

2011

2011 Official Plan Update Overview Understanding the Amendments

This document provides a short overview and explanation of the most significant changes proposed in the first Draft of the update to the Township's Official Plan.



Background

Council for the Township of Rideau Lakes decided at the outset of the required 5 Year Review of the Official Plan that the existing structure and general policy framework of the Official Plan was sufficient and that only amendments were necessary rather than a completely new Official Plan. This first draft reflects that direction.

The changes contained within the draft can be tracked as follows:

Items proposed to be deleted from the existing Official Plan are in ~~striketrough~~

Items proposed to be added are in Red

The following represents a guide to the more significant amendments proposed in this Draft:

Land Division (Section 5.2)

The current Official Plan essentially limits rural severances to a maximum three new lots from a parcel that existed in 1998 and allows Plans of Subdivision anywhere in the Township.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) seeks to limit development in Rural areas and encourages growth in Settlement areas (existing built-up and serviced areas). In order to address this Provincial Policy while seeking greater flexibility for severances and lot creation in the rural area, the new land division policies will do the following:

- New lot creation will be limited across the entire Township instead of on an individual lot basis
- 60% of new lots are to be created in Settlement Areas (major villages and area outside Smiths Falls) and 40% in the Rural area
- Based on historic lot creation patterns this will permit up to 32 new lots per year to be created in the Rural area
- Severances in general will still be limited to three per lot however the opportunity is now given to permit more lots if additional criteria can be adequately met
- Subdivision will continue to be permitted throughout the Township
- Development, through a Plan of Condominium, is now better recognized in the Plan as a land division option
- New policy section proposed to permit the re-establishment of lots which have merged in title

Settlement Area Designation (Section 3.9)

The Provincial Policy Statement requires that the majority of growth be directed to Settlement Areas. The current Official Plan has designated approximately 18 villages and hamlets as its settlement areas under the designated Village and Hamlet. In order to address the PPS a number of policy changes have been proposed as follows:

- All small villages and hamlets which are no longer receiving growth have been redesignated to Rural.
- Portland, Newboro, Elgin, and Delta have been placed into the new Settlement Area designation
- A new Settlement Area has been developed in South Elmsley in the Golf Club Road area to recognize the existing subdivision oriented settlement pattern and the higher demand for lot creation in this section of the Township

Significant Woodlands Mapping

The PPS has always required that municipalities protect significant woodlands from the negative effects of development but the Ministry of Natural Resources had never previously provided mapping to the Township as to what woodlands are indeed “significant”. The MNR has now provided this mapping based upon a model the Ministry has developed. Significant Woodlands are now recognized on the Land Use Schedules as Natural Heritage B features with the following differences with the other Natural Heritage B features:

- All lands located on the Canadian Shield can be exempted from the requirement to protect significant woodlands under the PPS and the Township has chosen to implement this exemption
- While development is not allowed within other Natural Heritage B features, such as wetlands, specific woodland policies permit a single dwelling and small commercial uses to be constructed in a significant woodland on existing lots of record
- Lot creation; however, will be restricted within woodlands just as it is within all Natural Heritage features.

Waterfront Development Objectives (Section 2.2.4)

This is a new policy section meant to better articulate how the Township expects to review development and, in particular, re-development projects along the Township’s many water bodies. The general core Waterfront Development policies have only seen minor amendments.

Sustainable Development Policies (Section 2.25)

Sustainable development is a concept that is becoming more widespread and the Official Plan has proposed policies to promote sustainable development practices. Sustainable development is a concept included in the PPS and the Township must include Sustainable Development policies in its planning documents in order to continue to be eligible for Federal Gas Tax funds.

Revised Wetland Mapping

The Township has been provided with revised wetland mapping from the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry identifies what wetlands in Ontario should be given a designation as Provincially Significant and this is implemented through municipal Official Plans. The revised mapping was based upon the much improved aerial photography available through the Province and further site inspections by MNR

biologists. Some wetlands have shrunk, some have been enlarged, while others have had their level of significance changed from locally significant to provincially significant.

Alternative and Renewable Energy Systems Policies (Section 2.24)

This is an emerging land use issue which has broad and far reaching land use implications. While the Province has enacted the Green Energy Act (September 2010) which has removed all municipal planning approval requirements and tools, the Township felt it was still important to address this emerging issue with planning policies. The reasons were both to ensure developers understood the Township's expectations with regard to renewable energy projects and in case the Green Energy Act is ever rescinded the necessary policies will already be in place.

Garden Suites (Section 2.9.1)

Garden Suites, often referred to as Granny Flats, are currently permitted as temporary uses for an elderly family member. The Township recognizes with changing demographics this use is expected to become more important and necessary. Therefore the Township has attempted to have policies in the updated Official Plan to give expected performance standards and guidance as to where and how these uses should be approved. The expected outcome once these policies are in place is that Garden Suites can be made a normal permitted use in the Zoning Bylaw and those wishing to establish a Garden Suite will no longer need to go through a site specific zoning amendment process provided they comply with the expectations of the Official Plan.

Lot Creation on Prime Agriculture Designated Land (Section 3.2.3.6.3)

The current Official Plan includes policies to allow for the long held practice of allowing for one farm retirement lot to be created on a property designated as prime agricultural land. The PPS which came out in 2005 after the current Official Plan was adopted no longer permits this form of lot creation in prime agricultural land. Essentially the PPS does not permit any lot creation to occur on lands designated as prime agricultural land (Class 1, 2 and 3 soils) except for a situation where a farmer has purchased an adjacent farm the surplus dwelling can be severed from that farm. The lands designated as prime agricultural land are depicted on the Land Use Schedules and are generally restricted to lands around Forfar and Crosby and south of Smiths Falls.