



## Staff Report P2025-01

Committee 2025-01-13

Council 2025-01-27

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**Submitted To:** Committee of the Whole | Council

**Submitted By:** Summer Valentine, Director of Planning, Building and Economic Development

**Prepared By:** Nathan Wukasch, Senior Planner

**Subject:** Zoning By-law Update – Strategic Directions and Engagement Summary Report

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### Recommendation

**THAT** Report P2025-01, “Zoning By-law Update – Strategic Directions Report and Engagement Summary Report”, dated January 13, 2025, be received;

**AND THAT** Council endorse the Strategic Directions and Engagement Summary Report dated January 7, 2025 and attached to this Report as Appendix B to act as a guiding framework for the preparation of a new draft comprehensive zoning by-law for the Town of Collingwood;

**AND THAT** Council acknowledges the overall Zoning By-law Update project may be delayed until appeals to the 2024 Collingwood Official Plan are scoped and/or resolved.

### Amendments

None.

## 1. Executive Summary

Following the approval of a new official plan, municipalities are legislatively required to update their comprehensive zoning by-laws within three years. The zoning by-law is the primary tool for implementation of official plan policies, including the community’s vision

and priorities to guide land use change, sustainable development, and growth. To that end, the Town of Collingwood is undertaking a Zoning By-law Update project through 2024 and 2025. The project includes three stages from initial research, to draft provisions, through to final enactment of the new regulations. Stage 1: Background Review, Analysis and Issues Identification concludes with the production of a Strategic Directions and Engagement Summary Report that is intended to provide a framework for the Stage 2 activities, including the preparation of a draft new zoning by-law. The Strategic Directions Report achieves the project goals as outlined herein and staff are recommending endorsement of the document by Council. Further, staff are seeking formal recognition that the overall project may be delayed due to significant appeals to the 2024 Town of Collingwood Official Plan.

## 2. Analysis

### Background

The Town of Collingwood new Official Plan 2024 (new OP) was adopted by Town Council in December of 2023 and approved by the County of Simcoe, subject to four minor matters of non-decision, in September of 2024. Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities have three years after the approval of a new official plan to update their comprehensive zoning by-law (ZBL) to conform to the revised policy framework. The ZBL is the most important regulatory tool to implement the new OP on a day-to-day administrative basis. ZBLs control the use of land and built form within a community. They contain site-specific requirements and detailed mapping, which are legally enforceable. Zoning compliance is a prerequisite to obtaining a building permit.

Council approved \$150,000 in the 2024 budget to proceed with the Zoning By-law Update project (ZBL Update) through an open market request for proposals (RFP). The RFP closed in March of 2024 and an evaluation process followed in accordance with the Town's procurement procedures. The successful bidder was The Planning Partnership in collaboration with Nethery Planning and Plan-It Geographical (the Consulting Team).

The ZBL Update has been branded “Zone the Future” (Figure 1) and is proceeding in three stages as follows:

*Stage 1: Background Review, Analysis and Issues Identification*

- Finalize project plan
- Produce Communication and Consultation Plan/Branding Strategy
- Jurisdictional best practices scan and gap analysis
- Discussion Papers to form basis of community engagement
- Initial round of public, stakeholder and Indigenous consultation
- **Stage Outcome – Strategic Directions Report**

*Stage 2: Preparation of Draft ZBL*

- Builds on strategic directions from Stage 2
- Draft ZBL content to form a basis for community engagement
- Next round(s) of public, stakeholder and Indigenous consultation
- Iterative process, may include more than one draft ZBL
- **Stage Outcome – Draft New ZBL and Summary Document**

*Stage 3: ZBL Refinement and Final Enactment*

- Builds on Draft New ZBL from Stage 2
- Statutory public meeting to present Final Draft ZBL and Consultation Summary
- Refine documents based on input received
- **Stage Outcome - Final ZBL for Council approval and final “plain language” summary document**

