

1. Introduction

The Official Plan for the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury (the “OP” or “Plan”) provides a policy framework for protecting natural resources and guiding the physical *development* of the Town. The Plan guides Council in the consideration of their responsibilities, while providing direction and certainty regarding development to the Town’s citizens and businesses.

In 2014 the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury initiated an Official Plan Review (“OPR”) of the OP, first adopted in 2002. It was restarted in 2016. Although portions have been updated since its initial adoption, this OPR marks the first *municipal review* of the OP. The OPR process included extensive visioning and consultation with Council, staff, the public, and agencies. The result is a Plan which represents the community through their input, consolidates all land use policy into one document, and brings the Town into conformity with recent Provincial and County land use policy direction.

This Official Plan provides the overarching tools to direct future growth and change and create a community that provides housing, *recreation*, retail and service, and employment opportunities for all. The intent of the Plan is to thoughtfully manage a growing community while preserving and enhancing its built and natural heritage. At large, this Plan will enable the Town to continue building on tradition.

1.1 Background

In 1991 the former Town of Bradford, and parts of the former Townships of West Gwillimbury and Tecumseth were amalgamated to form the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The Town now consists of three settlement areas—Bradford, Bond Head, and Newton Robinson—which are linked together by a robust network of agricultural land with rural clusters (Coulson’s Hill, Deerhurst, Dunkerron, Pinkerton) and an expansive Greenlands network.

Given the rural landscapes and natural geographic features, agriculture has always been the dominating industry within the Town, and has remained this way through steady growth and changing times. Growth has been driven by values of providing

access to community facilities and programs while preserving the Town's unique heritage and protecting vital agricultural lands.

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury is strategically located along Highway 400 within the County of Simcoe, between the City of Toronto and City of Barrie. New growth is transforming the form and layout of the Town. According to the 2016 Census, the Town's population and employment numbers were approximately 36,700 (including 4% undercount) persons and 10,000 jobs respectively. Growth projections as contained in the County Official Plan state that the Town's population will reach 50,500 people and 18,000 jobs by the year 2031.

Proud of its past and secure in its future, Bradford West Gwillimbury is a Town designed to provide opportunities for all. The once rural locale has now developed into a vibrant urban community, which still maintains a small town charm and sense of community. This Plan will ensure the Town continues along this trajectory in the years to come.

