

Business Focus Group Workshop

September 13th, 2021
Engagement Summary

BRAMPTON PLAN



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Public Workshop

1.1.1 Purpose

On Monday September 13th, 2021, from 8:00 am to 10:00am, a Business Focus Group was held for the City of Brampton Official Plan Review focusing on Brampton Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Official Plan Review project and Employment and Retail and Growth Management discussion paper directions. It was also an opportunity to collaborate and engage in open discussion to address the key themes related to the City's draft Official Plan Structure. The event was organized as follows (see Appendix A – Meeting Agenda):

Part 1 - Introduction and Housekeeping: Indigenous land acknowledgement; introductions and welcome statements. City staff reviewed the meeting objectives.

Part 2 - Presentation: City staff provided an overview of key Official Plan drivers, structure maps, and key ideas from the Employment and Retail and Growth Management Discussion Papers.

Part 3 - Discussion: Series of Questions were posed and discussed on topics related to affordability, mobility, goods movement, child care and quality of life.

Part 4 - Next Steps: Moving forward and other ways to provide feedback.

Consultation materials available online at the following link:

<https://www.brampton.ca/EN/City-Hall/Official-Plan/Pages/Engagement-Recaps.aspx>

1.2 Meeting Overview

1.2.1 Meeting Details (Venue, # of Attendees, Meeting Participants)

Approximately 36 Brampton Board of Trade members and 6 City of Brampton Staff attended the Focus Group Meeting that was hosted on Microsoft Teams. Comments were received through the Microsoft Teams chat box and answered during the discussion period. Five (5) major questions and areas were explored during the session:

- a. **Affordability** – Are your employees able to find affordable housing? Are there other affordability issues facing your employees?
- b. **Getting Around** – How convenient is it for your employees to get to work? How do the majority of your employees get to work? Do your employees primarily come to work from Brampton or outside of the City?
- c. **Goods Movement** – What issues are you encountering pertaining to goods movement?
- d. **Child Care** – Are your employees able to access quality child care?
- e. **Quality of Life** – Is Brampton delivering the kind of quality of life that your employees are looking for or that you need to attract talent? What feedback have your employees given on Brampton's lifestyle amenities?
- f. **Other Issues** – Is there anything currently affecting your business or employees that Brampton's Official Plan could assist with or alleviate? Is there anything else that is top of mind?

1.3 Outreach

The meeting was promoted and organized with the support of members of the Brampton Board of Trade and City of Brampton Economic Development staff.

KEY THEMES



Affordability



Getting Around



Goods
Movement



Child Care



Quality of Life

The key messages related to these themes are further detailed in Section 3 of this report.

3 Key Messages Heard

3.1 Affordability

- Jobs are expected to increase significantly but there is only 10% of land left – what are the jobs/industries that are anticipated to come/where will they go?
- Are employees able to find affordable housing? Most staff cannot find affordable housing in Brampton. Cost of housing and condo is unaffordable.
 - Housing Brampton is dealing with affordability in Brampton.
- Where and how will we bring more manufacturing? Office?
- Affordable housing is a concern for office employees - what do we do? How will OP address that? What can be done to make Brampton more affordable?
- What about over-crowding at single family bungalows?
- 2000 international students need to be housed in Bramalea for Trios - how will OP support purpose-built rental housing?
- With growth comes the need of housing. That's a lot of people that will need housing. Housing must be built now.
- If you really want to solve the affordable housing the price of real estate needs to come down and no one wants that.
- How flexible is the Official Plan given potential federal policies coming forward regarding intensification, nimbyism?
 - In line with what we (city) are thinking for Brampton Plan.
- Where will everyone work if Brampton will double their employment with only 10% of employment lands remaining? Where will businesses locate?
 - It's a combination of building out existing lands, intensification
 - Mixed use along transit corridors
- What are the definitions of high, medium and low density?
- Are we still planning to develop the lands around CAA centre? At one point there was a discussion of developing Brampton Golf club as well. Is that still an option?

