

City of Oshawa Integrated Columbus Part II Planning Act and Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Act Study

Virtual Public Information Centre (P.I.C.) Number 4 Meeting Minutes

Date: October 28, 2021

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Virtually (via Webex or telephone)

Matters Discussed

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Laura Moebis, Principal Planner, welcomed attendees and introduced Staff and Project Team members in attendance, consisting of:
 - Tom Goodeve, Director of Planning Services
 - Meaghan Harrington, Manager of Policy Planning
 - David Sappleton, Manager of Development Planning
 - Laura Brown, Principal Planner
 - Christine Chase, Planning Administrative Assistant
 - Ranjit Gill, Engineering Services
 - Liz Howson, Lead Consultant, MSH
 - Jonathan Chai, EA and Transportation Specialist, HDR
- Laura Moebis introduced two Councillors in attendance:
 - Councillor John Neal
 - Councillor Rosemary McConkey
- Laura Moebis overviewed P.I.C. instructions and rules, and reminded attendees that all representatives of any group other than the residents will be asked to identify themselves and their affiliation if they choose to speak and will not be permitted to speak on the residents' behalf.

2. Presentation: Draft Preferred Land Use and Road Plan and Supporting Documents Overview

- Liz Howson overviewed the P.I.C. presentation (which is available to view on the Study website at www.oshawa.ca/columbusstudy), with input from Jonathan Chai specifically on the transportation related slides (Slides 20 – 26).
- Attendees were reminded that stakeholder and public review of the draft preferred land use and road plan and supporting documents is underway and that comments on all of the material are requested by November 12, 2021. The Project Team will review all comments received and develop a recommended land use and road plan and Part II Plan for further stakeholder review.

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3. Question and Answer Session

- A resident asked when Simcoe Street North will be widened. Staff indicated that while the Region's Transportation Master Plan identifies a need for Simcoe Street North to be widened to four lanes between Winchester Road and Howden Road as a "beyond 2031 project", the draft Columbus Transportation Master Plan Final Report document identifies an alternative road network that would only require widening Simcoe Street North between Winchester Road and the proposed new east-west Type 'C' Arterial Road south of the Columbus Special Policy Area. However, the Columbus Study is currently under review by the Region to confirm that the draft preferred land use and road plan and supporting documents (including the draft Columbus Transportation Master Plan Final Report) are acceptable. Nothing has been confirmed or approved yet.
- A resident asked for the definition of the Natural Heritage System and Prime Agricultural lands. Staff provided an overview of their respective definitions and also indicated that the Natural Heritage System includes areas that need to be protected for and noted that Prime Agricultural lands are to be used primarily for agricultural purposes (e.g. farming or farm related uses).
- There was a discussion on the setback requirements for the Natural Heritage System and Prime Agricultural lands and staff indicated that it depends on the feature that is being evaluated. Staff also noted that the lands within the Part II Planning Area boundary are not designated Agricultural.
- A resident asked if there would be any road widening on Howden Road. Staff indicated that there were no recommendations to widen Howden Road but there was a recommendation to include paved shoulders with cycling facilities along Howden Road.
- A resident asked why no Agricultural Impact Assessments have been completed for the Study. Staff indicated that the lands within the Part II Planning Area boundary are within the Major Urban Area Boundary and would not require this type of assessment. However, Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements will still be looked at through the development review process.
- A resident expressed concern over medium density development and does not want Columbus to be taken over by townhouses. Residents want less density than what is currently built in Windfields and are also concerned about high density development. A resident also asked what medium/high density development looks like. Staff indicated that low density generally includes single family homes and some semi-detached dwellings. Medium density generally includes semi-detached dwellings and townhouses, and high density includes low-rise apartment buildings.

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- There was a discussion on density and staff indicated that although Columbus currently exists as a “rural community” and the Columbus Special Policy Area will continue to remain as low density, the Province sets out the minimum density targets which municipalities are required to meet, which means that outside of the Columbus Special Policy Area, higher density will be necessary to meet the Provincial Growth Plan targets (which is 50 jobs and persons combined per hectare).
- There was a discussion on the deadline for comments. Staff have requested comments on the draft preferred land use and road plan by November 12, 2021 but if comments are submitted after this date, they will still be accepted and included as part of the Study review.
- Laura Moebs introduced Regional Staff in attendance, including:
 - Ashley Yearwood, Regional Planning
 - Doug Robertson, Regional Works
- There was a discussion on the concerns raised by the residents during previous stages of the Study and staff indicated that the latest staff report (DS-21-155) includes responses to comments received on the previously released three alternative land use and road plans. Staff also indicated that all comments received on the draft preferred land use and road plan and supporting documents would be addressed as one package in a future report.
- Councillor Neal asked if public concerns get passed onto the Region. Staff noted that the Region is the approval authority for the Part II Plan so they will ultimately see all of the comments and responses received. As well, staff indicated that if there was a question or concern related to the Region (e.g. concern related to Regional roads, etc.), then staff would reach out to the Region for assistance.
- A resident asked if Brookfield Court would remain as a Court or if it will become a through road. Staff indicated that the existing local roads within the Columbus Special Policy Area are not anticipated to be re-configured or adjusted and will remain as is.
- A resident asked about the proposed bike lanes in Columbus and whether or not they will connect to Brooklin in Whitby. Staff indicated that there are protections for future corridors in place and there is anticipated to be a future connection to Whitby. Staff also indicated that Columbus Road is not recommended to be widened, but recommended for some reconfiguration, where necessary.
- A resident wanted to know the exact boundaries of the Columbus Special Policy Area based on addresses. Staff were unable to provide the specific addresses to describe the Columbus Special Policy Area boundary in the context of the meeting but indicated that a map of the draft preferred land use and road plan overlaid with the existing property lines can be provided to individuals, to give residents a better idea as to what properties are included within the Columbus

