

## **PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE – OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE 2021**

*Held: 4:00 PM, Monday, September 27, 2021*

*Location: Zoom Meeting*

### **SIXTH PUBLIC MEETING IN 2021:**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER:**

##### 1. Director of Development Services

Ms. Giddings welcomed the public to the meeting.

The Director of Development Services welcomed the public to this meeting

Question from the public how many more meetings will there be?

Next topic will be Affordable Housing. Two more meetings before the end of the year with a draft in December/January and wrap up in February.

The Director of Development Services introduced the presenters Mr. Renouf, Economic Development Coordinator for the Town of Perth and consultants Paul Hicks and Eric Marko from Re: Public Urbanism authors of the Employment Lands Study.

#### **2. PRESENTATIONS:**

##### 1. Town of Perth Employment Lands Strategy – Connor Renouf and Paul Hicks MCIP, RPP

Economic Development Coordinator provided an overview of employment lands in the Town of Perth. The Town has large industrial employers with a mix of various sizes of industry and locations throughout town. The sizes and different types of industry will impact where the economy goes forward as things change.

Mr. Hicks clarified for the audience that employment lands are industrial lands, business parks / office parks and warehousing. The term is a catch-all for lands that do not fit with conventional commercial, residential, or institutional land uses.

Mr. Hicks provided a background on why the Town needs to do an Employment Lands Strategy. It will look at where the Town want to go in terms of industrial land use.

#### **Employment Lands Background Analysis of what the Town looks like today**

- Where is Perth in relation to Major centres and Transportation networks? Major industrial uses are looking to be near major centres for labour and access to major transportation networks; 400 series highways, rail and air.
- What is happening in the regional economy? Looked to see if Perth specializes in specific industries or sectors
- What are the Town's ambitions as they relate to industrial growth? This could be Council's ambitions, community's ambitions, and economic development strategy to guide the users who will occupy these lands.

The Town of Perth has a healthy supply of employment lands scattered throughout different areas of Town.

### **Comparison of Perth's employment lands with other local municipalities.**

- Perth has a great competitive advantage
- Healthy growth rate 1.5% to permit the town to grow at a manageable rate.
- Healthy Employment lands supply.
- Healthy supply of people who work and live in the community  
Goal to have the labour force live and work in the community.
- Industrial Development Charges are approximately \$8.30/ft<sup>2</sup>.  
Development should pay for itself.
- Price \$40,000/acre competitive price point.

### **Summary of the findings**

- Distance from major transportation corridors will have a moderating effect on the types of industry that would locate in the Town
- Re-examine multiple use designation for industrial lands (Industrial and Business Park designations)
- Well positioned in terms of development costs, land costs, and amount of available land
- Low growth rate and distance from Ottawa will impact availability of labour

### **Sector Trends**

Identified five sector trends impacting industrial and manufacturing development: goods movement, e-business, automation, new manufacturing, and remote working.

### **Summary of the findings**

- Greater demand for flexibility in the types of uses permitted in employment areas.
- Large operations want access to major transportation corridors.
- Increased interest in establishing home-based businesses and industries
- Shifts in site design considerations for employment uses

### **Summary of report**

Focused employment lands study on four different components

- Growth and Demand – surplus that exceeds the Town's current needs over the next 20 years. Small and medium sized parcels will form the majority of the needs. Develop a master plan for industrial lands.
- Priority Sites and Areas – heavier industrial uses in the Southern lands due to buffering from town. Re-location or expanding the existing employment lands along highway #7 for the movement of people o goods. Development of a Community Improvement Plan to offer incentive programming to attract targeted industries and users by offering grants for reductions in charges to attract certain industries to the Town.

- Re-positioning of Underutilized Sites – focuses on a small collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings within the central core of the municipality. For other uses than traditional industrial uses such as residential or office use.
- Policy and Regulation - small tweaks to policy in the Official Plan and Zoning by-laws to make policies more flexible to potential users and stay current with current trends. Merge existing business park and industrial designations into one designation. Technical recommendations to bring the Town's policies into conformity with the provincial policies. Re-examine the list of permitted uses to allow for a greater level of flexibility. Introducing new definitions into the Zoning By-law to reflect the modern employment uses. Re-examine parking ratios in the industrial lands.

### **Questions or Comments?**

Large manufacturing industries are not going to abandon their low wages to come to Perth.

There are many locational advantages to want to locate an industry in Perth.

