

**REPORT #:** PLN-2025-50  
**DATE:** 21-Oct-25  
**TO:** Committee of the Whole  
**SUBJECT:** Recommendation Report  
Official Plan Amendments for Part 1: Intensification First  
Growth Management Strategy to Official Plan to 2051  
**PREPARED BY:** Mana Masoudi, Planner

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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That Report PLN-2025-50 regarding "Adoption of Official Plan Amendments for Part 1: Intensification First - Growth Management Strategy to Official Plan to 2051" be received;

That Council accept and endorse the contents of Report PLN-2025-50 regarding the recommended effect of the written submissions received and the oral submissions made at the statutory Public Meeting of September 9, 2025, on Council's decision;

That Official Plan Amendments for the Part 1 Growth Management Strategy be adopted for:

1. intensification of lands located within settlement area boundaries;
2. the Major Transit Station Area and Bridge Street Corridor;
3. Highway 400 Employment Lands; and
4. Employment Land Removal Criteria.

And that staff present the necessary by-laws for adoption of the Official Plan Amendments at its next available meeting.

**2. STAFF REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

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- Presents the final Part 1 Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) for adoption, implementing the first phase of the Town's Growth Management Strategy (GMS) to 2051.
- Updates Official Plan policies within the existing settlement boundary to advance an intensification-first growth approach consistent with the PPS 2024 and SCOPA 7.
- Establishes policy frameworks for the Major Transit Station Area, Holland Street Strategic Growth Area, and Employment Areas to support compact, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development.
- Reflects input from agencies and the public through refinements to density, height, and employment conversion policies

### 3. BACKGROUND:

Land use planning in Ontario is governed by the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13* (the Act), which establishes the framework for the provincial land use planning system. The Act also provides for matters of provincial interest which must be addressed in municipal planning decisions.

The Act requires municipalities to adopt an Official Plan (OP) that sets out the goals, objectives, and policies needed to guide and direct land use decisions. The Act mandates that municipal OPs and any decisions or advice on planning matters have regard to matters of provincial interest, be consistent with provincial policy statements, and conform with provincial plans. Section 26 of the Act requires municipalities to review and update their OPs on a regular basis to ensure ongoing consistency and conformity with applicable provincial policies and plans.

The Town’s current OP, adopted in 2021 and in-effect since 2023, was prepared using a 2031 planning horizon in accordance with the provincial and County policy framework then in force.

Subsequent amendments to the provincial and county policy framework have extended the planning horizon to 2051 and updated population and employment forecasts among other planning considerations. Accordingly, on June 25, 2024, pursuant to section 26 of the *Planning Act*, the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury (the Town) initiated an update to its OP by way of a two-part Growth Management Strategy (GMS) to update its OP policies so that it is reflective of a 2051 planning horizon.

Part 1 of the GMS updates the Town’s OP policies to reflect current provincial and County requirements in relation to accommodating growth within the Town’s existing settlement area boundary. Part 2, as the next step in the GMS, will evaluate and identify appropriate locations for the expansion of the settlement area boundary, or future secondary plan areas, and incorporate the resulting policies into the OP.

This report presents the proposed Part 1 Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) as recommended by the Town’s consultant WSP Inc., for Council’s consideration and adoption.

