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File: 15 PRO p
Planner: M.Tomazincic

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FROM:	JOHN M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS MEETING ON MARCH 23, 2015

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken:

- (a) the following information report on the **BE RECEIVED** for information;
- (b) the proposed Improvements to Public Engagement in the Planning Process **BE CIRCULATED** to the London Development Institute, the Urban League, the London Homebuilders Association, London Area Planning Consultants, London area architects, landscape architects and urban designers; and,
- (c) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to report back at a future meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee requesting an endorsement of the proposed Improvements to Public Engagement in the Planning Process as modified based on stakeholder consultations.

IT BEING NOTED that the estimated cost of implementation to improve the engagement process is approximately \$150,000 and will be referred for consideration as part of the 2016-2019 multi-year budget development should Council endorse this strategy.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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None

PURPOSE AND EFFECT OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The purpose and effect of this report is to outline:

- the minimum level of public engagement prescribed by the province in response to a planning application;
- the minimum level of public engagement required by the policies of the Official Plan;
- the City's current engagement practises;
- options intended to improve the current level of public engagement;
- constraints/requirements that need to be overcome to improve the current level of public engagement; and,
- recommendations for the most effective and efficient course of action.

While initial engagement has been undertaken to develop the preliminary engagement improvements outlined this report, the purpose and effect is also to circulate the detailed process improvements for comment and possible modification.

RATIONALE

- This initiative is intended to make public engagement more effective
- The intended outcome of improving public engagement is to make the planning process more accessible to all Londoners, so they can more easily get involved on their own terms
- A system of easy-to-understand public notices and Staff reports complement the plain-language style of *The Draft London Plan*

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- This initiative embraces new technologies to disseminate information faster and wider than with traditional methods

BACKGROUND

Planning Services, in partnership with Development Services, Communications, Service London, and with assistance from the City Clerks Office and Legal Services, have undertaken an initiative to improve public engagement in the planning process by communicating in plain-language. This initiative is also intended to make public notification more effective by improving the format, expanding the media options, and exploring ways to reach more citizens directly.

The intended outcome of improving public engagement is to make the planning process more accessible to the general public thereby inviting *meaningful* participation. When information is easy to understand and widely available, more citizens are enabled to participate in the process.

The initiative to improve public engagement began with the *ReThink London* process and carried through in the drafting of *The London Plan*. One of the objectives of *The Draft London Plan* is to create an Official Plan that is written in plain-language, easy to understand, interesting, and inclusive of informative illustrations.

The Draft London Plan is established on a foundation of five values, a clear vision, and eight directions to guide all of the planning and city-building initiatives. The five values were included to guide how the planning process is to be implemented in London. One of those values requires the municipality to “*be inclusive*” and pledges to “*...employ genuine and effective techniques to include all Londoners in our planning processes...[by considering] all Londoners in the plans and decisions we make.*” Similarly, one of the directions requires the municipality to “*make wise planning decisions*” by “*genuinely [engaging] stakeholders and the general public in all planning processes and meaningfully use that input to shape planning decisions*”.

While *The Draft London Plan* enables citizens to understand the long-term vision for the City of London in easy-to-read language and illustrations, much of this vision will be achieved through the cumulative outcomes of individual planning applications administered through the public planning process.

If the City’s long-term land use vision is to be implemented through the collective outcomes of individual planning applications, a system of easy-to-understand public notices and Staff reports also must accompany each planning application to complement the plain-language style of *The Draft London Plan* in an effort to clearly present the development proposal, requested amendment(s), and recommendation to Council. This will allow all concerned citizens to share in the exchange of information and facilitate meaningful and authentic engagement.

SCOPE OF STUDY

Planning Services identified six issues to explore where improvements can be made to the planning process engagement practices and further scoped possible initiatives to address these issues in partnership with, and assistance from, several internal service areas.

The scope of this exercise will analyse the below identified issues:

	Identified Issues	Possible initiative to address issue
1	Reports are too legalese and not written in plain-language to complement the <i>London Plan</i>	We need to develop an entire network of information dissemination If the Draft London Plan is easy-to-read but Notices and Reports are not, then we are not fulfilling the mandate of creating an Official Plan for the general public to understand Discourages public participation in the process if technical expertise is required to interpret the information provided

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	Identified Issues	Proposed initiative to address issue
2(a)	Expansion of the 120-metre radius for notification by Mail	Increasing the notification radius for all applications Using variable radii for different types of land use changes (i.e. Local =120m; Neighbourhood = 250m; Community = 500m; Regional = 1,000)
2(b)	Expanding the Mail notification to Include Tenants	Mailing out notification directly to tenant-occupied dwellings Requesting that owners of buildings notify tenants Mail out using "Occupant" labels since names of tenants are not readily available
3	Improvements to signage to include more information	Include-site specific information on signage Incorporate technology (i.e. QR Codes) Plain-language description of proposal Specific contact information and URL's Images of development proposal
4	Improving web presence, use of social media, and better coordination with CityMap	Web page devoted to each application Link new CityMap to the application-specific web page Expand the amount of accessible information available for each application to include hyperlinks to reports/studies Create Twitter and Facebook accounts for public notices with twitter handle and twitter hashtag
5	Plain Language for Public Notices	Simpler text, images, finding different ways to incorporate prescribed requirements AODA requirements
6	Introduce new practices to improve engagement with the public	Requiring mandatory Community Information Meetings for applications to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, new plans of subdivision, and site plans requiring a public participation meeting <u>within and directly adjacent to established neighbourhoods</u> Developing protocols outlining the content of Community Information Meetings

Staff evaluated each of the above, based on the following considerations:

Section 1 – What are the City’s current standards/practice

Section 2 – Evaluating Potential Changes to Current City Standards/Practices

- Cite best practices
- Cite Council goals/objectives
- Cite legislative requirements
- Cite comments/concerns raised by the public

Section 3 – What are some of the constraints/requirements that need to be overcome in order for us to achieve (Section 2)

- New resource requirements (i.e. Staffing)
- Process requirements/impacts/deficiencies
- Legislative and Policy implications (i.e. updates/changes to the council policy manual/Official Plan/Community Engagement Policy)
- Technology requirements/impacts/deficiencies
- Staff ability/technical requirements/training

Section 4 – Based on all the above, what is the recommendation?

Planning Staff also researched the engagement methods utilized by other jurisdictions including: City of Ottawa; City of Kitchener; City of Sarnia; City of Vaughan; City of Windsor; City of Burlington; City of Kingston; City of Hamilton; City of Newmarket; City of Toronto; City of Guelph; City of North Bay; Village of Pemberton, BC; City of Calgary; New York City

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REPORT SUMMARY

Planning applications affect people in many different ways. They represent change in our City and in neighbourhoods. It is important that we engage the public in a way that:

- Is clear and understandable to a broad range of participants
- Reaches as many people as possible who are interested in an application
- Recognizes that different people access information in different ways
- Is as early as possible in the process, so that input can help shape the outcome
- Is cost effective

Through the *ReThink London* process Londoners told us that they want more effective planning application engagement techniques. *The Draft London Plan* was written “to balance the requirement for planning-oriented policy language with the goal of minimizing jargon and bureaucratic phrases”. The format of *The Draft London Plan* is to provide a high level of readability and accessibility for the broad community – allowing for a better understanding of planning policies, their intent and rationale.

The Draft London Plan is based on a series of values. One is “be accountable”, which includes the notion of “being open and transparent in our decision making”. A second relevant value is to “be inclusive”. The Plan explains that “we will employ genuine and effective public engagement techniques to include all Londoners in our planning processes”.

Consistent with the feedback from the *ReThink London* process and the underlying values of *The Draft London Plan*, Staff are recommending a series of improvements to the current engagement practices for planning applications. We think these improvements will allow more Londoners to become more meaningfully involved in planning processes and affect how London develops around them.

The *Planning Act* (“the Act”) spells out the minimum requirements for how cities are to communicate with the public during planning application processes. However, these requirements are very basic and don’t represent the type of engagement that connects with Londoners. It should be noted that the notification and engagement process that are currently used in London go well beyond the minimum requirements of the *Act*.

That said, we believe that our current processes are not adequate and it is a good idea for us to consider new ways of engaging Londoners. Some of these new ways have financial implications, so we need to think about the balance between cost and public value for each of these considerations.

Below is the package of improvements that we are recommending, including the potential costs of each:

Proposed Change	Estimated Annual Cost Implication
Plain language reports written so that they are clear and easy to understand by all	\$0
Expand the radius for mail-out notices beyond 120m of the site on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the City Planner or Chief Building Official	To be absorbed in existing budget
Formally ask landlords to post the notification that we send to them in an obvious location so that tenants will see it.	\$0
Significantly improve notice signage to contain custom information relating to each application. More noticeable signage. Plain language information. Use QR codes and easy-to-remember URL to be directed to web page.	\$26,000 New signage costs & installation
Establish a new comprehensive web presence for Planning Services and Development Services applications to have all information within the file scanned “live” as it is submitted. The site will be much easier to interface with to find properties that are subject to a planning application and up-to-date information on meetings and next steps. New protocol regarding scanning and ongoing web updating will be required.	\$120,000 for new staffing

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Use Twitter, Facebook, emails, and RSS feeds to reach more Londoners who are interested in Planning Services and Development Services applications.	\$0 Additional staff included above
Plain language notices written so that they are clear and easy to understand by all	\$0
Develop new protocol to require an early community information meeting for applications to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, new plans of subdivision, and site plans requiring a public participation meeting within and directly adjacent to established neighbourhoods	To be absorbed in existing budget
Staff Costs to facilitate Community Information Meeting	To be absorbed in existing budget
Increased mailing costs to circulate the Notice of Community Information Meeting	\$3,500
Child minding for Community Information Meetings will be coordinated with Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services	To be absorbed in existing budget

The following appendices provide more information on each of these initiatives, including such things as:

- Best practices from other cities
- Cost evaluations
- Various options
- Preliminary recommendations

It is our intent to table this report with Council so that it can be circulated to various stakeholders and those who are interested from the general public to provide their input. Internal research and consideration of cost implications will also continue.

PREPARED BY:	REVIEWED BY:
MICHAEL TOMAZINCIC, MCIP, RPP MANAGER, CURRENT PLANNING	TERRY GRAWAY, MCIP, RPP MANAGER, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES & PLANNING LIAISON
RECOMMENDED BY:	
JOHN M. FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER	

13 March 2015

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APPENDIX “1” – PLAIN LANGUAGE IN PLANNING REPORTS
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1. Plain Language for Planning Committee Reports

Introduction

As mentioned in the Background section (above) one of the objectives of *The Draft London Plan* is to create an Official Plan that was written in plain-language, easy to understand, interesting, and inclusive of informative illustrations. If the City’s long-term vision is to be implemented through the collective outcomes of individual planning applications, and summarized in Staff reports, the Staff reports must be easy-to-understand to complement the plain-language style of *The Draft London Plan* in an effort to clearly present the proposal and recommendation to Council.

The City’s Current Standards/Practice

The current standard report templates begin with the Staff recommendation, followed by sections related to: Previous Reports; Purpose and Effect; Rationale; Location Map; Background; Official Plan Excerpt Map, Zoning By-law Excerpt Map; Planning History; and, Significant Department/Agency Comment before finally reaching the Analysis.

The Analysis section attempts to identify all of the land use planning policies that may apply to a particular application and evaluates whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the policies of: the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*; the Official Plan, Guidelines documents, Zoning By-law and occasionally other legislation and by-laws, where applicable.

This type of report structure is very technical in nature and is often written as though it will be submitted as evidence in an Ontario Municipal Board hearing rather than for ease of comprehension to the average reader. For non-planners, these reports lack a cohesive flow, are often repetitive, and often contain acronyms and jargon.

Evaluating Potential Changes to Plain Languages in Planning Committee Reports

Planning Committee reports from other municipalities in Ontario were reviewed in preparation of this report. Many municipalities have report structures that include a recommendation, brief background, and a plain language executive summary that provides a description of the site context and a concise overview of the recommendation.

These report structures then include all of the mapping, agency comments, detailed analysis and other supporting documentation as appendices to the report.

Constraints/Requirements for improving plain language for Planning Committee Reports

The challenge is to find a balance between writing in plain language while maintaining a minimum level of professionalism. Recognizing that Planning Committee reports may be submitted as evidence at an Ontario Municipal Board hearing, they must be able to withstand the scrutiny of cross examination.

Plain language reports may also continue to require jargon to identify technical terms and processes and acronyms on occasions where utilizing the long-form continuously becomes cumbersome.

Recommendations

It is recommended that all Planning Committee reports are prefaced with a brief plain language summary that clearly explains the information, intention and recommendations contained in the report. Ideally the language used would be reflective of the language used in the public

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APPENDIX “1” – PLAIN LANGUAGE IN PLANNING REPORTS
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notification and signage (see *Plain Language in Planning Notices and Improvements to Land Use Change Signage* sections below).

The purpose of a plain-language approach in written communication is to convey information easily and clearly. By choosing straightforward vocabulary and sentence structures and by organizing and presenting material clearly and logically, we ensure that our messages will be clearly understood.

Plain language improves community engagement and makes the intentions and decisions of the City more open, transparent and accessible. The benefits include:

- Plain language gets our message across in the shortest time possible
- More people are able to understand the message
- There is less chance that our document will be misunderstood
- And if our document gives instructions, readers are more likely to understand them and follow them correctly

Plain language is as important for electronic and web communication as it is for print.

The Ontario Government and the Government of Canada both call for plain language to be used in communications with the public, noting:

The obligation to inform the public includes the obligation to communicate effectively. Information about government policies, programs and services should be clear, objective and simple, and presented in a manner that is readily understandable. Messages should convey information relevant to public needs, use plain language and be expressed in a clear and consistent style.

It is recommended that the report templates be modified to include a plain language summary as the body of the report and include all the supporting documentation and accompanying information to the appendices.

