

Master Plan for the Cheltenham Badlands property, Caledon Ontario

Public meeting #2

Date and Time: Monday, January 25, 2016 at 7 p.m.

Location: Caledon Community Complex, Banquet Room A

Attendees:

- Approximately 35 members of the community
- Representatives from the following agencies on the Cheltenham Badlands Management Planning Team (CBMPT): Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT); Region of Peel; Town of Caledon; Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC); Bruce Trail Caledon Club; Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC)
- Representatives from Dillon Consulting Limited (Dillon)

Purpose of the meeting

Public meeting #2 was the second in a series of public consultation events on the Master Plan for the Cheltenham Badlands property. The purpose of Public meeting #2 was to:

- Provide a summary of the public consultation to date (display boards), including: online survey results; Public meeting #1 input
- Present the Master Plan analysis, priority protection mapping and rationale, and key management strategies contained in the Stage I report (presentation and display boards)

Meeting agenda

1. Open house/Sign-in/Review display boards – 7 to 7:30 p.m.
2. Presentation of Stage I findings (Dillon/OHT) – 7:30 to 8 p.m.
3. Questions and Answers (Dillon/OHT)
4. Closing remarks
5. Open house/Complete comment forms
6. Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Summary of meeting

1. **Open house – 7 to 7:30 p.m.**
2. **Presentation by the Ontario Heritage Trust and Dillon Consulting – 7:30 p.m.**

Karla Kolli from Dillon Consulting facilitated the evening and outlined the purpose of the meeting and the meeting format.

Sean Fraser from the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) provided the following updates to the planning process:

- One new organization has been added to the Cheltenham Badlands Management Planning Team (CBMPT) – the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. The primary contact is Fawn Sault, their manager of consultations.
- The Caledon Countryside Alliance has participated on the CBMPT for many years, and recently appointed a new representative who is with us tonight – Mr. Neil Morris.
- At the previous meeting, there was a request for greater public involvement in the CBMPT. As was mentioned at the first public meeting, new organizations are welcome to join the CBMPT, subject to endorsement from the team itself. The OHT and the CBMPT is open to community representation by other organizations such as a residents/ratepayers association, Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement Association.
- It is recognized that the capacity and resources required to create a new community organization to represent local interests may present a challenge. Therefore, with a focus on the Master Plan, the OHT has decided to hold a separate residents' forum at a venue near the Badlands (Cheltenham or Inglewood) to bring together local area residents, listen to and learn about their observations and perspectives, and better understand their concerns and proposed solutions. The residents' forum will be held in March or April (before the next public meeting). Information on the venue, format and invitations will be sent out shortly and shared within the community.
- As part of a separate consultation, the Trust is also reaching out to businesses near the Badlands to understand better how they are directly affected by the site and what they see as the key issues/opportunities.
- As a reminder, the Environmental Tribunal Hearing regarding the Badlands parking lot approval will take place from February 1 to 5, 2016 at the Town of Caledon council chambers.

Caroline Marshall from Dillon Consulting presented to the group. The presentation addressed:

- Context of the site within the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS).
- Study process: Reviewing the project timeline.
- Public consultation techniques being used on the study (consistent with the NEPOSS planning process).
- Guiding principles for the Cheltenham Badlands:
 - Conservation of the property's cultural and natural heritage values
 - Safety for all individuals who visit the site

- Improved accessibility for those who wish to access the site
- Enhanced opportunities for interpretation and public education
- Summary of the Stage I inventory and analysis process.
- Description of the approach to identifying priority protection levels, a summary of the evaluation of the site, and corresponding map of priority protection areas.
- Description of the overall adaptive management approach to the site, and key natural heritage management and visitor management strategies (Badlands feature, trails and viewing areas).
- Description of potential NEPOSS management zones and recommended zones to be applied to the site: nature reserve zone and access zone (selected locations).
- Next steps in the Master Plan process.

3. Questions and Answers

After the presentation, the floor was opened up to questions:

1. By increasing site access (in guiding principles), does this mean increasing access to walk on the Badlands?
 - A. (Dillon) “Site” is defined as the entire property, which includes the Bruce Trail. This does not mean that access should be provided to allow people to walk on the Badlands feature.
2. Did additional technical studies occur to inform the priority protection areas (PPAs) or were these determined using existing information?
 - A. (Dillon) The PPAs were determined using existing information (e.g., the ecological land classifications and natural heritage inventories) and additional site visits by Dillon biologists.
3. Didn’t the Badlands develop from erosion? Why are we stopping erosion? It has been going on for many years.
 - A. (Dillon) It is unlikely that erosion of the Badlands can be stopped. By not allowing people to walk on it, we will remove the human impact. We will be looking to the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC) to help determine if it is necessary and feasible for erosion from run-off to be managed in order to reduce sediment from entering the adjacent watercourse and wetland. Even if the local area is stable, this could have downstream impacts.
4. What are the terms of reference for Dillon? Did they include looking at impacts on the community (specifically traffic)?
 - A. (Dillon) The OHT prepared the terms of reference that outlined expectations of the Master Plan project. Dillon responded to that terms of reference with a proposal that outlines the study process (part of the presentation) and includes four public meetings.
 - B. (Ontario Heritage Trust) The OHT owns the Cheltenham Badlands property and the Master Plan authority is limited to the property itself. Regarding traffic impacts, the adjacent roads are under the jurisdiction of the Region of Peel (Olde Base Line Road) and the Town of Caledon (Creditview Road). We know that the impacts from visitation to the property go beyond the property, and both the region and the town are on the management planning team. It is acknowledged that the traffic issues go beyond the scope of the Master Plan and affect a larger area than just the vicinity of the Badlands.

- C. *(Town of Caledon)* A group has been established to look at traffic issues in the West Caledon area. It includes the Region of Peel, Town of Caledon, CVC and the OHT. The group will not just look at the area around the Badlands, but it will also include the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park, Belfountain Conservation Area and other highly visited areas. Traffic counts were conducted in the fall. The analysis is coming. The end goal is to determine how to manage traffic in the whole area. The aim is to have positive action in place before next fall.

The West Caledon Traffic Management Team – is it only government people?

- D. *(Town of Caledon)* Yes, for now. We recognize that the public needs to be engaged. The West Caledon Traffic Management Team need to come up with ideas and suggestions on how to deal with high visitor numbers (e.g., during fall colour season). Once we get to this stage, we will have public consultation.
5. How will impacts on the community be included in the Master Plan and how will it be integrated with the West Caledon traffic study? Residents want to be kept in the loop. If there are discussions on traffic and impacts on the community, the community would like to know about it.
6. In the presentation, it was noted that the whole property should be identified as a nature reserve. From that interpretation, there is minimal impact/development planned. How then does the OHT justify giving up part of this property to put on a parking lot, when this should not be considered minimal impact (trees removed, land built up, paved)?
- A. *(Dillon)* The nature reserve zone relative to the other possible NEPOSS management zones is one of the more restrictive. You will recall that we are also recommending that access zones be used to delineate access points to the site. If we are going to allow visitors on the site, even if it's just on the Bruce Trail, there is a need for support facilities. Relative to other sites, the area where the parking lot is currently proposed is less sensitive/significant. The more significant areas to be protected such as the Badlands and the mature forest are reflected in higher level protection zones. *(The priority protection areas map was used to show participants where the parking lot is proposed on Olde Base Line Road – in a proposed Level 3 protection area.)*
- B. *(Ontario Heritage Trust)* Prior to making the decision to put the parking lot in this location, there was considerable study of possible options by nine organizations on the management planning team. The current location is the location identified by all the organizations and was approved by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Environmental Land Tribunal Hearing regarding the parking lot approval is being held from February 1-5, 2016. That is the process by which those questions will be answered.
7. The scope of the (Cheltenham Badlands) management team is site-specific. Do you have the ability to think beyond the site in terms of access? Re-introduce new access on the site that is not on Old Base Line. Safety on Old Base Line needs to be the primary consideration. Are you able to do that, and have you done that? What about off Creditview Road, or putting a parking lot on Chinguacousy Road? Or in farm fields south of the property? Traffic on Old Base Line is terrible and it will just get worse. People will continue to come to the site.
- A. *(Ontario Heritage Trust)* It is within the scope of the Master Plan to look at other options to provide additional access to the site. The OHT can only implement changes