- Brampton will be built out mid-2040. Our growth trajectory has been behind Mississauga – commercial space /industrial space /jobs. What can be done in this document to influence the future?
- Insurance costs are out of control in Brampton affecting the cost of owning cars. What is being done to address this? As part of giving options of where to work, even within Brampton.
- I see there was a question about insurance costs. Having just having my second not at fault accident by a hit and run driver, high costs is caused by high number of accidents... However I can assure you the industry is working with the government on this. The answer will be “monitoring” your driving habits. By your insurance company there are big savings if people will allow this.
- Adding density around major routes is great but condos are as unaffordable as housing.
- Trios has a large number of international students and finding housing for them is challenging. Is there anything in Brampton Plan that encourages construction of purpose-built rental housing?
 - We have started to put targets in – especially in HH (% of new housing must be purpose built rental/affordable) will start to encourage thresholds for affordable housing.
- How can job-growth be accelerated? There is about 4.4M sqft of office space - 1.7M in office buildings. Compare this to Mississauga 41M square feet. What is the amount of office space needed to compete for high-value business? About 10.5M more square feet - or 82 more 100,000 square foot office towers. What can the OP do to accelerated office development?
- As a landowner, how does this affect me directly? When will we see more detailed plans/policies?
 - This process has already started to influence applications to get more affordable housing built.
 - Folks are referring to 2006 OP – this is why we are conducting this process with much detail.
 - How do you also ensure the plan will be relevant in 10-15 years when the world may change significantly?

3.2 Getting Around

- Any updates/advancements on the Steeles BRT? Steeles BRT? How does that work with Goods Movement? This is a major trucking route.
 - Encouraging that Steeles is being considered for BRT – the study should be completed so it can be prepared for upper level of government funding.
 - Steeles is a corridor the City of Brampton is looking at, alongside staff and Region staff to understand the best future for the corridor. We must have an idea of balance between goods movement and commuters.
- Boulevard type areas – great ideas, usage, community feel etc. – just need them separate from highway so goods/people movement is not impacted. Also safety issues of these are combined.

- We also need to address roads that do not have turn lanes - traffic congestion is also increased by right and left turning cars blocking traffic - Highway 10 from Steeles north to Mayfield is a great example.
- Congestion on Queen; Connectivity between Bramalea and Downtown; Uptown Vs/ Downtown
- The distance between where people live and work is a major crux for employers, especially in the hiring process.
- Streets need flexibility when it comes to congestion. If you are stuck in traffic in Toronto there are things to see. If you are stuck in Brampton, there's nothing from a visibility lens.
- Develop an Employment Area conversion framework - is the intent to convert some employment lands to other uses or vice versa?
 - Employment Area conversion should be rare. If we want to attract jobs we have to have land for them to build.
- My employees drive to Brampton and often don't like it. I set up the ability to work from home 5 years ago. Reason for employee retention. So when COVID hit we closed up the physical office and were back in business within an hour. One employee did move close to a GO line in Georgetown, he and his wife regularly use the GO to get to work.
- There is a massive disconnect between what exists and what supports we are able to provide. We have not done well in attracting local and international assets management firms.
- Clearly define where the employment lands are, and instill very strict policy around employment lands.
- The office issue should be integrated with investment attraction and transit/roads.
- The question assumes that the home location is decided first. I choose talent that lives in a good proximity to the city. It is not just where my employee works; I can't get a good employee because they can't get here.
- How do we ensure incentives for office markets to ensure we are competitive in the mind of investors?
- Sheridan College completed a campus master plan – and through this plan, recognized that the mobility hub needs to be reimagined to accommodate the density on the site.
- When it comes to informing transportation decisions, what data goes into it?
- There is challenges with getting to the industrial nodes, where do we get the data from to inform decision such as Steeles BRT?
 - Transportation planning collection of data, various internal sources, working with internal group.
- What are the plans for traffic, in Downtown Brampton specifically?
 - The different centres are meant to compliment each other – manage transportation movers the best we can. Congestion is not always bad, and is part of the shift which will occur in a growing city like Brampton.
- Make a policy which enables the conversion of employment lands.
- Will OP policy lock employment lands - protect employment land? So that conversion to residential does not occur?
- Are we encouraging home offices in residential development?