It is recommended that the appendices include a detailed analysis of the Planning recommendation that will supplement the information provided in the plain language summary. This analysis should include the following information:

- Introduction to the site context including natural heritage, built heritage, infrastructure, sensitive uses, and other relevant site constraints or benefits;
- Evaluation of the recommended “use” against the policies of the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*, the Official Plan, Guideline documents, Zoning By-law and any other relevant policy or legislation followed by public concerns and other outstanding issues related to the recommended “use”;
- Evaluation of the recommended “intensity” against the policies of the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*, the Official Plan, Guideline documents, Zoning By-law and any other relevant policy or legislation followed by public concerns and other outstanding issues related to the recommended “intensity”;
- Evaluation of the recommended “form” against the policies of the *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)*, the Official Plan, Guideline documents, Zoning By-law and any other relevant policy or legislation followed by public concerns and other outstanding issues related to the recommended “form”.

By organizing the report into an evaluation of the appropriateness of the “use”, “intensity”, “form” and “issues”, clearly organizes the justification used to recommend support or refusal of the application, it eliminates the repetition of policy analysis that is currently contained in the body of our reports, and allows the reader to understand the evaluation of the issues.

It is recommended that the revised report template be further reviewed by the City Clerks Office and Legal Services as well as for compliance with AODA requirements.

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APPENDIX “2” – EXPANDING THE 120M NOTIFICATION RADIUS

2. Introduction to Public Notification by Mail

Planning Act Public Notice Requirements

Ontario Regulations prescribe two methods by which public notification must be fulfilled: The first requirement is that notice shall be given by:

“...ordinary mail, to every owner of land within 120 metres of the subject land...and by posting a notice, clearly visible and legible from a public highway or other place to which the public has access...” [O.Reg. 545/06., s. 5(4)]

The second requirement is that:

“notice shall be given by publishing a notice in a newspaper that...is of sufficiently general circulation in the area to which the proposed by-law would apply that it would give the public reasonable notice of the public meeting...” [O. Reg. 545/06, s. 5(7)]

These represent the minimum provincial standards. And it should be noted that only one of these two methods is required to be met. Notwithstanding, the City’s current practice is to fulfill both of the minimum standards thereby going beyond the *Planning Act* requirements.

The *Planning Act* also requires that prior to passing a by-law to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, Municipal Council shall ensure that “...at least one public meeting is held for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to make representations in respect of the proposed by-law...” The above represent the minimum provincial requirements for public engagement.

The *Planning Act* also enables municipalities to adopt an “alternative procedure” with regard to public notification for amendments to the Zoning By-law and Official Plan. Where such “alternative procedures” are outlined in a municipality’s Official Plan, the *Planning Act* permits the municipality to implement its alternative measures for “...informing and securing the views of the public...”

City of London Official Plan Notice Requirements (i.e. Alternative Procedures)

The City of London Official Plan includes alternative procedures that closely mirror the *Planning Act* requirements. These include the requirement for:

- *Publication in a local newspaper that, in the opinion of the General Manager of Planning and Development is of sufficiently general circulation in the area adjoining the subject land that it would give the public reasonable notice of the application; and/or*
- *Prepaid first class mail or personal service delivery*

The alternative procedures also require the City of London to provide public notification and public liaison notices, to the best of the City’s ability, to the following individuals:

- *Every owner of land within the affected site and/or area to which the proposal applies, as shown on the last revised assessment roll*
- *Every owner of land within 120 metres (400 feet) of the area to which the proposal applies, as shown on the last revised assessment roll; and,*
- *Every person and agency that has given the City Clerk a written request for such notice.*

Staff from the City of London are required to follow these procedures when notifying the public of an application to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law.

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APPENDIX “2” – EXPANDING THE 120M NOTIFICATION RADIUS

2.(a) Expansion of the 120-metre radius for notification by Mail

Introduction

As indicated above, one of two Official Plan requirements for public notification in response to a request for a land use change is to provide notice by “...prepaid first class mail, to every owner of land within 120 metres of the area to which the proposal applies...” The below analysis outlines the City’s current Official Plan requirements and evaluates the effects of an expansion to the 120 metres radius.

The City’s Current Standards/Practice

Consistent with the above Official Plan requirements for public notification, the City of London circulates written notification by mail to every owner of land within a 120 metre radius of the subject site in tandem with the placement of a “Possible Land Use Change” sign in a visible location on the subject site for applications requesting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law.

The written notification contains:

- an explanation of the purpose and effect of the requested amendment
- a description of the subject site including a map
- how and where to obtain additional information
- information outlining how to become eligible for appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board

Evaluating Potential Changes to Current City Standards/Practices

London is not the only municipality to notify property owners of potential amendment to the Zoning By-law and/or the Official Plan by implementing the 120-metre radius identified by the *Planning Act*. Other municipalities applying a similar standard include, but are not limited to, Toronto, Ottawa, Kitchener, Richmond Hill, Sarnia, Windsor, Oshawa, Vaughan, Brampton, Whitby, and Chatham-Kent.

Public Notification that is circulated by mail tends to be a tangible and effective way to inform the public of pending amendments to the Zoning By-law and/or Official Plan since they are delivered directly to the property owner. Notwithstanding, this method of notification commonly elicits resentment by some.

Given that there is a fixed distance beyond which dwellings do not directly receive notification by mail, there is a perception of selectivity created when some neighbouring dwellings are directly notified and others are not. Those dwellings that were not included in the circulation area often express the sentiment “we were not notified of these amendments”.

Regardless of the size of the circulation radius, there will always be an inherent border beyond which households will not be notified. Therefore, a simple increase in the circulation radius may not resolve this public concern. It may simply shift the resentment to a location further from the subject site.

Constraints/requirements for overcoming expansion to the 120 metre radius

An expansion to the notification radius could be deemed to be cost-prohibitive in the short- and long-term. An expanded notification radius of any magnitude will result in increased costs for postage fees and incidental expenses related to production. Even a modest increase in the radius from 120 - 150 metres (or 25 percent), would result in an increase in cost of approximately 31 to 36 percent (see Figure 1 and Table 1 below) depending on the lot fabric.

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APPENDIX "2" – EXPANDING THE 120M NOTIFICATION RADIUS

278 Ambleside Drive - Case Study

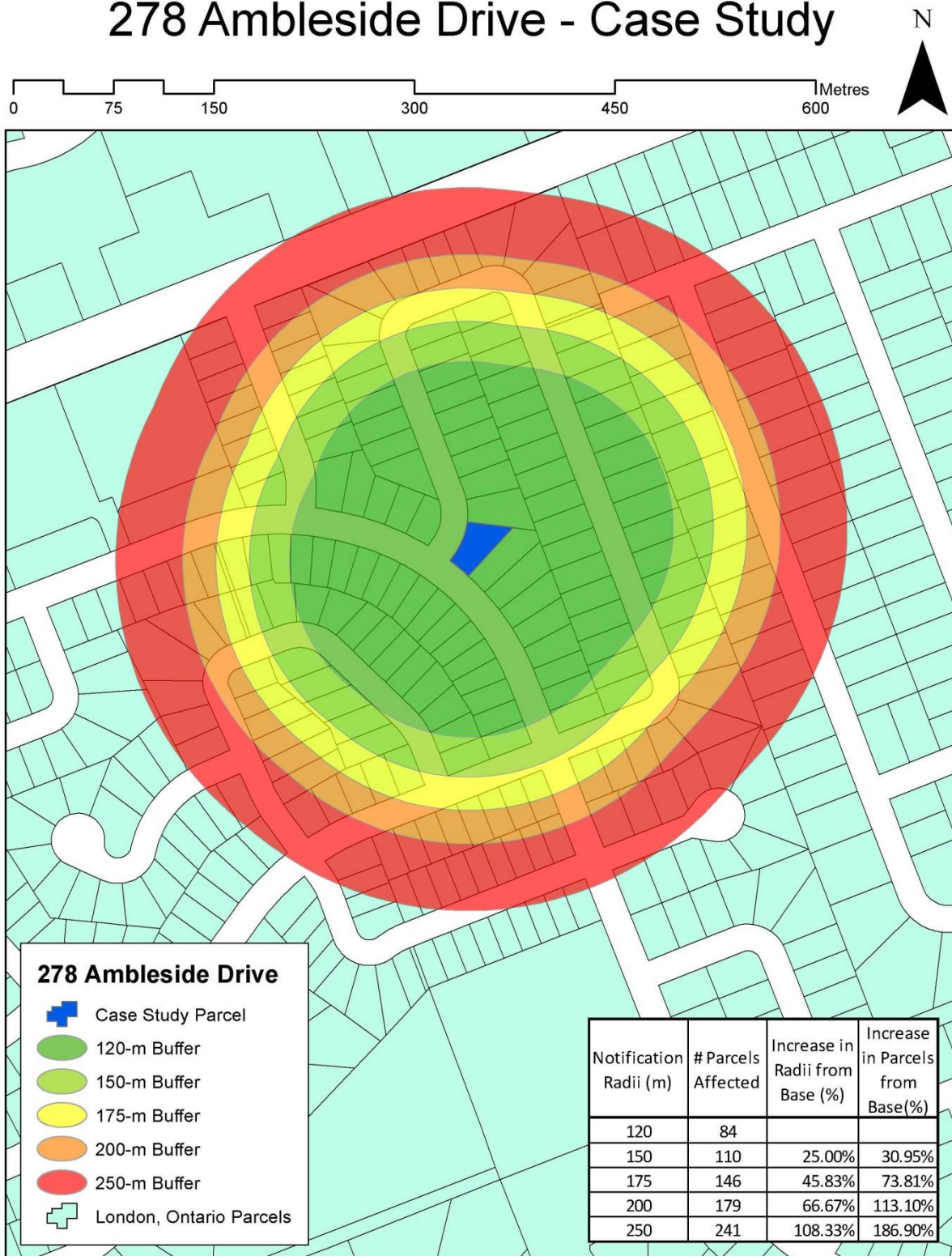


Figure 1 – This illustration demonstrates how an increase in the circulation area results in an exponential increase in number of parcels delivered with an increase in the circulation area

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APPENDIX “2” – EXPANDING THE 120M NOTIFICATION RADIUS

Radius Area	Distance (m)	% Increase in Distance	# of Parcels	Increase in Parcels from Base (%)	Marginal Parcel/m
1	120	-	7,464	-	0.6220
2	150	25%	10,161	36%	0.8990
3	175	17%	12,708	70%	1.0188
4	200	14%	15,363	106%	1.0620
5	250	25%	21,188	184%	1.1650

Table 1: Marginal Parcels Analysis

Planning Services Staff undertook an analysis to determine what would be the actual costs incurred if the current 120-metre radius was expanded by selecting 100 random parcels using typical applications within typical neighbourhoods. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1 (above) and Table 2 (below):

The above table illustrates that the increase in the number of parcels is disproportionately more than the increase in the circulation radius resulting in an exponential increase in cost.

Distance (m)	Total number of typical Parcels Delivered	Avg. # of parcels per delivered	Estimated Increase in Costs		
			Increased Cost Per Circulation	Increased Cost Per Application*	Total Increased cost Per Annum
120	7,464	74.64	-	-	-
150	10,161	101.61	\$57.99	\$115.98	\$8,100.00
175	12,708	127.08	\$112.75	\$225.50	\$15,800.00
200	15,363	153.63	\$169.83	\$339.66	\$23,800.00
250	21,188	211.88	\$295.07	\$590.14	\$41,300.00

Table 2: Increase in Cost Analysis

* Applications consist of two separate notices (Notice of Application and Notice of Public Meeting)

It should be noted that no exact cost figure per notice could be obtained. However, assuming a baseline cost of \$2.15 per notification for paper, postage, and employee time, cost increases can escalate rapidly. For example, an approximate doubling the notification radius (from 120 to 250 metres) effectively triples the number of affected parcels, which consequently, triples the annual mail notification costs. In actual costs, this would represent an estimated annual increase of \$41,300 based on an annual average of 70 requests to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law between Planning Services and Development Services. If the costs are to be absorbed in the Planning application fees, it would result in a fee increase of approximately \$600 per application.

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APPENDIX “2” – EXPANDING THE 120M NOTIFICATION RADIUS

However, there may be an opportunity to expand the notification radius on an ad-hoc basis at the discretion of the General Manager, Planning and City Planner (“City Planner”) or the General Manager, Development & Compliance & Chief Building Official (“Chief Building Official”) in situations where the circulation radius of a particular application exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- a parcel of land subject to a planning application is surrounded by few large parcels that effectively comprise the entire circulation area (i.e. Institutional, Open Space, Industrial, Agricultural)
- the majority of the community is located just beyond the 120 metre circulation distance
- the 120 metre radius captures just a small number of properties that would receive notice
- only a small number of parcels within a neighbourhood have not received notice and expanding the notification would complete the neighbourhood circulation
- to address any other unreasonable irregularities that occur due to the use of a 120-metre circulation radius

It should be noted that in circumstances where the City Planner or Chief Building Official exercise their discretion to expand the 120-metre radius that the use of this discretion will not result in:

- an excessively large circulation area
- an excessively large number of properties being notified creating undue cost implications
- notification to properties that are not reasonably associated with the subject property.

Recommendation

Based on the above analysis, and understanding that an increase in the circulation area may not resolve public concerns regarding the perception of being excluded from notification, and also understanding the likely increase in costs, it is recommended that there be no expansion to the existing standard of 120-metre radius from the subject site.

However, it is recommended that the notification radius be expanded at the discretion of the City Planner or Chief Building Official in extraordinary circumstances when the standard 120-metre radius exhibits certain characteristics. This may require an amendment to section 19.12 of the Official Plan which outlines the City’s notification requirements. Additionally, amendments may be required to certain delegation by-laws which delegate to the City Planner or Chief Building Official the ability to expand the minimum 120-metre notification radius.

