



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared by: G. Beggs, Director of Planning & Development

Department: Planning & Development

Date of Report: February 3, 2025

Report Number: PD-02-2025

Subject: Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan Adoption

Recommendation

That the report of the Director of Planning & Development, dated February 3, 2025 (PD-02-2025) regarding the Official Plan Amendment and updated Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan be received;

And that a By-law to approve the Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (OPA No. 2) to include the Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan in the Town of LaSalle Official Plan be adopted;

And that OPA No. 2 be forwarded to the County of Essex for its review and approval in accordance with the Planning Act.

Report

Background

The purpose of Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (Attachment 1) is to incorporate the Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan (Secondary Plan) policies and corresponding land use schedules into the Town of LaSalle Official Plan. In addition to the Secondary Plan, there are a series of Town-wide Official Plan Amendments being recommended, to help streamline the development approval process and bring the existing Official Plan into conformity with updated legislation.

The development of the Secondary Plan has been a collaborative approach between The Planning Partnership, a team of subconsultants, and Town Administration. The Secondary Plan being presented has been guided by three key elements: sustainability, high-quality development, and maximum growth forecasting/phasing. The process has been informed by supporting background studies, public consultation, landowner aspirations, and Council direction, all rooted in sound planning principles.

The Secondary Plan provides policies and an implementation framework that is intended to guide development and provide detailed directions on land use,

infrastructure, transportation, parks and open space and the natural environment beyond the general policies provided in the current Official Plan (2018). The Secondary Plan balances multiple interests and provides appropriate direction so that future development contributes to the Town's broader Official Plan objectives and strategic goals.

The Town's Official Plan promotes LaSalle as a healthy, vibrant and successful community. In support of that objective, the Town's Official Plan articulates six fundamental planning principles. These guiding principles were used as foundational elements to develop the Secondary Plan goals, policies and objectives. The guiding principles include:

- A Complete Community
- A Viable Community
- A Beautiful and High-Quality Community
- A Healthy Community
- A Sustainable Community
- A Resilient Community

The Secondary Plan is supported by the following statutory Schedules:

- Schedule F1 – Howard Bouffard Land Use Plan;
- Schedule F2 – Howard Bouffard Natural Heritage System; and
- Schedule F3 – Howard Bouffard Roads and Active Transportation Plan.
 - The transportation and active transportation network illustrated in Schedule F3 is supported by the Town's approved Transportation Master Plan and further reinforced by the updated work completed by LEA Consulting to rationalize the proposed network given current growth projections.

The Secondary Plan is supported by the following non-statutory Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Design Guidelines
- Appendix 2: Stormwater Management Plan
 - Stormwater management and flood inundation have been significant hurdles preventing development in Howard Bouffard. The outcome of the Howard Bouffard Master Drainage Study Environmental Assessment approves a solution that addresses both issues, facilitating development with recommended improvements to the ultimate storm outlet. The Stormwater Management Plan, integrated into the Secondary Plan, relies on the work and outcome of the Howard Bouffard Master Drainage Study.
- Appendix 3: Terms of Reference - Technical Studies

The preparation of the Secondary Plan is supported by the following non-statutory background studies:

- The Technical Report: Natural Heritage Assessment, prepared by LGL Limited;
- The Technical Report: Transportation Analysis, prepared by LEA Consulting Ltd.;
- The Howard Bouffard Master Drainage Environmental Assessment, prepared by Dillon Consulting;
- The Town of LaSalle Transportation Master Plan, prepared by WSP.

Implementation of the Secondary Plan, once approved, will be supported by the following tools:

- The Howard Bouffard Zoning By-law Amendment;
- The Wastewater Plant Capacity Allocation Protocol; and
- Other statutory processes, policies, guidelines and agreements under relevant Provincial legislation.

The following table outlines the key milestones, timelines and the process undertaken in the development of the Secondary Plan.