- within the parcel that it owns. The management team includes other agencies, government and groups who can look beyond the property.
8. If you're providing these alternative routes, will the Badlands be fenced all around the property? You're not going to stop people from walking there if they can walk there.
 - A. (*Ontario Heritage Trust*) We don't have any plan to remove the fence in the immediate future. We understand that there is a great deal of sensitivity toward the topography and we heard that many people agree that the public shouldn't be walking on the feature. We need to think creatively on how to manage people visiting the site. One way to manage people is to use fences.
 9. At the last meeting, I was encouraged – and continue to be – that you are taking a holistic approach to the site. What is conspicuous is where the parking lot is going to go? Was this in the terms of reference? It should have been. Why is it not part of this analysis? That's what I thought this whole process was for. If you don't include the parking lot in this assessment, then you are not taking a holistic approach.
 - A. (*Ontario Heritage Trust*) The need for a parking lot stems from the unsafe nature of uncontrolled parking on Olde Base Line Road. The decision to place the parking lot in this location followed study of several options over several years. Agencies and the management team have endorsed the location of the parking lot and it was approved by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. This is now the subject of the upcoming Environmental Tribunal Hearing. Is that the only parking lot? I don't know. Might there be others? Possibly.
 10. One of the mandates of the OHT is to provide public access to the site. As owner of the site, won't you do what you want to do?
 - A. (*Ontario Heritage Trust*) The OHT is bound by the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Under the plan, the OHT is required to go through a master planning process, and the Master Plan has to be approved by the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
 11. We can't keep people out of the area. Caledon is a special place. We can't keep it to ourselves. We have to think about how to protect the Badlands and meet the OHT's mandate.
 12. In the past, the site has not been staffed and has been left to do its own thing. Will the Master Plan be making recommendations on such things as how the site will be manned, paid parking so people don't abuse it, hours of operation? There should be a paid full-time person that is onsite all the time to ensure that there is a responsible security. Tickets, pay parking. Is this how the site will be operated as part of the management plan? The site should not be opened unless there is full-time staff onsite to manage it. It is not fair that regional police or Caledon bylaw officers manage this.
 - A. (*Ontario Heritage Trust*) How the site will be operated will be part of the Master Plan. To what extent and the details of the operational management of the site will be decided through the Master Plan.
 13. The management goals are bang on. The trick is to balance access with demand of access. If you don't have the balance, you will still have people walking up and down Old Base Line. On a typical summer day, there are 54-56 cars. If you don't build enough parking onsite, they will still park on the road. Personally, I love the charm of kids running up and down the hills. Without the activity, the Badlands may become greenlands.

14. About the parking lot, you make it sound like it's a done deal. I'm surprised about that, and surprised that it is located on the Bruce Trail. I have concerns that the parking lot may become a local hang out.
- A. (*Ontario Heritage Trust*) The parking lot is proposed at the Bruce Trail trailhead that serves a dual purpose. The Bruce Trail Conservancy is represented on management team.
15. As someone who will live right beside the parking lot and who is an avid hiker, I agree that there are no longer 54-56 cars parking at the Badlands. I agree that a viewing platform is great for hikers but question whether people will still visit if they can only stand on a viewing platform. I am concerned that building a parking lot may not be worthwhile anymore.
16. Is the parking lot going in the one area that is the least sensitive? But isn't it also the most unsafe spot to put a parking lot?
- A. (*Moderator*) We've talked a lot about the parking lot. We need to defer this and other parking lot questions to the end of the meeting if there is time. Please allow other types of questions about the information presented to come to light.
17. Would like to commend the OHT. It is not easy to stand up at public meeting and say we can do better. I am pleased that there is more community consultation coming. Obviously, there are different opinions and perspectives. But glad you are bringing people together to find solutions.
18. I am trying to understand the sequence of events re: the Master Plan. This meeting has helped me figure out what can happen on the property, but it seems safety isn't one of the four guiding principles. Why not wait until transportation analysis is done before developing concepts? How can there be a hearing next week when a transportation study is not done?
- A. (*Ontario Heritage Trust*) The management team has worked for several years looking at how to provide safe access to this site. This work did include several traffic studies and analyses. We are going to the Environmental Tribunal Hearing with what has been determined to be the safest, most appropriate and least sensitive part of the property for a parking lot. Currently, there is zero safe, legal parking onsite. The public needs a safe place to access the property. This is the location that the team has decided on based on consideration of several options and a multi-year, multi-agency approval process.
19. The online survey – when was it done? Did it ask if people would still go to the Badlands if they couldn't walk on them anymore?
- A. (*Dillon*) The online survey was launched in September and closed at the end of October (2015). Yes, the question about physical access to the feature was asked and approximately 65% said Yes, they would visit if access were limited to viewing only.
20. Since erecting the fencing, there is less parking on the road. During this past Thanksgiving weekend, however, there was parking half a kilometre from Creditview west, on Creditview, and around the corner. There were lots of cars and it was unsafe. It is still a popular area notwithstanding the fact that you don't have direct access to the Badlands feature. Most people agree that there is no safe parking on Old Base Line. The region can't put forward Creditview Road because it's not a regional road. The amount of erosion is horrendous, and turbidity in Credit River can impact fish spawning. It is important to look at turbidity and erosion coming off the Badlands.

6. Closing remarks

The presenters noted the next steps in the process, which included the following:

- Dillon will complete the Stage I inventory and analysis report.
- OHT will host the local residents forum in March or April of 2016.
- Dillon will host the 3rd public meeting focusing on possible site concepts in spring of 2016.

The moderator thanked everyone for their participation and feedback.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Additional resources

- Public meeting #2 – Presentation
- Public meeting #2 – Display boards