It is noteworthy that the receipt of a letter delivered directly to a dwelling is often perceived to be an effective means of notification when compared to the City’s other methods. The sentiment from those dwellings that were *not* included in the circulation area is that they were *not* notified of these amendments. This is often because the other methods of notification (i.e. sign posted on subject property and Londoner publication) have gone unnoticed. Therefore, while it is recommended that the expansion to the radius for mail circulation be unchanged (except in certain discretionary situations), improvements to other methods of notification should be considered to increase the effectiveness of notification reaching residents.

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APPENDIX “3” – EXPANDING NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE TENANTS

2.(b) Expanding the Mail notification to Include Tenants

The City’s Current Standards/Practice

The City of London does not currently mail notifications to tenants of properties in response to applications for land use change. Consistent with the Official Plan requirements, notice is given by “...prepaid first class mail...to **every owner of land** within 120 metres (400 feet) of the area to which the proposal applies, as shown on the last revised assessment roll” [Emphasis added]. If the property is not owner-occupied or if it contains multiple units, the property owner has the option of disseminating the information to their tenants upon receipt of the public notice.

Evaluating Potential Changes to Current City Standards/Practices

The above Official Plan requirement to notify owners of land is consistent with the minimum requirements of the *Planning Act*. The Ontario Regulations similarly define “owner of land” by specifying that, “For the purposes of [notification by ordinary mail], the owner of land is deemed to be the person shown on the last revised assessment roll of the municipality or on the current provincial land tax roll at the address shown on the roll...”

On May 20, 2014, Municipal Council resolved, “That, the Civic Administration BE REQUESTED to report back at a future meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee with respect to providing tenants and area residents with notice of any proposed development and/or redevelopment, including but not limited to, reviewing what other municipalities are doing, placing signs on the property and requesting that owners post notices on bulletin boards...”

A survey of Ontario municipalities indicates that the minimum standard required by the *Planning Act* is typically utilized, which is the 120-metre notification radius and notifications to registered property owners only. The onus falls on owners of rental properties to notify their respective tenants of any application or public meeting that might affect them.

The *City Council Policy Manual*, Chapter 7 (Engineering Services) includes a *Public Notification Policy for Construction Projects*. This policy specifies that the standard notification for various public construction projects shall be provided by, “...written notification...to the affected property owners. Multiple copies of the same notice will be **delivered to the landlord/superintendent of multi-unit dwellings** to enable them to notify their tenants” [Emphasis added].

While it has been suggested that similar policies should be adopted for Planning Services, it should be noted that the “affected property owners” differ between Engineering projects and Planning applications. For Engineering projects, “affected property owners” are owners of land within a 30m radius of the project whereas for planning applications “affected property owners” are property owners within a 120 metre radius of the subject site.

Constraints/requirements for overcoming expansion for mail notification to tenants

The major constraint to expanding the mail notification to include tenants is the actual ability to obtain the names and address of tenants. Consistent with provincial regulations and Official Plan policy, the City of London uses ownership information obtained from MPAC to determine the names and addresses of property owners. There is no reliable source of information to obtain the names and addresses of tenants.

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APPENDIX “3” – EXPANDING NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE TENANTS

If the Official Plan policies were amended to require that tenants residing within 120-metres of the affected property also receive notification by prepaid first class mail, this would become the new statutory requirement for the City of London. Given the lack of reliable information for tenant residency, there is a high likelihood that many tenants living within the circulation area would not receive the notification, resulting in non-compliance with the requirements. This could result in appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board on the basis of failure to comply with the statutory requirements.

It should also be recognized that there are additional cost implications that are inherent when the number of parcels is increased. Similar to the previous example related to expanding the notification radius, there are additional costs incurred related to postage and other incidentals. In a situation where a notification catchment includes rental dwellings, there will be an increase in the number of notices required to satisfy the new requirements.

In order to quantify the potential cost increases, an analysis was undertaken to determine the number of additional notices required if rental dwellings are included within a circulation area. One hundred properties throughout the City were randomly chosen and a 120-metre circulation area was applied. The analysis anticipates a 43% increase in the total number of dwellings to be notified per application resulting in a total annual increase in cost of \$9,700 assuming a baseline cost of \$2.15 per notice.

Additionally, as indicated above, given that there is not a database with names of tenants available, any notification mailed to tenants of rental buildings would be addressed to “Occupant” rather than a personalized label. There is a concern that the lack of personalized labels may reduce the effectiveness of the notices.

However, in situations where Staff are aware of rental dwellings located within the circulation radius, efforts may be made to request that the owner of the property notify their tenant and/or post the notice in prominent location(s) within the building such as in common areas, front lobby, laundry area, and mail room. This is consistent with the City Council Policy Manual policies relating to *Public Notification Policy for Construction Projects*.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the existing *Planning Act* and Official Plan requirements which stipulate that “...every owner of land within 120 metres of the area to which the proposal applies [receive notification]...” [emphasis added] continue to apply as the standard. This is largely due to the lack of reliable data for tenant occupancy, thereby increasing the potential for appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board due to lack of notification, should the standards be changed to require tenant notification.

While it is recommended that the mail notification not be expanded to include tenants, improvements to other methods of notification, such as signage, should be considered to increase the number of notified residents.

Given the cost implications and concern regarding the effectiveness of “Occupant” letters, it is recommended that tenant notification continue to be the responsibility of the property owner or landlords. Tenants of affected buildings may contact the City or access the website for any additional information.

It is also recommended that property owners and landlords be requested to post the notices in prominent locations within the rental buildings to notify tenants of the potential for a land use change in proximity to the subject site.

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APPENDIX "4" – IMPROVEMENTS TO LAND USE CHANGE SIGNAGE

3. Improvements to signage to include more information

Introduction

As previously indicated, one of two provincial requirements for public notification in response to a request for a land use change is to provide notice by "...ordinary mail, to every owner of land within 120 metres of the subject land... and by posting a notice, clearly visible and legible from a public highway or other place to which the public has access..." While the above analysis focused on the notification by mail, the below analysis outlines the City's current standards for signage and evaluates the potential for improvements.

The City's Current Standards/Practice

The City of London posts a sign on lands in a location that is clearly visible and legible from a public highway for all site-specific applications requesting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law. This is undertaken in tandem with the requirement for circulating written notification by mail to all *property owners* within a 120 metre radius. Signs are not posted on lands that are the subject of a request for a Minor Variance, Consent (Severance), or Site Plan Approval.

The signs used by the City to notify the public of applications to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law are generic and provide minimal information about the proposed land use changes. They are effectively intended to call attention to the fact that an application has been submitted and direct interested parties to call City Staff for further information (see figure 2).

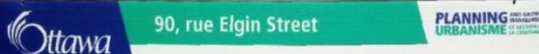
The benefits of the existing signage are that they may be reused numerous times and may be applied to a wide range of applications. However, the disadvantage is that they do not convey any specific information about the proposed land use change and their direction to the City of London website is very generic.



Figure 2 – Existing City of London sign to notify public of a potential land use change

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APPENDIX "4" – IMPROVEMENTS TO LAND USE CHANGE SIGNAGE



90, rue Elgin Street

Applicant's proposal
The City of Ottawa has received a Site Plan Control application to develop a 17 storey office building with ground floor retail and a three storey underground parking garage.

Proposition du requérant
La Ville d'Ottawa a reçu une proposition visant la réglementation du plan d'implantation pour l'aménagement d'une tour de bureau de 17 étages, dont le rez-de-chaussée sera occupé par des commerces de vente au détail et qui comprendra trois niveaux de stationnement souterrain.

Let us know what you think.
Melissa Jort-Conway
613-580-2424 extension 16187
melissa.jort-conway@ottawa.ca

Qu'en pensez-vous? Dites-le nous.
Melissa Jort-Conway
613-580-2424 poste 16187
melissa.jort-conway@ottawa.ca

Visit: Ottawa.ca/devapps
for more information on this application

Visit: Ottawa.ca/demdam
pour plus de renseignements sur cette demande

Photo en haut: 23, 2014. (AR) Photo à droite: 23 Jan. 2014




Development Proposal
144 & 150 Berry Road

Proposed amendments to Zoning By-law 569-2013 and the Etobicoke Zoning Code have been made to permit a phased mixed-use development. Phase 1 consists of a 2-storey commercial/institutional building and Phase 2 includes a new public road, three mid-rise residential buildings (one 10-storey and two 6-storey buildings) and a 3-storey, 16-unit townhouse block. A total of 496 residential units and 36,487 square meters of gross floor area is proposed.


STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING:
Information will be posted once meeting is scheduled.

 **Toronto** File# 14 193159 WET 05 OZ
For Information:
www.toronto.ca/planning/developmentapplications
City Planner: Luisa Galli
416-394-6007 lgalli@toronto.ca



DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
1200 King Road

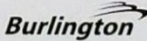
Proposal: Application to subdivide a 49 hectre parcel of land into lots and blocks for business corridor, employment commercial, general employment, mixed use corridor, open space and future development.



Applicant: Metropolitan Consulting (905-637-2926)
File: 550-01/14

For more information please contact the Burlington Planning Department at 905-335-7600 x7809

Visit our web site - www.burlington.ca/1200KingRoad or use the QR code above to access file materials.



What's Going On Here ?

This project is being brought to you by:
The City of New York
Department of Design and Construction

The name of this project is:
Reconstruction of Times Square
Project # HWMP2012

New York City has a variety of projects, both public and private, which when completed will improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. Whether it's new building construction, road repairs or park improvements, each effort will make New York a better place to work, live, and visit. Here at Times Square and Duffy Square a new Plaza is being built that will beautify the Plaza and make it inviting.

Work on this project is scheduled to be completed by: 5/15/2016
Thank you for your patience.

For more information on this project call:
718-466-7000

If you see an unsafe condition at this site, please dial 311

CITY OF NORTH BAY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

An Application has been made under the Planning Act for:

An Official Plan Amendment A Minor Variance
 A Zoning By-Law Amendment A Plan of Subdivision or Condominium
 A Consent to Sever

on the property legally described as: _____

For the purpose of: _____

A Public Meeting to consider this matter will be held:

1) By: _____ 2) Date: _____
3) Time: _____ 4) Location: _____

To obtain a copy of the circulation notice or for more information please contact:

1) Name: _____
2) Phone: _____ Quote File: _____

ZONE CHANGE NOTICE

AN APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE TO CHANGE THE ZONING ON THESE LANDS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CALL 519-741-2200 X 7987
AND REFER TO APPLICATION
#ZC14/08/M/KA

CITY OF KITCHENER
PLANNING DIVISION

Figure 3 – Signage used by various other municipalities to notify public of a potential land use change

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APPENDIX “4” – IMPROVEMENTS TO LAND USE CHANGE SIGNAGE

Evaluating Potential Changes to Current City Standards/Practices

As part of the review of potential changes to the current City practices, a review of other municipal practices was undertaken. This review revealed a wide range of standards between municipalities (see figure 3). For example:

- the City of North Bay uses pre-printed signs with blank spaces where the pertinent information is hand-written;
- the City of Kitchener employs a similar standard to that of London whereby a text-only sign is used to notify that an application for a land use change has been submitted and directs readers to call the planning office for more information;
- New York City uses colour-coded, text-only signs but written colloquially with phrases such as “*What’s going on here*”;
- The City of Toronto uses a mix of plain language text to provide information about the proposed use, intensity, and form and a black-and-white picture to illustrate the site layout;
- The City of Burlington uses a similar sign format as Toronto while also incorporating QR Codes allowing users to access the relevant information directly on their smartphone or tablet;
- The City of Ottawa uses large, bilingual, coloured signs with a brief project description and an illustration of the proposed development.

Constraints/requirements for overcoming impediments to improvements to signage

It is important to note that there will be cost implications as a result of implementing the aforementioned changes to the signage standards.

	Manufacturing Cost	Placement Cost	Notes
Current Signage	\$49	\$70	Manufacturing costs can be spread over many applications since signs are reusable
Proposed Signage	\$150-300	\$200	In the event of a change to a development proposal, a sticker may be applied over portions of the sign <u>in temperatures above freezing</u>

Table 3 – Summary of the cost implications between the current standard signage and an option for a new aluminum panel signage

The reason for the wide ranging cost of signage under the proposed standards is due to the number of options for consideration. The cost of a basic corrugated plastic (“coroplast”) sign, that is similar in material to the current signage, would be approximately \$150 and the cost of a basic aluminum panel (“alupanel”) sign would be approximately \$175. The cost of installation is also anticipated to increase given the additional amount of time required to support and install a larger sign. The type of signage used would affect the cost of installation hardware which could cost approximately \$50 per sign. Another option to consider is the use of a double-sided sign which would add approximately \$75 to the cost of printing. The total cost of signage per application is anticipated to increase by approximately \$375. Annually, this will result in a cost of approximately \$26,250 based on 70 applications requesting amendments to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law annually between Planning Services and Development Services which is currently not accounted for in the current application fees. These and other options could be explored as part of a Request for Proposals from sign manufacturers, including cost competitiveness.

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APPENDIX “4” – IMPROVEMENTS TO LAND USE CHANGE SIGNAGE

Another cost consideration is the Staff cost to create the sign template and populate the sign information with each application. Although the former will be a one-time Staff cost to work with the sign manufacturer to develop the sign template (i.e. signage layout, colour coordination) and develop the process required to communicate the information from City Staff to the sign manufacturer, the latter will introduce ongoing Staff costs to create individual signs for each application. These are in addition to the cost of the signs described above. The current pre-manufactured signs do not require any additional Staff input whereas the proposed new sign standards would require that each sign be populated with unique text and illustrations specific to that development proposal. Staff time would also be required to update the signage if the application is amended part way through the processing period. This additional Staff cost is also not currently budgeted.

The new signs could also consist of a unique QR code that would require the creation of an individual web page with additional information about the application (see *Improving web presence and Electronic Communication* section below). The creation of this webpage and the management of content would have to be managed by municipal Staff to ensure that the information is relevant and current. These Staff costs are also not accounted for in the current budget.

Recommendations

Using elements of the best practices from other cities, new technologies, and AODA requirements, it is recommended that new signage be pursued by Staff and implemented in a phased-in approach be implemented for new planning applications. It is not recommended that signage related to existing applications be retroactively changed to reflect new standards.

