

TOWN OF ONTARIO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Steering Committee Meeting #5 (Virtual) | January 5, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Susan Brown
John Graziose
Bob Heintzelman
Bob Kelsch, Deputy Supervisor
Brian Natale
Sylvia Ryndock
Deb Doud
Don Cedruly
Joe Crestuk
George Konstantinou

John Evanowsky
Matt Horn, MRB Group
Jane Nicholson, MRB Group
Brooke Mayer, MRB Group

Project Updates

Matt and Jane opened the meeting with the following project updates:

Community Survey: The survey has received over 200 responses to date, and is the focus of this Steering Committee meeting. Jane explained that the survey will remain “live” until post-workshop #1. Typically, the survey closes 1-2 weeks after the first public forum; however, since this has not occurred, we will keep it open until we have received more feedback. Ideally, we would like to have 300 responses. Committee members are encouraged to continue to share the link within their networks.

Website: The website has been updated to reflect the change in the public workshop. We will continue to post updates as we move forward with scheduling the public forum.

Public Workshop: The workshop was initially postponed until February; however, group consensus is to host the workshop on a virtual platform. MRB Group will develop options for holding a series of theme-based workshops (e.g. Parks, Trails, and Recreation or Economic Development) that will occur over several days or weeks (to be determined). The Steering Committee will assist in advertising to targeted groups and on social media once the final schedule has been determined. Steering Committee members suggested advertising on Route 104 (marquee) as well.

What We've Heard: Project Recap + Preliminary Survey Results

Jane Nicholson and Brooke Mayer, MRB Group, provided a recap of the Steering Committee meetings and highlighted themes that have emerged since the first meeting. This information would be used to form the topics for the public forum.

Jane discussed what the Steering Committee found to be strengths and assets, such as community character, the lake, and rural landscape while challenges include downtown, lack of diverse housing options, lack of business recognition, and the need to strengthen the infrastructure, gateways, and interconnectivity.

Brooke presented the preliminary survey results and the parallels between the Steering Committee responses. She explained keeping the survey open will ensure a more robust response rate. One challenge with the preliminary results is that we are missing youth engagement. Only one person

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under the age of 25 responded, so we'll need to push the survey through the Steering Committee's outreach channels to capture this audience.

Brooke further reviewed community priorities based on respondents' rankings of the importance, and their satisfaction with, elements of the Ontario community. Responses were plotted on an x and y axis, indicating what topic areas received a high priority and satisfaction rate versus those that received a high priority and unsatisfied response rate. Those that received a high priority and unsatisfied response rate will, in particular, require additional study and clarification through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and the public forum. These areas include: job opportunities, business incentives and support, pedestrian connectivity, quality restaurants, internet access, and re-envisioning downtown.

Brooke reviewed the topics for further clarification and debriefed with Committee members. General comments from Committee members included:

- Reinvestment of downtown versus Route 104 development (visibility, economic engine)
- Redefining Ridge Road
- Cost of rent
- Businesses and traffic (visibility)
- "Town Center" concept and creating a city center
- Implications for community / household investment in a hyperlocal city center with unique restaurants and retail vs. fast food and chain stores

Summary & Next Steps

MRB Group will finalize the Stakeholder and Focus Group list and send the final proposed schedule to the Committee members, who are welcomed and encouraged to attend the focus groups. These interviews will be held at the end of January into February in parallel with the public forums.

The next meeting is to be held on February 2nd at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.