

# NOTLRA Advisory Committee

## Meeting Summary

March 30, 2025 | Niagara-on-the-Lake

### 1. Official Plan (OP) Review

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The committee reviewed a report analyzing the Final Draft Official Plan (March 13, 2026), with a focus on advocating for stronger Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) language and identifying gaps relevant to the Town's long-term growth framework.

#### Growth Targets & Settlement Areas

- 4,600 new units and a population of approximately 29,000 targeted by 2051
- Growth is overwhelmingly concentrated in Glendale, which is projected to reach 15,000 residents — the largest portion of NOTL's population
- Virgil is nearly built out; remaining land is limited to parcels off Concession 6 and Line 2
- A 389-unit development on Concession 7 is currently under construction — the first of several large Glendale projects
- High-density residential (apartments) is anticipated around the Glendale mall area
- The 2019 OP similarly projected ~28,000–29,000 population by 2040, suggesting consistent long-range planning assumptions

#### Glendale Secondary Plan — Notable Absence

- Despite Glendale accounting for most projected growth, the Glendale Secondary Plan does not appear to be included in the draft OP
- The OLT has now confirmed approval of the Glendale Secondary Plan — the appeal barrier is resolved
- This absence should be raised directly with planning staff: there is no longer a legal reason to exclude it
- The committee noted that leaving it out creates potential confusion and risk for developers

#### Affordable Housing

- Draft OP targets: 20% affordable rental housing, 10% affordable ownership
- Definition of 'affordable' remains vague — income-based but not clearly defined in the plan
- Ownership affordability loosely equated to sub-\$500,000 units by committee members
- Key concern: CMHC grants have been terminated and federal funding clarity is still pending
- Historical issue flagged: affordable housing funding has carried 10-year limits — after which rental units could potentially convert to condos, defeating the intent
- Developers have stated they find rental construction unattractive given low (~4%) returns; subsidies are essential to making it viable
- Vince is tracking available government grants and subsidies; government clarification is still outstanding

#### Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs)

- ADUs are now provincially mandated — applicants meeting bylaw requirements will receive approval
- Applies broadly, though heritage district applicability was noted as a potential nuance to clarify
- ADUs are expected to contribute meaningfully to long-term rental housing stock
- Short-term rental of ADUs is not permitted

### Tree Canopy

- Current tree canopy coverage: approximately 18%; target is 30%
- Gap is largely attributable to NOTL's dominant agricultural land base — vineyards and farm fields are not counted in canopy metrics
- Cassie Burns (Climate Adaptation Coordinator) has been tasked with a natural assets inventory, which should include tree canopy mapping
- Opportunity identified: concession and line roads could accommodate tree planting with appropriate spacing (50'+ for vineyard air circulation); external funding from private organizations and banks may be available
- Potential conflict with irrigation infrastructure in roadside ditches was noted

### Environmental Language — Section 7

- Committee members flagged that 'shall' language in the previous OP was weakened to 'may' — this was raised by Seniors for Climate during the last cycle
- Two instances of 'can' in the CPPS strategic pillars section (environmental leadership; streetscape/active transportation) were changed to stronger language ('should/shall') during the meeting

### Cash-in-Lieu of Parking

- Cash-in-lieu of parking provisions remain in the new OP but enforcement has been inconsistent historically
- A recent commercial expansion (Royal George area) was flagged as an example where cash-in-lieu should arguably have applied to newly developed land but did not
- Revenue collected goes to general revenue rather than being earmarked for parking infrastructure — a structural concern

### Council Structure

- Council has approved a reduction from 8 to 6 councillors; provincial approval is pending
- The reduction is viewed by some as a compromise in the context of potential municipal restructuring
- A discussion on ward vs. at-large representation was raised as a potential election issue — pros and cons noted but no committee position taken

## 2. CPPS Advocacy — Status & Strategy

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The CPPS remains the committee's primary advocacy objective for embedding into the Official Plan before adoption.

### Current Status

- Stuart had a meeting with Nick on the morning of March 30 to discuss arranging a meeting with Aimie

- A text exchange followed but the outcome was not yet confirmed at meeting time
- Nick's response to Peter Neumayer's name being raised was positive — he indicated the idea was well-received
- The committee confirmed: staff engagement (Aimie and Nick) must precede any delegation to Council

### The Ask

- Amend the Final Draft Official Plan to designate NOTL's five urban communities as priority areas for CPPS implementation
- Include a defined timeline for that implementation following OP adoption
- Current draft language is weak ('may implement') — the committee's position is that it should read 'shall implement' with a committed timeline
- CPPS has been on the books for years but is barely referenced in the current draft

### April 14 Committee of the Whole

- The April 14 Committee of the Whole – Planning meeting was discussed as a potential presentation opportunity
- Suggested framing: acknowledge the Town's work on the OP, then make the case for embedding CPPS with a defined implementation timeline
- This presentation approach to be confirmed with Aimie and Nick before proceeding

### Municipal Comparators

- Approximately 50 municipalities have now implemented CPPS — many within the last year, signalling a growing movement
- Lincoln was noted as a municipality many assumed had a CPPS but does not — a useful corrective data point
- This momentum should be framed as context in any presentation to staff or council

## 3. Document Management & Committee Operations

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### Document Repository

- A request was made to establish a document folder within the NOTLRA website for committee materials
- Working documents to be posted on the internal C2 committee page
- Final, approved documents (post-presentation) to be posted on the public-facing NOTLRA page
- David to implement; committee to identify which documents should be uploaded and in what order

### OP Section Assignments

Members were assigned OP sections to review and provide preliminary comments on by March 31:

- Tony: Sections 3.13 (Mixed Use), 3.14, 3.15, and 3.16 (Conservation)
- Others: Commercial areas (3.12) and other sections as self-selected
- Bob Bader (Governance Committee) flagged as a resource — has reviewed portions of the current OP and may provide additional input

## Meeting Cadence

- Placeholder meetings to be set every two weeks going forward
- Next meeting: April 10 (placeholder — confirm if needed based on progress)
- April 1: Board meeting — CPPS meeting with Aimie/Nick to be raised and actioned

## AI Tools — Noted by Committee

The committee discussed the use of AI tools in document preparation. The CPPS report was acknowledged as being AI-assisted (Claude Pro). Other members noted using ChatGPT, Gemini, Co-Pilot, and Perplexity for various tasks. Gemini was noted for its graphics and rendering capability. The importance of fact-checking AI outputs was reinforced.

## 4. Action Items

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Action Item	Owner	Deadline
Submit preliminary OP section review comments	All assigned members	March 31
Compile member input and circulate to committee	Peter / Norm	April 1
Raise CPPS meeting with Aimie/Nick at board meeting	Peter (board)	April 1
Arrange and confirm meeting with Aimie and Nick re: CPPS	Peter / Stuart	ASAP
Post working documents to C2 internal site	David	Ongoing
Identify final documents for public NOTLRA website posting	Committee	Post-approval
Follow up with Steve Archer re: Glendale Secondary Plan exclusion	Committee lead	Before April 14
Confirm April 10 placeholder meeting is needed	Peter	April 7
Prepare/refine CPPS presentation for Aimie/Nick meeting	Brian / David	Before meeting