

To: COUNCIL
Meeting Date: 9/23/2025
Subject: Preston Secondary Plan Project Update
Submitted By: Sarah Austin, Acting Director of Planning
Prepared By: J. Matthew Blevins, MCIP, RPP – Senior Planner Reurbanization
Report No.: 25-001-PG
File No.: C11
Wards Affected: Ward 1, Ward 3, Ward 4

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Report 25-001-PG Preston Secondary Plan Project Update Report be received;
AND THAT the Preston Secondary Plan – Preston Forward 2051 Vision and Purpose as outlined in Report 25-001-PG be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

This report provides Council with an update on the progress of the Preston Secondary Plan – Preston Forward 2051 project and provides Council with the proposed vision and purpose for the Secondary Plan for approval.

Key Findings

- **Community Engagement:** Extensive outreach was conducted through open houses, school sessions, market pop-ups, and online tools, with feedback summarized in Appendix A.
- **Vision:** The proposed Vision is built around four pillars—Community, Nature, Connectivity, and Employment—reflecting Preston’s identity and future aspirations.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of the Secondary Plan is to proactively guide development in Preston to meet future needs for residents, businesses and employees,

including land uses, built form transportation connections, natural heritage preservation, housing mix and a range of amenities.

- **Planning Framework:** The Secondary Plan will guide land use, built form, transportation, urban design, and natural heritage to support growth and Stage 2 ION implementation.

Financial Implications

The Preston Secondary Plan was approved through the 2025 capital budget and a budget increase was approved in July 2025. Additional details are included in the Financial Implication section below.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Strategic Action

Objective(s): PLANNING FOR GROWTH - Provide for a mix of development, uses and amenities in order to meet the needs of a changing and diverse population

Strategic Action: Lay the foundation for future community-building

OR

Core Service

Program: Not Applicable

Core Service: Not Applicable

This project is intended to facilitate sustainable growth in a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) through the completion of a Secondary Plan and related Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for the Preston Core Area.

BACKGROUND:

The Preston Secondary Plan – Preston Forward 2051 will provide a planning framework to accommodate growth in the Preston area related to projected population and employment growth and to support the implementation of ION Phase 2.

The four phases of the project are illustrated in Figure 1: Project and Engagement Timeline.

Phases 1 and 2 are now complete which has led to the development of the Vision and Purpose being presented to Council in this report. The Vision and Purpose will guide

the creation of the draft secondary plan that will be further informed by input received through a second round of public engagement.

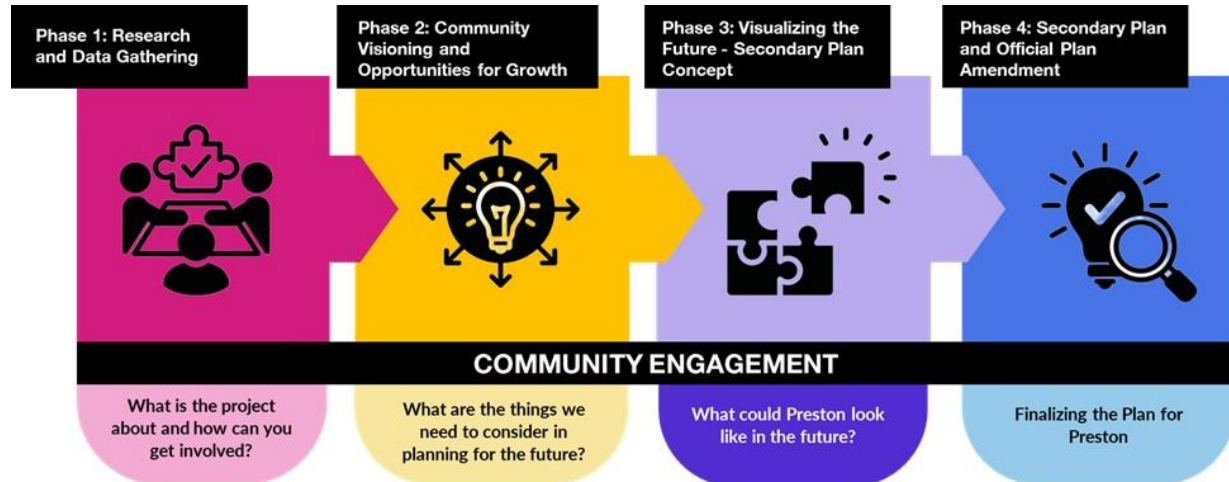


Figure 1: Project and Engagement Timeline

During Phases 1 and 2, engagement sessions were held within Preston including a public open house and design charrette, a session at Preston High School, open office hours at the Allan Reuter Center and a table at the Preston Farmers Market. Figure 2 gives a brief overview of the events that have been held through the first round of engagement. A summary of the feedback received from these sessions is included in Appendix A.

An Engage page (<https://www.engagewr.ca/cambridge-preston-secondary-plan>) provides the public updates through each phase of the project and offers additional opportunities to provide feedback. A survey was posted on the engage page to gather feedback from the public. Future surveys will be posted to the Engage page to request public feedback on the subsequent phases of the project.