Date / Milestone	Description
April 2023	A report was taken to Council to initiate the Secondary Plan for the Howard Bouffard Planning Districts and to retain The Planning Partnership as the lead consultant for the project.
May 2023	A subsequent report was brought to Council to approve the recommended boundary for the Secondary Plan Area.
July 2023 – November 2023 <i>Landowner Consultation</i>	Over 30 meetings were held between the Town's Administrative Team, the Planning Partnership, and major landowners within the Howard Bouffard Area. The secondary plan process and objectives were shared, and landowner development aspirations were communicated. These meetings helped shape and inform the development of the emerging preferred plan.
September 2023 <i>PlaceSpeak Discussion Forum</i>	An online forum was launched using the Town's civic engagement platform to obtain feedback on the proposed Options 1, 2, and 3. The consultation resulted in 2, 137 views, 72 comments received, and 118 connections made to allow residents to actively follow the project.
First Nations and Partner Consultation	The Secondary Plan was informed by ongoing consultation between both Caldwell First Nations and Chippewa of the Thames First Nations. Ideas were shared and communication about project updates was provided. The County of Essex as the approval authority was engaged in the process and offered commentary at different points in the

Date / Milestone	Description
	project particularly related to the development and delineation of the Natural Heritage System.
December 2023	The Emerging Preferred Plan was brought to Council for review and Council endorsed proceeding with the next steps in the Secondary Plan process.
January 2024 Open House Public Workshops	Two separate workshop sessions were held with members of the public, residents and stakeholders, to hear comments, feedback, and concerns, designed to inform the further development of the Secondary Plan. The workshop included a presentation followed by group table discussions.
October 2024 Statutory Public Meeting	<p>The Statutory Meeting under the Planning Act was held to receive input and commentary regarding the preferred plan, goals, policies and objectives of the Secondary Plan. The meeting was advertised to ensure conformity with the requirements of the Planning Act, including going beyond the notification requirements by issuing notice to all property owners in the Secondary Plan Area.</p> <p>Agencies and partners were also circulated prior to the Statutory Public Meeting and encouraged to provide written comments in response to the Secondary Plan.</p>
February 2025 <i>Council Adoption</i>	This report recommends approval of OPA No. 2 to include the Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan and associated Schedules into the Official Plan, as well as updating existing policies and mapping Schedules where necessary.

Discussion

The Comment-Response Matrix provided in Attachment 2 summarizes comments from the Statutory Public Meeting held on October 29th, 2024, as well as written public comment submissions received, and comments from external agencies related to the draft Secondary Plan. The matrix itemizes each comment and provides a corresponding response that addresses the comment received. Comments were largely focused on the following themes:

- Concerns related to the development of the Natural Heritage System and the identification of Environmental Protection Designation and Feature Assessment / Restoration Overlay; some individuals felt there was not enough natural heritage identified, while others suggested that the system as proposed did not adequately balance development intentions for the Secondary Plan Area.

- The additional policies governing the requirement for non-residential uses within the Mixed-Use Corridor were considered by some to be overly restrictive, suggesting instead that market forces should dictate and drive the need for commercial space.
- Given the pre-zoning approach being used for Howard Bouffard, a number of comments were received related to the pre-zoning of parks and schools and the financial consequences of doing so as it relates to future market value determination and land acquisition.

Modifications to the Draft Secondary Plan

While the Comment-Response Matrix provides a detailed record of each comment and response, not all comments necessitated changes to the plan. Some comments, however, prompted necessary revisions to the draft document. Revisions to the Secondary Plan include:

1. The identification of Specific Policy Area 2 (SPA 2) to address the issue of land use compatibility for proposed development within the 300-meter Influence Area of an existing Class II Industrial Facility. Following the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks D-6 Guidelines, any application for the development of a sensitive land use within Specific Policy Area 2 shall minimize and mitigate potential impacts on the long-term economic viability of the existing on-site employment uses. Additional policies have been added to SPA 2 to trigger the requirement of a Land Use Compatibility Study as part of a development application, necessary to assess the impacts of the proposed sensitive land use on the existing industrial facility.
2. In response to the feedback received regarding the pre-zoning approach for parks and school sites, those areas have been left in the deferred urban zone to not adversely impact the future valuation of those lands.
3. A different approach to the pre-zoning of the Feature Assessment / Restoration Overlay lands was considered, which resulted in leaving these lands in the deferred urban zone. Given that a more detailed and comprehensive Environmental Impact Study is required to better understand these unique features and the potential opportunities associated with these areas, it was decided to defer the zoning of these lands until the municipality can better understand the outcome of that work.
4. The trigger for non-residential Gross Floor Area within the Howard Bouffard Mixed-Use One Zone (HBMU1) and Howard Bouffard Mixed-Use Two Zone (HBMU2) was somewhat modified, while continuing to balance the strong desire that the Laurier corridor evolves as a mixed-use corridor, and specifically not a stand-alone residential corridor:

- Appropriate wording has been added to the Official Plan to clarify what is included within the list of "non-residential land uses".
- The zoning by-law for the HBMU1 zone was modified to reduce the non-residential Gross Floor Area at grade requirement from 60 percent to 50 percent and to ensure that this requirement is only triggered should the site have frontage and access along Laurier Parkway. HBMU2 sites maintain the 25 percent non-residential Gross Floor Area at grade requirement but must also have frontage and access along Laurier Parkway for this policy to be triggered.
- For both HBMU1 and HBMU2 zones, where a site includes multiple buildings, the Town will accept a comprehensive plan that ensures that the aggregate total of non-residential Gross Floor Area at grade equals the minimum prescribed non-residential Gross Floor Area at grade, and, where satisfied, stand-alone residential buildings may be permitted.

Conformity with the Land Use Planning Policy Framework

The following section provides an overview of how the Secondary Plan conforms and is consistent with provincial, regional, and local policies.

Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), 2024

Ensuring that a Secondary Plan is consistent with the PPS guarantees that local development decisions are not in conflict with provincial priorities, upholding the overall vision for land use across Ontario. The PPS, which came into effect on October 20, 2024, is a policy document issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act*. The *Planning Act* requires that Council decisions affecting planning matters “**shall be consistent**” with the policies of the PPS.

The PPS encourages and supports development on lands identified for urban growth in settlement areas. It also establishes that the Town should be supporting and promoting residential development that results in compact built form and makes more efficient use of existing services while offering a range of housing forms/types/tenures to meet the projected demands of a diverse population.

The Secondary Plan is consistent with the PPS in that it supports the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and resources by accommodating growth through intensification and providing a mix of residential, employment, institutional, parkland and recreational uses. The updated PPS emphasizes the importance of planning for people and homes and supporting the achievement of complete communities. The Secondary Plan being recommended proposes mixed-use neighbourhoods that offer a full range of housing, transportation options, and public service facilities to meet the diverse needs of the LaSalle population.

The PPS also recognizes the unique role that Indigenous communities have in land use planning and development, encouraging meaningful early engagement to inform

decision-making. To provide and exchange information regarding the objectives of the Secondary Plan with First Nations, information was initially uploaded to the Nations Connect Portal as a way to engage and connect with both Caldwell First Nations and Chippewa of the Thames First Nations. From there, a series of meetings were held between Administration, LGL Limited and members of those First Nations groups. The overall consultation objectives were to foster and strengthen relationships, share ideas and exchange desired goals and objectives regarding the project. The Secondary Plan has been modified to consider feedback and commentary received from our First Nations Partners.

County of Essex Official Plan (2014) and Official Plan Update (2024)

The Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan Area is located within the 'Primary Settlement Area' as identified on Schedules "A1" and "A2" in the approved 2014 County of Essex Official Plan. The Primary Settlement Area corresponds to the limits of the Town of LaSalle's urban area boundary. Moreover, subsection 3.2.4.1 of the County Official Plan, 2014 states that:

- Primary Settlement Areas shall be the focus of growth and public/private investment in each municipality;
- Primary Settlement Areas shall have full municipal sewage services and municipal water services and stormwater management services, a range of land uses and densities, a healthy mixture of housing types including affordable housing options and alternative housing forms for special needs groups and be designed to be walkable communities with public transit options (or long-term plans for same);
- Cost-effective development patterns and those which minimize land consumption and reduce servicing costs are encouraged. Land use patterns which may cause environmental, heritage preservation or public health and safety concerns shall be avoided.

The Secondary Plan conforms with the County of Essex's Official Plan policies for land within the settlement area and helps to achieve the objectives of the County's Official Plan with targeted policies and direction for land use grounded in sound planning principles.

