
DATE: January 7, 2009

SUBJECT: **PEEL REGION OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW - COMMUNICATION,
CONSULTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Environment, Transportation
and Planning Services

OBJECTIVE

To update Regional Council on consultation activities associated with the Peel Regional Official Plan Review.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Peel Region Official Plan Review (PROPR) Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy (CCES) is an essential component in the PROPR Work Program. The objectives of the PROPR CCES are threefold; to engage stakeholders and the general public on PROPR, to provide stakeholders and the public with clear, relevant and timely information about the Regional Official Plan review, and to engage municipal and provincial planning staff in the process.
- The Employment Lands Workshop was held on November 14, 2008, to examine policy options for the Employment Lands focus area. The Environment Workshop held on November 24, 2008, considered policy options for the Sustainability, Natural Heritage, Agriculture, Energy, Air Quality and Greenbelt Conformity Focus areas.
- Some of the key findings from both workshops include: stakeholders agree that sustainability as an overarching framework for the Regional Official Plan (ROP) is appropriate, but should also be considered during the development stage as well as at the policy level in the ROP; the need for flexible regional policies to attract employers and investment; the need for ongoing dialogue with the Province, other Regional governments and local area municipalities when considering policy directions for the Regional Official Plan; Regional policies should be strategic and long-term in order to anticipate shifting trends in labour, economy, and employment densities, and to capitalize on Peel's competitive advantages; Peel should lead in energy policy and shift to green energy including energy from waste.
- Upcoming communication activities for 2009 include: open houses, public meetings scheduled for the amendments to the Regional Official Plan, key stakeholder consultations for the Managing Growth, Transportation and Integrated Waste Management focus areas, as well as an upcoming issue of the PROPR Newsletter 4.

PEEL REGION OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW - COMMUNICATION, CONSULTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**DISCUSSION****1. Background**

The purpose of this report is to update Regional Council on consultation activities associated with the Peel Region Official Plan Review (PROPR). In order to bring the Regional Official Plan into conformity with Provincial plans, policies and legislation, the work program, as approved under Resolution 2007-1103, confirmed fifteen focus areas for PROPR, see Appendix I. The PROPR Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy (CCES) is an essential component in the PROPR work program. The objectives of the PROPR CCES is threefold: to engage stakeholders and the general public in the PROPR, to provide stakeholders and the public with clear, relevant and timely information about the ROP review, and to engage municipal and provincial planning staff in the process. Throughout this process, regional planning staff has been keeping Regional Council informed of key consultation activities. This has been done through status reports to both the Inter-Municipal Planning Subcommittee (IMPSC) and Regional Council. The latest CCES update was addressed in a PROPR status update report, which was on the IMPSC agenda of September 25, 2008. At General Committee on November 13, 2008, Regional planning staff also prepared a staff report to update Regional Council on the results of the Managing Growth Stakeholder Consultation Workshop held on October 7, 2008.

Staff will continue to collect input at upcoming consultation activities, such as workshops, public meetings and open houses. Staff will also continue to inform key stakeholders and the public on the PROPR process through the PROPR website, www.peelregion.ca/officialplan, and through the PROPR newsletters.

Two recent workshops, held in late 2008, focused on employment and environmental issues. The Employment Lands Workshop, held on November 14, 2008, was conducted to examine policy options for the Employment and Employment Lands focus area and the broadly defined Environment Workshop, held on November 24, 2008, considered policy options for the Sustainability, Natural Heritage, Agriculture, Energy, Air Quality and Greenbelt Conformity focus areas. The workshops aimed to obtain input specific to each focus area from key stakeholders, including regional and local councillors, provincial, regional and area municipal staff, as well as representatives from the private and non-profit sectors. Both workshops were well attended with representatives from Regional Council, the public, non-profit and the private sector.

The objectives of the Employment Lands workshop were threefold: to provide an overview of the preliminary Peel employment and Employment Land Project findings, to provide an overview and obtain input on Peel's Regional Official Plan Policy direction related to employment lands, and to provide an overview and get input on the Region's method of employment land budget analysis to 2031.

The objectives of the Environment workshop were twofold: to provide an overview of environment policies in the Regional Official Plan being considered for the Natural Heritage, Agriculture, Greenbelt Conformity, Sustainability, Energy and Air Quality focus areas, and to provide an opportunity to obtain input from invited stakeholders on policy options as presented in all the focus areas noted above.

