

Alton Village Study - Phase 2 - Community Meeting #2 – Summary Report

Royal Canadian Legion – Alton Branch 449 | July 30, 2009

Agenda

Alton Village Study - Phase 2 - Community Meeting #2 focused on the evaluation of the planning alternatives identified during the June workshop; and as a result of the evaluation, the Project Team's recommended elements of the Preferred Planning Alternative.

The workshop format included:

- Introductions and a brief overview of the study by Ben Roberts (Project Manager) and Loren Polonsky (MMM Group).
- A presentation by Nicole Weber (AECOM) on behalf of Credit Valley Conservation, discussing the Shaws Creek Subwatershed Study.
- A presentation by Nancy Reid (MMM Group) and Shannon Baker (Ecoplans), discussing the evaluation of the planning scenarios.
- A presentation by Chris Tyrrell (MMM Group) identifying the recommended elements of the Preferred Planning Alternative.
- Break-out groups and a plenary session to discuss the recommendations of the Preferred Planning Alternative.



Presentation - Evaluating the Planning Alternatives

Nancy and Shannon discussed the key findings resulting in the evaluation of the three planning alternatives that consisted of:

Alternative 1 – Emphasis on the Village Core

Alternative 2 – Dispersed Growth

Alternative 3 – Potential Settlement Area Boundary Expansion

Each alternative was evaluated against seven key criteria which were developed earlier in the study and confirmed earlier by residents, including:

- Conformity to Legislation, Policies and Guidelines
- Adherence to Draft Planning Objectives & Community Design Principles

- Adherence to Draft Environmental Objectives
- Adherence to Draft Servicing Objectives
- Consideration of Key Heritage Attributes
- Incorporation of Community Input

Key findings of the evaluation include:

- All of the common elements are “preferred” and should be carried forward, including the protection of heritage resources and natural areas, design standards for new developments to maintain character, streetscape improvements and traffic calming, linking trails and green spaces and establishing a Village Green and gateways.
- Each of the alternatives offers elements that are preferred and should be incorporated into one “hybrid” alternative.
- Additional analysis/evaluation of some of the elements is required as part of Phase 3 (particularly with respect to environmental and servicing) such as: assimilative capacity, transportation modelling stormwater management requirements, population allocations and land needs.

Nancy indicated that the Draft Preferred Planning Alternative was developed by assuming a total Alton population that could range from 1,900 to 2,500 with no Village expansion; or with a Village expansion, the maximum Village population could not exceed 4,000 people through 2031.

Presentation - Elements of the Preferred Alternative

Chris discussed the process of identifying the Draft Preferred Planning Alternative and distributed maps to attendees illustrating the alternative’s key elements. Chris indicated that as a result of the evaluation of the three alternatives, it was determined that each of the alternatives offered elements that are “preferred”. Consequently, rather than identifying one “Preferred Alternative”, the Project Team identified “Elements of a Preferred Alternative” that will be carried forward. Chris indicated that additional elements will be carried forward as “unknowns” that need to be resolved through further analysis.

Some of the elements identified as part of the Preferred Alternative included:

- New civic and commercial areas on the Village’s west side
- Enhanced streetscapes along Main Street and Queen Street
- Green links and trails strategically located throughout Alton
- Distinct features, such as gateways, enhancements to the pond and Queen Street / Main Street intersection improvements
- Protection and enhancement of built and cultural heritage resources

- New infill development on Edmund Street, west of Agnes Street and southwest of the Main Street / McClellan Road intersection
- A mix of residential uses on the Village's west side

Chris indicated that a Village expansion may be necessary if it is demonstrated that sufficient opportunities for growth are not available in the Town's villages of Caledon Village, Mono Mills, and Palgrave. Chris said that Caledon's Official Plan allocates growth to the Town's six Villages - and that the total Village population expected to grow from 6,308 in 2011 to 10,462 in 2031. If it is determined that an expansion is necessary and desirable to accommodate growth, Chris indicated that:

- It could only be recommended as a result of the Alton Village Study
- Town staff would be required to act upon the recommendation as part of a municipal comprehensive review that is being undertaken as part of the Town's Provincial conformity exercise
- As part of the Alton Village Study, policy would be developed that would require certain things to happen before growth can occur outside of the existing boundary
- Policy would be developed to ensure that specific controls are applied to new development in order to ensure that residents would enjoy the benefits of growth
- Additional work would need to be done to determine actual populations and location of the expansion

Workshop Arrangement

Loren facilitated the workshop portion of the evening. The first half of the workshop was spent in small group discussions – as participants weighed the strengths and weaknesses of the Elements of the Preferred Planning Alternative. The second half of the workshop allowed participants to share their findings to the group as a whole.

The goal of the exercise was to allow participants to identify those elements they like and dislike about the Preferred Planning Alternative, and discuss anything the planning team may have missed in its evaluation.

