

# STAFF REPORT



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**To:** Mike Pilon, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Samantha Willock, Municipal Planner

**Subject:** Official Plan Project Phase 3 – Zoning By-law Process

**Date:** December 2, 2025

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## **Executive Summary:**

This report provides an overview of the process for Phase 3 of the Official Plan Project, being the update to Zoning By-law 2014/45, to ensure the steps taken align with Council's intentions.

Council direction is being sought on two items:

1. The process outlined by this report; and
2. Instead of undertaking a comprehensive update to the Zoning By-law, repealing and replacing it with a new by-law, which will have no impact on project timelines, costs, process, or scope.

## **Official Plan Project Overview:**

The Official Plan project began in spring of 2024, when Council awarded the RFP for the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Update to Planscape and SGL. The project was twofold: complete a comprehensive review of the Official Plan to ensure consistency with applicable policy, and to update the Zoning By-law to ensure conformity with the new Official Plan.

The project has been broken down into four phases, as outlined below:

*Phase 1 – Background Review/Study* was completed December 2024.

*Phase 2 – First Draft Official Plan and Public Project Introduction* – is underway and substantially complete. Outstanding phases 2 tasks were broken down in depth in the October 21<sup>st</sup> staff report.

*Phase 3 – Zoning By-law Preparation and Consultation* – has begun and is broken down in detail later in this report.

*Phase 4 – Refinement and Finalization of the Updated Official Plan and Zoning By-law* – will begin once all public meetings for the Official Plan and Zoning By-law have occurred, and the final documents are ready to be adopted.

### **Phase 3 (Zoning By-law Update) Process:**

The proposed process for phase 3 is outlined below:

#### **1. Planning Advisory Committee Meeting to Discuss Key Themes – January/February 2026**

Prior to a redline revision of the Zoning By-law being prepared, a Planning Advisory Committee meeting will be held to discuss big items which have a broad impact on multiple regulations. Having this discussion before a redline amendment is prepared will avoid the duplication of work should the revised regulations not align with PAC's direction. Depending on the number of planning applications in these months, this discussion may be an agenda item on a regular meeting, or a special Planning Advisory Committee meeting may be held.

Key themes would include:

- Replacing the R1 and R2 zone with a low density residential zone
- Introducing new commercial zones
- Regulations for additional residential units
- Home occupations/ home industries
- Trailers and special vehicle parking

#### **2. Staff Report to Council on PAC Recommendations – February 2026**

Following the PAC discussion, staff will prepare and present a report that summarizes PAC's recommendations on the key themes. At this meeting, Council would have an opportunity to proceed with PAC's recommendations, provide alternative direction, and/or identify additional considerations they would like considered.

#### **3. Version 1 of Draft Amendments – March 2026**

In accordance with the direction provided by Council and the Planning Advisory Committee, the consultants will prepare a redline amendment document showing the proposed changes to the zoning regulations.

#### **4. Planning Advisory Committee Review of Version 1 – March/April 2026**

Once the redline amendment is prepared, a special Planning Advisory Committee meeting will be held to review and discuss the proposed new and amended regulations.

#### **5. Council Review of Version 1 – March/April 2026**

Following the Planning Advisory Committee's review, a special Council meeting will be held to review and discuss the first version of the proposed amendments. Given tight project timelines, PAC recommendations will likely be provided verbally by staff, not as a comprehensive summary report.

As an alternative to separate discussion, the PAC and Council review can be done as one special Council meeting by inviting the 3 Planning Advisory Committee members at large to participate. This would allow all Councilors to hear PAC's recommendations and may ease project timelines. This combined meeting approach was used when Zoning By-law 2014/45 was created.

#### **6. Version 2 of Draft Amendments to Council for Review – April 2026**

The draft regulations will be updated in accordance with Council and the Planning Advisory Committee's direction. Version 2 will be brought to Council for review prior to proceeding with public consultation. Should significant changes be required, the proceeding timeline may be delayed to accommodate further revisions.

**7. Public Open House – April/May 2026**

As per section 34(12) of the Planning Act, a public open house must be held prior to the passing of a by-law. The open house will follow the same format as the Official Plan open houses. Presentation boards will be around the room for the public to view and ask questions to staff and consultants. The consultants will give a brief presentation on the process and key changes, then provide a question and answer period. Only one open house is proposed, to be held in Council chambers. If Council wants to add an additional open house(s), it would cost an additional \$4000/day beyond the initial project budget.

**8. Planning Advisory Committee Review of Public Consultation – May/June 2026**

The consultants will prepare a report providing a summary of all public comments received to date and the consultant's response (i.e., recommended revisions, justification for regulations, etc.). PAC will be presented with this report and any revised regulations that the consultants prepare based on public input.