Engagement by the Numbers



Figure 2: Summary of Round 1 Engagement

Project Schedule

The secondary plan is planned to be a 12-16 month process with the following milestones:

- May 2025 – project initiation report to Council
- May/June 2025 – first round engagement (Phase 2)
- September 2025 – update to Council
- October/November – Release of land use concept and second round of engagement (Phase 3)
- Spring 2026 – Release of draft plan and Statutory Public Meeting (Phase 4)
- Spring/Summer 2026 – Third round of engagement on draft plan
- Early Fall 2026 – Council Approval

ANALYSIS:

Setting a clear purpose and vision is an essential first step in creating a secondary plan. It helps guide future growth, reflect community values, and ensure that changes are well-planned, coordinated, and aligned with long-term goals.

Vision

It is recommended that the Secondary Plan include a new policy that establishes the vision for Preston as updated through various community engagement initiatives

including the Community Focus Group. The vision highlights four pillars that represent the Preston community: Community, Nature, Connectivity and Employment.

Community

Preston Towne Centre is envisioned as a complete community with a vibrant core. As this area of Cambridge grows, it will provide a mix of uses and a full range of housing options, offering a variety of types and affordability levels to accommodate all life stages and support aging in place. The cultural and architectural heritage of Preston is celebrated and integrated as the community grows.

Nature

The Speed and Grand Rivers are the cornerstones of Preston's natural heritage, offering unique access to nature, showcasing the area's green spaces. Maintaining park access, urban forest, and recreational amenities while protecting environmental features will ensure the resilience of natural heritage and greenspaces.

Connectivity

King Street East serves as the main north-south corridor and commercial hub, linking Preston to the rest of Cambridge and the region. It supports a vibrant main street and provides a linkage to planned Stage 2 ION Rapid Transit, enhancing regional transit accessibility and connectivity.

Employment

New employment uses will be encouraged to locate in Preston to contribute to transit-supportive densities and create a community where people can live and work if they choose. The former industrial lands along the rail spur lines in Preston will transition to residential and other neighbourhood-serving uses over time.

Purpose

It is recommended that the purpose of the Secondary Plan be identified as follows:

The purpose of this plan is to proactively guide development in Preston to meet future needs for residents, businesses and employees. The plan will guide land uses and built form and other elements that are important to creating a complete community including transportation connections, urban design, and natural heritage preservation. The Plan encourages housing mix and helps create a range of amenities and spaces that foster

an active public realm and creates a place that residents are proud to call home, that people want to visit, and that employers want to locate.

Next Steps

With Council's endorsement of the Vision and Purpose, staff will work with the consulting team (Dillon Consulting) to complete the Technical Brief and to prepare a Draft Land Use Concept for consideration in the second round of engagement. Once Phase 3 has been completed staff will prepare a draft secondary plan and hold a Statutory Public Meeting of Council.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

City of Cambridge Official Plan (2012), as amended

Policy 2.5.5 of the Official Plan states that the City will prepare secondary plans to "ensure development occurs at the densities and form consistent with the Official Plan."

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Preston Secondary Plan is funded by the Core Areas Transformation Reserve Fund (CATF) in partnership with Economic Development as it is intended to facilitate intensification of the Preston Core Area and the Protected Major Transit Station Area. Project A/01588-20 initially had a budget of \$250,000 approved through the 2025 Budget. The budget was subsequently increased to \$350,000 through the Capital Status and Forecast Report – April 2025 (Report 25-013-IFS) to accommodate increased engagement. The project remains within budget.

PUBLIC VALUE:

Collaboration:

Staff will collaborate with the community through consultation with the appropriate Advisory Committees. Staff are executing a detailed engagement strategy to ensure that there is robust public engagement with the public and stakeholders through sessions held within the Preston Town Core as well as a Council Workshop to discuss the priorities identified by Council and the public.

Transparency:

To ensure transparency, the project will follow the process for Official Plan Amendments as set out in the Planning Act. Staff provide regular progress updates to the project sponsors and will provide regular updates on the Engage website to allow the public access to background information and draft plans as they are prepared.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

Advisory Committees Consulted:

The following Advisory Committees will be consulted through the secondary plan project:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee (Legislated)
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (Legislated)
- Cycling and Trails Advisory Committee
- Youth Advisory Committee

PUBLIC INPUT:

Public engagement is a key focus of the secondary plan project and will involve various methods of engagement. Engagement strategies include the formation of a Community Focus Group; use of the engage page to gather input and report on results; consultation with First Nations; outreach to area residents and business owners including the Preston BIA. Strategies will continue to include both in-person and virtual events, open houses, a visioning exercise, and modeling of current and proposed land use.

A summary of public input is included in Appendix A.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The following departments were consulted on the project work plan:

- Economic Development
- Finance
- Recreation and Culture
- Engineering

CONCLUSION:

The Preston Secondary Plan will help guide future growth in a way that reflects the community's values and supports long-term goals. With Council's approval of the Vision and Purpose, the project can move forward to the next phase, including technical work and further public engagement to shape the draft plan.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

General Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 25-001-PG Appendix A – Round 1 Engagement Summary