Find a business or industry that would attract people to come to Perth to work.

Q: Is Highway #7 not considered close enough to a major 4 lane corridor?

A: There are plenty of businesses and factories located in remote areas of Eastern Ontario. Large industrial or warehouse users are looking to be less than 1km of 400 series interchanges.

Q: Perth has very fast Internet with gigabit technology allowing people to easily work from home. Wondering if there are businesses that set up in a smaller community to promote working from home.

A: Entire regions are promoting the work from home theory e.g. the Maritimes. Often termed the "Digital Nomad", people who can operate from a remote location provided that they have good Internet connectivity.

Q: Reduction in charges to attract businesses/industry?

A: Only legal if the municipality adopts a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to specific targeted business areas. The Town could go through an amendment process, or develop a new CIP plan for industrial users.

Q: Considering employment lands and improvement plans how could the town treat the legacy abandoned lands and contaminated lands?

A: There are a group of plans geared towards the redevelopment of existing brownfield, old factories, abandoned employment lands that could help with

1. Assessing how much cleanup has to be done and
2. Assisting with the cost to clean up the lands.

An example could be assisting developers with the cost of extending services to the vacant industrial lands.

Q: What is the estimated costs of an improvement plan?

A: Can vary depending on the size and scope of the project.

Q: What happened to the CPR Train station? Could it be renewed for goods traffic?

A: Unlikely to have passenger traffic on CPR line due to VIA operating on CN lines. As the Town is close to the tracks businesses could approach CPR to join into their lines. For large rail facilities, this would require up to 3km of rail line for rail shunting.

With regards to the old Train Station, nobody at the time saw it worth repurposing so it was demolished.

Q: Re-zoning employment lands to residential? Can you provide guidance or examples for affordable housing?

A: This would require a comprehensive review of employment lands before converting to another use. This can be costly for land owners. Perth has a surplus of industrial lands. This is the time period where this can be reviewed during this update process. The Town has a surplus of the lands that this study has provided and there are recommendations to change some of the employment lands to other uses.

Q: Are there federal funds for re-purposing lands for affordable housing?

A: There may be federal and/or provincial funds that could assist with this. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) would be a good place to start.

Affordable housing vs geared to income housing. Social housing and community housing. Assisted housing geared to people who require assistance in living.

## Breakout Groups

1. Given Industry trends what should the Town be doing to provide new opportunities for industry (think in a physical sense: land, infrastructure, urban design)?

- Consider shifting the bulk of the industrial lands north of highway #7 to take advantage of the transportation advantage
- Create more office complexes closer to the downtown area
- Find ways of attracting e-commerce and remote working
- Do we have PR Group to advertise the town to encourage bigger industries to come here? Economic Development Coordinator to advertise the town.
- Town could bear the cost of putting the infrastructure in to lots that currently do not have it.
- Promote the high speed fibre optic internet
- Tourist Town to attract people to come work and live

2. How can the Town make industrial operations and areas more attractive?

- Marketing partnerships with larger organizations
- Making these and future lands more green, sustainable and help businesses make those changes

- Planning paving of big places with boulevards to allow water to re-absorb into the ground. Also in the middle of streets. This is called Low Impact Development (LID).
  - Bundle industrial land into an eco-zone
  - Town subsidized Uber fares to help people get around
3. What can the Town do to repurpose old or underutilized industrial lands and buildings near the commercial core?
- Creating a secondary plan to convert the legacy industrial park to a fun new mixed use community. Require a developer to do that. Ways to re-imagine the old Brown Shoe Factory on Sherbrooke St.
  - Develop Urban Design Standards to go along with the re-development of old industrial buildings
  - Financial incentive to clean up a property
  - Make land more attractive by servicing all the lots
  - Land is in the Floodplain. Additional measures to go through to enable further development
  - Subsidizing services to the lots
  - Mixed zoning such as light manufacturing and a makers space
  - Provide a CIP grant to entice industrial property owners to take the building in a different direction.
  - Bring back the trains and can the siding to Sherbrooke St be re-utilized.
  - Go through visioning exercises with legacy buildings. This would involve the owner and community sketching out what this building could look like afterwards, thinking of the big picture. Urban designer and architect to re-design. Lots of examples of successful re-use of legacy buildings.

3. **NEXT MEETING:**

**October 18, 2021 4:00 p.m. Topic: Affordable Housing**

4. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting concluded at 5:31 p.m.