The elements to be included in the proposed new signage include:

- Durable material such as corrugated plastic (coroplast) or lightweight metal (alupanel) to provide resiliency to weather and vandalism
- Large size (2.7m x 1.83m) to facilitate highly visible signs and adequate space for information
- Coloured images and fonts that are compliant with AODA requirements to capture attention, provide development details, and promote the City’s brand
- Plain language text which succinctly informs readers about the development proposal and provides, names, phone numbers and email addresses where additional information can be obtained
- Use of QR codes which will direct users to a web page containing additional information about the proposal which is used in conjunction with the new CityMap

It is recommended that Staff initiate a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) process to determine the cost of incorporating the above features into new signage, the cost/benefits of using plastic or aluminum signs, and the cost of hardware/installation, for each of the different sign materials.

It is recommended that the outcome of the above RFP process be incorporated into future budgets and annual reviews of application fees.

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APPENDIX “5” – IMPROVING WEB PRESENCE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

4. Improving web presence and better coordination with CityMap

Introduction

The aforementioned improvements to signage represent a significant upgrade to how information is displayed and conveyed to those who have the ability to pause and read the messages displayed on the signs. The use of QR codes will also allow for instant access to additional reports and studies for smartphone and tablet users. And for those passersby who do not have the ability to pause and absorb the information (such as transit users and motorists), the improved signage will still be useful in alerting them of a requested land use change. However, in order to provide an integrated network of information, the City’s web presence will need to ensure that all the relevant information is available since it will likely be the medium that passersby will utilize next to learn more about a proposal. The effectiveness of this web presence will also be aided with an easy-to—use web address.

Currently the City’s website does not consolidate all the information in one location and a number of reports and studies associated with the application, including those that were prepared by the applicant, are not available on-line. An improved web presence could:

- consolidate all the relevant information onto individual web pages for each application;
- be linked with CityMap, will be mobile friendly; and,
- include the use of new electronic notification and social media applications.

The City’s Current Standards/Practice

Planning applications are currently accessed through the City’s online mapping function CityMap, which acts as one of the many disconnected sources of information. All parcels that are subject to applications for requested land use changes are highlighted to notify neighbours of potential changes in their neighbourhoods and to allow for easy identification of parcels to those passersby who may have seen a sign posted on a property but were not able to note the address (see Figure 4). However, CityMap only provides partial information related to an application.

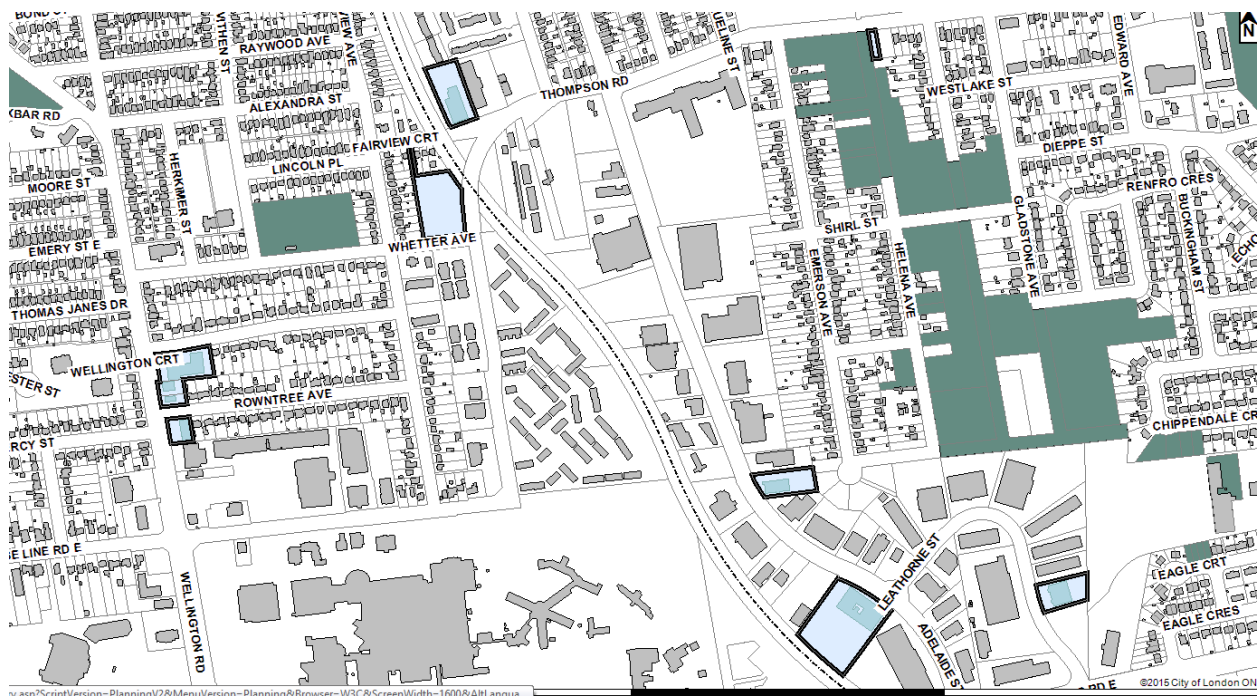


Figure 4 – Image of existing CityMap interface accessed through the City of London website highlighting the parcels which are subject to a planning application

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APPENDIX “5” – IMPROVING WEB PRESENCE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

By “clicking” on the subject parcel, the user is provided with the application file number, the address, the applicant’s name, the Planning Division general phone number and a link to search for associated files pertaining to that address. The associated files typically consist of a scanned copy of the Notice of Application, which is the same document that was mailed to all property owners within 120-meters of the site. In other words, there is minimal additional information that may be accessed by the CityMap.

Notices of Applications, Public Meetings, and Open Houses are located on a different web page. This page provides a link for each week’s notices that were published in the Londoner. To access information for a specific address or application requires users to know the date that notice was published. This is not an intuitive search criterion since the date of publication is often unknown or of limited importance to a neighbour.

Committee reports prepared by Staff are also located in a separate area accessed via the *Council and Committee Meetings* section of the website with the user required to know the date and which Standing Committee of Council a given report was presented in order to access the report. This system is not linked to the Planning or Development Services area of the website which is used to access information related to the application process.

Evaluating Potential Changes to Current City Standards/Practices

Functionally, the greatest improvements can be made by developing a system where all elements related to an individual file are located on a single webpage. This would entail the creation of a single dedicated page for each application where the relevant information is consolidated and accessible. These web pages would themselves need to be easily searchable, intuitively located, linked to CityMap, and associated with a QR code.

The City of Guelph presents an excellent example of a website designed to address the improvements required to make the website portion of the application experience accessible and efficient for its users.

The web page shown in Figure 5 encompasses a number of features which serve as an excellent template for a future City of London website experience. The web page in Figure 5 below is related to an application for a zoning by-law amendment immediately adjacent to a former landfill site in Guelph’s east end.

This web page (illustrated in Figure 5) is dedicated solely to one application and all the pertinent information is consolidated and available for viewing and offers the following features:

1. The site address and file number are clearly indicated. This allows for users to have an immediate assurance they are dealing with the relevant application. This web page is accessed via a frequently updated and edited list of all active applications. This feature is convenient for users who are not accessing the web page through the CityMap function. In order for this to function as efficiently as possible it is important that all notices and signage direct interested parties to this page by clearly posting the web address (an easy-to-remember URL) and QR code.
2. A concise plain language description of the nature of the application. This should be developed in conjunction with any notice included in the Londoner, signage, and Notice sent by mail to reduce confusion.

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APPENDIX "5" – IMPROVING WEB PRESENCE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

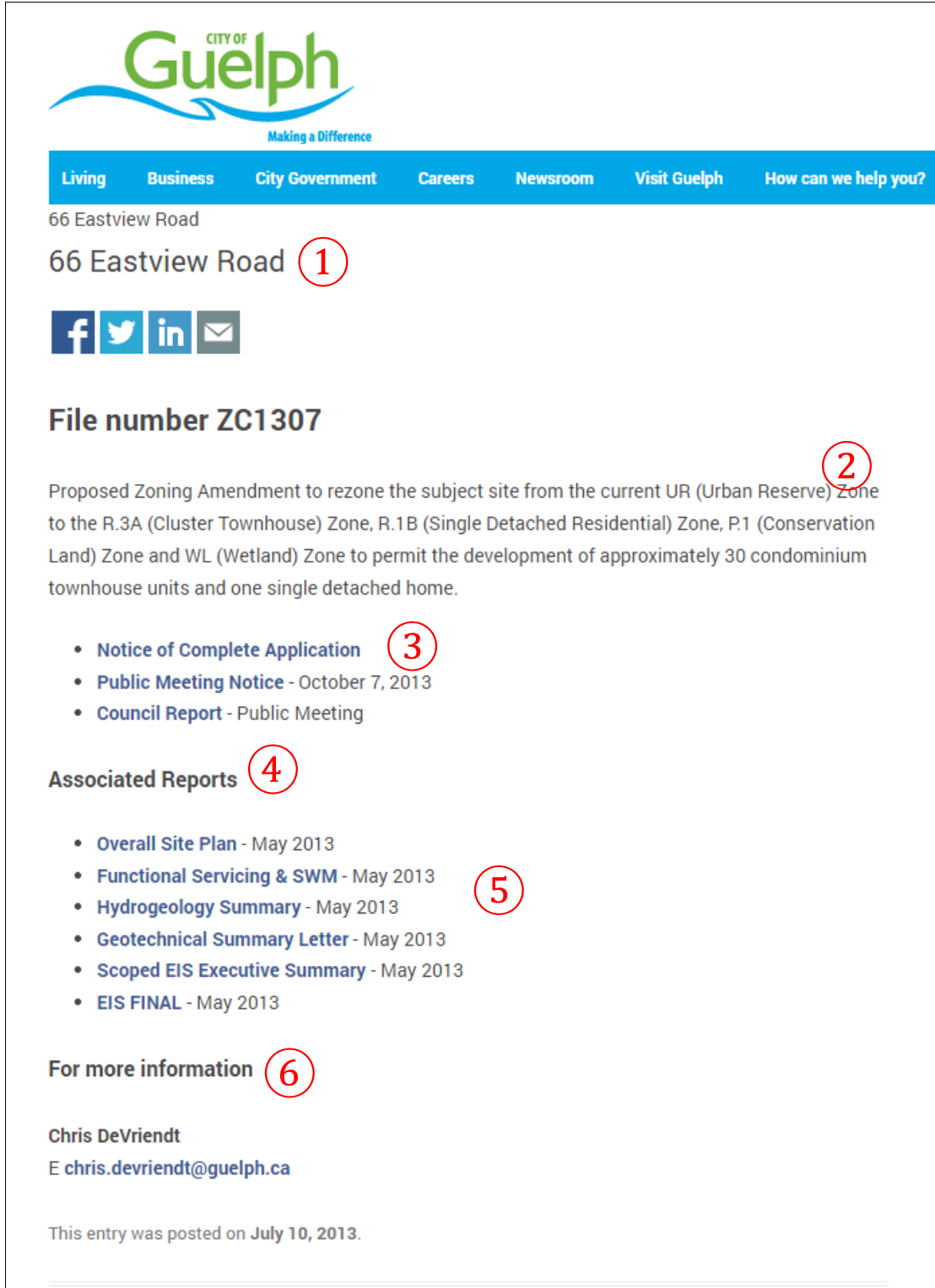


Figure 5 - Illustrating a webpage from the City of Guelph dedicated to a specific zoning application where information related to the application is consolidated

3. All list of all municipally-produced documents related to the file such as the Public Notices and the Report to Council. This is distinguished separately from the documents provided by the applicant.
4. Associated Reports provided by the applicant in support of their application containing information that is relevant to the public’s review of the application. The availability of reports and studies on-line enhances transparency and ensures that the public and other stakeholders may have access to all the relevant information earlier in the planning process so that they may be more informed as to what land use changes can be expected if a planning application is successful.

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APPENDIX “5” – IMPROVING WEB PRESENCE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

5. A date stamp on files indicates when the application was opened. This also indicates to users whether the documents are current. This becomes more important when subsequent studies are undertaken or when policies/legislation have changed since the submission of the application.
6. An indication of where to find additional information. In this case Guelph has chosen to provide the file planner’s email address. A direct phone number and office address where the file may be viewed in person may also be considered for inclusion.

It is important to note that this website is AODA compliant. The text is clear with high contrast for those with limited sight. The text is organized in orderly lists for screen readers. The document also functions without the mouse, by tabbing through elements for those with motor impairment issues around mouse use. AODA compliance will be necessary for any web page devoted to planning applications for the purposes of promoting public engagement.

Constraints/Requirements for improving web presence and better coordination with CityMap

Staff training, Staff time allocation, and launch timing represent the largest issues. Presently, there are a limited number of authorized web authors with access to make changes to the web site. While this recommended change will exponentially increase the number of files to be added to the City’s website, no proportionate increase in the number of web authors is proposed creating staffing constraints. All web authors, both existing and newly added, will require training with regard to creating new web pages, creating QR codes associated with the new web pages, and adding files to the new webpages. In order to effectively engage the public through real-time web presence, dedicated Engagement Support Staff resources will have to be added. There is currently no budget allocated to fund dedicated Engagement Support Staff resource positions.

To implement the recommended improved web presence and better coordination with CityMap, new tasks include:

- Create a web page for every new application
- Create and link a new QR code for each new web page
- Create the web page template and populate web page with information about the applicant, a summary of the requested changes, planner’s name and contact information
- Scan all reports, studies, notices immediately as they come in to create a live web page
- Continually update all web pages to maintain a live internet presence including the scanning of any subsequent reports, posting new and revised public notices, times and dates and locations of all upcoming Community Information Meetings
- Update status of the application (i.e. current, on-hold, appealed, closed)
- Post Staff report and Council resolution
- Retire the website after sufficient time
- Develop and maintain databases of contact information for those r to remain informed of specific planning applications and the preferred means of electronic communication
- Prepare/amend the new signage (see *Improvements to Land Use Change Signage* section above)
- Organize the Community Information meetings (see *New Community Engagement Protocols* section below).

