



VISION WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT



MAY 24, 2012

Introduction

The City is initiating **Shaping Stratford**, its Official Plan review and update. To kick off the public consultation process, a Vision Workshop was held on Wednesday, May 16th 2012, between 7:00 – 9:00pm, in the Tim Taylor Lounge of the Rotary Complex at 353 McCarthy Road. The Vision Workshop was the second of five public sessions, following a statutory public meeting on March 26th, and was a key component of this important planning program. The event was attended by approximately 20 residents.

The Goal: The goal of the Vision Workshop was to consider how to update the City's Vision and Guiding Principles as a basis for shaping the community's future to the 2031 planning horizon. The Vision and Guiding Principles are a key input to the development of the City's Official Plan update. To achieve this Goal, those in attendance were asked to share views for a vision and related principles for future of Stratford. This included offering ideas on creating great neighbourhoods; economic development; a network of natural heritage, parks and open space; main streets; locations for intensification of development and affordable housing – as well as identifying other issues and concerns. This input is intended to help the City understand preferred Official Plan policy directions for consideration in the fall of 2012.

The Event: Following an introductory overview presentation, the session was highly interactive. Participants were invited to share their views through group discussions which were reported back at the end of the session. For those unable to stay for the whole session, comment sheets were available.

Alternative Opportunities for Input: Your input is important. If you were not able to attend the Vision Workshop, you can also share your views online – please visit the Shaping Stratford website at www.shapingstratford.ca. The website will also provide you with additional information on the study and allow you to add your name to the study mailing list.

Further information on Shaping Stratford may also be obtained by contacting:

Ms. Barbara Dembek
Director of Building and Planning
(P) 519-271-0250, ext. 221
(F) 519-569-8643
Email: shapingstratford@city.stratford.on.ca

Note: Information will be collected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

Agenda

The Vision Workshop was conducted in the following format:

- Doors Open and Display Panel Viewing (7:00 – 7:15pm)
- Introductions (7:15 – 7:20pm)
- Top Priorities Exercise (7:20 – 7:25pm)
- Project Presentation (7:25 – 7:45pm)
- Vision Workshop Exercise Introduction (7:45 – 7:50pm)
- Vision Workshop Exercise (7:50 – 8:30pm)
- Reporting Back (8:30 – 8:45pm)
- Results of Top Priorities Exercise and Concluding Remarks (8:45 – 9:00pm)

Project Presentation

A digital version of the Project Presentation is available on the Shaping Stratford website at www.shapingstratford.ca.

Top Priorities Exercise

The Top Priorities Exercise was conducted at the onset of the Vision Workshop. Participants were each provided with a post-it note and a pencil, and were asked to briefly identify their top three priorities for the project. The exercise took approximately 5 minutes to conduct, after which responses were collected, synthesized, and presented back at the conclusion of the Vision Workshop. The following points summarize the key priorities identified (in no particular order):

- Enhance Market Square, and consider conversion of the space to a pedestrian plaza;
- Improve sidewalks and walkability throughout the City;
- Provide more cycling routes and make the City more bicycle-friendly;
- Expand the City's public transit system;
- Improve vehicle circulation and provide additional parking in the downtown area;
- Retain existing green spaces and expand the City's open space network, providing new trails for walking and cycling;
- Create a healthy and safe environment for local residents, in all respects;
- Create a truly intelligent and advanced city with high tech infrastructure and industry, re-establishing the City's role as one of the world's most intelligent communities;
- Ease accessibility to services and shops, particularly in the downtown area;
- Achieve social, environmental and economic sustainability;

- Balance the need to provide shops and services for tourists and local residents;
- Preserve heritage buildings and the heritage character of the downtown and other historic areas of the city;
- Limit the height of new buildings in the downtown and ensure that new buildings respect the city's heritage character;
- Provide mixed-use development in the form of intensification and infill;
- Create complete communities where residents are close to shops, schools, parks, and transit;
- Ensure the continued vitality of the downtown core; and
- Maintain a strong and diverse economy.

Vision Workshop Exercise

A digital version of the Vision Workshop Exercise is available on the Shaping Stratford website at www.shapingstratford.ca. Your input is important. If you were not able to attend the Vision Workshop, please complete this online exercise to help shape the community's future to the 2031 planning horizon, on which the Official Plan will be based.

The Vision Workshop Exercise began with a review of the City's existing Official Plan Vision Statement. Keeping this in mind, participants were asked to conduct a series Visual Preference Surveys, which asked participants to work in their groups to indicate their visual preference for a variety of topics including:

- Low-Rise Mixed-Use Buildings (including 3 to 5 storeys);
- Low to Mid-Rise Residential Buildings (including single detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, walk-up apartment buildings, and apartment buildings);
- Streetscape Treatments (including on-street cycling lanes, wide sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, street trees, cafes, on-street parking, and crosswalks);
- Open Space Treatments (including playgrounds, urban plazas, waterfront views, mid-block connections, natural trails, year-round activities, public art, and accessibility); and
- Sustainability (including bioswales, permeable paving, naturalized parking with bioswales, naturalized landscapes, bicycle parking, "green" buildings, green roofs, and solar panels).

Once the Visual Preference Surveys had been completed, participants were presented with an open ended question asking for their thoughts on how the City's current Vision Statement should be updated, while keeping the discussions and priorities developed through the Visual Preference Surveys in mind. Lastly, participants were presented with another open ended question, asking for any other ideas, thoughts or concerns they may have which should be considered as part of the Official Plan review.

