



Staff Report

To: Council

From: Shawn Binns, Chief Administrative Officer and
George Vadeboncoeur, Manager, Planning Special Projects

Meeting Date: December 11, 2024

Report No.: DS2024-154

Subject: City of Barrie Proposed Boundary Expansion -
Receipt of Hemson Joint Land Needs Analysis and Study

Type: Requires Action

Motion No.:

Recommendation

1. That report DS2024-154 *City of Barrie Proposed Boundary Expansion – Receipt of Hemson Consulting Ltd. (“Hemson Consulting”) Joint Land Needs Analysis and Study* be received;
2. That Council receive the Joint Land Needs Analysis and Study Memorandum dated December 6, 2024 prepared by Hemson Consulting for information;
3. That the Township of Oro-Medonte continue to engage with the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator, Hemson Consulting, and the Township of Springwater, the City of Barrie and the County of Simcoe to develop a draft work plan to further review, support, and consider the options identified in the report, and the costs to complete the proposed scope of work;
4. That staff report back to Council with recommended next steps, proposed work plan, and associated costs at the January 2025 Council meeting;

Background

On November 8, 2023, Mayor Nuttall, of the City of Barrie, made a [presentation](#) to the Township of Oro-Medonte proposing a boundary adjustment to address Barrie's need for additional employment lands.

These lands encompass approximately 772 hectares (1,907.65 acres) of active farmland and environmentally sensitive features.

Specific parcels adjacent to the City of Barrie have been previously considered for development. Specifically, on December 4, 2019, the Development Services Committee received a [deputation and planning justification report pertaining to 121 Penenanguishene Road](#) (Item 7a) to consider a mixed use development of the 133 acre parcel. Specifically, the proposal consisted of:

- Residential: single-detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, tri-plex dwellings, mid-rise apartments and condominiums
- Community Uses: Retirement home, Recreation centre, Daycare, retail (coffee shop, medical office) and protected forests, parks, walking/hiking trails and a community garden

The Township supported the proposal for 121 Penetanguishe Road and the request to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a Ministerial Zoning Order. The request for a Ministerial Zoning Order did not materialize. These lands were discussed again with Council at its meeting of February 14, 2024, as outlined in [Report DS2024-017](#).

In early 2024, in response to the City of Barrie's 2023 presentation and proposal, the Township, with support from the County of Simcoe engaged Hemson Consulting to undertake a [Review of Barrie Employment Land Needs](#). The April 2024 review concluded that:

- The City of Barrie has sufficient employment lands as outlined in their Official Plan;
- That the proposed boundary adjustment lands in the Township of Oro-Medonte are not well suited for employment uses, given the distance from existing and developing employment areas in the south, and also due to the presence of an existing adjacent residential area to the west;
- Barrie's existing vacant Employment Area supply, concentrated mainly in southern Barrie, is superior across a number of site selection considerations in comparison to the proposed boundary adjustment lands.

In June 2024, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing assigned the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator to work with the City of Barrie, the Townships' of Oro-Medonte and Springwater, and the County of Simcoe, "to assist the municipalities in developing a mutually acceptable approach to enable growth in the area and achieve local and Provincial priorities such as the creation of housing and opportunities for employment in the boundaries between Barrie/Springwater and Barrie/Oro-Medonte."

To support the Provincial objective of *More Homes Built Faster*, and considering the previous development proposal at 121 Penetanguishene Road, the Township participated with an objective of diversifying its housing stock along the City of Barrie's urban boundary.

The parties suggested, and it was agreed that as a first step, the municipalities should determine if there is a need for additional employment and/or residential land within and around the City of Barrie, the Township of Oro-Medonte, and the Township of Springwater.

In September 2024, the municipalities announced that Hemson Consulting had been engaged to undertake a "Joint Lands Needs Analysis and Study" pertaining to the defined study area to 2051.

The draft study is now complete and is being presented to Council and the public. This initial phase includes a review of existing background studies, Official Plans, the City of Barrie's existing land supply, and a review of the additional land needs of participating municipalities arising from growth forecasted to 2051. The information reviewed will help determine if additional study phases are required. The report is included as *Appendix A*.

