

STAFF REPORT



TO: Development Services Section of Coordinated Committee

FROM: Nathan Wukasch, Planner

SUBJECT: Town of Wasaga Beach Official Plan Update & Growth Management Strategy
Initial Steps – Phase One

DATE: April 13, 2017

RECOMMENDATION:

“THAT Development Services Section of Coordinated Committee recommend that Council authorize staff to hold an initial public consultation and community visioning session for the Town of Wasaga Beach Official Plan Update & Growth Management Strategy.”

BACKGROUND:

In February 2017, the Town issued a Request for Proposals to retain a consulting team to assist with the new Official Plan and Growth Management Strategy. After careful consideration of the proposals, Staff made a recommendation to hire the consulting team led by the GSP Group, and Council passed a resolution on March 28th, 2017 “THAT Council award the contract to lead the creation of a new Official Plan for Wasaga Beach to the consulting team led by the GSP Group and that staff proceed to enter into a contract with the GSP Group for Phase One of the project”.

DISCUSSION

The project has been broken out into two phases.

Phase One: Consultation and Information Gathering (2017)

- Step One – Project Initiation
- Step Two – Municipal Comprehensive Review, Background Studies, and Discussion Papers
- Step Three – Proposed Policy Directions

Phase Two: Policy Preparation (2018)

- Step Four – Draft Official Plan and public consultation
- Step Five – Final Official Plan

The purpose of this report is to introduce the first steps in Phase One: Consultation and Information Gathering of the project. A large component of consultation is engaging the public and seeking out public opinion. Through this report, staff seek authorization from Committee and Council to proceed with scheduling an open house/public meeting as part of the Official Plan update. The Technical Advisory Committee (Staff) will be meeting with the consulting team to initiate the project on Friday April 7, 2017 to discuss the work program and to schedule dates for the open house/public meeting. This report has been prepared in advance of the kick-off meeting.

Phase One will generally consist of a public consultation program, the review of background studies, preparation of discussion papers, and a proposed policy directions report. The Town recognizes the value of public consultation in the preparation of a new Official Plan: community engagement will be critical to the success of the project. Community consultation and participation is an essential component of the work program, which should effectively inform and engage stakeholders about the project and obtain community opinion and consensus regarding key policy directions and 'where and how to grow'.

Staff will work with the Consulting team in the coming weeks to finalize a Consultation Strategy that continues and builds upon community visioning to inform the project structure and engage the community in determining the future of Wasaga Beach. The Consultation Strategy will contain the following items:

- A Community Visioning exercise, held in the form of an open house/public meeting, and a possible community survey. This will build upon the results of the consultation program of the Downtown Master Planning process. The intent of the visioning exercise is to establish a community vision, goals and principles for the new Official Plan based on community input. The vision, goals and principles will guide the development of the Official Plan and will guide the growth, development and change of the Town over the next 20 years. The deliverable will be a Vision Statement, guiding principles, goals and policy objectives to form and inform the framework for the new Official Plan.
- Consultation with County of Simcoe Planning staff, as the approval authority for the Town's Official Plan, regarding a growth management strategy and land budgeting data collection.
- Consultation with other agencies and key stakeholders, including Ontario Parks, NVCA, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Units, School Boards, Provincial Ministries, community representatives, local businesses, resident groups/associations, seniors groups, local development industry, and other interest groups.

The final Consultation Strategy will describe how to engage the community through the course of the work program for the Official Plan review. The Public Consultation Strategy will consider:

- the methods and types of notice, including social media
- the number and purpose of the consultation meetings including workshops, round tables and statutory public meetings
- the target audiences to be engaged through different means, differentiated by age, geographic location/neighbourhood, etc.
- how the Town's "duty to consult" will be undertaken in respect of the First Nations and Metis communities.
- how comments will be addressed and responded to; specifically including where changes in land use designation are proposed and how those owners will be notified and consulted.
- the number, timing and purpose of consultation meetings with the County of Simcoe Planning Department throughout the various phases of the study.

At this point, staff are asking for authorization to hold the community visioning session at an initial public meeting in May 2017.

CONCLUSION:

The update to the Official Plan and Growth Management Strategy are underway, with the hiring of the GSP Group with sub-consultants Kevin Curtis Planning, and N. Barry Lyons Consultants. An initial Technical Advisory committee meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2017 in order to commence the project. In the interest of timing, staff are seeking authorization from Council to begin the formal public consultation process in May 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Wukasch, MCIP, RPP
Planner