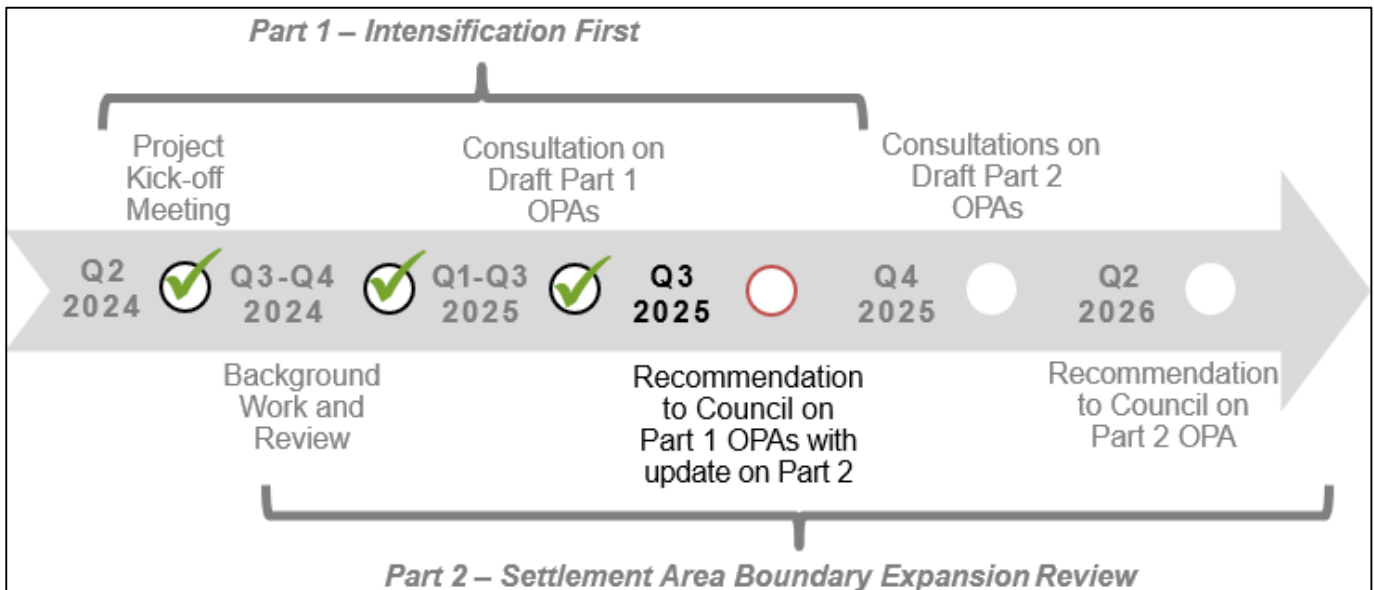


Figure 1- Town GMS Project Timeline

### **3.1 - Purpose And Intent Of Part 1 Official Plan Amendments**

Guided by the *Planning Act*, the *Provincial Planning Statement, 2024*, the Simcoe County Official Plan and the adopted Simcoe County Official Plan Amendment No. 7 (SCOPA No. 7), the Town is planning to accommodate a forecasted population of 83,470 people and 30,900 jobs by 2051. This represents increases of approximately 39,000 residents and 19,000 jobs from 2021.

To support this planned growth, the Part 1 OPAs focus on policy modifications to the areas within the existing settlement area boundary and advance an “intensification-first” growth strategy. This approach directs residential intensification to key transit nodes within the Town’s settlement area, while establishing policies to protect and optimize designated employment lands to accommodate the anticipated job growth. Collectively, these amendments are consistent with and conform to applicable Provincial and County policy direction. More specifically, the purpose and intent of the Part 1 OPAs are to:

- Delineate the boundaries for a *Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)* around the Bradford GO Station and establish a framework to accommodate 12,800 residents and jobs at a minimum density of 150 residents and jobs per hectare in the MTSA;
- Identify and establish boundaries for the Holland Street West Strategic Growth Area (SGA) to promote the redevelopment of the Town’s main street;
- Establish the Holland Street Mixed Use Corridor to guide the transformation of the corridor west of Professor Day Drive into a more pedestrian-oriented community;
- Introduce Town-wide policies to support residential intensification, including an updated target directing 42% of new housing to the existing Built-Up Areas;
- Establish new employment conversion criteria to protect existing employment lands; and,
- Redesignate additional lands along Highway 400 from “Employment Reserve” to employment uses in order to meet projected employment needs to 2051.

The proposed policies in support of the Part 1 OPAs were informed by technical analyses prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson), retained by WSP Inc. to provide growth forecasts, land needs assessments, and related background information to guide the policy directions. In collaboration with WSP and Town staff, Watson prepared three technical background reports that form the foundation for the draft policies advanced through Part 1. A summary of the findings of this technical work is included in ***Attachment 5.1 - the Recommendation Report*** prepared by WSP Inc. in support of the Part 1 OPAs.

The remaining attachments include the draft OPAs and associated schedules. Staff have reviewed the WSP Inc. recommendation report and are satisfied that it provides an appropriate basis for the proposed amendments. This staff report provides a summary of the recommendation report prepared by WSP Inc., endorses its findings and accordingly recommends that Council adopt the Part 1 OPAs.

### **3.1 - Legislative And Policy Framework**

As noted above, and in accordance with the *Act*, any proposed policies or amendments to the Official Plan must have regard to matters of provincial interest, be consistent with the *Provincial Planning Statement, 2024*, and conform with applicable provincial plans. For the Town, this includes the *Greenbelt Plan, 2017*, the *Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2008*, and *South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan, 2015*. As a lower-tier municipality, the Town’s OP must also conform with the County of Simcoe Official Plan, including the County adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 7 (SCOPA 7).