Employment Lands

The County's recent Land Needs Assessment for the Town of LaSalle, as part of the County Official Plan update, identified the need for roughly 59 hectares of land as appropriate for the accommodation of industrial land uses (employment land employment). There is some employment land element embedded within Howard Bouffard (within the Business Park Designation), however, given the history of Howard Bouffard, and its location and context, the identification of additional industrial lands within the Secondary Plan Area is not considered appropriate. Howard Bouffard's role in accommodating employment opportunities is focused primarily on population-related

employment - retail and service commercial uses and institutional/community uses, including schools.

The identification of the need for additional industrial employment land provides an opportunity for the Town to explore options for an expansion to the existing Urban Boundary, as articulated within policy 4.A.7.3 of the new County Official Plan. This opportunity would explore lands within LaSalle that are appropriate for the accommodation of employment land employment uses, with a focus on locations that have:

- Excellent accessibility and visibility to/from Highway 401 - providing access to regional and international markets; and
- Minimal impact on existing and planned residential neighbourhoods.

Natural Heritage System

The natural heritage features and their associated ecological functions have been identified and protected from development within Howard Bouffard, as supported by the Technical Report: Natural Heritage Assessment prepared by LGL Limited. This background work and technical data were used to compile the Natural Heritage System identified in Howard Bouffard.

The Secondary Plan balances conservation interests and development interests to the extent possible. A bolstered north-south ecological corridor has been created to connect the proposed Ojibway National Urban Park with other important natural heritage features located within the Secondary Plan area.

It is important to note that the proposed Natural Heritage System represents a 113% increase in area over the existing Natural Heritage System identified within the Howard Bouffard Area. Many natural heritage features that were previously identified within the Natural Environment Overlay of both the County's Official Plan (2014) and the Town's Official Plan (2018) are now recognized for Environmental Protection given the supporting work and science completed by LGL Limited.

Where the Environmental Protection Designation is considered, there was a conformity exercise undertaken to ensure that those features in the County Official Plan that are identified for protection maintain the same level of protection in the Secondary Plan. A goal identified in the County's Official Plan is to identify restoration opportunities to help establish linkages and corridors between natural heritage features. In fact, the County Official Plan states that prior to the approval of any local Secondary Plan, the Environmental Impact Study undertaken shall explore the opportunities to restore and enhance the natural heritage features in the area, including the establishment of linkages. The Natural Heritage Assessment completed by LGL Limited includes restoration opportunities within the Feature Assessment / Restoration Overlay to the Natural Heritage System identified in the Secondary Plan. These areas, while not exactly mimicking the restoration areas identified by the County, are generally located adjacent to existing natural heritage features, or link one feature to another to enhance ecological corridors and functions.

Ultimately, the Consultant Team and Town Administration worked collaboratively with the County of Essex Planning Department to develop the policies put forward in the Secondary Plan, specifically related to the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage System. While the new County Official Plan specifies a regional target of 15% natural heritage cover after restoration, the Natural Heritage System identified in the Secondary Plan makes up roughly 33% of the total area within Howard Bouffard. The federal government targets a minimum of 30% natural heritage cover within a municipality, which we have successfully achieved through the Secondary Plan exercise.

Town of LaSalle Official Plan (2018)

The Secondary Plan builds on the guiding principles and objectives within the Town's Official Plan and provides further targeted policies and directions that speak specifically to the needs of Howard Bouffard. Using the fundamental principles established within Section 3.1 of the Town's Official Plan as a guiding framework, the Secondary Plan policies are based on three key elements: sustainability, high-quality development and maximum growth forecast/phasing. These elements are guided by the Town's overarching Official Plan objectives and further refined through the Secondary Plan policy approach.

Implementation Tools

Several implementation tools have been developed to help guide and facilitate development within Howard Bouffard. Given the unique infrastructure and servicing constraints associated with development in this area, it was important to develop tools and appropriate mechanisms to help navigate these area-specific issues through the development approval process.