- As someone who owns and works in the tech space, many of my employees and colleagues will not go back to a full-time in office model. But having more opportunities for hoteling spaces and virtual offices would be key.
- Many businesses want to come to Brampton – office not available. City is currently working on CIP to attract major office development. Stats this year 500k-750k office in process of development just this year. Positive sign.
- Is there a disconnect between Brampton and other areas in GTA in terms of the types of investment we attract?
- When the City of Brampton's Economic Development Office is working with large international employers, they are looking to attract talent from across the GTA. Transit is critical. Yes, we need office spaces, but we need transit connections. A young tech worker that lives in Oakville needs to be able to use transit to easily get to Brampton.
- Brampton Transit and GO has done their best in the past 10 years to provide transportation for Brampton citizens. Unfortunately it can not keep up with the growth of Brampton as it is dependent upon funding from the province and the federal level. Brampton continues to get inadequate funding to meet the needs. Many employees and students are late for work/class because the buses are full, and they need to wait for the next or two buses.

3.3 Goods Movement

- What sorts of policies are included in the goods movement section in Brampton Plan?
- There is a safety issues and privatively issue – boulevard at 80KM. There needs to be consideration for separation of highway vs. boulevard. Are there not other options to build highway?
- What is being done to expand 410 highway north section from Mayfield south to around Queen? Congestion where highway remains 2 lanes is an issue for people and goods movement?
- Is removal of tolls on 407 the single path that will be pursued for goods movement corridor? And is all of the goods movement traffic on Steeles through traffic or is it also to move within Brampton?
 - Trucks using Steele's vs 407 – Sheridan looking to intensify and the use of trucks on Steeles needs an alternative. Regional connectivity in and outside of Brampton.
- If this is a 30 year vision, are we not including the impact of the 413 and how it will help the movement of goods? In the mixed used areas... will we be looking at adjusting zoning to allow some existing retail to become microfilament centers, a somewhat hybrid of industrial lands for goods to reach the consumer that last mile?
- Is Brampton actively working to displace goods movement from its economic activity? And shift focus to other sources of economic activity?
- Compatible land uses and protection of significant supply chain activities?
- This is a 30-year plan, what can be done now to set the foundation for growth? There is a heightened urgency and a next-level order of magnitude to become comparatively competitive with other jurisdictions? Brampton is playing catch-up. Our growth trajectory

- lags other jurisdictions in Peel and along the innovation corridor” but there are promising signs. Logistics employment growth is leading at almost twice the rate of manufacturing.
- Lack of industrial space in Brampton. We need transit but goods should not be slowed down.
 - Oakville accommodates a highway - it travels through Oakville - Oakville is one of the wealthiest communities in Canada and the 403 highway attracted headquarters such as Aviva, Siemens, and WSIB etc.....We can do that here too! But we don't see flexibility being considered in the plan.
 - Why the choice between "fast trucks" and pedestrian friendly? A wide boulevard becomes a barrier. Practically you cannot or will not walk across a 100m+ road. Have a highway. Have a Boulevard. They do not need to be the same road.
 - Council should ask planning to present a concept plan with the boulevard on Heritage Road. They didn't and therefore investment potential is less attractive.
 - If options are analyzed, show us the analysis.
 - Planning ideologies shouldn't overtake Brampton family incomes.
 - An option could be to raise the highway too. No viable options have been presented to Council.
 - Highway could be in a trench. With walkways over the cut. Options should be investigated. If that has been done, please show us the reports. Watson consultants weren't given the latitude to employment forecast with boulevard on Heritage Rd. That should have been done and presented to Council. New lanes were just opened last week.
 - And the 401 westbound up to Trafalgar and a little past, is already crazy with congestion.
 - If we were thinking about the redevelopment of Uptown, we cannot have all goods movement on Steeles (impact on Sheridan). People are going to changes jobs over their lifetime – Regional connectivity is important. Must consider goods AND people movement between different jurisdictions.
 - Prioritizing the transportation and industrial side of highway will help to unlock industrial development.

3.4 Child Care



- Places of Worship – encourage them to open up their facilities for child care, social services, recreation/quality of life. Some of these spaces are underutilized or vacant for several days of the week.
- Access to child care is restricted and cost is unaffordable. Child care needs to be structured, safe reliable, etc.
- We need to look at affordable solutions and access. Many parents struggle to get to day care or cover the costs or get to day care.
- Is child care zoning more restrictive in Brampton than other areas in the GTA?
 - Allow for the different types of child care, allow for informal and non-traditional child care.
- Brampton Plan should have policies to allow flexibility in different types of child care. Not all parents work 9-5 so the traditional child care centre does not work for them. More informal child care required.