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Special Policy Area (Note: if you would like a copy of this map, please contact lmoebis@oshawa.ca).

- A resident asked if any existing houses will be knocked down in Columbus. Staff indicated that it depends on whether or not a developer owns any houses and if they intend to develop those lands.
- There was a discussion on housing affordability and residents indicated that affordable housing should be included in Columbus. Staff noted that there are some high level affordable housing policies proposed within the draft policy text. A resident also noted that existing Columbus residents should have the first opportunity to choose affordable housing options if they are forced out of their homes.
- A resident asked if the draft Transportation Master Plan Final Report is online and staff noted that it can be found on the study website (www.oshawa.ca/columbusstudy).
- There was discussion about road widenings and staff clarified that the draft Transportation Master Plan Final Report recommends widening Simcoe Street North between Winchester Road and the proposed new east-west Type 'C' Arterial Road south of the Columbus Special Policy Area.
- A resident indicated that they would like measures put in place on Columbus Road to slow down traffic similar to what is being proposed on Simcoe Street North through the Columbus Special Policy Area.
- A resident asked what would happen if the Region were to continue to recommend Simcoe Street North be widened through the Columbus Special Policy Area, despite the draft Transportation Master Plan Final Report recommending this stretch not be widened. Staff indicated that the Part II Plan can help to inform the Region's Official Plan and that the Region is still reviewing the draft preferred land use and road plan and supporting documents. The Region did indicate that they are generally supportive of the draft plan so far, but that they are still in the process of reviewing all of the material. Staff also noted that there are measures that can be put in place to help reduce traffic speeds along Simcoe Street North, including adding street trees, raised medians, improved sidewalks, etc. The intent of the proposed two north-south Type 'C' Arterial Roads located east and west of Simcoe Street North is to divert traffic away from Simcoe Street North.
- A resident asked if Thornton Road North can be widened to four lanes to Howden Road to create a by-pass. Staff indicated that there is not enough traffic on Thornton Road North to justify widening it to four lanes. As well, there is currently no 407 interchange at Thornton Road North, which contributes to lower traffic levels that do not justify its widening.

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- A resident asked if any of the mixed use nodes can be made smaller or if there can only be mixed use nodes located south of Columbus Road, east of Simcoe Street North. There is concern that the heritage homes located north of Columbus Road within the mixed use node may be impacted and some residents feel that there won't be a lot of uptake in commercial uses along Columbus Road in the proposed mixed use designation. Staff indicated that the City does not want to create an imbalance of people and jobs and that the Provincial Growth Plan sets out the target that the City is required to meet. Staff also indicated that the draft policy text includes a draft policy (Draft Policy 8.8.4.2.3) that recognizes the existing heritage resources north of Columbus Road within the proposed Mixed Use Node I designation and ensures that development is to be designed to accommodate the sensitive integration of residential uses and that the cultural heritage resources in this area shall be conserved. Staff also reiterated that within this Mixed Use Node 1 area, before any development can occur, comprehensive plans have to be prepared and all development has to conform to the Oshawa Official Plan.
- A resident asked for clarification on the corridor protection areas as shown on Slide 23 of the presentation (on the Road Network mapping). Staff clarified that these are the general locations for future roads that are to be protected for the long term, but they are not yet identified as actual roads in the Part II Plan mapping at this time. There was further discussion about protection of agricultural lands and staff indicated that agricultural uses in the Study Area would continue to remain agricultural until the lands may be needed (if these lands are brought into the Major Urban Area boundary).
- A representative from the Columbus Developers' Group indicated that it is the intent of the Columbus Developers' Group to develop the Columbus Part II Planning Area using the minimum population numbers and targets as shown in the draft land budget.
- A resident indicated their concern with the proposed Mixed Use Node I impacting their home and the future of their homestead. They are not supportive of the proposed Mixed Use Node I designation located north of Columbus Road, east of Simcoe Street North. The resident also mentioned that there is potential for flooding in the area and was unsure how any development could take place on these lands. Staff indicated that a mixed use designation permits both residential and commercial uses and there was no intent from any level of government to take these lands for development purposes. If a developer owned land in a proposed mixed use node, they would have the ability to develop these lands, but in the interim, these lands would remain as status quo.
- A resident indicated their support of some of the protection proposed for the Columbus Special Policy Area. However, residents are still concerned regarding

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potential future widenings along Simcoe Street North, as many homes are located close to the street. Staff indicated although surveys have not yet been completed, design options are still being reviewed to determine how much space would be needed along certain portions of the various roads in Columbus. This will specifically be looked at in Phases 3 and 4 of the Environmental Assessment component of the Study.