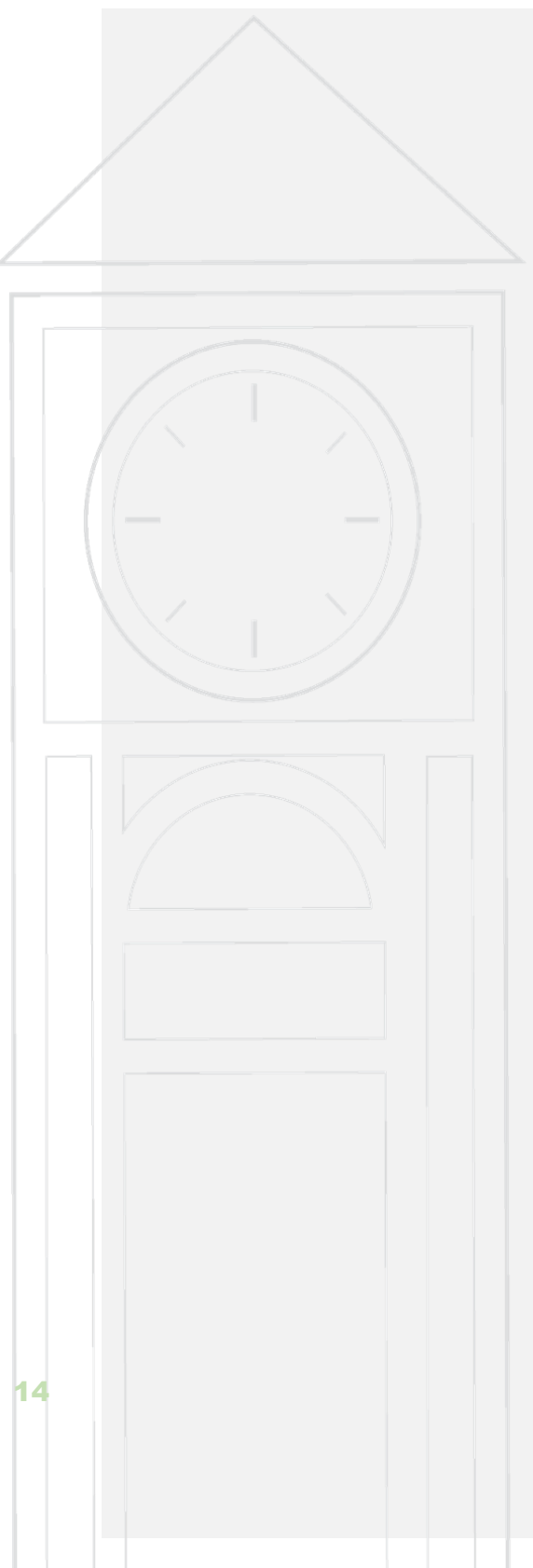
1.2 Policy Context

The planning framework in Bradford West Gwillimbury is largely influenced by higher levels of government, as enabled by the *Planning Act*. The Province of Ontario provides broad policy direction with/to which municipalities must be consistent and conform. As an upper-tier government under the Province, the County of Simcoe provides specific policy direction to implementing Provincial legislation and plans.

Within this framework, Bradford West Gwillimbury is the lower-tier government, responsible for providing guidance tailored toward the Town's unique context. The following describes the regulatory framework in which the Town is obliged to administer its planning function.

1.2.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* is a legislative document which provides the basis and guidance for Ontario's fundamental land use planning framework. It establishes the hierarchy in which planning must be addressed within the Province, and provides authority to apply planning policies and tools at both provincial



and municipal levels (e.g. provincial plans, official plans, zoning by-laws, plans of subdivision, *site plan control*).

1.2.2 ~~Provincial Policy Statement, 2020~~ Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial ~~Policy-Planning~~ Statement (PPS), ~~2020-2024~~ provides direction on key Provincial interests related to land use planning and *development* in Ontario. These interests revolve around three key themes, being:

- Building Strong Healthy Communities;
- Wisely Using and Managing Resources; and
- Protecting Public Health and Safety.

The Town's Official Plan and land use planning decisions "*shall be consistent with*" the PPS, requiring Council to ensure that PPS policies are applied within relevant decision-making processes. The policies of the PPS are to be incorporated into municipal plans through a *municipal review*. The PPS requires municipalities to make sufficient land available to meet projected needs, and allows for planning to a time horizon of up to 25-30 years. ~~At the time of adoption of this Plan, the County of Simcoe's Municipal Comprehensive Review is in progress, after which the Town must update this Official Plan to account for its projected needs beyond the current horizon of 2031, through to the timeframe specified by the County Official Plan.~~

1.2.3 ~~Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe~~

~~The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) is a long-term plan that sets out policies to manage growth, build complete communities, and protect the natural environment. The Growth Plan builds on the PPS and establishes a more detailed Provincial policy framework for implementing Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe by better managing growth and establishing a long-term framework for where and how the region will grow.~~

~~The Growth Plan has been prepared under the *Places to Grow Act*, 2005. The original document was enacted in 2006 and was updated twice by amendment before its replacement in 2017 and further amendment in 2019 and 2020.~~

~~The 2020 consolidated Growth Plan is the version currently in effect, as of August 28, 2020. The Growth Plan works to support the achievement of *complete communities* through support for economic development, protection of the *natural environment*, and preservation of land for forecasted population and employment growth over the Plan's horizon.~~

~~All decisions on planning matters must conform to the Growth Plan including, as applicable, growth and *intensification targets* or alternatives thereto as established by the County of Simcoe Official Plan. Upon completion by the County of the current *municipal comprehensive review*, lower tier municipalities like the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury must subsequently update their Official Plans to ensure that growth and intensification targets remain in conformity with the County's Official Plan.~~

~~Through the OPR that led to the adoption of this Plan, conformity has been achieved with the 2020 Growth Plan through to 2031. A future OPR, following completion of the County's current *municipal comprehensive review*, will bring this document into conformity through to 2051.~~

1.2.4 The Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan, ~~together with the Growth Plan~~, builds on the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) to establish a land use planning framework for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including the south-eastern portion of the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The Protected Countryside lands identified in the Greenbelt Plan are intended to enhance the spatial extent of agriculturally and environmentally protected lands.

Planning decisions within the Greenbelt Plan Area are required to conform to the Greenbelt Plan.

1.2.5 Lake Simcoe Protection Plan

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan was prepared and approved under the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008, to take effect on June 2, 2009. The Plan generally applies to the Lake Simcoe watershed and provides objectives for the protection, improvement and restoration of the ecological health of the watershed. The Plan consists of targets, indicators and policies organized into chapters that address the following policy

themes: aquatic life, water quality, water quantity, shorelines and natural heritage, other threats and activities (including invasive species, climate change and recreational activities), and implementation.

