

Draft community plans in King City, Nobleton, taking shape

By Mark PavilonsEditor

Following a series of well attended public open houses, Township staff have presented a draft report on two neighbourhood plans. Staff shared details of studies for both King City (Doctors Lane) and Nobleton (Old King Road) with councillors recently. The lands are comprised of key portions of the Core Areas within the vicinity of Old King Road in Nobleton and Doctors Lane in King City, as well as municipally owned lands in proximity to the cores. The lands within the Study Areas include a number of prominent buildings including identified cultural heritage resources, and lands have potential to be redeveloped in both the short and long-term. The project is an exciting opportunity to create forward-looking plans that will support place-making, provide necessary community facilities to support complete communities, and facilitate growth in the Township's priority areas. In Nobleton, the Municipal lands within the Study Area have already been subject to decisions from Council. The Old King Road Study Area includes the Dr. William Laceby Community Centre & Arena and the Nobleton Lions Community Park, the latter of which is subject to a redevelopment strategy which was presented to Council in March 2023. The Old King Road Study Area also includes the Nobleton Community Hall which was confirmed by Council to be retained by the Township in its present location as a property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Dillon Consulting was retained in the fall of 2023 to assist with the development of the Doctors Lane and Old King Road Neighbourhood Plans Study and the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS). The studies looked at everything from neighbourhood plans, water and sewers, parking, tree inventory and heritage. The Doctors Lane and Old King Road Neighbourhood Plans Study and the development of the implementing CPPS has been structured as five (5) phases. Phase 3 of the Project is being initiated now and will conclude in Q4 with the preparation of the draft neighbourhood plans, which will be the first opportunity to visualize a strategic and comprehensive vision for the development and enhancement of each Study Area. The conceptual Neighbourhood Plans consist of graphics, images, and maps that identify an approach to the development or re-development for the areas. Phase 3 will include additional consultation sessions to encourage original, creative and imaginative ideas and feedback on the conceptual Neighbourhood Plans. Consultation opportunities will include public open houses, focus group workshops, stakeholder interviews and a meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is comprised of Staff from internal departments and external agencies, including the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), York Region and Metrolinx. Following additional public consultation, the conceptual Neighbourhood Plans will be finalized to provide a roadmap that guides the development of the CPPS and contributes to the creation environment. The aim is to present the concept plans and studies to council for endorsement this November. For each Study Area an in-person focus group meeting and an in-person public open house was held within the respective Study Areas. The focus group meetings included a presentation on the Study, walking tours of the Study Areas with the Project Team, and collaborative activities to discuss the vision, opportunities and constraints for the Study Areas. The public open houses were structured as drop-in sessions with opportunities to ask questions of the Project Team, and provide comments and ideas related to the vision statements for the study areas, and preliminary opportunities and constraints. Both focus group meetings had over 25 attendees, and each open house had over 50 attendees. A survey on the draft vision statements was shared via the SpeaKING project page, which received 15 responses, and written comments on the draft vision and ideas for the Study Areas were received from 14 members of the public. The draft Background Review and Directions Report provides an overview of the Study Areas, the CPPS system in Ontario, a best practices review, key directions based on an analysis of the preliminary constraints and opportunities, an overview of the general structure of a CPP Bylaw and next steps. The Report is currently a draft, and is intended to evolve as the key themes for each Neighbourhood Plan Area are discussed and refined. Based on the consultation that has occurred to date, key themes have been heard for each Study Area. For Doctors Lane, recommendations included prioritizing pedestrian connectivity; promoting mixed uses; encouraging diverse housing types and enhancing gathering places. For Old King Road, top suggestions included prioritizing commercial and retail uses; mixed use developments; improving traffic and safety and preserving the natural heritage. Staff noted the key themes for each Study Area are similar, but how they are realized and incorporated into the conceptual Neighbourhood Plan for each area may be different based on the characteristics of each village and its needs, opportunities and constraints. The draft Report also sets out key directions and next steps, which recognize that the decision to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plans and a CPPS recognizes that deliberate action and new tools are needed to support the redevelopment of the Study Areas. Council gave staff the go-ahead to proceed with more public consultation, drafting the

plans and bylaw and a further presentation to council.