The success of this initiative and the level of service provided to the public are heavily dependent on dedicating resources to maintain the web sites in real-time and provide electronic communication. Without dedicated resources allocated to this position, the proposed new procedure would require that existing Staff devote a portion of their time to creating and maintaining the web pages. This would likely restrict the timeliness of web updates given the limited number of web authors and the anticipated increase in the number of documents that are to be uploaded to the website and maintained on an on-going basis.

Whereas the current practice of uploading public notices to the website does not constitute a high volume of documentation and requires no continual monitoring once uploaded, the proposed new procedure to upload *all* the submitted reports and studies, maintain the webpage

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APPENDIX “5” – IMPROVING WEB PRESENCE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

to inform stakeholders of upcoming meetings, report addendums/updates, and posting revisions to the development proposal will require continuous monitoring and updating requiring the allocation of resources to this initiative.

In terms of the timing of the launch of this proposed new procedure, the City’s Information Technology Services are currently in the process modifying the CityMap function. The existing CityMap is based on older software that will no longer be supported by the product manufacturer. Therefore, CityMap will be revamped using recent software with a user interface that is more intuitive with current map websites, such as Google Maps, where users can zoom in/out using the mouse scroll wheel and move the map by panning in various directions. Given that the existing CityMap will be phased out, the proposal to link planning applications to CityMap could be implemented after the launch of the revamped CityMap (see figure 6).



Figure 6 – Image of updated CityMap interface accessed through the City of London website which replace the current CityMap seen in Figure 4

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City’s web presence and internal process be improved by creating individual web pages for every application requesting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, providing a single point of information and allowing for increased transparency and efficiency.

Uploading all of the reports and studies submitted with the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendment application to the individual web page enables the public to consider the possible change in land use and reflect on the development proposal for a given site comprehensively since all the information will be easily accessible. Individual web pages for each Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendment application will facilitate a single consolidated source of information where interested stakeholders can keep up-to-date on reports and studies and dates of public meetings.

Improving the City’s web presence will also facilitate a seamless network of communication by integrating the City’s website with the proposed improvements to signage and the revamped CityMap.

It is also recommended that the QR codes, proposed to be included on the improved signage (see *Improvements to Land Use Change Signage* section above), be linked to the individual web page related to that application.

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APPENDIX “5” – IMPROVING WEB PRESENCE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

As part of an enhanced web presence, it is also recommended that Planning Services and Development Services begin utilizing social media and other electronic engagement for providing information to the public including:

- Email, whereby a database is created for each application and interested members of the public can request that they be informed of new information and amendments for specific applications by email
- The creation of a planning application “app” for smartphone and tablet users allowing the public to interact with the City’s improved web presence
- Twitter dedicated to planning applications
- Facebook page dedicated to planning applications
- RSS feeds

The intent of introducing these new forms of electronic and social media is to allow the public to submit requests to be notified and identify their preferred means of communications. This will enable City Staff to send information in real time through various preferred media when new material is submitted or applications are amended, and expand the network of communication further.

In order effectively implement this improved web presence, it is recommended that dedicated Engagement Support Staff be hired who can focus on ensuring that the website is populated with all the relevant information, keep the website current with new and amended information, and ensure that new applications and updates to existing applications are made in a timely fashion. The role of this new Engagement Support Staff resource would also include developing and maintaining databases of contact information for those requesting to remain informed of specific planning applications and their preferred means of electronic communication, notifying the public of new information and amendments to existing applications through electronic and social media in real time, and maintain the Twitter and Facebook pages dedicated to planning applications. The dedicated Staff resource can also develop the QR codes and prepare/amend the new signage (see *Improvements to Land Use Change Signage* section above) and help to organize and facilitate the Community Information Meetings proposed for certain planning applications (see *New Community Engagement Protocols* section below).

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APPENDIX “6” – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

5. Plain Language for Public Notices

Introduction

As previously indicated, the City of London sends notices of application and public meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Official Plan. The Official Plan outlines standards for the various planning applications indicating to whom notices must be sent, the manner in which notices will be circulated, and what information is to be contained within the notice.

The City’s Current Standards/Practice

Consistent the Official Plan and provincially legislated requirements outlining what information is to be included in the public notices, the notices of application and public meeting requesting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law contain:

1. The date, time and location of the public meeting or open house.
2. An explanation of the purpose and effect of the proposed by-law.
3. A description of the subject land, a key map showing the subject land, or an explanation why no description or key map is provided.
4. Where and when additional information and material about the proposed by-law will be available to the public for inspection.
5. The following statements:
 - a. *If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to (name of municipality or planning board) before the by-law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of (reference to council and name of municipality, or name of planning board) to the Ontario Municipal Board.*
 - b. *If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submissions to (name of municipality or planning board) before the by-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to do so.*
6. In addition to the above requirements outlined in the Official Plan and prescribed by the Ontario Regulations of the *Planning Act*, subsection 34(12) of the *Planning Act* requires that, “...The Council shall ensure that, sufficient information and material is made available to enable the public to understand generally the zoning proposal that is being considered by the council...” In order to ensure that the public is able to generally understand the zoning proposal, the City’s current practice is to state the current zoning and the potential new zoning if approved by Council.

The following is a typical notice of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment as sent by the City of London (see figure 7). The numbered boxes correspond with the six “requirements” listed above.

Two empty rectangular boxes for agenda item and page numbers.

APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES



OZ-8371
Mike Davis
Tel: 519-661-2500 ext. 4650
Fax: 519-661-5397
Email: mwdavis@london.ca
Website: www.london.ca

September 3, 2014

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING BEFORE THE
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
for OFFICIAL PLAN & ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT
APPLICATION**

2. An explanation of the purpose and effect of the proposed by-law

APPLICANT: B.J. Hardick Chiropractic Professional Corp.
LOCATION: 581-585 Waterloo Street and 321 ... Avenue (see attached map)
PURPOSE AND EFFECT: The purpose and effect of the requested Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments is to permit the development of a 6-storey (20m tall) residential apartment building to contain up to 35 dwelling units.
POSSIBLE AMENDMENT: Change the Official Plan land use designation **FROM** "Low Density Residential" **TO** "Multi-Family, High Density Residential".

Change Zoning By-law Z.-1 **FROM** an Office Residential Special Provision (OR(1)•D75•H12) Zone which permits Office-Apartment Buildings, Type 2 Group Homes, Class 2 Lodging Houses, Offices, and Medical/Dental Offices up to a maximum height of 12 metres and a maximum density of 75 units per hectare, and a Residential R3 Special Provision Office Conversion (R3-2(6)/OC2) Zone which permits Single Detached Dwellings, Semi-Detached Dwellings, Duplex Dwellings, Triplex Dwellings, Converted Dwellings, Fourplex Dwellings and Professional and Service Offices in existing buildings together with at least one dwelling unit, **TO** a Residential R10 Special Provision (R10-3(_)) Zone which would permit Apartment Buildings, Class 2 Lodging Houses, Senior Citizens Apartment Buildings, Handicapped Persons Apartment Buildings and Continuum-of-Care Facilities up to a maximum height of 20 metres, a maximum density of 250 units per hectare with special provisions to allow for a range of reduced development regulations including: front yard setback (0.0m); exterior sideyard setback (0.0m); rear yard setback (0.0m); and, lot coverage (55%). The City may consider the proposed zoning by-law amendment through a bonus zone which would require the construction of a specified building design in return for the proposed height and density increases.

6. The zoning proposal that is being considered by the council

**The lands subject to this application are located within the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District designated under Section 41 (Part V) of the Ontario Heritage Act. As such, future development of the subject lands including construction and/or demolition is subject to the provisions of the West Woodfield Conservation District Plan and Guidelines and requires additional approvals including a heritage alteration permit, and demolition clearance from Municipal Council following consultation with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage and a public meeting.*

PUBLIC MEETING: By letter dated June 26, 2014 you were informed of the above possible amendments.

1. The date, time and location of the public meeting or open house

You are now advised that the Planning & Environment Committee will consider this application at its meeting on **Tuesday, September 23rd, 2014 no earlier than 5:00p.m.** Meetings are held in the Council Chambers on the second floor of City Hall, located at 300 Dufferin Avenue (north-east corner of Wellington Street). Each application is allocated a time for public delegations. It should be recognized however, that the Planning & Environment Committee may find it necessary to exceed the limit. Your cooperation is appreciated in the event that you have to wait for your application to be considered.

Figure 7(a) - Typical notice of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment as sent by the City of London

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APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

5 Prescribed statements

Personal information collected and recorded at the Public Participation Meeting, or through written submissions on this subject, is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, and the Planning Act, 1990 R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13 and will be used by Members of Council and City of London staff in their consideration of this matter. The written submissions, including names and contact information and the associated reports arising from the public participation process, will be made available to the public, including publishing on the City's website. Video recordings of the Public Participation Meeting may also be posted to the City of London's website. Questions about this collection should be referred to Cathy Saunders, City Clerk, (519) 661-2500 ext. 4937.

If a person or public body does not make oral or written submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the City of London before the proposed amendments are adopted, the person or public body may not be entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of the City of London to the Ontario Municipal Board, or may not be added by the Board as a party to the hearing of an appeal unless, in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to do so.

This application is considered to be residential intensification under the policies of the City's Official Plan. While a public site plan meeting is not required for this application, site plan matters, including those matters set out in the intensification policies of the Official Plan, will be considered as part of the staff review of this application. By way of this letter, we are also asking for your input and comments regarding this proposal. The matters that you might want to consider include fencing, landscaping, lighting, driveway locations, building scale and design, and the location of the building on the site. These policies are found in Section 3.2.3.5 of the Official Plan, and may be viewed online at www.london.ca. Conceptual renderings of the proposed development have been attached to this notice for assistance in this regard.

4 Where and when additional information and material about the proposed by-law will be available to the public for inspection

A neighbourhood or community association may exist in your area. If it reflects your views on this proposal, you may wish to select a representative of the association to submit comments on your behalf.

Your representative on City Council, Ward 13 Councillor Judy Bryant (phone: (519) 660-0828; email: jbryant@london.ca) would be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have with this application.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Copies of this report are available from Planning Services and will be available at the Planning & Environment Committee meeting. If you wish to view additional information or material about the requested Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments, it is available to the public at Planning Services, 206 Dundas St., London, ON, Monday to Friday, 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m.

For more information, please call Mike Davis at 519-661-2500 ext. 4650 referring to "File OZ-8371".

TO BE NOTIFIED:

If you wish to be notified of the adoption or refusal of a request to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, you must make a written request to the City Clerk, 300 Dufferin Ave., P.O. Box 5035, London, ON, N6A 4L9. You will also be notified if you address the Planning and Environment Committee at the public meeting about this application and leave your name and address with the Secretary of the Committee.

y:\shared\implemen\development apps\2014 applications 8309 to\8371oz - 321 central ave and 581-585 waterloo st (md)\notices\notice of public meeting.docx

Figure 7(b) - Typical notice of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment as sent by the City of London

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APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

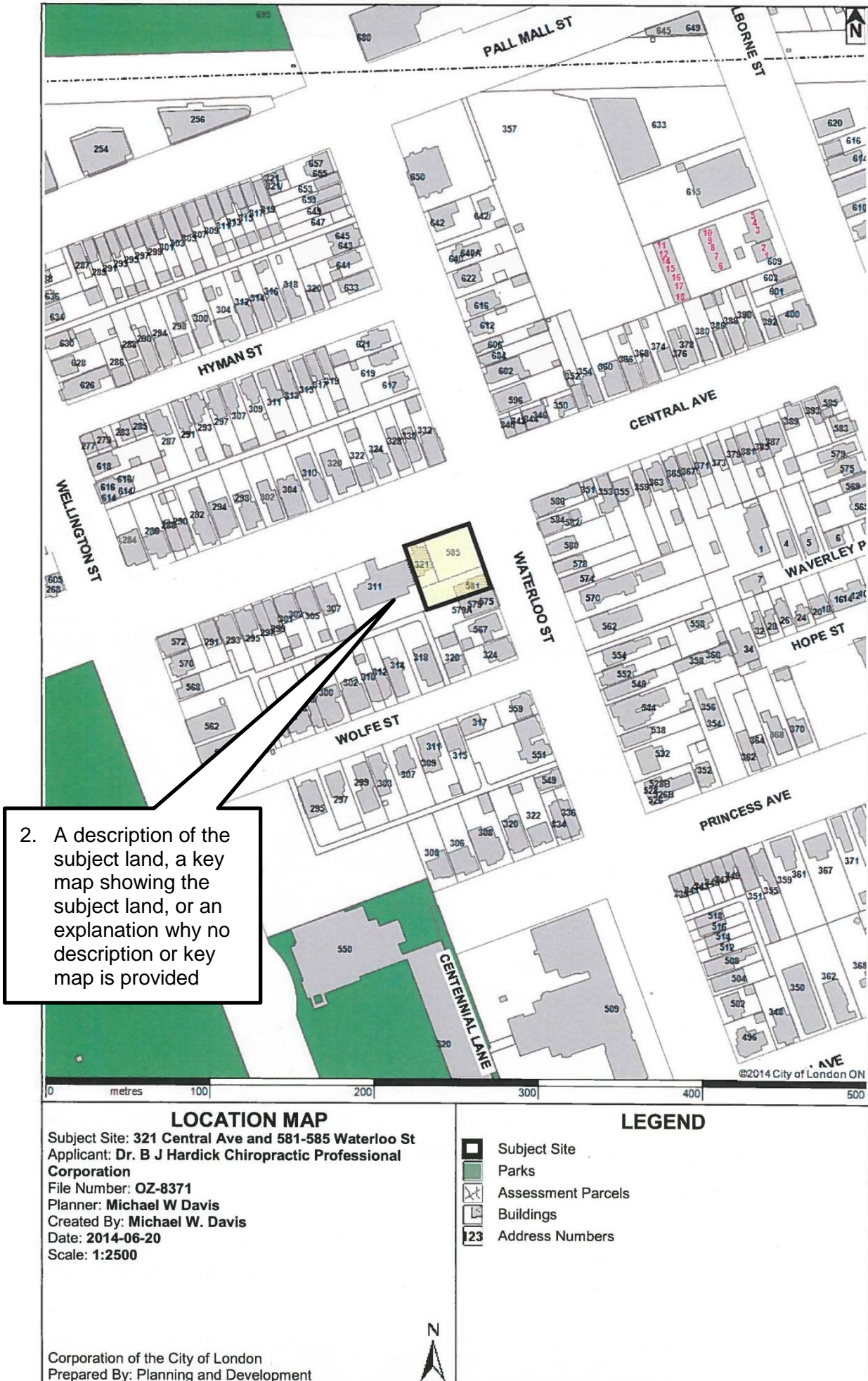


Figure 7(c) - Typical notice of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment as sent by the City of London