Under Section 1(1) of the Planning Act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan is considered a “Provincial Plan”, meaning all planning decisions within its jurisdictional area must conform to the designated policies of the plan.

1.2.6 County of Simcoe Official Plan

The County Official Plan was adopted by the Council of Simcoe County on November 25, 2008, and was subsequently appealed to the [OMB Ontario Municipal Board \(OMB\)](#). [The OMB has since been restructured and is currently known as the Ontario Land Tribunal \(OLT\)](#). On December 29, 2016 the OMB approved the County Plan, with select site-specific appeals remaining outstanding.

The County Plan sets out goals and objectives and further outlines the policies that govern how land in Simcoe County (the “County”) will be used on a broad level. Policies of the County Official Plan provide a framework for local municipalities to undertake more detailed planning that implements its requirements.

The over-arching goals of the County Plan are:

- To protect, conserve, and enhance the County's natural and cultural heritage;
- To achieve wise management and use of the County's resources;
- To implement growth management to achieve lifestyle quality and efficient and cost effective municipal servicing, *development* and land use;
- To achieve coordinated land use planning among the County's local municipalities and with neighbouring counties, districts, regions, separated cities, and First Nations lands;
- To further community economic development which promotes economic *sustainability* in Simcoe County

communities, providing employment and business opportunities; and

- To promote, protect and enhance public health and safety.

The County Plan directs population and employment growth and *development* to designated settlement areas, with a particular focus on primary *settlement areas*. The Bradford Urban Area is one such primary *settlement area*. Policies stimulate a compact, *mixed use* built form that promotes settlement areas as strong, healthy and vibrant places. To achieve the compact *development* of settlement areas, the County OP provides specific density and *intensification targets*, in keeping with the approved alternative targets for the Town.

There are three *settlement areas* within the Town—the Bradford Urban Area, Bond Head, and Newton Robinson, in addition to the Highway 400 Employment Lands Strategic Settlement Employment Area (SSEA). Outside of this, the majority of land within the Town is identified as Prime Agricultural lands, which are to be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

[On August 9, 2022, the County of Simcoe adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 7 to the County Official Plan \(SCOPA 7\). This amendment updated the growth management policies and land use designations of the County's Official Plan. SCOPA 7 provided updated growth projections to the year 2051.](#)

[The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury will be required to amend its Official Plan to conform with the policies and growth projections of SCOPA 7 within one year of those policies coming into effect. At the time of adoption of this Official Plan Amendment, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has not approved SCOPA 7 and it is not in effect.](#)

1.3 Purpose of an Official Plan

The OP is a policy document adopted by Council under the provisions of the *Planning Act*, which requires that an official plan “contain goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic and *natural environment* of the

municipality” (Section 16(1)). Additionally, the *Planning Act* identifies matters of Provincial interest which municipalities must have regard to within their official plans, and establishes the two-tier relationship which the Town holds with the County.

As such, this Plan is essential in not only implementing a vision for managing growth and change in the Town, but also directives of the *Planning Act* and the various policy documents it enables. Specifically, the Plan:

- Conforms or does not conflict with provincial plans, has regard to matters of provincial interest, and is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement;
- Conforms with the County OP in all areas where the County has jurisdiction;
- Complies with or has regard for the relevant *watershed* plans, policies, programs and mandate of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority;
- Defines a framework and policy context for decision making that provides certainty for the planning process;
- Establishes the desired land use patterns based on the needs and aspirations of the Town; and
- Coordinates land use and *infrastructure* requirements to ensure that the anticipated growth can be accommodated.

This Plan is a Local Official Plan, and provides the planning framework for growth and *development* in the Town.

Additionally, this Plan is not a regulatory document by itself. The policies of the Plan are implemented by the decisions of Council and in conformity with zoning and other regulatory by-laws adopted by Council from time to time.

1.4 ~~The 2016—2020~~ ~~Official Plan Review~~

~~The *Planning Act* requires municipalities to undertake an Official Plan Review every 10 years and update their Plan every 5 years thereafter, unless it has been replaced by a new Plan. It is important to regularly update the Plan to ensure that it is still reflective of the Town's vision for growth and that local~~

~~planning documents evolve in parallel with issues and matters of upper-tier and Provincial interests in order to provide a consistent policy framework.~~

~~The changing policy framework and demographic, economic and environmental conditions over the period since the last Plan was approved, set the stage for preparing a new Plan for the Town. Given the lack of a comprehensive update since adopted in 2002, this Review was undertaken through a three phase process, spanning four years.~~

~~**Phase 1** was implemented through a series of individual Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) on four matters reflecting important Council priorities. Specifically, this Phase addressed:~~

