

Caledon holds public meeting on Aggregates Policy updates

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A public meeting was recently held at Town Hall to present updates to the Town of Caledon's aggregate policy.

On February 24, Town Council approved a motion directing Staff to review the Province's modifications to Official Plan Amendment 1 (OPA 1) and put forward a new Official Plan Amendment that includes ?relevant and pertinent policies that were altered or removed

from OPA.?

This motion came forward as the Town's attempt to respond to the Province's modifications to Caledon's Official Plan Amendment No. 1 (OPA 1), when it was passed in January with no right of appeal.

In October of 2024, the Town completed the Supplementary Aggregate Resources Policy, which

concluded with Council's adoption of OPA1 to ?incorporate mineral aggregate policies into the adopted Future Caledon Official Plan,? and with it was the passage of a related Zoning By-law Amendment to implement the new policies.

It was approved by the province with numerous modifications.

Staff shared the modifications ranged from administrative matters, such as references and definitions, to changes in policy interpretation related to the environmental policy framework.

The intent of the report, as presented by Staff, is not to bring back all deleted and modified content from the province in OPA 1, but instead ?assess which removed or adjusted elements are still applicable, justifiable, and relevant to Caledon's context.?

It was stated the Town must work within the Provincial context and cannot overstep Provincial standards.

The previous Zoning By-law Amendment will also be repealed and replaced.

Many of the provincial modifications were proposed to remain, such as modifications to limit the application of Town policies in Niagara Escarpment Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan areas, certain terminology changes, and the removal of blasting and air quality policies that speak to how studies should be conducted, and instead, referencing the Aggregate Guidance Manual.

With OPA 1, staff carried over aggregate policies from OPA 161, with modifications.

During the presentation, it was shared that in the Provincial modifications, the Province stated that ?the new OPA is a policy framework that strays from the originally-approved set of policies in OPA 161.?

Also, that ?to attempt to add in the balance of the Greenbelt Plan policies to OPA 1 would further change the policy framework.?As such, the Province deleted many policies linked to OPA 161, instead inserting/defaulting to Greenbelt Plan policies.

This OPA will bring forward previous OPA 161 policies, with updated, precise analysis to demonstrate conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, covering issues such as where aggregate operations are permitted and prohibited, and environmental protection and

development policies specific to a number of features, which were said to be different and more protective of the features through OPA 161 than in the baseline greenbelt plan itself.

It also covers policies for progressive rehabilitation.

Also drafted for inclusion is the 'Area of Influence' policy, which sets study boundaries.

The provincial expectation for an area of influence is 500m; the Town of Caledon will be asking for a larger area of 1000m around the extraction limit.

When it comes to existing operations, the proposed policy that is recommended to be restored is to apply contemporary standards across all operations, including bringing legacy sites into better policy with modern policy and regulatory standards at any opportunity; as well as facilitate the improvement of the environmental and operational performance of mineral aggregate extraction.

Staff added the provincial concern is that this applies to existing operations, and that this policy states that, if a change is proposed on existing sites, the Town is looking to apply, bring forward, and improve the performance of those operations, if possible.

Staff have already received numerous submissions regarding the draft and will review them, along with any additional submissions, as they plan to finalize the document.

Following the public meeting, the draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment will be updated and finalized after taking in feedback from Council and the public, as well as through any final research and analysis undertaken.

Members of the public attended the meeting that evening and voiced their concerns about fill operations, farmland, and other environmental impacts.

David Sylvester, with Forks of the Credit Preservation Group, was a delegate to the meeting, stating he was there 'on behalf of the people to advocate for aggregate policies that truly protect the environment and health and welfare of our residents.'

Their group advocated that evening for the adoption of policies, including an Air Quality Standard based on World Health Organization research and a clarification of the definitions of woodlands and wetlands in a local context.

Sylvester said that what they are advocating is good planning, while advancing the public interest.

'It's important that your decision reflects the public interest, and I can assure you, this is what the people want,' he added.

Staff responded to questions from the committee that, while it is doable to adopt the policy and zoning changes they would like to see, that type of language was initially struck out by the province in OPA1.

'If what the public wants is change with how the overall provincial framework is administered, your quarrel is not at Caledon Town Council, is it at the province,' said Lead Planner Joe Nethery.

Nethery said the corporation of the Town of Caledon cannot alter or change those provincial standards, provincial framework, or provincial legislation.

Members of the public continued to raise their concerns, also stating that it is the Town's role to push back against these changes.

The final instruments are targeted to be presented to the Planning and Development Committee for adoption and passing in June 2026, and the project website will continue to be updated to ensure the information prepared is available for public review and comment.