
May 9, 2012

The Council of the Township of Springwater would like to thank the Midhurst Ratepayers' Association for their presentation to Council on the Midhurst Secondary Plan. During the presentation there were several questions that were posed. The following points contain the Township's responses to the questions presented that evening:

Question 1: Would Council explain to us why an annual urban growth rate of 30% is necessary in our rural village?

Answer: The Township has not designated an annual urban growth rate. There are no set annual growth rates for any settlements in the Township of Springwater.

Question 2: How does Council plan to protect the existing Village of Midhurst from serious traffic congestion?

Answer: Addressing traffic is important to the Township. The Township has completed work that includes a traffic study, which evaluates the anticipated traffic flows and identifies required upgrades in the settlement area to address this concern. The upgrades required include additional road connections to existing arteries, urbanizing of selected roads to include sidewalks, widening of some roads from two lanes to four lanes, addition of turning lanes, and signalization of key intersections.

Question 3: What measures will Council take to deal with the inevitable land use conflicts and damage to our natural environment that will arise from intensive urbanization under the Secondary Plan?

Answer: The Midhurst Secondary Plan identifies and delineates environmental corridors through environmental protection designations to provide for natural spaces and connections. The Midhurst Secondary Plan was also reviewed by the Ministry of the Environment. The planning process, through plan of subdivision, zoning and site plan, provides tools for Council to control how development will occur. Engineering requirements will also be mandated that have strict requirements on design and measures that focus on the protection of the environment.

For example, treatment of storm water is enhanced (storm water ponds which are to also provide an aesthetically pleasing open space area)

through requirements within subdivision agreements to ensure that storm water management plans are provided to the satisfaction of the Township and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA). One of the requirements within a storm water management plan is to reduce or remove pollutants from storm water (quality and quantity control) before it is conveyed back into the watershed.

Question 4: How much more of the taxpayers' money does Council propose to spend promoting and defending a plan that the voters of Midhurst don't want?

Answer: The Midhurst Secondary Plan has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by a number of parties including the Province of Ontario. Township Council has not provided any direction to staff for the expenditure of taxpayers' funds towards the defence of the Midhurst Secondary Plan at the Ontario Municipal Board.

Question 5: Will Council do the right thing, repeal the Secondary Plan and develop a strategy to work collaboratively with the community to create a Secondary Plan that reflects the voice and wishes of the voters of Midhurst?

Answer: Consultative sessions were held between 2004 and 2008 prior to the approval of the Midhurst Secondary Plan. There have also been several Public Information Meetings in 2008 that solicited public input prior to approval by Springwater Council in November of 2008. Additional meetings were held afterwards to give ratepayers an opportunity to gain additional information on the Secondary Plan. A schedule showing these meeting dates is included in the Midhurst Secondary Plan section of the Township website. (Municipal Services > Planning & Development > Midhurst Secondary Plan)

The Midhurst Secondary Plan was developed as an integral part of the Township's future planning and growth requirements. Planning policy requires a balance of competing interests and the provision of equity and accountability for all citizens and affected stakeholders. There are many different types of citizens (residential, corporate) within the Township, and as a result, the answer to what is the "right thing" depends on the perspective of who is asking the question. As such, the "right thing" as mentioned, may be perceived to be in the best interests of the residents of Midhurst, but may not be in the overall public interest of the Township as a whole. Therefore, Council's position moving forward will need to consider the impacts to the citizens (resident, corporate) and the Township as a whole.

The Midhurst Secondary Plan is currently before the Ontario Municipal Board. In these circumstances, the Ontario Municipal Board now has jurisdiction over the Secondary Plan and it is questionable whether it is legally open to the Township to repeal it unilaterally in any event. The Township's status before the Ontario Municipal Board is essentially the same as that of the Province and other parties to the Ontario Municipal Board appeals. The Township can advocate for changes to the Secondary Plan at the Ontario Municipal Board, but any changes would have to conform to the Growth Plan including Amendment #1 as the solution imposed by the Province for the Midhurst Secondary Plan.