Results of the Discussion

Because of the importance of the issue and the active involvement of the participants, additional time was allotted for discussion. The results of the discussion are provided below:

1. What I Liked...

The Environment, Parks and Recreation

- The Mill Pond as a community amenity
- Protect Shaws Creek in its natural state as much as possible
- Likes focus on active transportation elements – bicycle trails
- Supports need for bicycle lanes, more sidewalks
- Likes bicycle stands to encourage cycling
- Open space, cultural and heritage features
- Supports protecting the ponds, but concerned about storm sewers into pond/river system and flooding

Heritage & Identity

- Likes the idea of a gateway for the historic core
- Likes investments into existing buildings
- Likes designation of a heritage district (streetscape design, furniture, etc.)
- Supports new infill that reflects existing character (Village Character)
- Supports new school reflecting the Town's architectural elements (existing school should be incorporated into new school)
- Likes having a "focal feature" at Queen and Main Street

Improved Safety and Accessibility

- Supports traffic calming measures (2)
- Traffic calming – Main Street and Queen Street (consider speed humps)
- Supports alternative routes to schools
- Appreciates the need to revitalize the streets and streetscapes and improve walkability (2)

Residential Uses

- Supports individual homes along Queen Street West designated as "Villager Character Residential"
- Diversification of housing styles – not cookie cutter homes
- Location of single family homes

Other Uses

- The community gathering area
- Western community use
- Edmunds and Robb infill

- New civic area to the west
- Likes infill in the Robb property
- Revitalization of the Village core

2. What I Suggest Improving...

Commercial Uses

- Extend the “community gathering area” along Main Street south of the Queen Street intersection (2)
- Move the western commercial development further east near new western civic development (5)
- Dislikes new western commercial area – focus on the core
- Show commercial area further east on Queen Street
- Opposed to extension that includes commercial on west side of Agnes Street (north of Queen Street)
- Consider more uses for the Robb and Edmund blocks – not just commercial (2)
- Consider commercial uses on Queen Street west of the railroad tracks

Residential Uses

- No townhouses – village character residential is ok
- Dislikes Thomas Farm as estate residential
- Opposes cookie cutter homes with garages as primary frontage

Existing Boundaries

- Redraw the boundaries
- Include Thomas Street in the boundary – other homes to the north

Boundary Expansion

- Concerned about potential population increase of 300% - or 4,000 people (why Alton?)
- There appears to be pressure from outside of the Village to expand, while on average, residents seem opposed to expanding the boundary
- Do not prefer “potential expansion area” except for the road allowance
- Expansion proposal should only be considered in the distant future
- Opposed to expanding the boundaries – large population changes the nature and character of the Village
- Opposes expanding boundaries west of Mississauga Road
- Opposed to the study’s timeframe – why 2031 for Alton and 2021 for Inglewood and Cheltenham

Other Elements

- Servicing in relation to the Thomas Farm
- Consider Reynolds property for civic use
- Consider a community centre in the northwest corner of the Village
- Maintain the park west of Dods Drive (identified on map as “Community Use”)

- Concerned with some proposed road designs – how much total width of pavement needed?
- No money in gateways
- Western “Community Use” area should be preserved for “civic” only
- “Village Infill Mixed Density Residential” north of Edmund Street – good for new seniors home and townhouses.
- Seniors area can accommodate more seniors

3. Other Comments...

Traffic and Parking

- Make traffic inhospitable to trucks (ensure the Region, Town and Village are on the same page)
- Concerned about people bypassing Main and Queen Street by taking King Street and Victoria Street instead
- Don't consider proposed transportation links; consider alternative bypass for traffic from Thomas Farm
- Consider parking on Queen Street in the downtown core
- Parking is already an issue for the core area
- Identify parking opportunity along Main Street north of the Queen Street intersection
- Consider parking on the east side of the “Community Use” area south of Amelia Street
- Parking could be located at the existing Legion site and Robb property
- Need a connection from Millcroft Inn to the village core

More Information Needed

- How will servicing work?
- Would improved municipal services be provided...at whose cost?
- It's hard to make an educated decision when so many things are still unknown/undefined (i.e., population projections, servicing, etc.)
- Clarify the community use at John Street and Queen Street (north side)

Other Issues

- Bury hydro poles in the downtown core
- Erin is a good example of a preserved village
- Consider historic street signs
- Respect the Greenbelt (2)
- Phasing (growth) is a necessity

Next Steps

Chris provided an overview of study's next steps, including key milestones and future opportunities for public engagement. Chris indicated that the next steps in the study's second phase would include:

- A Council workshop to endorse the Preferred Alternative

- Finalizing the Preferred Alternative as part of the Phase 2 Draft Report
- Initiating Phase Three of the Alton Village Study
- Hosting a Public Workshop for phase three in the fall of 2009

Loren and Ben thanked attendees for participating in the workshop and for staying past its scheduled completion. Loren indicated that all materials would be e-mailed or mailed out to those residents who previously participated in the Alton Community Study - but were unable to attend the July 30 workshop. Loren said that no final decisions will be made until after all of the residents' comments have been submitted to the planning team.