Participants in the Vision Workshop were organized around four round tables. Each group worked together to complete the Vision Workshop Exercise. A note taker and presenter were designated by each group to present their findings to the larger group at the end of the workshop. The following points summarize the key ideas and priorities of each group:

Group One: Group One gave top priority to mixed-use buildings in the neighbourhood of 3 to 4 storeys, which make use of materials such as brick and spandrel, with window proportions respecting Stratford's heritage context, while placing less priority on buildings in the neighbourhood of 5 storeys or greater, or those which make significant use of materials such as stucco. The group had a neutral stance on the provision of structured parking.

The group gave priority to single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings and townhouses in the neighbourhood of 2 to 3 storeys. The group had a neutral stance on the use of other housing typologies including walk-up apartment buildings and apartment buildings. The group also gave a higher priority to buildings with a more traditional and subtly contemporary design which make use of materials such as brick, wood and stone, while placing less priority on more modern buildings which make use of materials such as vinyl siding and large expanses of window glazing.

The group placed a high priority on all streetscape treatments, with the exception of on-street parking lanes, to which it had a neutral stance.

The group placed a high priority on playgrounds, waterfront views, natural trails, year-round activities, public art and accessibility. The group had conflicting opinions on mid-block connections, citing concerns over implementation.

The group placed a high priority on solar panels, bicycle parking, "green" buildings, "green" roofs, and natural parking and landscapes. The group had a neutral stance on the provision of bioswales, and cited concerns about the maintenance of permeable paving treatments.

Group One provided no formal comments regarding revisions to the City's existing Vision Statement, but indicated it should be made more concise.

Group Two: Group Two gave priority to mixed-use buildings in the neighbourhood of 3 storeys, which make use of such materials as brick, wood, and concrete, with window proportions respecting Stratford's heritage context, while placing less priority on buildings in the neighbourhood of 4 storeys, or those which make use of such materials as spandrel, metal siding, and stucco, or those with a more modern architectural character. The group also placed a high priority on the provision of structured parking.

The group gave priority to single-detached dwellings and townhouses in the neighbourhood of 1 to 2 storeys, while having a neutral stance on semi-detached dwellings in the neighbourhood of 3 storeys, and placing less priority on walk-up apartment buildings and apartment buildings in the neighbourhood of 4 to 6 storeys. The group placed a priority on buildings with a less significant focus on garages and parking, and prioritized buildings which made use of materials such as brick and wood, placing less priority on buildings which make use of materials such as stone, vinyl siding, or large expanses of window glazing.

The group placed a high priority on all streetscape treatments, with the exception of on-street parking lanes, to which it gave very little priority.

The group placed a high priority on all open space treatments, including playgrounds, urban plazas, waterfront views, mid-block connections, natural trails, year-round activities, public art and accessibility.

The group placed a high priority on all aspects of sustainability, including bioswales, permeable paving, natural parking and landscaping, bicycle parking, “green” buildings, “green” roofs, and solar panels.

The group indicated that the City’s existing Vision Statement should be made more concise, while concentrating on strengthening the downtown core, increasing density, making amenities available downtown, and making Stratford more walkable and bicycle friendly.

Group Three: Group Three placed a high priority on mixed-use buildings in the neighbourhood of 3 storeys, which make use materials such as brick, and which fit within Stratford’s heritage context. The group placed less priority on more contemporary and modern buildings in the neighbourhood of 3 to 5 storeys, which make use of materials such as metal siding, stucco, or large areas of window glazing. The group placed a high priority on the provision of structured parking.

The group placed a high priority on all forms of low to mid-rise residential buildings, including single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, walk-up apartment buildings, and apartment buildings with heights ranging between 1 and 6 storeys.

The group placed a high priority on the majority of streetscape treatments, including on-street cycling lanes, wide sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, street trees, and cafes, while placing less priority on on-street parking and crosswalks.

The group placed the highest priority on mid-block connections, with a neutral stance on all other open space treatments including playgrounds, urban plazas, waterfront views, natural trails, year-round activities, public art, and accessibility.

The group placed a high priority on permeable paving, natural parking and landscaping. The group had a neutral stance on the provision of solar panels, and gave little priority to bioswales, bicycle parking, “green” buildings, and “green” roofs.

Group Three provided no formal comments regarding revisions to the City’s existing Vision Statement, but agreed it should be made more concise.

Group Four: Group Four gave a priority to mixed-use buildings in the neighbourhood of 3 to 4 storeys, particularly those which complement Stratford’s existing heritage context. The group had a neutral stance on some more contemporary architectural styles, and placed little priority on buildings in the neighbourhood of 5 storeys, or on structured parking, indicating that traffic should be spread out.

The group prioritized single-detached dwellings and townhouses in the neighbourhood of 1 to 3 storeys which make use of materials such as brick and wood, while providing a neutral stance on semi-detached dwellings, and placing little priority on walk-up apartment buildings and apartment buildings in the neighbourhood of 4 to 6 storeys.

The group placed a high priority on wide sidewalks and cafes, with a neutral stance toward the provision of crosswalks, street trees, and on-street cycling lanes, and placing little priority on pedestrian amenities and on-street parking.

The group placed a high priority on urban plazas and accessibility, with a neutral stance on mid-block connections, and natural trails, and placing little priority on playgrounds, waterfront views, year-round activities, and public art.

The group placed a high priority on permeable paving, natural parking and bicycle parking, with a neutral stance toward natural landscapes, and placing little priority on bioswales, “green” buildings, “green” roofs, and solar panels.

Group Four indicated that the City’s existing Vision Statement should be more concise.

Next Steps

The Vision Workshop represents a key part of Stage 1 of the study process, which involves data collection and a review of background material. It will form part of the basis for Stage 2 which focuses on the policy formulation process. For more information, please refer to the Project Schedule, which is available on the project website at www.shapingstratford.ca.