

January 30, 2025



Mayor and Councillors
Town of Blue Mountains
PDF via Town website

**RE: Committee of the Whole, Meeting of February 4, 2025
Agenda Item B 9: Follow Up Recommendation Report – Official Plan 5 Year Review**

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

The Ontario Headwaters Institute, a charity that promotes watershed security, congratulates elected officials, staff, and others involved in crafting the Official Plan, November 2024. It appears to be an exemplary document that conforms to key aspects relating to the protection of water per the Provincial Planning Statement.

Further to our presentation in October, 2024, we offer the following comments of the Plan, the report on its review, and our presentation on the Municipal Charter for Watershed Security.

1. We note that the Plan lacks direction on how the Town will integrate key functions. For example, strong elements on stormwater run off are not linked to issues relating to either a master drainage plan in general nor on-site infiltration for road and other types of construction in more specific instances. This and similar aspects that could reduce costs, environmental risk, and damage to both infrastructure and private property might be encouraged through the adoption of the Municipal Charter on Watershed Security.

That is not to suggest that the Charter would replace any aspect of the Official Plan, but that the adoption of a Charter could provide a high-level commitment to integrate land use and watershed planning at the municipal level, encouraging the Town to pursue the Official Plan's commitment to sustainability in new and practical ways.

2. We are somewhat surprised that the staff report, while perhaps tasked at an earlier time, does not mention either the Charter nor the responses received to Council's request for feedback from the two conservation authorities to which the Town provides members. In particular, the report states on page 8 that it makes no recommended changes to the framework of the draft Official Plan, whereas the letter from Grey Sauble was highly complimentary on the type of engagement being proposed by the Charter and asked several very pertinent questions about the Town's aligned responsibilities.

While the timing for including some aspects of the responses from Grey Sauble and Nottawasaga Valley in the staff report may not have been possible, we hope for some further discussion with the Town on the conservation authorities' comments going forward.

3. We will be pleased to update you on the Municipal Charter for Watershed Security in brief oral comments on February 4. While the text is unchanged, the Charter is now the middle section of a Discussion Paper called Shifting Ontario Toward an Outcomes-based Framework for Watershed Security being released on January 31.

The first section of the Discussion Paper encourages discussion on a series of recommended actions for the Province, while the third focuses on a revitalize and expanded role of conservation authorities and similar agencies.

We will be soliciting broad input from the Province, municipalities, conservation authorities, organizations, and the public. Outreach activities will include in-person and remote presentations. Naturally, we would be pleased to arrange a session on the Discussion Paper with the Town of Blue Mountains at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Andrew McCammon

Executive Director