Analysis

The following is a brief summary of Hemson Consulting's findings:

- Barrie has sufficient employment lands to meet demand to 2051 with sufficient serviced supply to address medium and long-term needs (p. 21).
- Barrie has a short supply of "shovel ready" lands and/or large parcels that are able to accommodate for the expansion of existing businesses, or for new larger businesses. However, "Barrie is implementing a targeted plan to accelerate the extension of linear infrastructure in key areas within South Barrie to bring to market" (pp 17-21).
- Acquiring additional employment lands outside of Barrie would not address short-term supply issue (p. 21).
- Oro-Medonte has well located employment lands that are in line with the Township's Employment Land Strategy (p. 22)
- Barrie has a limited/weak case for a boundary adjustment in Oro-Medonte or Springwater based solely on the need for employment land uses (p. 48)
- Barrie is challenged in meeting the residential density targets as outlined in its' Municipal Comprehensive Review Document and Official Plan. Historical growth pattern suggests that the density of residential development occurring in the City is not as it was originally anticipated/planned for (pp. 34-43).
- Barrie's rate of housing growth will need to increase to meet the City's Housing Pledge of 23,000 units by 2031 and Long-Term Forecast. The historic rate of growth from 2006-2021 has been 625 units. To achieve this pledge, the City

would require a substantial increase in housing starts, an average of 2300 units per year from 2022-2031 (pp. 34-37).

- Based on Barrie's proposed greenfield development density, and typical suburban greenfield density, it is anticipated Barrie will run out of greenfield land needed to accommodate its planned density or typical suburban density in approximately 2041. It will need between 265 (654 acres) hectares and 630 hectares (1,557 acres) to accommodate its residential and community lands needs (commercial, small scale employment, parks, institutional, etc.). An additional range of 125 (309 acres) ha to 300 ha (741 acres) for employment land needs has been suggested in the context of complete communities in consideration of expansion of Municipal boundaries (p. 48).
- The Township's Official Plan does not contemplate the creation of new settlement areas (pp. 40-43) and the development of residential/community uses adjacent to Barrie would require the need for servicing agreements and associated governance structure should Municipal borders be maintained (p.49).

Two options for future discussion have been outlined:

1. Maintain municipal boundaries
 - Surrounding municipalities to absorb growth
 - Servicing Agreements and potential regional governance model required over time
2. Adjust municipal boundaries
 - Annexation of lands to accommodate the City of Barrie's land needs

Proposed Next Steps

Each Municipal Council is considering the Joint Lands Needs Analysis and Study at their respective Council Meetings on December 11, 2024.

Staff propose the following next steps as a logical progression, to arrive at a decision to either continue with the process or not:

- 1) Staff to review the details and recommendations from the Phase 1 Study.
- 2) Continue to work with the City of Barrie, Township of Springwater, County of Simcoe, the Office of Provincial Land Development Facilitator and Hemson consulting to develop a proposed work plan for further analysis of options for accommodating growth. It is anticipated this work would take into account the following considerations but not limited to:
 - recommendations for any further studies to satisfy the determination of needs and associated timing of needs as well as environmental, suitability, and servicing.
 - public and stakeholder consultation as well as financial impact analysis.
- 3) Prepare an Options Report for Council's consideration at its' January 2025 meeting.

- 4) Seek Council's direction/confirmation to continue to participate in facilitated discussions with the City of Barrie, Township of Springwater and the County of Simcoe at the January meeting.

Financial/Legal Implications/ Risk Management

Cost to the Township to complete the *Review of Barrie Employment Land Needs* (April 2024) was approximately \$10,000.

The Township's share of the Joint Land Needs Analysis and Study – Summary of Stage 2 Findings (December 6, 2024) cost is \$10,600.

Corporate Strategic Priorities

- Financial Sustainability
- Well Planned Development
- Employment Lands
- Community Engagement and Trust

Attachments

Appendix A – Hemson Consulting – *Joint Land Needs Analysis and Study – Summary of Stage 2 Findings*

Conclusion

The Phase 1 *Joint Lands Needs Assessment and Study* has been completed by Hemson Consulting to address the City of Barrie's request for additional land and is being presented to Council for information. The study concludes that Barrie appears to have sufficient employment lands to meet its needs, however, additional land will be required in the future in the Barrie, Springwater Oro-Medonte area for residential and community use purposes. Hemson Consulting has also made recommendations with respect to further analysis and studies that could be undertaken as part of a second phase of review, which will be subject to further review and decision. According to Hemson Consulting, this concludes Phase 1 of the Hemson Consulting assignment. Before proceeding to Phase 2, Council is required to decide if it wishes to participate further. A staff report with recommended next steps, proposed work plan and associated costs will be presented for Council's consideration and direction at the January 2025 Council meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

George Vadeboncoeur,
Manager, Planning Special Projects

December 6, 2024

Shawn Binns
Chief Administrative Officer

December 6, 2024

Approvals:

Date of Approval:

Brent Spagnol, Director, Development Services

Dec. 3, 2024