Figure 1: ZBL Project Branding

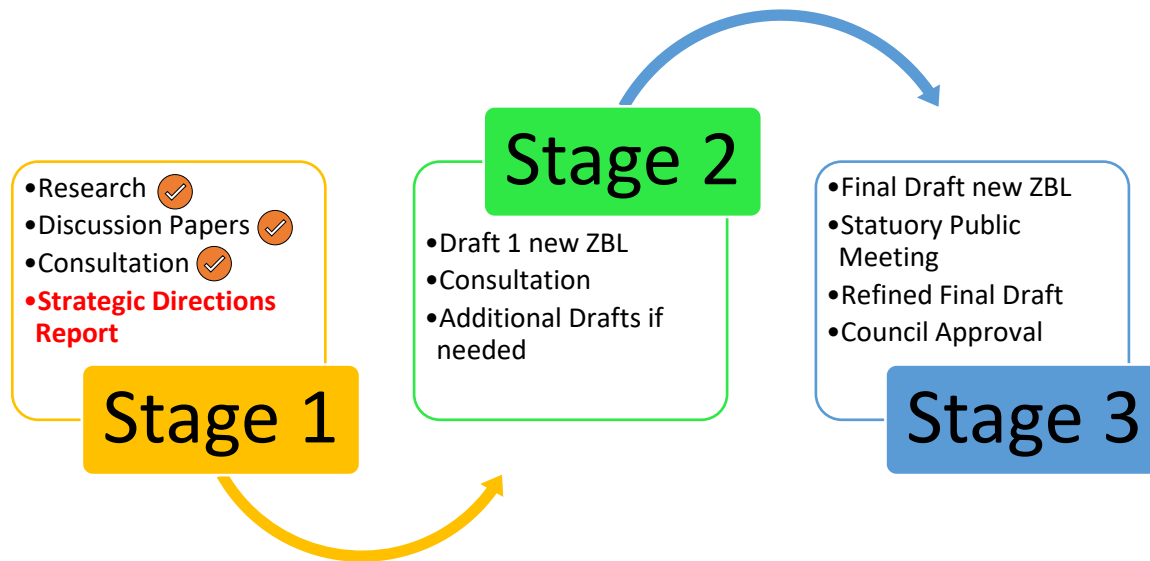


The ZBL Update is intended to achieve these important high-level outcomes, with a more detailed overview of the desired project deliverables available in Appendix A:

- Address evolving legislation and policy
- Conform to new OP
- Facilitate sensitive infill and gentle density
- Apply a lens of innovation
- Support a complete, sustainable community
- Address emerging issues and trends, including housing and climate crises
- Flexibility to recognize existing and new uses
- Simplify and improve clarity

The estimated timeline for the completion of the three stages, without external disrupting factors such as appeals to the new OP, resource shortages or redirected priorities, is 12 to 18 months. Staff will be employing Figure 2 to assist with tracking project progression and identifying public engagement opportunities. The current project status is highlighted in red, with completed actions noted with a check mark.

Figure 2: ZBL Update Project Progress



Additional background information is available on [ZBL Update Engage Collingwood](#) project page.

### **Strategic Directions and Engagement Summary Report**

The purpose of the Strategic Directions and Engagement Summary Report (Strategic Directions Report) is to consolidate preliminary recommendations from a series of five Discussion Papers as informed by stakeholder feedback to provide a strategic framework to guide the preparation of the first draft of the new ZBL. The Strategic Directions Report is the primary product outcome from Stage 1 of the ZBL Update project and is attached as Appendix B. The Strategic Directions Report is based on and organized to reflect the core Discussion Paper themes, which collectively drive toward meeting the project goals outlined in the Background Section of this Report:

- Official Plan and Town Standards Implementation
- By-law Mapping, Structure and Usability
- Intensification, Design and Sustainability
- Contemporary Zoning Principles, Trends and Gap Analysis
- Site-Specific Provisions

The Discussion Papers were used as a springboard for stakeholder consultation and the recommendations refined in the Strategic Directions Report in response to the input received. It should be noted that the content of the Strategic Directions Report is not

final and may evolve as the project progresses through future phases, particularly in response to recent or anticipated legislative or regulatory changes at the Provincial level.

## **Options**

Council may proceed with one of the following alternatives, with Option 1: Endorse being the staff recommendation. While Options 2 and 3 are potential paths for Council, they would not be recommended at this time for the reasons provided.

### **1. Endorse**

Staff have worked with the Consulting Team, attended the consultation opportunities, read all written submissions, and reviewed the content of the Strategic Directions Report and are satisfied that the Report meets the ZBL project goals, appropriately incorporates stakeholder feedback, and provides well reasoned and defensible recommendations that represent good planning.

Therefore, staff recommend that Council endorse the Strategic Directions Report to act as a guiding framework for the preparation of a new draft comprehensive ZBL for the Town of Collingwood.

### **2. Refer Back**

Should Council find any of the recommendations in the Strategic Directions report to be unpalatable, unfounded, or generally requiring more thought and refinement, Council may wish to refer the document back to the Consulting Team and staff for further modification. Should this be the desire of Council, staff would suggest that clear direction be provided regarding the requested amendments and caution that such changes may not necessarily be supportable by the Consulting Team or staff.

### **3. Do Not Endorse**

Council may elect not to endorse the Strategic Directions Report, leaving the municipality without a guiding framework for the preparation of the first draft of the new ZBL.

### **Financial Impacts**

Council approved funds of up to \$150,000 for the ZBL Update project in the 2024 Budget. The project is currently on a fiscally responsible track, with expenditures meeting expected targets for the first Stage of work. Any unspent portion of the total budget allocation will be carried forward to the 2025 Budget to ensure project continuity and completion. Overall project timing may be impacted by appeals to the new Official Plan and staff will keep Council apprised of any resultant effects on the project budget.

