

## MEETING PRIMER

### RIDGEWAY/THUNDER BAY SECONDARY PLAN – PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING No.2

Following the first Public Information Meeting in July 2012, numerous comments were received after the invitation to public to provide their opinion on whether the previous 2009 Council adopted Neighbourhood Plan needed any “tweaking” prior to be advanced for Secondary Plan purposes.

For the most part, the Neighbourhood Plan of 2009 remains highly relevant and strongly reflects the direction in which the draft Secondary Plan has been prepared. Following the initial input received, staff has prepared a draft policy document and updated mapping that strongly reflects of the 2009 Plan with some slight modification.

The policies contained within the draft Secondary Plan reinforce provincial and regional policy directives of the Provincial Policy Statement and Places to Grow. A “Complete Community” concept is the focus of the Amendment considering Town Official Plan objectives, age in place philosophies and the provision of a wider range of choice in residential housing form within Ridgeway-Thunder Bay.

As the available larger parcels of land for traditional subdivision development dwindles in the Plan Area, it is important to establish opportunities for continued and renewed growth using a finer parcel fabric, more compact designs and priority locations to compliment and sustain primary community components.

More particularly:

- Less available development land will lead to more intensification within the neighbourhood;
- Identifying appropriate and key locations for intensification that reinforce the long term viability of the commercial districts, sustainability of our natural features and open space areas and other community assets are best achieved by embedding policy into the Town’s Official Plan;
- Recognize Town objectives in working towards a more balanced mix of housing types by providing areas with increased density and establishing criteria for additional areas. The current neighbourhood mix is highly weighted towards the detached dwelling form and a broader range of choice is desirable; and
- Ensuring efficient use of land and infrastructure is fundamental.
- Providing age-in-place opportunities
- Development policies that support the Downtown

#### Key Modifications

There are generally 6 key modifications to the Land Use Plan that were made as a result of comments received or through consideration of staff.

1. Relocation of the proposed neighbourhood park space in the northwest area of Ridgeway to be located next to the elementary school to leverage the schools current playfield in conjunction with the new parkland, creating a much larger contiguous open space complex. The introduction of medium density in this vicinity is rationalized through the enhanced larger open space area and natural features setting. Separation distances are reasonable and could be considered for some apartment built form in this location.
2. Gorham Commercial Gateway area is being provided opportunity to support expanded commercial uses. While staff had originally contemplated designation of light industrial nature, the available land is not quite sizable enough to warrant and the Town does continue to support commercial use at this location. Therefore, staff are recommending broadening the permitted uses to include some types of uses that could be found in the light industrial designation. The location of which is restricted to being located back from Gorham through policy and would be detailed with regulation in a site specific zoning By-law. Additionally, staff are recommending Urban Design Guidelines be prepared for the Gorham / Dominion commercial area.

3. Re-designation of the current Downtown “Commercial” designation to a “Core Mixed Use” designation. This designation is seen as a means of clearly distinguishing the Downtown commercial with that of the Gorham. While little would change in terms of what is permitted and regulated, it does promote a mix of residential on upper floors in the downtown and does attempt to prohibit certain new uses from establishing, such as drive-thrus and new automotive related uses. These uses would be permitted in the Gorham commercial area. Bridgeburg and Crystal Beach already make use of the Core Mixed Use designation. Additionally, staff are recommending Urban Design Guidelines be prepared for the Downtown area.
4. Wells Avenue was originally being shown as a conceptual road to be considered for opening up. This was met with vocal local opposition. While staff supports the residents in their request not open and construct a road, staff strongly believe this road allowance can become an important pedestrian link to the Friendship Trail, creating a means for a strong north/south connection for pedestrian and recreational trail users to travel safely towards the waterfront areas. A very modest trail system is envisioned, that would retain much of the vegetation occupying these Town road allowances. Appropriate sections of Wells would be re-designated as Open Space accordingly.
5. The specific reference to the local commercial potential at Bernard and Thunder Bay Road has been removed.
6. Conceptual roads South of Thunder Bay Road have also been removed from the Plan.

Staff believe these modifications are both responsive and responsible changes as a result of further consideration and commenting received from the public and other sources since the July 2012 PIM meeting.

### Staying Informed

Fort Erie's website provides us with an opportunity to keep you informed of the activity as it relates to the Plan's progress. We suggest you visit the Town's *Ridgeway/Thunder Bay* webpage to keep track of meetings and Plan progress. Staff will use the website to post materials, documents and Notices over the course of the process. However, milestone meetings such as this evening's, and the Statutory Public Meeting will have Notices published in the Fort Erie Times and announced at Council Meetings well in advance of meeting dates.

You can visit the website at [www.town.forterie.on.ca](http://www.town.forterie.on.ca)

Simply type “*Ridgeway/Thunder Bay*” in the search field and you will be given the link to this Plan's web page

Staff thank you and encourage you to write us with your thoughts or comments concerning the Secondary Plan's development. You can take a comment sheet home with you to fill out and mail in, or write us and e-mail to the attention of the contact below. For this latest round of consultation, we would respectfully request your comments be received no later than March 31, 2013.

### **Thanks for coming out this evening!**

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