- Parents with children still need to drop off at school (all levels) and daycare - so cars will still be needed.
- City of Brampton's Economic Development Office is looking at access to child care as an economic recovery tool. We are working with the region to see how we can attract more and our colleagues in planning to see what zoning needs to change, and where. Overall, City is looking at making childcare easier for parents/families in Brampton.

3.5 Quality of Life

- Does Brampton Plan consider policies to allow for the creation of post-secondary campuses and/or training facilities?
- Brampton's Vision is ambitious – will be a challenge for the city to consider how all of Brampton's communities are prioritized.
- Growth really needs to be prioritized and when – it cannot be all things to all people. If Uptown is a front runner, it needs to be focused on.
- Brampton Plan must consider where they want people to be/travel to in the city.
- Very exciting outlook, BBOT is well positioned to help the city attract employers to compliment our existing roster of companies and help create the live work ratio required to go along with the population growth.
- The plan includes a comment about "contextualized housing", is that code for giving current residents the ability to veto intensifications in their neighbourhoods?
- Places of Worship are dictated and restricted by Brampton's bylaws. For example, land allocation is based upon number of seats. Maybe we need to look at a mixed functional uses of places of worship, Social services, child care, recreational uses.
- Key to note that the Flood Mitigation has been funded and I believe it's in design. The faster it's designed and construction finishes, the faster the Special Policy Area can be lifted north of Wellington in downtown Brampton. That will help with development and certainty.
- Lifestyle amenities for folks with pets and walkability must be considered in discussion surrounding quality of life. People do not clean after their pets as they do not have enough bins to throw the waste or posts with poop bags.
- Quality of life for pets – accommodating the appropriate spaces for dogs.
- The new downtown office will manage some of these issues. Sept 17 we will be holding a virtual meeting to discuss and take away to hopeful resolve.
- Washrooms in the downtown, needles in the downtown, and issues of safety that may prohibit investment in the downtown should be addressed.
- The downtown accommodates a lot of students and safety is a real concern.
- It is important the city plans for large scale infrastructure projects. Look at these within a long-term plan and how to pay for more these infrastructure projects.
- Brampton Plan is an opportunity to bring people and life back to the downtown.
- The City needs to create a plan for the downtown that considers funding solely within the municipal tax base.
- A lot of home offices only permit one employee and require parking on the driveway – but this is too restrictive and the live work relationship needs to be reevaluated.

- City should look at low-cost, recreational activities that employers will be attracted to for recreation, team development.
- Brampton Plan needs to look at how to get investment into the entertainment sector – there is a perception issue.
- Social services must be examined especially in the context of downtown Brampton.

4 Next Steps

4.1 Upcoming Events

There will be several opportunities to participate in the Brampton Official Plan Review process. One way is to provide your input on a series of Discussion Papers related to the Official Plan, which were presented to the public during three (3) Public Open House meetings scheduled on June 7, 2021, June 21, 2021, and July 26, 2021. Materials, when available, can be accessed by visiting the project webpage and can be found under 'Engagement Recaps'). Public Engagement events, as they are scheduled, and a link to the Brampton Plans surveys, can be found on the project webpage at the link below:

[City of Brampton | Official Plan | Brampton Plan Engagement](#)

Email the City at the email address below to be informed of upcoming engagement events.

opreview@brampton.ca

Appendix A - Meeting Agenda

AGENDA



Title	Brampton Plan: Official Plan Review		
Date	September 13 2021	Time	8am – 10am
Venue	Microsoft Teams		
Purpose	Focus Group Meeting – Business Community		

1) Introduction and Overview of the Agenda

- a. Introductions and Objectives

2) Short Presentation

- a. Brampton Plan

3) Open Discussion

- a. **Affordability** – Are your employees able to find affordable housing? Are there other affordability issues facing your employees?
- b. **Getting Around** – How convenient is it for your employees to get to work? How do the majority of your employees get to work? Do your employees primarily come to work from Brampton or outside of the City?
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- f. **Other Issues** – Is there anything currently affecting your business or employees that Brampton's Official Plan could assist with or alleviate? Is there anything else that is top of mind?

4) Next Steps and adjournment