

Council focusing on block plan study areas

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King council is allocating more money, and resources, into developing the Nobleton and King City Block Plan Study Areas. Councillors also approved staff recommendations to create a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) to help with the Township's planning framework for approving development and site alterations within these study areas. Core areas of Old King Road in Nobleton, and Doctors Lane in King City, are being considered for short- and long-term redevelopment. Staff believe it's important to develop policies for these areas to implement a 'community vision.' Designating them as study areas will streamline the application review process. A CPPS has benefits both for the municipality and for the applicants. The CPPS combines development application processes, which streamlines the application review by undertaking the review once instead of multiple times where the application requires both a Site Plan Development Application and a zoning process, either a Zoning Bylaw Amendment Application or Minor Variance Application. Public consultation and approvals, both from council and the Committee of Adjustment, lengthen the application review process. Should the Township choose to do so, approval authority for CPPS permits can be delegated to staff and there is no requirement under the CPPS for a public meeting or hearing as extensive consultation occurs through the development of the CPPS Official Plan policies and bylaw. Further, a CPPS has its own review timelines under the Planning Act with CPPS permits to be issued by the municipality within 45 days, in contrast to 90 days for a Zoning By-law Amendment Application, 30 days for a Minor Variance Application and 60 days for a Site Plan Development Application, which aids in increasing the efficiency of the review while allowing both the Site Plan Development and zoning processes to occur. The CPPS also reduces the risk of appeals as only the applicant can appeal an application refusal, and there are no third-party appeal rights with a CPPS, similar to a minor variance application. Staff said the application process through a CPPS can also be more transparent and predictable as the approval process can be written directly into the CPPS bylaw and can detail everything from the complete application requirements to the approval process to what conditions may be required. With a CPPS the parameters and variations are clear, specific, and transparent. The CPPS bylaw also encourages community building as the bylaw can specify items of value to the community such as affordable housing, design guidelines and landscape features that can be required within the CPPS Area. CPPS can address environmental protection, tree retention and removal, and site alteration. This allows a CPPS to be specific to ensure that the vision for the area is implemented, but also builds in flexibility through variation and conditions so that development is not stifled. A CPPS allows for the planned vision and priorities of the community to be established up front to provide more certainty in the development review process. The CPPS provides an opportunity to guide the long-term redevelopment of the lands within the Study Area to ensure that community and municipal goals are achieved for these strategic lands within the Village Cores. Staff will develop the CPPS for both Nobleton and King City study areas, undertake studies, traffic and parking assessments, and coordinate a public consultation program. This will include open houses, SpeaKING page and postings, community workshops in person, hybrid and/or virtual, and a progress presentation to council. Staff will report to council in the fall, to provide a status update on the Block Plan Studies and the work towards the development of the CPPS. There is currently an approved budget under Growth Management Services for a Block Plan Study for Doctors Lane for \$100,000. To address the additional scope for the Nobleton Lands and efficiencies to combine both projects it is recommended to increase the budget by \$100,000 for a total of \$200,000. This would be funded by the Surplus Land Reserve Fund, which currently has a balance of \$1,519,386.