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APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

Development Concept:

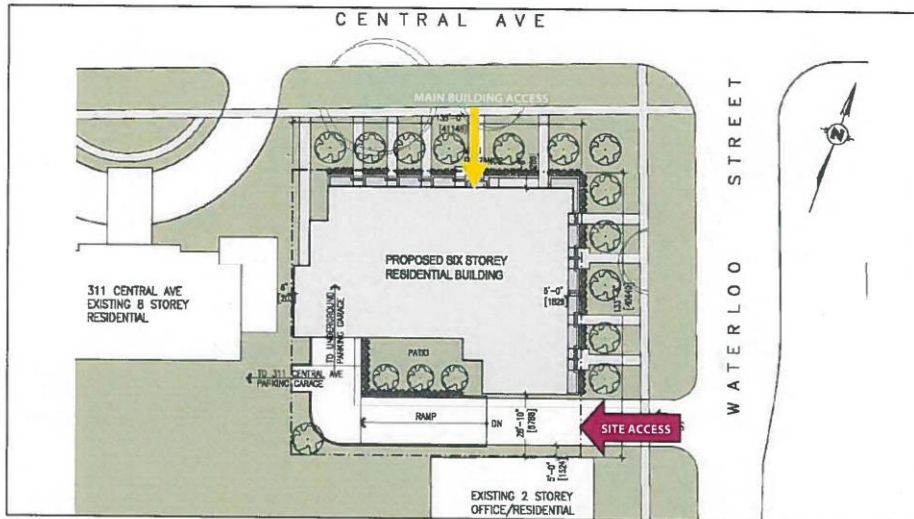


Figure 7(d) - Typical notice of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment as sent by the City of London

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APPENDIX “6” – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

Evaluating Potential Changes to Plain Languages for Public Notices

While the City’s current practices are in accordance with Official Plan and provincial requirements, the notices are technical in nature with details that include zone codes and regulatory language that does not resonate with the average reader. A subsequent concern is the disproportionate amount of space that the regulatory requirements and technical information occupy on the page relative to the plain-speak *Purpose and Effect* section.

In reviewing Notices from various municipalities across the Province, there are few examples of Notices that deviate from the minimum requirements of the *Planning Act*.

The differences between the notices sent by other municipalities and those sent by the City of London revolve around the amount and location of colloquial language used and the amount of information being conveyed. The best examples of other municipalities demonstrate an ability to concisely convey the necessary information without an abundance of confusing codes or highly technical language or information.

Generally, the messages being conveyed in the Notices of Application and Public Meeting can be summarized as follows:

- a) what change in use is being requested by the applicant;
- b) what does the development proposal look like;
- c) when and how readers can participate, comment, listen, discuss the application,
- d) is there more information (studies, background reports, etc.) available to help form their opinion, and;
- e) what are their rights to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board should they be opposed to the proposal altogether.

Simplifying the message, writing clear and helpful headings and paragraphs that convey the message to the intended audience, and potentially redesigning the layout of our current notices would all help to make the planning process more accessible to more readers. In order to improve the effectiveness of our public notices, a concerted effort will have to be made by Staff which focuses on plain-language.

In order to catch the public’s attention and convey information effectively, Notices that have promotional and marketing qualities should be explored such as those used by the Village of Pemberton, BC (see figure 8 below).


Constraints/Requirements for improving plain language for public notices

From an operational, process, and policy standpoint, there are no impediments to making the appropriate changes to incorporate plain language in the public notices sent by the City of London. It would require a culture change, and require the understanding and buy-in from Staff and administration. Because individual Staff are responsible for writing individual notices, getting everyone to move away from the highly technical, information-laden notices toward something that speaks more directly to the audience may be challenging. However, making these incremental changes would not require amendments to any internal processes or procedures.

In order to make extensive changes to our mailed notices, it is advisable that we work closely with the City’s Legal and Clerks Departments to ensure that the requirements of the *Planning Act* are being fulfilled.

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APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES




Village of Pemberton
ZONING AMENDMENT (TRAIN STATION PARK)
BYLAW NO. 696, 2012

PUBLIC HEARING


We're Listening.

Public Hearing


Tuesday,
April 3, 2012
7:00 pm
Council Chambers
1350 Aster Street




Phone
(604) 891-6135



Email
clmont@pemberton.ca




Website
www.pemberton.ca



What is Zoning Amendment (Train Station Park) Bylaw No. 696, 2012 about?

To designate the train station lands on Frontier Street, outlined with a heavy black line, as PR-1 Parks and Recreation". The amendment also permits the subject lands to have no minimum building setbacks or maximum lot coverage requirements.



How Will This Affect Me?

The train station building and lands were recently acquired by the Village of Pemberton. The purpose of the bylaw is to establish the zoning as a park for public purposes.

How Do I get More Information?

A copy of the proposed bylaws and relevant background documents may be inspected at the Village of Pemberton Office, 7400 Prospect Street from Thursday, March 22, 2012 to Tuesday, April 3, 2012 during office hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (statutory holidays excluded), and also online at www.pemberton.ca.

Sheena Fraser, Corporate Officer

Figure 8 – Notice used by the Village of Pemberton, BC which is written in plain language, illustrations, colours and layout to attract readers and generate public interest

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APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and mailed Notices

The AODA encourages, and in some ways requires, the City of London to reconsider those communications that we are sending out to the public. The first tenet of the AODA is the "Accessibility Standard for Customer Service" and another that pertains to the provision of information is the "Information and Communication Standard". O. Reg 429/07 of the AODA states that:

"Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents... are available upon request." (O. Reg. 429/07, s. 8 (1)).

This means that the City must include a statement on our mailed communications that indicates if another format of communication is necessary for any individual, that we will accommodate this request to the best of our ability.

"The notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances." (O. Reg. 429/07, s. 8 (2))

"If a provider of goods or services is required by this Regulation to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the provider shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability." (O. Reg. 429/07, s. 9 (1).)

It is not intended that the City anticipate the needs of everyone, but that the City is prepared to accommodate needs as they arise. If an individual has been working with the City and has agreed to a specific format, the City shall continue to communicate with that individual in the agreed-upon method.

"The provider of goods or services and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information. (O. Reg. 429/07, s. 9 (2))

The Province has created a series of guideline documents to assist those who are required to implement changes in their organization to do so. Within the "Information and Communications Standard" there is clear direction as to how the City of London is to address changes to accessibility required by the Act.

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APPENDIX "6" – PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR PLANNING NOTICES

“There is no one-size-fits-all solution to making information accessible. People with the same type of disability may have different needs. For example, only a small percentage of people who are blind use Braille.

You don’t have to have accessible formats on hand, and the law does not specify what format or communication support to use. It’s flexible, because what you provide will depend on your resources, the type of information, its current format and your customer’s individual needs. You don’t have to provide the specific format an individual asks for, but you do have to work with them to try to meet their needs.” (from Information and Communications Standard)

Recommendations

Notices sent to the public should be checked against a “Plain Language” checklist, such as that used by Staff in the City of Ottawa (see Appendix 11). This would encourage notice authors to compare the content of the notice against a template to assess the terms and languages used therein and therefore make them more accessible to the average recipient. Using common words instead of jargon, breaking text into shorter sentences and paragraphs, and minimizing technical terms and regulatory language should be top of mind when authoring a notice.

It is also recommended that illustrations be inserted into all notices, with a conceptual site plan comprising the minimum requirement, and building elevations where available. The use of graphics to complement the text would have immediate impacts in the quality of the public notification.

It is recommended that the Notice templates be reorganized to ensure the information is presented in a way that is intuitive to the reader and clearly expresses the information that needs to be conveyed.

It is also recommended that the legislative requirements prescribed by the *Planning Act* be included at the end of the public notice thereby allowing the City to produce a plain-language notice, complete with illustrations, while striving to meet the prescribed provincial requirements. The rationale behind this is to decouple the technical jargon prescribed by the province from the plain-language notice written by the City. Interlacing the two may reduce the effectiveness of the plain-language notice.

Lastly, it is recommended that Staff include a statement on all mailed materials that indicates that other formats and accommodations will be made upon request, to the best of our ability to accommodate special needs requests and conform to AODA standards.

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APPENDIX “7” – NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

6. Introduce new protocols requiring Community Information Meetings

Introduction

As previously mentioned, the minimum requirements prescribed by the *Planning Act* and echoed in the Official Plan policy include the issuing of public notification (as outlined above) as well as the requirement for a statutory public participation meeting.

The *Planning Act* requires that prior to passing an amendment to the Zoning By-law, Municipal Council shall ensure that “...at least one public meeting is held for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to make representations in respect of the proposed by-law...” These requirements apply for an amendment to the Official Plan as well.

The City’s Current Standards/Practice used to engage with the public

The City of London complies with the provincial requirements outlined above by providing an opportunity for the public to make representations at a public participation meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee prior to the decision of Council. This statutory public participation meeting typically occurs one week prior to the meeting of Municipal Council where a decision is rendered on the matter.

Recently, however, Planning Staff have encouraged applicants to hold non-statutory Community Information Meetings to facilitate an earlier engagement with interested stakeholders prior to the public participation meeting. Many applicants have also volunteered to host non-statutory Community Information Meetings as part of being responsible corporate citizens. There are a number of benefits to conducting Community Information Meetings for the applicant, the community and Staff.

For the applicant, they are able to hear the concerns of the public at an earlier stage and explore opportunities to implement some of the comments and/or mitigate some of the concerns expressed by the public during the Community Information Meeting. For the community, it provides a venue where neighbours have the opportunity to see visuals and hear about the proposed development directly from the source and facilitate dialogue prior to taking a position on the matter. For Staff, Community Information Meetings provide an opportunity to provide information about the planning process, next steps, and how to participate. It also allows Staff to witness the dialogue between the community and the applicant and identify the issues that need to be resolved as part of the processing of the application. It may also reduce the number of applications being referred back to Staff by Council for further discussion with the applicant and neighbours to resolve issues.

However, since Community Information Meetings are non-statutory, there is no legislative authority to compel an applicant to hold these meetings. Planning Staff *encourage* applicants to hold such meeting and applicants have largely been willing to participate. Since there are currently no standards in place which outline the meeting requirements, these meetings are conducted at the discretion of the applicant resulting in a wide variety of meeting formats and methods of engagement. As a result, the public engagement experience varies widely and the types of discussions and amount of information shared are also widely divergent between meetings.

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APPENDIX “7” – NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

Evaluating Potential Changes required to Implement Community Information Meetings

Although the *Planning Act* requires that one statutory public participation meeting be held to discuss planning applications prior to a decision of Council, the *Planning Act* allows for discretion among municipalities to establish their own procedures. Similar to Community Information Meetings described above, there is no standardized process being employed among the various Ontario municipalities for statutory public participation meetings and, as a result, the procedures vary between municipalities.

Whereas London holds the statutory public participation meeting at the Planning and Environment Committee, one week before the Council meeting, where Staff present their recommendation, some municipalities hold the statutory public participation meeting at the front end of the planning process prior to Staff preparing a report.

In these early statutory public participation meetings, the applicant provides a brief presentation regarding the proposal followed by public participation by members of the public who provide their comments and state any questions they have to the applicant requesting clarification. After this statutory public participation meeting is concluded, staff prepare a report with a recommendation and by-law to be brought forward to a future committee meeting as a consent item. The Staff report includes a summary of the comments provided by the public during the statutory public participation meeting held previously as well as staff’s recommendation.

At that subsequent committee meeting, committee members discuss the application and make their recommendation to city council for a final decision to be made at the next city council meeting. Since the statutory public participation meeting had already been held, the subsequent committee meeting where the staff recommendation and by-law is discussed is not open to public comment. If members of the public disagree with the committee’s recommendation to municipal council, they may request delegation status at the meeting of municipal council.

A concern with this approach is that while the statutory public participation meeting acts as a venue to present comments and concerns about a particular proposal early in the planning process, it does not facilitate dialogue about the final recommendation and by-law being considered by the committee. It is this dialogue that is often of most concern to the applicant and community. Interested stakeholders must seek delegation status to avail of the opportunity to address municipal council directly if there is a concern with the recommendation of the planning committee. This effectively defers the work of the committee to council.

The City of London could consider a hybrid approach whereby a non-statutory Community Information Meeting is conducted at the earliest part of the application process to allow all stakeholders to present their issues and identify concerns while still conducting the statutory public participation meeting at the Planning and Environment Committee at the latter part of the process, one week prior to the meeting of Municipal Council, where the final recommendation and by-law can be vetted publicly.

Constraints/Requirements for implementing Community Information Meetings

In order to pursue a process whereby Community Information Meetings are conducted at the front end of the planning process, it would be beneficial to develop a protocol that creates a level of expectation about the types of applications that would be subject to Community Information Meetings and work with the applicants to host these meetings at the front end of the planning process. In the event that an applicant does not wish to participate, the City can act as the host of the meeting. Such a protocol could outline the meeting format requiring:

- a consistent format among all meetings
- that minutes be taken, and
- that meeting dates do not conflict with the respective ward councillor’s schedule.