**9. Staff Report to Council with Engagement Summary and PAC Input – June 2026**

Council will be presented with the engagement summary document and PAC's recommendations on revising the proposed regulations. It is intended that Council would make any final comments on the proposed regulations at this meeting.

**10. Version 3 of Draft Amendments – June/July 2026**

Version 3 of the regulations would be prepared as per Council's direction.

**11. Special Council Meeting for Statutory Public Meeting – July 2026**

As per section 34 of the Planning Act, a special Council meeting will be held to allow the public to make representations in respect of the proposed by-law regulations. Notice of the public meeting will be posted in the newspaper in accordance with the legislative requirements, as well as on the municipal website.

**12. Version 4 – Final Regulations – July/August 2026**

Any minor revisions arising from the public meeting will be made and the document will be formatted for Council adoption.

**13. Council Adoption – July/August 2026**

The timing of the adoption will depend on the Official Plan; the by-law can be adopted at the same meeting as the Official Plan or at a later meeting, but cannot precede the Official Plan adoption.

**Public Consultation:**

Members of the public will have multiple opportunities and methods for providing their input on the new regulations. There are two meetings where residents can ask questions and voice their opinions; the open house in April/May and the special Council meeting in July. To ensure public awareness of these meetings, notice will be posted in the newspaper, on the municipal website, on social media, and will be emailed to those subscribed to the project update emails.

All versions of the draft regulations and supporting documents will be made publicly available on the Official Plan and Zoning By-law project webpage. This page includes multiple resources such as a commenting form, staff contact information, methods of submitting comments, and how to subscribe for email updates.

The public can provide comments throughout the entirety of the project via email to staff or [officialplan@westnipissing.ca](mailto:officialplan@westnipissing.ca), using the comment form, or in written form submitted in person.

Throughout the duration of this process, internal staff departments such as public works, building, and emergency services will be consulted to ensure the proposed regulations align with their policies and requirements. External agencies will be notified and consulted in accordance with legislation.

### **Comprehensive Amendment or Repeal and Replace Considerations:**

The current Zoning By-law was adopted in July of 2014. Since its adoption, there have been numerous significant changes to policy and legislation at the provincial level. The new provincial requirements and policy directions have been incorporated into the new Official Plan, and now the Zoning By-law needs to be updated to reflect those new priorities.

The update to the Zoning by-law was initially presented as a comprehensive amendment, however staff and the consultants are recommending that By-law 2014/45 be repealed and replaced with a new Zoning By-law. The statutory requirements for a new zoning by-law and a comprehensive amendment are the same, so taking this approach will not impact the process, timelines, or project costs.

By adopting a new Zoning By-law, it will have a new number (i.e., 2026/xx), signaling to the public that it reflects current priorities and recent policy changes. Repealing and replacing the existing by-law also eliminates the need for a comprehensive amendment, which requires extensive documentation of every wording and formatting change. These notations can make the by-law difficult to read. The consultants will still prepare a redline version for Council and the Planning Advisory Committee, but the adopted by-law will be cleaner and free of amendment notes.

### **Statutory Process:**

Zoning By-laws are regulated by Section 34 of the *Planning Act* and relevant notice requirements are regulated by O.Reg.545/06. The regulations that pertain to updating the Zoning By-law are summarized below.

26(9) – Zoning by-law must be updated within 3 years of a new or revised Official Plan

34(12) – Before amending the Zoning By-law:

- sufficient information and material must be made available to the public
- one public meeting where the public can comment on the proposed by-law must be held
- one open house must occur where the public can review and ask questions about the information

34(13) and O.Reg. 545/06 – Notice must be given to the prescribed persons, public bodies, and residents by posting in the newspaper or on the Municipal website

34(14) – Open House must occur at least 7 days before the public meeting

34(14.1) and 34(15) – Public notice must occur at least 20 days before the public meeting

34(14.2) – All attendees of the public meeting must be given an opportunity to speak

34(14.5) – Appeal rights must be made available at the public meeting

34(15) – Information on the proposed regulations must be sent to public bodies that may have an interest in the project at least 20 days before the by-law is passed

34(17) – If changes to the proposed regulations occur after the public meeting, Council shall decide if further public notice is required

34(18) – Within 15 days of the by-law being passed, notice of its passing shall be sent to those that submitted a written request to be notified of the decision.

34(19) – Within 20 days of the notice of passing, specified persons, public bodies and property owners that submitted written comments or spoke at the public meeting can appeal the by-law to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

**Conclusion:**

Phase 3 of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law project, being the update to the Zoning By-law component, is underway. Before proceeding with the steps outlined in this report, staff are seeking Council's acceptance of this process. Further, Council concurrence is needed to proceed with replacing by-law 2014/45 with a new zoning by-law instead of undertaking a comprehensive amendment.

**Prepared By:**

Samantha Willock, Municipal Planner

**Attachments:**

None

**Reference Material:**

[Planning Act, RSO 1990, as amended](#)