



What kind of city does Peterborough aspire to be?

By MICHELLE COLLINS, Reimagine Peterborough
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Picture the Peterborough you want to live in 20 years from now - what do you see? Under the leadership of Peterborough's new director of planning, Jeffrey Humble, the City of Peterborough is embarking on an ambitious and much-needed plan to engage the

public on questions like these, and to design a new and potentially transformative Official Plan for Peterborough's next several decades.

There will be a lot to think about; the last full review was in 1981. Growth pressures in southern Ontario are intensifying, home and living expenses are rising, climate change is causing disastrous and costly damage to our natural and built infrastructure, multi-modal transportation systems (cycling, walking, bus, light rail, train, uber, etc.) are a must to manage growth, and the role, identity, and function of the "city" in our lives and businesses has evolved significantly in just a few decades.

Fortunately, Humble appears to be brimming with energy and ideas to improve our sometimes staid city. He has shown a keen interest in getting to know the community, and recently demonstrated his depth of knowledge about modern urban planning and Peterborough's untapped potential as guest speaker at a Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA) breakfast event.

As director of planning in Yellowknife for 10 years, Humble led the creation of a Smart Growth Development Plan. The process involved public engagement with more than 2,000 residents on issues of urban design, land use, preservation of natural areas, transportation, and economic development and energy use.

As a result, Yellowknife's Smart Growth Development Plan creates a long-range vision based on smart growth principles and includes seven background reports and a Recommendations Report with 15 detailed implementation strategies to address environmental, social and economic concerns.

The Plan earned the City of Yellowknife a Sustainable Community Award from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in 2011. Humble also sits on the advisory team of Sustainability Solutions Group, which is leading a sustainable cities strategic review to identify key issues and barriers facing Canadian municipalities and international best practices to solve them.

This valuable experience and influence will be vital to Humble's work leading the research, public engagement, and development of an updated Official Plan for Peterborough during the next year and a bit. A final Official Plan may be up for Council approval by September 2018, making it binding as law.

The first steps of the renewed process have already been taken. Humble recently secured council's unanimous support for an increased budget of \$200,000, which will be used to bring on two new planning staff, bolster public engagement with public forums, design charettes, online surveys, draft reviews, and an Official Plan Advisory Committee with broad community representation.

The timing coincides well with Ontario's updated Growth Plan. Just finalized on May 18, 2017, the updated Growth Plan sets provincial direction for cities to manage growth, build complete communities, curb sprawl, and protect the natural environment. As a designated "urban growth centre" Peterborough has the responsibility to serve as a high-density major employment centre.

Crucially, we the community must also provide support, resources, and dedication to this process. Peterborough will soon face serious challenges and big opportunities: this Official Plan Review is truly becoming our chance to reimagine what kind of city we aspire to be and determine how we will take advantage of coming shifts.

We encourage citizens, organizations, and sector leaders to become enthusiastically engaged in the city's renewed and open process.

This is the fourth in a series of columns from Reimagine Peterborough, a citizen-led movement to invite the incredible potential within our city to come together to create, share, and engage on a city plan for a brighter future. Join and follow us on our Facebook page, Twitter, or reimagineptbo.ca