Attachments 5.1 (pages 5-6) provide detailed analysis of how the proposed Part 1 OPAs demonstrate consistency and conformity with these requirements. For the purposes of this report, staff confirm that the OPAs have regard to matters of provincial interest, are consistent with the *Provincial Planning Statement*, conform with the aforementioned applicable provincial plans and the County of Simcoe Official Plan. On this basis, staff endorse the Recommendation Report prepared by WSP Inc. and recommend that Council adopt the proposed Part 1 OPAs.

**3.2 - Public Engagement And Consultations**

In accordance with Section 17(15) of the Act, the preparation of an OPA requires consultation with the approval authority, prescribed public bodies, and the public. The Act further requires that relevant information and materials be made available to the public, and that at least one statutory public meeting and one open house be held for an OPA prepared under Section 26. The Town exceeded these minimum statutory requirements through a comprehensive consultation process undertaken in support of the Part 1 OPAs, as summarized below.

<b>Consultation Type</b>	<b>Planning Act Requirement</b>	<b>Town of BWG Action</b>
<b>Approval Authority Consultation</b>	The approval authority must be consulted during the preparation of an Official Plan or OPA and provided with supporting and prescribed information and material. (s.17(15)(a))	Staff consulted and met with Staff from the County of Simcoe throughout the preparation of the Part 1 OPAs and provided them with all supporting and prescribed materials for review and comment.
<b>Public Body and Agency Consultation</b>	Prescribed public bodies must be consulted and provided an opportunity to review all prescribed information and materials. (s.17(15)(b))	Draft materials were circulated to prescribed public bodies, including conservation authorities, utility providers, Metrolinx, and Indigenous communities, for comment. Meetings were held to discuss feedback where appropriate.
<b>Public Information and Accessibility</b>	Adequate information and material, including the proposed plan, must be made available to the public in an accessible manner. (s.17(15)(c))	Draft OPAs and supporting reports were posted on the Town’s project webpage and made available in print in accordance with the <i>Planning Act</i> and Town notification procedures.
<b>Public Meeting</b>	At least one statutory public meeting must be held to allow public representations on the proposed plan. (s.17(15)(d))	A statutory public meeting was held on September 9, 2025, to receive public comments on the draft OPAs.
<b>Open House</b>	Where an OPA is prepared under Section 26 or relates to a Community Planning Permit System, at least one open house must be held. (s.17(16))	Five open houses were held throughout the Part 1 OPA process, including a comprehensive open house on August 21, 2025.

For additional details on these consultation efforts including the feedback that was received please refer to page 16 of Attachment 5.1.

### **3.3 – Modifications To Part 1 OPAs and Consideration Of Public Submissions**

Building on the consultation activities summarized in the previous section, the following section outlines how feedback received from agencies, stakeholders, and the public informed revisions to the draft Part 1 OPAs and how these revisions align with the Town’s overall growth-management objectives.

The Part 1 OPAs update the Town’s Intensification and Employment Area policies to establish a clear framework for directing and managing growth over the long term. These updates align with the County of Simcoe and the Province by defining where and how development should occur and by setting clear standards for evaluating any future requests to remove lands from designated Employment Areas. The policies also protect lands essential for supporting employment and housing opportunities, enabling the Town to manage growth that efficiently uses land and resources and coordinates development with existing and planned infrastructure and services.

Employment Area policies were a key focus of public and agency feedback during consultation. Several landowners within designated Employment Areas requested that their lands be removed from the employment designation. The Part 1 OPA process does not include the redesignation of site-specific Employment Area lands requested by landowners. The policies were developed in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, the County adopted SCOPA No. 7, and the findings of the Watson Employment Land Needs Assessment, all of which emphasize protecting strategically important employment lands to accommodate forecasted job growth.

Any future requests for redesignation must be advanced through a separate planning process supported by detailed technical studies and planning justification to the satisfaction of the Town and relevant review agencies. For more detail regarding the background and policy work informing the development of the OPAs please refer to pages 7 to 9 of Attachment 5.1.

In accordance with Section 17(23.2) of the Act, Council is required to provide a brief explanation of the effect, if any, that written and oral submissions from the public had on its decision regarding an Official Plan Amendment (OPA). This section fulfills that requirement by summarizing how feedback received through the consultation process informed the Part 1 OPAs through the following table. A detailed record of all submissions and resulting modifications is provided in Attachment 5.1, including pages 10-23 of the attachment.