### **Next Steps**

Once the Strategic Directions Report is endorsed by Council, the Consulting Team will proceed to the Stage 2 project activities, including the drafting of a new comprehensive ZBL, using the approved framework as a guideline for the content and in consideration of the shifting Provincial legislative and policy regimes. However, at the time of writing of this Report, approximately one third of the policies in the new OP and associated schedules and appendices are under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). In reviewing the 16 appeals, while they appear to be primarily site-specific in nature, Appellants have initially cast a wider net, capturing entire sections of the new OP. A [‘Working Appeal Copy’](#) of the new OP, identifying which sections are presumed to be under appeal, can be found on the new Official Plan [project Engage Page](#). While the Consulting Team and staff are confident that through appropriate scoping and settlement negotiations with the Appellants, the breadth of the impact of the appeals can be reduced, this process takes time. Considering the legislative requirement for the new ZBL to conform to the new OP, the speed at which appeal scoping and resolution can be accomplished will impact the Team’s ability to bring forward the first draft of the new ZBL with confidence of conformity. Staff will update Council regularly as the scoping process progresses, including highlighting the timing and fiscal effects on this project. To that end, staff are recommending that Council formally acknowledge the

potential for delay to ensure transparency for the development community and the wider public.

### 3. Input from Other Sources

The Strategic Directions Report includes a summary of community and stakeholder engagement for Stage 1 of the ZBL Update project (see Section 2, Pages 7 to 16). Consultation included a combination of in-person and virtual events, pop-up presence at the Farmer's Market, direct outreach to Indigenous Peoples with a current or historic interest in the geography of the Town of Collingwood, interviews, focus groups, and written correspondence. Members of Council, as well as select Advisory Committees of Council were directly involved in providing feedback to the Consulting Team. Further, the Discussion Papers and invitations to attend the planned consultation events were provided directly to agencies typically involved in the development review and approvals process, including Provincial Ministries, the County of Simcoe, School Boards, Conservation Authorities, utility providers, emergency services, etc. Individual or organizations unable to participate directly in the engagement program were encouraged to provide comments on the Discussion Papers and any other zoning-related matters on or before November 15, 2024. Similarly, participants were encouraged to subscribe for project updates through the [Town's Engagement webpage](#). The outcomes and feedback resulting from the community engagement are well documented in the Strategic Directions Report, including key messages that were generally common across stakeholder groups. At the time of writing this Report, no comments were received from Indigenous Peoples. This is not unusual, Indigenous communities struggle with the capacity to respond to consultation requests from municipalities and other entities. A second outreach to Indigenous representatives is planned as part of Stage 2 of the project.

This Report was reviewed by Department Heads on January 7, 2025 and the content responds to the input received.



## 4. Applicable Policy or Legislation

Legislation or Provincial Policy applicable to the ZBL Update project includes but is not limited to:

- *Planning Act* (1990) and associated amendments under Bills 109, 23, 97 and 185
- Provincial Planning Statement (2024)
- Simcoe County Official Plan (2023 Consolidation)
- Town of Collingwood Official Plan (2024)

Under Pillar #1: Sustainable of the 2024 Community Based Strategic Plan goal to “Encourage more housing options that meet community needs”, a key action is identified as:

*Consider opportunities within the Comprehensive Zoning By-law to encourage the development of diverse housing options to meet community needs.*

The Strategic Directions Report responds to that action by including recommendations designed to use the available levers within the ZBL tool to increase the supply, diversity, and affordability of housing in Collingwood, with a focus on strategic growth areas and gentle density in established neighbourhoods.

## 5. Considerations

2024-2028 Community Based Strategic Plan: Advances pillar(s) below:

- |   |  |   |                                      |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Connected                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vibrant | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services adjusted if any                                 | Not Applicable   |   |                                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change / Sustainability:              | Positive impact on climate change/sustainability (decreases GHG emissions) |   |                                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication / Engagement:                   | Public Engagement has occurred   |   |                                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility / Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: | Vetted with Input from Accessibility Advisory Committee                    |   |                                      |

- ☒ Registered Lobbyist(s) relating to content: Updating the comprehensive ZBL may impact a variety of development projects, some of which may be subject to registered lobbying efforts

Next steps and future action required following endorsement:

After endorsement of the Strategic Directions Report, proceed to Stage 2 of the ZBL Update project including preparation of a draft Zoning By-law for public consultation

## 6. Appendices and Other Resources

**Appendix A:** Excerpts from Request for Proposals For Consulting Services for the Town of Collingwood Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Update (Project Short Title: Zoning By-law Update), FIN2024-014P, February 8, 2024

**Appendix B:** Town of Collingwood Zoning By-law Update Strategic Directions and Engagement Summary Report, January 7, 2025

## 7. Approval

**Prepared By:**

Nathan Wukasch, Senior Planner

**Reviewed By:**

Summer Valentine, Director of Planning, Building and Economic Development

**CAO Comments:**

- ☒ Endorsed by CAO Skinner on January 8, 2025 to proceed to COW.