Currently, there are no protocols in place to require this approach.

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APPENDIX “7” – NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

While the above outlines a protocol that may be implemented *after* the submission of a complete application, a further step may be to require a Community Information Meeting *before* the submission of an application. The benefit of this approach is that the applicant can hear the concerns of the community prior to the submission of the application thereby providing an opportunity to modify the development proposal to mitigate public concerns in the formal application. The added benefit to the applicant is that a meaningful attempt to mitigate the concerns of the public may facilitate an efficient application process. Currently, there is no ability to require an applicant to hold a Community Information Meeting prior to the submission of the application.

One approach to consider is amending the Complete Application policies of section 19.16 of the Official Plan to include the submission of a *Record of Community Information Meeting* as part of a complete application. A *Record of Community Information Meeting* could consist of a Council-approved template summarizing the comments, concerns and minutes of the Community Information Meeting. Currently, there is no Official Plan policy requiring the submission of a *Record of Community Information Meeting* as part of a complete application.

Another concern is the risk that the members of the public misinterpret the Community Information Meeting as the statutory public participation meeting and not attend the Public Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee and not provide formal comments which form part of the public record and losing opportunity for appeal. This concern can be mitigated if a protocol for Community Information Meetings is developed requiring that Staff prepare a presentation outlining the planning process, conveying how citizens may formally participate, and stressing that the Community Information Meeting is not the statutory public meeting.

There are also cost implications to consider related to overtime costs for Staff to participate and facilitate Community Information Meetings. Often the subject matters discussed at Community Information Meetings focus on issues related to traffic, sanitary servicing, storm water, site plan, forestry, urban design, natural heritage, and other matters that require the attendance of specialized subject matter experts extending beyond the expertise of planners from Planning Services and Development Services.

Other cost increases include fees for venue rental and the increased cost in postage to mail the Notices of Community Meeting. Using derived data based on five months of planning application activity, and assuming that 40% of the total number of applications will require Community Information Meetings, it is estimated that there will be an additional annual cost of \$3,500 for mailing the Notices of Community Information Meeting.

				Estimated Increase in Costs	
Total Annual Number of Applications	Number of Applications requiring Community Info Meetings	Avg. # of parcels per delivered	Total Number of Notices Mailed	Cost per mail Notification	Total Annual Mail Cost for Notices
70	28	171	4,788	\$0.72	\$3,447

Table 4 – Estimated annual cost of mail notices for Community Information Meetings

However, in an effort to reduce this cost, Planning Services and Development Services Staff can endeavour to piggy-back the Notice of Community Meeting with the Notice of Application in the same envelope and limit the new additional mailing costs.

Given that not all planning application typically generate public interest, the scope of Community Information Meetings can be limited to those applications in which the public has an interest – generally those applications which propose a change of land use or new development within, or in proximity to, established neighbourhoods.

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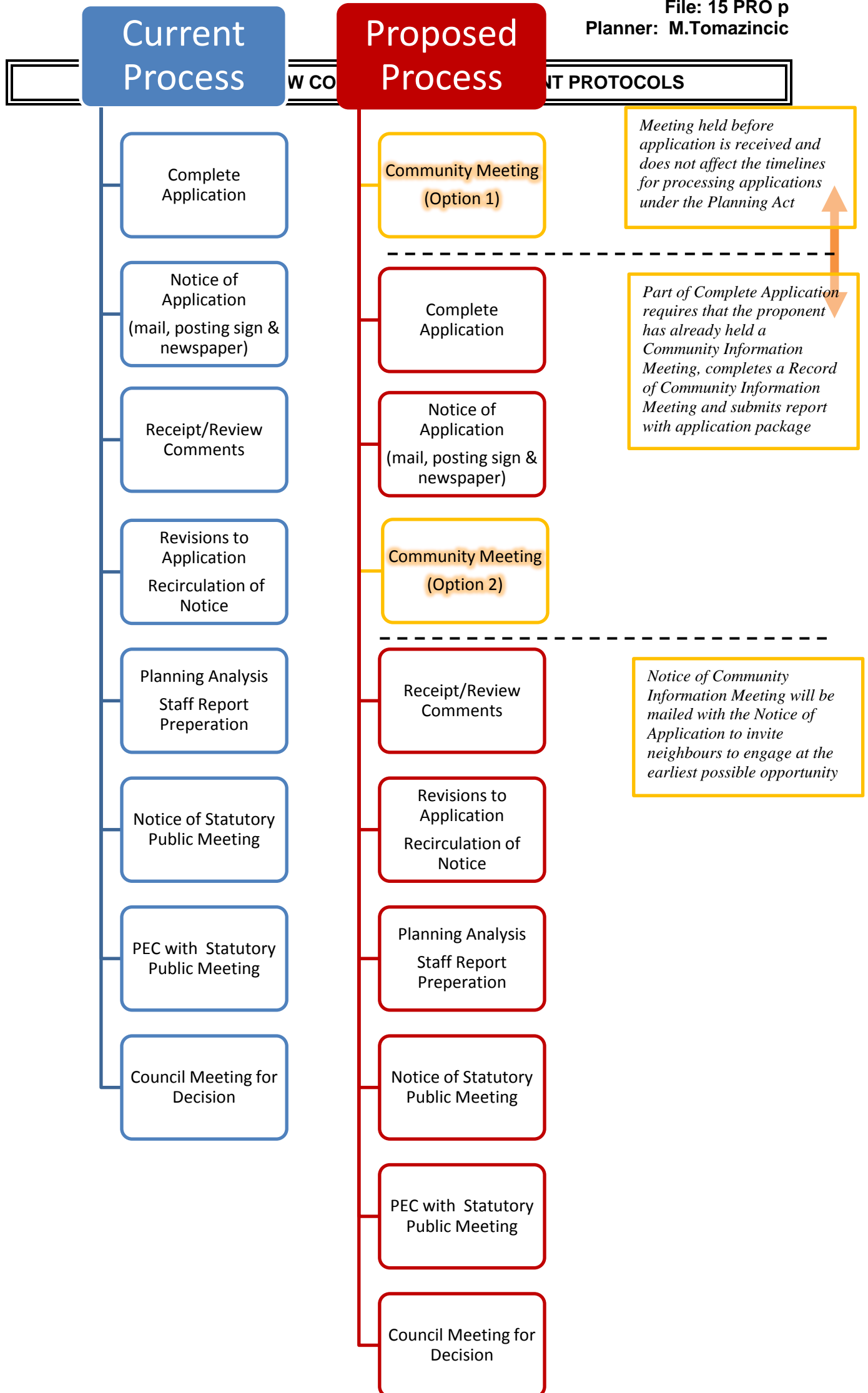


Figure 9 – Flow chart outlining existing and proposed planning application review process that incorporates non-statutory meetings 37

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APPENDIX “7” – NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

Recommendation

It is recommended that Staff develop a modified planning application review process that incorporates Community Information Meetings early in the application processing timeline (see figure 9). Requiring mandatory Community Meeting for applications to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, new plans of subdivision, and site plans requiring a public participation meeting where within or directly adjacent to established residential neighbourhoods.

To facilitate this revised process and allow a high standard of information sharing to be consistently delivered, it is recommended that a Community Information Meeting protocol be developed and endorsed by Municipal Council. This protocol can include the components of the *Record of Community Information Meeting* which would be completed by the meeting host and submitted to the City as part of the review of the application.

A draft of a potential Community Information Meeting protocol (*Administrative Procedure for Planning Applications Involving Development Within or Directly Adjacent to Established Residential Neighbourhoods*) has been attached as Appendix “10” which outlines the potential City process for Community Information Meetings. It is recommended that this draft protocol be circulated for public and agency comments, modified where necessary, and endorsed by Council at future meeting.

Similar to the section describing *Plain Language for Public Notice*, it is recommended that a plain language and promotional style Notice of Community Information Meeting be developed by Staff when used to invite members of the public to future Community Information Meetings by regular mail.

It is also recommended that Staff consider an amendment to section 19.16.2 of the Official Plan to include the *Record of Community Information Meeting* as part of a complete application. This will enable Staff to require that a Community Information Meeting be held prior to the submission of an application for an amendment to the Zoning By-law and Official Plan. In order to effectively implement this Official Plan amendment, it is recommended that the two separate by-laws which require an applicant to consult with the municipality prior to making an application under the *Planning Act* (By-law No. C.P.-1469-217) and its companion delegation by-law (By-law No. C.P.-1470-218) be reviewed for consistency.

Lastly, in order to ensure that Community Information Meetings are accessible to as many people as possible, it is also recommended that child minding services be offered at Community Information Meetings free of charge to those in attendance to allow those with child minding responsibilities to participate. This service can be coordinated with Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services. The cost of this service can be absorbed within existing budgets.

CONCLUSION

This initiative is intended to engage the public more effectively by improving the notification methods, using plain-language, and expanding the media options to provide notification with an objective to make the Planning process more accessible to the general public and thereby inviting *meaningful* participation.

If the City’s long-term vision is to be implemented through the collective outcomes of individual planning applications, a system of easy-to-understand public notices and Staff reports also must accompany each planning application in an effort to clearly present the proposal and recommendation to Council. This will allow all concerned citizens to share in the exchange of information and provide input into the planning process.

Agenda Item # Page #

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File: 15 PRO p
Planner: M.Tomazincic

APPENDIX "8" – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written with the efforts, cooperation, and expertise of the following people with thanks from the author:

- Mohammed Alsakka – Service London
- Barb Debbert – Planning Services
- Jeff Bruin – Planning Services
- Ethan Ling – Development Services
- Rob Paynter – Communications
- Thomas Thayer – Planning Services
- Amanda-Brea Watson – Planning Services
- Rosanna Wilcox – Service London

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APPENDIX “9” – TABLE OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue	Recommendation	Cost
Plain Language Planning Reports	Planning Committee reports are prefaced with a brief plain language summary	\$0
	All the supporting documentation and accompanying information be included as the appendices	\$0
	Revise report structure into an evaluation of the “use”, “intensity”, “form” and “issues” to clearly organize the justification used to support recommendation	\$0
	Ensure revised report structure is consistent with AODA standards	\$0 Minimal cost incorporated in existing resources
Expanding the 120m notification radius	Maintain the standard 120m notification radius	No change to current costs
	Review Section 19.12 of the Official Plan to determine if amendments are required to expand notification radius at the discretion of the City Planner or Chief Building Official in extraordinary circumstances when the standard 120 metre radius exhibits certain characteristics	To be absorbed in existing budget
	Review certain delegation by-laws to determine if amendments are required to permit the City Planner or Chief Building Official to expand the notification radius in extraordinary circumstances	To be absorbed in existing budget
Expanding mail notification to include tenants	Existing <i>Planning Act</i> and Official Plan policies requiring that <u>owners of land</u> be notified continue to apply as the standard	No change to current costs
	Property owners and landlords requested to post notices in prominent locations to notify tenants of potential for a land use change	\$0
Improvements to Signage	Review how elements of the best practices from other cities, new technologies, and AODA requirements be incorporated into new London signage standards	\$26k for new signage and installation
	Develop new sign templates featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large size (4’ x 8’) • Plain language summary of proposal • Illustration • QR code • Specific contact information and web page address 	

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APPENDIX “9” – TABLE OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue	Recommendation	Cost
Improvements to Signage (Continued)	Initiate an RFP process to determine the cost of incorporating the above features into new signage, the cost/benefits of using plastic or aluminum signs, and the cost of hardware/installation, for each of the different sign materials	\$0
Improving Web Presence	<p>Creating web page for every application requesting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law</p> <p>Upload all reports and studies submitted with the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendment application to each application web page</p> <p>Link individual web pages to the subject site on the revamped CityMap</p> <p>Link the QR code proposed for the new signage to the individual web page related to the application</p> <p>Keep individual web pages current with new and amended information in a timely fashion</p> <p>Develop and maintain databases of contact information for specific planning applications and preferred means of electronic communication</p> <p>Retire web pages once the files are closed and opportunity for public participation is complete</p> <p>Planning Services and Development Services utilize social medial and other electronic engagement for providing information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Email database to inform interested public of new information • Creation of a Planning Application app for smartphone and tablet users interacting with the City's improved web presence • Twitter dedicated to planning applications • Facebook page dedicated to planning applications • RSS feeds 	\$120,000 for new staffing
Plain Language for Public Notice	Check Notices against the criteria of the “Plain Language Checklist	\$0
Plain Language for Public Notice	Include a statement on all mailed materials that indicates that other formats and accommodations will be made upon request, to the best of our ability	\$0

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APPENDIX “9” – TABLE OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue	Recommendation	Cost
Plain Language for Public Notice (Continued)	Work collaboratively with Civic Administration to reorganize notice templates to ensure the information is presented in plain language with a promotional style to attract public interest and be effective in conveying messages	\$0
	Illustrations be inserted into all Notices with a conceptual site plan comprising the minimum requirement and building elevations where available	\$0
	Include the legislative requirements at the end of the public notice to decouple the technical jargon prescribed by the province from the plain-language notice written by the City.	\$0
	Develop plain language and promotional style Notice of Community Information Meeting and notify neighbours through regular mail	\$3,500 in postage fees
	Provide child minding services be at Community Information Meetings free of charge to those in attendance	To be absorbed in existing budget
Introduce new protocols requiring Community Information Meetings	Endorse the <i>Administrative Procedure for Planning Applications Involving Intensification</i> , attached as Appendix “11” outlining the City’s process for Community Information Meeting	\$0
Introduce new protocols requiring Community Information Meetings (continued)	Amend the Complete Application policies of the Official Plan to include the <i>Record of Community Information Meeting</i> as part of a complete application to enable Staff to require that a Community Information Meeting be held prior to the submission of an application.	\$0
	Review the need to amend By-law No. C.P.-1469-217 and its companion delegation by-law By-law No. C.P.-1470-218 which require an applicant to consult with the municipality prior to making an application under the <i>Planning Act</i> to enable Staff to require that a Community Information Meeting be held prior to the submission of an application	\$0