<b>OPA Topic</b>	<b>WSP Revisions</b>	<b>Staff Comment</b>
Holland Street West Strategic Growth Area (SGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarified that no density cap applies within the SGA;</li> <li>• Expanded boundary to include compatible lands;</li> <li>• Removed 3-storey height minimum for commercial uses to support viability and flexibility</li> </ul>	Staff support the revisions as they enhance clarity, maintain commercial viability, and better align with the Town’s intensification objectives.
Employment Area Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added preamble for context;</li> <li>• Refined conversion criteria for consistency with the PPS, 2024 and Watson’s Employment Strategy recommendations.</li> </ul>	Staff concur that the revisions strengthen policy alignment and reinforce protection of employment lands for long-term job

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced two sets of criteria for employment removal criteria:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ one set applying to lands deemed Employment Areas, in accordance with the PPS 2024 definition, and</li> <li>○ one set applying to employment supportive lands which include a wider range of employment and employment supportive uses and generate jobs but do not meet the scoped definition of Employment Area in the PPS 2024.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>growth in consistency with the PPS.</p>
<p>MTSA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced policy enabling the Town to consider a future Community Planning Permit System (CPPS);</li> <li>• Confirmed that MTSA boundaries remain within the 800 m “walkshed” of the GO Station despite requests for expansion.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff support the revisions, which maintain alignment with Provincial direction on transit-supportive planning while providing flexibility for future implementation tools.</p>

Attachment 5.6 to this report contains additional information regarding comments received through consultation on the Part 1 Official Plan Amendments that are the subject of this report.

Town staff have reviewed and concur with the recommendations advanced by WSP Inc., finding the proposed Part 1 Official Plan Amendments:

- Have regard to matters of provincial interest;
- Are consistent with the *Provincial Planning Statement, 2024*; and,
- Conform to the County of Simcoe Official Plan including the adopted Simcoe County Official Plan Amendment No. 7.

As a result of the above, staff recommend that Council adopt the proposed Amendments to the Town Official Plan.

**3.4 Next Steps And Conclusion**

Should Council adopt the Part 1 Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), staff will bring forward the requisite bylaw for Council’s approval. After adoption, a Notice of Adoption will be issued in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act. As the County of Simcoe is the designated approval authority, the adopted OPAs will be forwarded to the County for review and decision. Once the County issues its decision, an appeal period will apply in accordance with the Act.

**4. ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Part 1 OPAs implement the first phase of the Town’s Growth Management Strategy and align the Official Plan with the Planning Act, PPS 2024, and SCOPA 7. The amendments establish a policy framework that supports compact, transit-oriented growth and the protection of employment lands essential for long-term economic development. Staff are satisfied that the proposed policies and revisions prepared by WSP Inc. conform with provincial and County planning direction,

respond appropriately to public and agency input, and provide a clear basis for managing growth within the Town's existing settlement boundary to 2051. The policies position the Town to accommodate forecast population and employment growth in a sustainable, coordinated manner consistent with regional infrastructure and servicing capacity.

**5. EFFECT ON TOWN FINANCES:**

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Costs associated with Part 1 of the Growth Management project are covered through the capital budget for the Town's Official Plan Update project, addressing growth management to the year 2051.

**6. RELATION TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

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The proposed Phase 1 Amendments to the Town's Official Plan as part of the 2051 growth management project are related to multiple priorities of Council's 2022-2026 term, including those that fit within the themes of: Community Safety and Traffic Congestion; Economic Development; and Downtown and Urban Renewal.

**7. ATTACHMENTS:**

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- Attachment 5.1: Part 1 Recommendation Report
- Attachment 5.2: Official Plan Amendment for Residential Intensification
- Attachment 5.3: Official Plan Amendment for MTSA
- Attachment 5.4: Official Plan Amendment for Employment Lands
- Attachment 5.5: Official Plan Amendment for Employment Criteria
- Attachment 5.6: Comment Response Matrix

**8. STAFF REPORT APPROVAL:**

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<b>APPROVAL</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Prepared By: Mana Masoudi, Planner	October 10, 2025
Reviewed By: Alan Wiebe, Manager of Community Planning	October 12, 2025
Reviewed By: Mahesh Ramdeo, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer	October 14, 2025
Reviewed By: Ian Goodfellow, Director of Finance/Treasurer	October 15, 2025
Approved By: Geoff McKnight, Chief Administrative Officer	October 15, 2025