

Staff Report



To	General Committee
Subject	City Initiated Official Plan Amendment to integrate lands annexed through the <i>Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act (2025)</i>
Date	April 22, 2026
Ward	Wards 1, 3, 4, 5
From	M. Banfield, RPP, Executive Director of Development Services K. Oakley, P.Eng., Acting General Manager, Infrastructure and Growth Management
Executive Member Approval	M. Banfield, RPP, Executive Director of Development Services K. Oakley, P.Eng., Acting General Manager, Infrastructure and Growth Management
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer
Staff Report #	DEV-013-2026

Recommendation(s):

1. That the Official Plan Amendment to integrate lands formerly part of the Township of Springwater as defined through the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Act, 2025* as outlined in Appendix A – Draft Official Plan Amendment No. 6 and Map 2: Land Use Designation (former Springwater) into the Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) as part of Staff Report DEV-013-2026, be approved;
2. That the Official Plan Amendment to integrate lands formerly part of the Township of Oro-Medonte as defined through the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Act, 2025* as outlined in Appendix B – Draft Official Plan Amendment No. 7 and Map 2: Land Use Designation (former Oro-Medonte) into the Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) as part of Staff Report DEV-013-2026, be approved;
3. That the Official Plan Amendment to integrate lands formerly part of the Townships of Springwater and Oro-Medonte as defined through the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Act, 2025* as outlined in Appendix C – Proposed Amendments to Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) Maps into the Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) as part of Staff Report DEV-013-2026, be approved;

4. That the Official Plan Amendment to amend the land use designation of 10 properties within the Built-up Area as outlined in Appendix A, B and C to Staff Report DEV-013-2026, be approved.
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Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to recommend amendments to the Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) to integrate lands annexed through the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act, 2025*. Additionally, revisions are proposed to a limited number of properties within the City's pre-2026 boundary to align adjacent land use designations and better support current development applications.

On January 1, 2026, the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act, 2025* came into effect, transferring 1,673 hectares of land from the Townships of Springwater and Oro-Medonte to the City of Barrie. As the City works to integrate these lands within the City of Barrie Settlement Boundary, policies and mapping require amendment.

Key Findings:

Official plans are used to regulate land use, guide growth and development, while balancing community, economic, and environmental interests. As the lands were formerly part of the Townships of Springwater and Oro-Medonte, an Official Plan amendment is required to designate and include these lands within the City's Official Plan 2051 (May 2024). Through the proposed amendments, uses for the new lands will provide clear direction, which will enable the planning for servicing and next steps for development.

The proposed amendments to the Official Plan set out the vision for the new lands and amend existing policies to reflect the new features of the area. As identified in Appendix A and B changes are proposed to the text of the Official Plan 2051, including:

- Establishing specific management authority and environmental protections for Little Lake. The existing Official Plan sets out development and public interest policies for the waterfront area. As a unique feature, now primarily controlled by the City, amendments are proposed to allow for an area-specific management authority with a mandate to protect and promote those lands around Little Lake for the long-term benefit of residents.
- Permitting, only within Boundary Adjustment lands, the temporary provision of communal services for private septic and water supply where municipal services are not available, planned or feasible to support new development. In recognition of timelines required to extend municipal water/wastewater service to all new lands, where it is appropriate and in the best interests of the City, additional flexibility for servicing is deemed appropriate. Such circumstances

are to be temporary and all capital and operating costs will be the responsibility of the proponent. Connections to municipal services will be required as they are made available, with costs and responsibilities for the future connection being the responsibility of the property owner at that time.

- Extension of the *Designated Greenfield Area* policies to the new lands, to ensure development proceeds in an efficient and coordinated manner. These policies provide certainty to the community in how development may proceed. Further, these existing policies ensure the community is efficiently planned with shared and continuous service infrastructure, road networks, trails and parks. Updates to the City's 'Designated Greenfield Areas' and 'Built-up Area' definitions are further proposed to ensure conformity with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.
- Protection for *Employment Areas* within the Boundary Adjustment area in line with provincial policy changes where setbacks and / or mitigation elements shall be provided and will be the responsibility for any proposed Sensitive Land Use.
- Establishing a policy for the requirement of a buffer generally along the new Settlement Boundary, where appropriate, to allow for protection of existing property owners and a transition to the adjacent Townships.

The Official Plan Amendment assigns land use designations to the lands identified through the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act*. The Official Plan Maps have been updated accordingly to reflect the boundary adjustment and are included as Appendix A, B and C to this staff report. In assigning these land uses, consideration was given to existing uses, adjacent established neighbourhoods, natural heritage features and the City's long-term employment and community needs. No new designations are introduced through this amendment. Refinement to the limits of designations may occur through future, site specific redevelopment applications in accordance with the Official Plan and applicable planning processes.

Amendments to 10 properties within the Built-up Area are proposed to address land use alignment at the interface between the former and expanded City limits, with targeted adjustments made where appropriate to better reflect existing land uses and to provide the opportunity for supportive, compatible land uses to develop within this area. These amendments are intended to align adjacent uses and support current development applications. As amended in Appendix 'C' Map 2 – Land Use Designations, 418, 428, 436, 444 and 445 Blake Street, 406 and 416 Georgian Drive, 247 and 256 Steel Street and 138 Penetanguishene Road are proposed to be redesignated from 'Neighbourhood Area' to the 'Commercial District' and 'Community Hub' designations. These changes support institutional-related development and ensure consistency and continuity of land use designations across properties located along and adjacent to the former municipal boundary.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications for The Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation.