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APPENDIX "10" – PLAIN LANGUAGE CHECKLIST



Plain Language Checklist

- Written for the average reader**
Know the expertise and interest of your average reader, and write to that person. Don't write to the experts, the lawyers, or your management, unless they are your intended audience.
- Organized to serve the reader's needs**
Organize your content in the order the reader needs—the two most useful organization principles, which are not mutually exclusive, are to put the most important material first, exceptions last; or to organize material chronologically.
- Has useful headings**
Headings help the reader find the way through your material. Headings should capture the essence of all the material under the heading—if they don't, you need more headings! You should have one or more headings on each page.
- Uses "you" and other pronouns to speak to the reader**
Using pronouns pulls the reader into the document and makes it more meaningful to him. Use "you" for the reader ("I" when writing question headings from the reader's viewpoint) and "we" for your agency.
- Uses active voice**
Using active voice clarifies who is doing what; passive obscures it. Active voice is generally shorter, as well as clearer. Changing our writing to prefer active voice is the single most powerful change we can make in government writing. Active sentences are structured with the actor first (as the subject), then the verb, then the object of the action.
- Uses short sections and sentences**
Using short sentences, paragraphs and sections helps your reader get through your material. Readers get lost in long dense text with few headings. Chunking your material also inserts white space, opening your document visually and making it more appealing.
- Uses the simplest tense possible—simple present is best uses base verbs, not nominalizations (hidden verbs)**
The simplest verb tense is the clearest and strongest. Use simple present whenever possible--Say, "We issue a report every quarter," not "We will be issuing a report every quarter."
- Omits excess words**
- Avoid noun strings (consecutive nouns in a sentence)**
- Uses concrete, familiar words**
- Uses "must" to express requirements; avoids the ambiguous word "shall"**
- Uses lists to simplify complex material**
You can shorten and clarify complex material by using lists. These features give your document more white space, making it more appealing to the reader.

Adapted from: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/checklist.cfm>

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APPENDIX "11" – DRAFT COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING PROTOCOL

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS
INVOLVING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR DIRECTLY ADJACENT ESTABLISHED
RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS**

PART 1 – PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE

Planning Act applications which facilitate Development within or directly adjacent to established residential neighbourhoods often generate a high level of public interest. Recognizing this, engagement with the local community early in the process is essential for effective public input.

The purpose of this procedure is to define the City of London approach for community engagement with respect to primarily residential intensification applications within established neighbourhoods and non-residential applications by the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official, or their designates. This procedure recognizes that the processing of certain *Planning Act* applications for Development within or directly adjacent to established residential neighbourhoods is a community-first approach that requires engagement of area residents early in the process.

PART 2 – AREA OF APPLICATION

2.1 Type of Application

These procedures shall apply to applications to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, new plans of subdivision, or applications for Site Plans Approval that requiring a public participation meeting.

2.2 Geographical Area

This procedure applies to the types of applications described in Section 2.1 which facilitate Development within or directly adjacent to established residential neighbourhoods.

2.3 Excepted Lands and Buildings

This procedure does not apply to the types of applications described in Section 2.1 which facilitate Development of industrial lands that are located within industrial designations.

2.4 Authority to review requirement for Community Information Meeting

Despite subsections 2.1 to 2.3, the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner or the Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official may, at their sole discretion, review the requirement for a Community Information Meeting and determine that a Community Information Meeting shall not be necessary.

PART 3 – TIMING OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETINGS HELD

As part of the mandatory Pre-Application Consultation process for submitting applications to amend the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law, new plans of subdivision, and site plans which facilitate Development within or directly adjacent to established residential neighbourhoods, the City will identify whether a Community Information Meeting will be required prior to submission of a Complete Application (as per 19.16 of the Official Plan) or during the planning application process.

3.1 Prior to Submission of a Complete Application

Through Pre-application Consultation with Planning Staff or Development Services Staff, an Applicant may be required to fulfill the Community Information Meeting Criteria by holding a Community Information Meeting prior to the submission of a *Planning Act* application which facilitates Development within or directly adjacent to established

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APPENDIX “11” – DRAFT COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING PROTOCOL

residential neighbourhoods. An Applicant also has the discretion to voluntarily fulfill the Community Information Meeting Criteria prior to the submission of an application.

Should the Community Information Meeting criteria described in Part 4 of this procedure not be fulfilled, additional meetings may be required that are consistent with the criteria for a Community Information Meeting to the satisfaction of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner or the Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official.

3.2 During Planning Application Review Process

Typically the Community Information Meeting will be held within the first month of the review process for a *Planning Act* application that has been deemed to be complete.

PART 4 – COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING CRITERIA

4.1 Community Information Meeting Criteria

For the purpose of satisfying the procedure, the Host or Alternate Host of the Community Information Meeting must meet the following criteria.

4.2 Availability of Ward Councillor

Request from the City Clerk a date for the proposed Community Information Meeting that does not conflict with the schedule of the Ward Councillor by providing sufficient notification to be able to participate, and confirm their attendance, or have alternative arrangements made. The date of Community Information Meetings will be determined taking into consideration other bookings in the City’s Online Calendar using best effort to avoid a conflict.

4.3 Coordination of Community Association and/or BIA

Recognizing that each community is unique is vitally important, early engagement with organizations such as the local Community Association, Business Association, and/or Business Improvement Area is encouraged as these groups can assist with identifying: key stakeholders, demographic characteristics (such as language barriers), patterns, general resident concerns, potential meeting requirements and other community details.

In order to allow time for co-ordination with respective associations the Host or Alternate Host will be required to:

- a) contact the Urban Regeneration Unit who will identify whether the lands subject to the Zoning and/or Official Plan amendment application are within the boundaries of any known Community or Business Associations.
- b) contact the appropriate association(s) (at least 3 weeks in advance of proposed meeting) with the proposed Community Information Meeting date to assist with sharing information about the meeting with the members. Information that may be requested to be shared include: the meeting date, time, location as well as contact details.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposed Community Information Meeting date does not conflict with important community events (community yard sale, parade, festival, etc.)

4.4 Provide Notice

To ensure broad access to information about the proposed Development is made available, the applicant will be asked to provide a copy of the draft concept plan and the supporting documentation in an electronic format that allows Staff to post the information on the City’s website and be included in any public notice for the Community Information Meeting.

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APPENDIX “11” – DRAFT COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING PROTOCOL

Planning Services or Development Services Staff will prepare a notice for the Community Information Meeting which will include: meeting date and time; location of meeting (both map and written municipal address); host contact information; and details of planning proposal.

Notice of the Community Information Meeting, shall be given as described in clauses a) and c) or as described clauses b) and c):

- a) i) publication in the Londoner at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed meeting; and,
- ii) publication of the notice on the City of London’s website at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed meeting;
- b) prepaid first class mail or personal delivery with a circulation radius to be determined by the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official, or designate;
- c) publication of the notice on the website of the Host and Alternate Host as well as in social media feeds, and in regularly printed materials such as newsletters to inform stakeholders, where applicable.

4.5 Hosting the Meeting

It will be a function of the Host to organize, hold and ensure that the Community Information Meeting Criteria are fulfilled. Another Participant may fulfill the requirements of the Host by requesting authorization from the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official, or designate.

- a) A Participant other than the City may, by request hold, at no cost to the City, a Community Information Meeting to answer questions about the requested amendment and proposed Development. If the purpose of the meeting is to satisfy these Procedures, the applicant is required to consult with the City prior to scheduling the meeting and acting as an Alternate Host.
- b) The Alternate Host is required to meet the same criteria as a Host as described in Part 4.5 of this Procedure, to the satisfaction of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official, or designate.

4.6 Attendance

For attendance purposes, a sign-in sheet must be provided. The sheet(s), logging the: name, home (mailing) address and email address will be included as part of the Record of Community Information Meeting Report which will form part of the public record.

The sign-in sheet must include a clause noting that:

“The personal information collected on this form is collected under the authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990 and may be used for the purpose of informing you of future information meetings and Statutory Public meetings relating to this matter. By providing this information you acknowledge, and give consent to, the Corporation of the City of London including your personal information in the public record and that such information may be included in a Council of the City of London agenda and on the City’s web site.”

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APPENDIX “11” – DRAFT COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING PROTOCOL

4.7 Applicant Presentation on Proposal

The Applicant, their agent and/or advisors will provide a brief presentation about the requested amendment and proposed Development during the Community Information Meeting. The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate how the proposal fits within the surrounding context. The presentation will also include a question and answer period in the presence of all participants.

4.8 City Staff Presentation on Planning Process

Staff will attend the meeting; provide a presentation to the attendees about planning processes, timing, and City of London policies. The presentation will also include a question and answer period in the presence of all participants.

4.9 Staying Informed

The City will provide additional information on how those who attended the meeting can stay informed throughout the planning application process. Such information provided may include, but is not limited to: contact information for the file planner, contact information for the applicant, and where information can be accessed on the City’s website (as relates to section 6.3 of this procedure).

4.10 Open House Format

If the Host meets all other criteria set out in Part 4.5 of this procedure, the Community Information Meeting may also include an Open House/Drop-in component. This option is intended to allow attendees who may otherwise feel uncomfortable to speak in a larger public format with an opportunity to dialogue with the meeting Host on a more informal basis.

4.11 Record of Community Information Meeting (“Record”)

The Application will be required to complete a Record of Community Information Meeting to summarize the nature of the discussion and the responses provided. The meeting Record must identify the issues that were raised and how the applicant and/or City responded to them. The meeting Record will be included to form part of the complete application and public record. The City may provide a template for the Record of Community Information Meeting report to maintain consistency and conciseness.

4.12 Non-Exclusive attendance

The Community Information Meeting is a public forum and non-exclusive. All interested parties are welcome to attend, regardless of whether they belong to any formal group or association.

4.13 Accessible Location

It is strongly encouraged that the Community Information Meetings be held at an accessible venue within the neighbourhood where the property that is subject to Application is located.

4.14 Timing of Meeting

The meeting is to be held outside of typical office hours. Typically the meeting duration lasts for at least 2 hours and held between the hours of 6:00pm – 9:00pm during weekdays or between the hours of 10:00am –9:00pm on weekends.

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APPENDIX “11” – DRAFT COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING PROTOCOL

PART 5 – DEFINITIONS FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PROCEDURE

“Applicant” shall mean:

- i. a person or public body requesting Council to amend the Official Plan of the Corporation of the City of London under section 22 of the Planning Act;
- ii. a person or public body requesting Council to amend the Zoning By-law, Z.-1, under section 34 of the Act of the Corporation of the City of London under section 22 of the Planning Act;
- iii. a person applying for approval of plans and drawings under section 41 of the Act; or
- iv. an owner of land applying for approval of a plan of subdivision under section 51 of the Planning Act

“Application” shall mean:

- i. a request or requests to amend the Official Plan of the Corporation of the City of London under section 22 of the Planning Act;
- v. an application or applications to amend the Zoning By-law, Z.-1, under section 34 of the Act of the Corporation of the City of London under section 22 of the Planning Act; or
- ii. a submission or submissions of plans and drawings for site plan approval under section 41 of the Planning Act

“City” shall mean the administrative staff of the Corporate of the City of London.

“Community” shall mean the people within a particular area, often neighbours whose social interaction is among other people living in the area, regardless of any size.

“Community Information Meeting” shall mean a meeting that is organized, held and reported on by the Host, or Alternate Host in accordance with the criteria set out in Part 4 - Community Information Meeting Criteria of this procedure.

“Development” shall mean a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures requiring approval under the *Planning Act*.

“Managing Director, Planning and City Planner” shall mean the person who holds the position of Managing Director, Planning and City Planner for the City.

“Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services & Chief Building Official” shall mean the person who holds the position of Managing Director, Development & Compliances Services & Chief Building Official for the City.

“Neighbourhood” shall mean the immediate area or district where people live and may be interpreted differently by those living within based on their personal experiences.

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APPENDIX "11" – DRAFT COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING PROTOCOL

“Participant” shall mean anyone who attends the Community Information Meeting, noting however that more specialised roles shall mean the following:

“Alternate Host” shall mean a Participant other than the City who may, by request, hold, at no cost to the City, a Community Information Meeting to make a presentation and answer questions about the proposed Development. An Alternate Host of the Community Information Meeting may include, but is not limited to: an Applicant, Community Association, Neighbourhood Association, Business Association, and Business Improvement Area (BIA).

“Attendees” shall mean the Participants present at the Community Information Meeting (other than the Host, or Alternate Host) who are in attendance to gather information about the proposed Development, gain knowledge about planning processes and get a better overall understanding of how the Applicant’s requested amendment and proposed Development. This may include, but is not limited to any one of the following: Members of the general public; neighbouring landowners; Ward Councillors; representatives from a Community Association, Neighbourhood Association, Business Association and/or a Business Improvement Area (BIA); City Staff; or Staff from other Government Agencies. Attendees may contribute to the meeting by providing constructive input on how the proposed Development can fit with neighbourhood.

“Councillor” shall mean an elected official who currently holds the position as a member of City Council and represents a specific area, or ward, of the City.

“Host” shall mean the City with respect to organizing and holding the Community Information Meeting. It will be a function of the City is to organize and ensure that the Community Information Meeting Criteria are fulfilled, unless another party fulfills the requirements of the host by requesting authorization from the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, Managing Director, Development & Compliances Services & Chief Building Official, or designate to act as Alternate Host.

“Developer” shall mean Applicant as defined and can be used in place of any of the following: Agent, Consultant, Proponent, and/or Applicant.

“Staff” shall mean anyone who works under the Direction of the Planning Services Managing Director, Planning and City Planner or Managing Director, Development & Compliances Services & Chief Building Official for the City of London