## **APPENDIX A**

Excerpts from Request for Proposals For Consulting Services for the Town of Collingwood Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Update (Project Short Title: Zoning By-law Update), FIN2024-014P, February 8, 2024

### **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to:

- Address the evolving Provincial, County and local policy, legislative and regulatory landscape;
- Bring the Zoning By-law into conformity with the new OP (built-form focused approach with mixed land uses);
- Facilitate appropriate development/redevelopment/intensification/infill in Collingwood as a PSA, including the concept of gentle density that recognizes the character of existing neighbourhoods;
- Bring an innovative lens to zoning as a tool, including consideration of a CPPS, form-based by-law, coordination with surrounding municipalities, or other forward-thinking ideas;
- Address emerging issues and trends in land use planning and sustainable community planning, particularly to assist in addressing the housing and climate change crises;
- Be flexible enough to support and recognize new uses and forms/types of development; and
- Improve and simplify the content and organization of the Zoning By-law to facilitate ease of understanding and interpretation, improve clarity, and streamline use.

### **4. Scope of Work**

The following is intended to give a general overview of the scope of the work but is not an exhaustive list of expected deliverables. It is the expectation of the Town that the bidding firms will make recommendations based on their own experience on the scope and deliverables to meet the project purpose, including any value-added services or

products. The consultant will be required to provide all of the personnel, mapping, graphics, reports, presentations, documentation and resources necessary to complete the project.

## 5. Objectives

Include addressing the following:

- Provincial legislation/regulations, policies, and plans, including but not limited to:
  - The Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, the Places to Grow Act and A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Clean Water Act, Source Water Protection Plans, and any other relevant provincial legislation, regulations and/or guidelines;
- County of Simcoe Official Plan, Municipal Comprehensive Review, and relevant guidance documents;
- New Town of Collingwood OP, and relevant Town master plans, guidelines, standards, and documents, which shall include, but not be limited to:
  - A review of the new OP to implement relevant policies through zoning including consideration of a form-based approach;
  - Establishment of zone categories that enhance opportunities for sensitive infill and intensification and recognize transitions between neighbourhoods and built forms;
  - Recommendation of minimum and maximum zone standards to provide for built form and development that is compact, efficient, and street/multi-modal oriented;
  - Establishment of provisions that:
    - address development and intensification opportunities within the built-up area (e.g. sensitively accommodating gentle density increases within established neighbourhoods) and the efficient build-out of designated greenfield areas, and recognize appropriate improvements in the remaining rural areas where servicing and other constraints may exist;

- are supportive of affordable/attainable housing and innovative housing opportunities, including accessory dwelling units and progressive parking standards, noting that an affordable housing specific zoning by-law amendment will precede the comprehensive review, but timing may allow input or alterations by the successful firm; and
  - support sustainable development, as well as implementation of a climate resiliency framework;
- General Technical Analysis
    - Review and analyze the key components of the Zoning By-law, including but not limited to by-law administration, definitions, general provisions, zone structure, zone standards, permitted uses, and holding zones in the context of a jurisdictional scan of best practices and research completed as part of the Official Plan Review;
    - Explore which elements of urban design guidelines, engineering standards, and green development standards can be incorporated and controlled through zoning, given the legislative changes that limit municipal tools through site plan control;
    - Make recommendations on how to clearly articulate complex urban design goals, such as building height and massing, angular planes, setbacks and step-backs, street wall and complete streets.
    - Explore the extent to which the Zoning By-law can be more user-friendly to a lay person through the use of visual tools to convey the desired information (tables, diagrams and graphics etc.), including the preparation of these materials;
    - Review and incorporate all new provisions from site-specific exception by-laws passed since the last site-specific amendment consolidation and recommend whether older exceptions should be repealed;
    - Make recommendations regarding identified issues, topics for further review and investigation, and/or problem areas that have been compiled

by staff or that emerge through the technical review, including past Council resolutions; and

- Undertake a review of minor variances and zoning by-law amendments applied for over a minimum period of the past 5 year to identify and address trends;
- Mapping/Schedule Review
  - A review of the existing zones and schedules;
  - Preparation and digitization of all proposed new schedules; and
  - A review of the availability of zoning schedules through GIS-based programs and on-line platforms, and identification of areas of improvement. The above describes the basic scope of work that should be undertaken. It is expected that the successful firm will compile a team and propose a work program that achieves the purpose of this assignment in a creative, contemporary, efficient and effective manner. The Town may consider deviation from the above scope of work where outcomes would align or better achieve the project purpose.