Summary reports on the Employment Lands and Environment workshops are available for review at the Regional Clerk's office.

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2. Findings from the Employment Lands Workshop and Environment Workshop

The following are some key findings from both workshops:

- Stakeholders agree that sustainability as an overarching framework for the Regional Official Plan is appropriate, but it should also be considered during the development stage as well as the policy level in the ROP
- The need for flexible regional policies to attract employers and investment
- The need for ongoing dialogue with the Province, other Regional governments and local area municipalities when considering policy directions for the Regional Official Plan
- The Region should play a strong role in identifying, protecting and servicing key corridors for employment, transportation and utility purposes
- Regional policies should be strategic and long-term in order to anticipate shifting trends in labour, economy and employment densities, and to capitalize on its competitive advantages
- It is important for the Regional Official Plan to meet provincial conformity for natural heritage features policy, but it is also important that the Region consider further steps beyond PROPR to address natural heritage systems planning. This will be done later.
- Agriculture needs to be recognized as an industry and policies also need to protect “family farms” in the Region
- Peel should lead in energy policy and shift to green energy including energy from waste

3. Peel Regional Official Plan Review Consultation Activities to Date

In consultation with area municipal staff, regional planning staff conducted workshops and consultations to engage stakeholders and the general public on the PROPR process. The PROPR website is kept up to date and maintained by staff. PROPR newsletters are also published on a quarterly basis to further provide relevant and timely messages about the ROP review.

a) Discussion Papers Released to Date

The following discussion papers have been posted on the PROPR website and are available for comment at www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan/discussion.htm

- Air Quality Discussion Paper
- Greenbelt Plan Policy Review Background Paper
- Peel-Caledon Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat Study
- Natural Heritage Policy Review Discussion Paper
- Sustainability Discussion Paper
- Employment and Employment Lands Discussion Paper
- Energy Discussion Paper
- Agriculture Discussion Paper
- Growth Management Background Paper
- Sustainability Background Paper
- Transportation Background and Challenges Paper

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b) PROPR Newsletters

Three issues of the PROPR Newsletter were released in September 2007, February 2008 and more recently, in August 2008. Staff will be working towards a fourth PROPR Newsletter, which is expected to be released in February 2009.

4. Upcoming Consultation Activities

a) Discussion Papers

In addition to the above noted discussion papers that were released and are available online for comments, upcoming discussion papers will be released on the following topic areas: Managing Growth, Regional Housing Strategy, Integrated Waste Management, Transportation and Planning Tools and Updates.

b) Consultations with Stakeholders

The Growth and Intensification Workshop, scheduled to occur on January 30, 2009, is cancelled due to the lack of availability of small area municipal growth forecast data, which is required to develop future growth scenarios and to understand the implications of growth, transportation and infrastructure issues. The consultant hired by both Brampton and Mississauga has been diligently working on this issue; however, the data was not available at the time of this report. The lack of this information has proven difficult for Regional and area municipal planning staff in moving forward to meet the provincial conformity deadline. Regional planning staff will continue to work with provincial and area municipal staff and explore alternative solutions to complete the PROPR exercise.

The Transportation and Integrated Waste Management focus areas are also scheduled to consult with key stakeholders in early January 2009.

c) Open Houses and Public Meetings

As part of the PROPR Work Plan and as stated under Section 17(15) of the Ontario Planning Act, the Region is required by the Province to hold at least one open house and one public meeting to present and obtain public input on draft Official Plan amendments prior to Council adoption. Open houses will be held at Regional Headquarters and at area municipalities, where warranted.

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CONCLUSION

Consultation to date on PROPR has been significant with active participation and input from area municipal staff, the Province, key stakeholders and the general public. Staff will continue to work with area municipal staff to ensure their comments are integrated into draft ROP policies. Staff will also continue to meet with the Province regularly to provide updates and seek input on provincial targets and policies. Regional planning staff will continue to provide public opportunities for input throughout the rest of the PROPR process in the form of open houses and public meetings.



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Approved for Submission:



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c. Legislative Services

APPENDIX I
Peel Region Official Plan Review – Communication, Consultations and Engagement Strategy
Update
January 7, 2009

Peel Region Official Plan Review – Fifteen Focus Areas