- ~~— Seniors Housing Policy (OPA 24)~~
- ~~— Growth/Population Review, in accordance with Provincial targets (OPA 25)~~
- ~~— 2016 Employment Lands Review (OPA 26); and~~
- ~~— Downtown Bradford Revitalization Strategy (OPA 27).~~

~~The public was engaged through four issue-oriented workshops for the issue groups listed above, along with two public open houses and a statutory public meeting for the suite of OPAs.~~

~~**Phase 2** involved a review and analysis of policies and studies related to topics not covered in Phase 1, including:~~

- ~~— Implementing changes to the *Planning Act* (Bill 51 and 73 Amendments);~~
- ~~— Conformity with a range of Provincial and County plans, including:~~
 - ~~• Provincial Policy Statement, 2020;~~
 - ~~• Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020;~~
 - ~~• Greenbelt Plan, 2017;~~
 - ~~• Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2009;~~
 - ~~• Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act, 2011;~~

- ~~• Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139);~~
- ~~• County of Simcoe Official Plan; and~~
- ~~• South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan.~~

- ~~— Residential and commercial use permissions;~~
- ~~— Attainable housing;~~
- ~~— Agricultural and rural lands policies;~~
- ~~— Economic development;~~
- ~~— Environmental policies;~~
- ~~— Heritage planning;~~
- ~~— Public and community uses.~~

~~Additionally, this phase included a community visioning workshop in which participants provided input through various activities on their ideas for a “vision” for the Town, and supporting goals to be implemented by this Official Plan.~~

~~**Phase 3** involved drafting the new Official Plan policies. This Phase involved various statutory and non-statutory consultations, with the public, stakeholders and Council to review the draft Official Plan policies, prior to Council consideration and adoption. Prior to this Review, no up-to-date consolidation of the Plan existed, meaning all users were relying on multiple documents to determine applicable policies.~~

~~The following amendments and updates were incorporated through this process:~~

- ~~— OPA 16, Bond Head Settlement Area;~~
- ~~— OPA 17, Transportation Network; and~~
- ~~— Phase 1 OPR amendments (OPA 24 – 27).~~

~~OPAs 16, 17, and 24 through 27 were approved through separate by-law and are in force and effect and have only been incorporated for reference purposes. They have been incorporated as approved and/or pursuant to any settlement with the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal and, therefore, are~~

~~not subject to appeal. Text related to OPAs 24-27 have been identified throughout the text for convenience purposes.~~

1.5 Organization of the Official Plan

This Plan includes several inter-related components, which must be read in their entirety as a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for setting priorities and making decisions. This Plan consists of the text and the schedules attached hereto and shall include any future amendments that may be approved. The text and schedules are inter-related and should be read in conjunction with one another.

The Official Plan is organized in the following manner:

Part A – Introduction: Sections 1 and 2 provide context to the Plan, outline the basis upon which it was prepared, and lay out the vision, goals, and objectives in which the policies work to implement.

Part B – Town-wide Policies: Section 3 provides detailed policies related to urban structure, growth management, built and cultural heritage, economic development, community design, the transportation network, functional services, and environmental and natural heritage *conservation*.

Part C – Land Use Designations: Section 4 provides the uses permitted in the various designations in the Town, and the related land use and built form policies.

Part D – Secondary Plans: Section 5 provides additional policies related to the sub-areas of Bond Head and Highway 400 Employment Lands.

Part E – Special Policy Areas: Section 6 provides policies related to a number of Special Policy Areas with additional policy related to individual properties or neighbourhoods in Bradford.

Part F – Implementation, Interpretation and Monitoring: Section 7 describes and enables the mechanisms and processes to implement the policies of the Plan.

Part G – Glossary of Terms: Section 8 provides a number of definitions for words used in the Plan that provide further clarification.

The Plan also includes Schedules that are described in the policies and enhance an understanding of the Plan as follows:

Schedule A: Urban Structure and Built Boundary

Schedule B: Land Use

Schedule B-1: Land Use – Bradford Urban Area

Schedule B-1A: ~~Heights in Downtown~~
~~Bradford~~ [Downtown Bradford Strategic Growth Areas](#)

Schedule B-2: Land Use – Highway 400 Employment Lands Secondary Plan

Schedule B-3: Land Use – Bond Head Secondary Plan

Schedule C: Transportation Plan

Schedule D-1: County and Greenbelt Features

Schedule D-2: Wetlands and Areas Of Natural and Scientific Interest

Schedule D-3: Source Protection

Schedule D-4: Aggregate Resources, Constraints and Hazards