Alternatives:

The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 – General Committee could maintain the existing policies and land use designations of the Township of Springwater Official Plan (1997) and Township of Oro-Medonte Official Plan (2022) (i.e. Status Quo).

This alternative is not recommended as the *Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act (2025)* was enacted to address a demonstrated need for additional Community and Employment land within the City of Barrie. Implementation of the boundary adjustment is contingent on establishing Official Plan policies supporting redevelopment and long-term growth. Retaining township Official Plan designations and policies would limit the ability for timely and coordinated growth and not support the effective implementation of the boundary adjustment lands.

Alternative #2 - General Committee could maintain existing land use designations on the 10 parcels proposed for amendments within the Built-up Area while approving only the proposed amendments to the Boundary Adjustment lands.

This alternative is not recommended as the amendments within the Built Boundary are proposed to improve alignment between land uses at the interface with the Boundary Adjustment lands and, in some instances, support active development applications on the subject properties.

Alternative #3 - General Committee could direct staff to change the designation of site specific properties.

This alternative is not recommended. The proposed Official Plan Amendments have been developed using best practice land use planning principles and have incorporated feedback through the Public Engagement process. The recommended designations and mapping provide the planning framework that supports infrastructure master planning, redevelopment, and the delivery of Community and Employment lands to meet demonstrated City needs. Further site-specific adjustments can be considered through future development applications, as appropriate.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report are related to the goals identified in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.

Affordable Place to Live	X	Planning for community and employment areas ensures that there are sufficient lands available to 2051 to support job creation and to build housing.
Community Safety		
Thriving Community	X	The application of existing land use designations to new City lands supports long term needs for employment and community lands while protecting greenspaces and natural heritage features.
Infrastructure Investments	X	Setting land use designations for the new boundary lands will allow for infrastructure master planning work to occur, the first step to provision of servicing the new lands.
Responsible Governance	X	Ensuring municipal planning documents are brought up to date with new boundary lands through a publicly informed process.

Consultation and Engagement:

Open House

City staff hosted an Open House on April 8, 2026 to share draft Official Plan mapping and associated policy direction for the new lands. The Open House provided an opportunity for property owners, stakeholders, and the public to review proposed land use designations and policy approaches and to provide feedback in advance of the statutory Public Meeting. Comments included:

- Requests for site specific amendments to the proposed Natural Heritage Designation
- Confirmation that employment areas are to be protected
- General requests for clarification on the Planning process and how the City plans for the area to develop
- Questions regarding timing for development and infrastructure
- Support for the planning process being undertaken

Public Meeting

A public meeting was held for the proposed Official Plan Amendments on April 15, 2026, at Affordability Committee. In response to the notice of an Open House and Public Meeting staff received a number of written submissions for consideration and one oral presentation by a property owner. Staff have considered the feedback and provide a general summary below.

A matter raised by interested parties from the public was the impact of the proposed natural heritage designation on individual properties. Staff have reviewed and provided comments to those individual parties in all instances, with

justification for the mapped features. Refinement has been made to the draft mapping as presented in attachments to this report, or staff have identified existing policies and review standards where natural heritage features may be refined through a development application. A response has been provided to all letters and inquiries explaining options for property owners.

The pace of the Official Plan Amendment Process was raised as a concern. Some residents raised concerns that the pace that the City had proceeded with in the boundary adjustment had not allowed them to fully understand how their lands and area were expected to change over time. These comments have generally been addressed in consultation between property owners and staff when the process and planning timelines have been shared.

Protections for *Designated Employment Areas* emphasized. Throughout the Joint Land Needs Assessment and Boundary Adjustment consultation, an emphasis has been placed on the need for additional Employment Area and Community Lands. Staff, with regard for this demonstrated need, have sought to designate the boundary adjustment land to address these needs. Further emphasis has been placed on protection for Employment Areas in line with recent changes through PPS 2024 to ensure that employment areas remain for specified employment uses without encroachment from sensitive land uses.

Allowing for transitions to adjacent communities. Through the Boundary Adjustment process, concerns were brought forward from Township residents and the municipalities seeking a buffer between the new City Boundary and adjacent established rural and agricultural uses. As part of this process, the City has accepted the value and need for this transition area and will support creation of such Buffer Lands where appropriate in allowing for a transition from the urban to rural landscape.

Environmental and Climate Change Impact Matters:

The City of Barrie Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) has significant regard for Climate Change, Resilience and Environmental Protection. The proposed Amendments seek to maintain those policies and extend existing protections over the new lands including the Little Lake Park feature.

Appendix:

Appendix A – Draft Official Plan Amendment No. 006 and Map 2: Land Use Designation (former Springwater)

Appendix B – Draft Official Plan Amendment No. 007 and Map 2: Land Use Designation (former Oro-Medonte)

Appendix C – Proposed Amendments to Official Plan 2051 (May 2024) Maps:

Map 1 – Community Structure
Map 3 – Natural Heritage Protection Overlays
Map 4a – Mobility Network (Alternative Transportation Networks)
Map 4b – Mobility Network (Road Classification)
Map 5 – Right-of-Way Widths
Map 6 – Greenspace Network
Map 7 – Drinking Water System Vulnerable Areas
Map 8 – Cultural City Features
Appendix 1 – Conservation Authority Areas

Report Author:

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File #:

D30-005-2026

Pending #:

Not Applicable.