A new **implementing Zoning By-law** has been prepared and will be advanced following final approval of the Secondary Plan. The **Design Guidelines**, Appendix 1 to the Secondary Plan, are intended to help support the principles and policies of the Official Plan and the Secondary Plan, and guide development within Howard Bouffard. The Design Guidelines encourage the design of a complete, effective, and sustainable built environment consistent with LaSalle's character and vision for the future. All new developments within the Secondary Plan shall be consistent with the Design Guidelines.

A **Wastewater Plant Allocation Protocol ("Protocol")** has been developed to help guide the allocation of sanitary capacity within the municipality in a fair, equitable and transparent manner. Planning for growth requires alignment between land use planning and decisions related to municipal service infrastructure, to ensure that critical municipal services are available to support development.

The Protocol relies upon the statutory authority set out in s. 86(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, which requires the Town to provide wastewater services to development, where there is sufficient capacity available. In LaSalle, proposed development, both within the Secondary Plan Area and through intensification within the rest of the existing Urban Area, has the potential to exceed available plant capacity in the long term. The Protocol is developed to manage capacity until such time as plant capacity can be enhanced.

The Protocol will come back to Council for consideration and adoption, following approval of the Secondary Plan.

Also included as an Appendix to the Secondary Plan is a **Terms of Reference for Technical Studies** document. This document helps to provide advanced scoping related to supporting studies necessary to accompany development applications. The intention is to provide additional information on the list of studies that may be necessary when contemplating a development proposal, including an outline of the purpose, scope and expectations for study completion. The reporting requirements vary in a manner that reflects the scale and/or complexity of the development proposed.

Ultimately, this series of support documents have been developed with the objective of assisting in the implementation of the goals, policies, and directions put forward in the Secondary Plan.

Next Steps

Should Council adopt OPA No. 2, to include the Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan in the Town of LaSalle Official Plan, OPA No. 2 and associated documentation will be forwarded to the County of Essex Manager of Planning for final approval, as the delegated approval authority by the Province. Once the County issues its decision, a notice of decision will be issued and a 20-day appeal period is established.

Any owner of land within the Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan Area that has provided comments to the Town or the County prior to the adoption of OPA No. 2, has the right to appeal all or part of the OPA. Once OPA No. 2 is approved and the appeal period lapses, the Secondary Plan becomes part of the Official Plan and is considered in full force and effect.

Conclusion

The Secondary Plan anticipates long-term growth of up to a maximum of 32,000 people and jobs combined over a 20-30-year horizon. The purpose of the Secondary Plan is to establish a comprehensive land use planning, urban design, transportation and municipal service infrastructure policy framework to guide new development in Howard Bouffard. The Secondary Plan is informed by planning, natural heritage, transportation and engineering experts, as well as a full spectrum of expertise provided by Town staff.

Critical to the future implementation of the Secondary Plan is the importance of existing and future municipal service infrastructure and transportation facilities to support significant urban development. In recognition of these constraints, several implementation tools have been established as part of this overall project to assist with the orderly development of the Howard Bouffard Area.

Having undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the feedback and commentary received, the Secondary Plan has been revised where appropriate, along with a technical review to clarify the intent of various policies and maps. Administration is satisfied that the Secondary Plan is consistent with the PPS, conforms to the County of Essex Official Plan and Official Plan Update, and fulfills the overall direction established

within the Town of LaSalle's Official Plan. Staff recommend that the Secondary Plan be adopted and forwarded to the planning approval authority for final approval.

Consultations

The Secondary Plan was led under the direction of the Planning Partnership and a team of subconsultants, Town Administration, local partners, the County of Essex and various associated agencies. Through public consultations, open houses, the Statutory Public Meeting, individual conversations and meetings, the Secondary Plan has evolved into its current version. A dedicated project website was developed to share information regarding the Secondary Plan and provided a point of contact for those interested in learning more about the project.

Prepared By:



Director of Planning and Development

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Link to Strategic Goals

1. Enhancing organizational excellence - No
2. Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town - No
3. Grow and diversify the local economy - Yes
4. Build on our high-quality of life - Yes
5. Sustaining strong public services and infrastructure - Yes

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan Adoption .docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 Howard Bouffard Secondary Plan.pdf - Attachment 2 Comment-Response Matrix.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 5, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Chief Administrative Officer

Joe Milicia



Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Peter Marra