- A resident asked if the Columbus Special Policy Area could be expanded. Staff indicated that the current Special Policy Area covers the general area of the existing community. Staff noted that there are draft policies proposed in the draft policy text to limit development in the Columbus Special Policy Area and to ensure protection and conservation of the existing cultural heritage resources throughout the Part II Planning Area consistent with the heritage study submitted by ASI.
- A resident asked if the City will be expanding the Part II Planning Area boundary to Whitby. Staff indicated that the City is not proposing any expansion of the Part II Planning Area boundary at this time. The Region of Durham is currently undertaking their Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review and it is during this exercise that Regional staff will determine where future boundary expansions should take place in Durham Region.
- A resident expressed frustration and dissatisfaction with the City and the proposed development in Columbus. A resident asked why development even had to occur in Columbus. Staff indicated that the Part II Planning Area boundary has already been set by the Region as additional land for development and the City is required to meet Provincial targets as set out in the Provincial Growth Plan.
- A resident indicated their concern about bike lanes and their impacts on properties. Staff indicated that the design of the recommended bike lanes in Columbus would be studied further in the next phase of the Environmental Assessment component of the Study.
- A resident asked if the City plans to develop all four corners of Simcoe Street North and Columbus Road for commercial development. Staff indicated that development will be limited within the Columbus Special Policy Area and that the type of limited development that may occur in the Columbus Special Policy Area is unknown at this time.
- There was a discussion on affordable housing and staff indicated that a range of approaches are being explored.
- A resident asked about the potential impact to wells from the proposed development. Staff indicated that deep drilled wells are rarely impacted by development. However shallow, dug, marginally performing wells can be impacted by development. If well impacts do occur, the Region's approach,

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through the Well Interference Policy, is to provide a watermain connection and waive the normal frontage and connection costs. The homeowner will still need to pay for any work required on private property to bring services to the house.

- A resident asked for clarification on the Study schedule and future timelines. Staff indicated that comments on the draft preferred land use and road plan and supporting documents are requested by November 12, 2021, and that a statutory Planning Act Public Meeting is anticipated to be held sometime in 2022. Staff also estimated that construction would not begin in Columbus for another five to ten years (though noted it would probably be closer to ten years).
- A resident asked what kinds of streetscaping could be implemented along Simcoe Street North within the Columbus Special Policy Area. Staff indicated that some measures may include interlocking pavement, street trees, narrower lanes, wider sidewalks and the addition of bike lanes.
- A resident expressed general concern over the proposed development in Columbus and frustration that the proposed plan is not being sensitive to the existing community of Columbus. Residents also noted their concerns related to the loss of farmland in Columbus.
- A resident expressed concern that the Study has not looked at where people will be coming from when travelling through or moving to Columbus and indicated that there should be more roads to accommodate the future population. Staff indicated that the analysis that was conducted looked at the future travel patterns of residents and that the majority of residents come to and from the south. As well, many people will be using Simcoe Street North to get to Highway 407 East however based on modelling, the number of lanes and the proposed alternate north-south Type 'C' Arterial Roads recommended should meet the needs of the residents.
- Residents expressed their concern and frustration with the internet and broadband challenges in Columbus. Staff indicated that the Region of Durham is undergoing a Regional Broadband Strategy to improve access to broadband across Durham Region. Information on this can be found at: <https://www.durham.ca/en/economic-development/invest-and-grow/telecommunications.aspx>
- Residents indicated that there will be an increase in traffic along Simcoe Street North travelling south from Port Perry, as Port Perry continues to develop. It was suggested that opening and widening Thornton Road North may help to provide more options for this anticipated growth in north-south traffic.
- A resident had concerns regarding the impact that new development in Columbus would have on Oshawa's hospital and indicated the need for better and more infrastructure in Oshawa, including improved hospital services. Staff

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indicated that hospital planning is conducted by Lakeridge Health and not the City.

- A resident noted that a median may be needed on Howden Road and that the use of agricultural equipment needs to be taken into consideration for the future planning of Howden Road.
- Staff thanked all attendees for their participation and time during the meeting and reiterated that staff are available to discuss information and answer questions at any time throughout the Study. Staff also noted that comments on the draft preferred land use and road plan and supporting documents are requested by November 12, 2021 and can be submitted via email, telephone or mail.
- Councillor Neal apologized that the meeting could not be held in person and thanked attendees for their time and participation.