fundamental directions that will be taken in the preparation of the new Official Plan. The schedules attached to this report should be considered draft schedules prepared at a conceptual level at the present time. However, the report and schedules should be made available for public review in order that full public consultation on the draft Official Plan can occur in the spring of 2009.