

Council endorses plans for future boundary expansion, growth

For immediate release (Feb. 4, 2025) – Orillia Council took significant steps toward shaping Orillia’s future growth and development during a special meeting of Council on Feb. 4, 2025. Decisions included setting a minimum average density target for strategic growth areas and advancing policy directions for the City’s new Official Plan.

“This is a pivotal moment for Orillia. By setting clear density targets and forward-thinking policies, we are laying the groundwork for a vibrant, sustainable future — one that supports growth while preserving the unique charm and character of our city. This is just one of the first steps in a long process, but these decisions will help ensure that future generations have the opportunity to live, work, and thrive in Orillia,” said Mayor Don McIsaac. “Throughout this process, open communication has remained a top priority. We value the input we’ve received and are committed to ongoing, constructive dialogue with our neighbouring communities.”

Boundary Expansion

What Was Approved: As part of its boundary expansion planning process, Council approved the establishment of a minimum average density target of 47 units per net hectare. At the same time, Council also decided to seek 195 gross developable hectares through the municipal restructuring process to expand Orillia’s municipal boundary to accommodate growth to the year 2051 and beyond.

The approved density target means that Orillia will grow more efficiently within its current boundaries, reducing the footprint of new development while maintaining a small-town feel. This also reduces the amount of land originally identified within the surrounding municipalities of Severn and Oro-Medonte as potential areas for a future boundary expansion.

The process to finalize the boundary expansion involves ongoing collaboration with neighbouring townships, Simcoe County, and Indigenous communities.

“The boundary expansion process is a long and complex journey,” said Katy Modaressi, Director of Development and Infrastructure Planning. “With Council’s direction, our next step is to prepare detailed maps identifying the best lands for expansion. These maps will undergo public consultation and further technical analysis before being finalized. Full implementation, including the municipal restructuring process, will take several years to complete, and we remain committed to keeping our residents and neighbours informed and engaged every step of the way.”

Next Steps: The City’s consultants will now begin Phase 3 of the Technical Land Evaluation, identifying the most suitable areas for the boundary expansion. The findings will be presented to the public for feedback before final approval.

Official Plan Review

What Was Approved: Council endorsed in principle the 31 policy directions outlined in the Stage 2 Policy Directions Report for the Official Plan review and update. These policies will shape Orillia’s growth, covering housing, transportation, climate resilience, and more.

Next Steps: The first draft of the Official Plan, incorporating the endorsed policy directions, will be presented to Council later this year, with adoption targeted for 2026.

How to Stay Involved

Residents and other interested parties will have opportunities to share their input as the City continues with this process. A public open house will be held to review draft maps for the boundary expansion, and additional updates will be shared on the City's website and through public communications.

Sign up to receive updates by email as both projects progress at orillia.ca/OfficialPlan.

Background

Since 2021, the City of Orillia has been undertaking a comprehensive review of its Official Plan and evaluating future land needs to accommodate projected growth through 2051. This process has included a detailed Land Needs Assessment, technical land evaluations, and extensive public consultation to determine the best approach for growth within the City's boundaries and the potential for boundary expansion.

For more information on the Official Plan and boundary expansion processes, including answers to frequently asked questions, visit orillia.ca/OfficialPlan.

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