



G. L. Pothier Enterprises Inc.
2197 Galloway Drive
Oakville, Ontario, Canada L6H 5M1

tel: (905) 844-5174
fax: (905) 844-7368
em: glenn@glpi.com

Haldimand County Council Workshop

February 16th, 2023 Meeting Notes Summary

Building on Strength

In terms of what's happening in Haldimand County — the geographic area and/or within the Corporation — what's going well...what are the strengths and successes on which to build going forward?

- Great staff — senior management team meshes/works well together.
- Quick responses to issues across all divisions.
- Good succession planning — and internal promotion of people.
- Good facilities (e.g. rinks, libraries, etc.).
- Well-managed growth.
- Tax rates kept reasonably low.
- Willingness to adjust/try new things — refusal to be complacent.
- Residential growth that has helped with taxes.
- Flexibility, willingness and ability to tackle issues.
- The County's solid financial foundation.
- Great elements/facets of the County: community centres; service groups; people who help unite the community; people who volunteer and assist one another; etc.
- Great volunteers and people who truly care about the community.
- Good Council: dedicated, committed, helpful individuals who care about the public interest.
- Staff and elected official focus on providing timely and forthright answers.
- The breadth and volume of things going on in the County.
- The County's natural heritage: lakes, forests, parks, greenspace, etc.
- Trails and recreation opportunities.
- The ability to identify health and safety needs (it is typically other levels of government that can be barriers to moving forward with and acting on them).

Situational Analysis — Key Context and Considerations

A KnoWonder Exercise	
<p><i>What do we KNOW is happening inside or outside of Haldimand County (key trends, new legislation or policy directives, societal changes, etc.) that need to inform the discussion of strategic priorities?</i></p>	<p><i>About what are we WONDERING — what are the big questions for which there may not currently be answers (but that may have an impact on this strategic priorities setting exercise)?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haldimand is beside some larger municipalities (e.g. Hamilton, Niagara, etc.) – and what they do is seen by others and influences perceptions of the County. • Bill 23 is an important initiative with potentially far-reaching implications. • There is a societal move toward electric vehicles (EVs) – and this has implications for County fleets and mobility within the area. • Climate change and related issues (resiliency, adaptation, etc.) are a pressing concern. • There are labour shortages in certain areas – issues relating to the attraction and retention of employees/talented people have implications for the economy and County’s tax base. • There has been a large increase in the number of volunteers who have joined (and are assisting) organizations post-Covid. • The impact of inflation will have implications for the finances of the County and others. • Given the uncertainty of the current operating environment, there is a need to prepare for multiple future scenarios. • There is an aging population and it has implications for health care and other resource utilization. • There is a lack of services/activities and programming for both seniors and youth. • There is limited available housing stock — and housing affordability/attainability for youth and others (there is a long wait-list for attainable rental housing and limited turnover among those already in these homes). • There are limited places for seniors to move to (within the community). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will higher order levels of government do and how will those actions affect us? • Will the province regionalize services – and ‘force’ municipalities to work together? • Is amalgamation coming? And, if so, when will it come and what will it look like? • What are the implications for shared services? • Will growth create fiscal and service delivery challenges? • How do we maintain ‘rural ways’ as growth and development continue to occur? • How do we maintain community values amidst all of the changes taking place? • Where will we be with jobs in the next 5-10 years to help keep younger people in the community? • What will the housing situation look like for youth in the future?

What did you hear during the election campaign — and what are you hearing from the public/constituents?

- There are questions about the future of the indoor pool facility – and when it might be forthcoming.
- The need for and timing of a third bridge in Caledonia.
- Inflationary pressures are real and impact people's lives – given this, there is a need to keep taxes manageable.
- Given the various financial pressures, it is imperative to keep taxes low.
- Want responsible development and well-managed growth.
- There is a need for more senior and youth programming.
- There is a need for enhanced access to the internet (in rural areas in particular).
- There have been improvements to the County's website, but there are still some issues to address (need a more accessible and user-friendly website).
- There is a need to better educate/inform the public in a more engaging fashion about what the County is doing (and for more transparency about what's happening in the County).
- Need more County outreach/public relations to push information out in a timely and relevant fashion.
- Need to enhance communication with the public – get the word-out about programming, activities, and so forth.
- There are multiple road-related concerns: speeding; distracted driving; truck routes through residential areas; congestion; traffic safety generally; etc.
- There are some concerns about the care and maintenance of the roads and related grasscutting.
- There is too little police presence (not enough 'feet on the ground') – this gives rise to perceived safety-related issues.
- There is a desire for some sort of public transportation.
- High inflation and interest rates are making it difficult for some to pay mortgages.
- The increased cost of living in general is making things difficult for many.
- There are concerns about the availability of health-related services and facilities, and access to health care generally.
- There is a need to attract health care professionals (in particular, family doctors).
- Some would like to see Sunday hunting.
- The importance of communication and advocacy to the Province (re: well managed growth, need for more schools, need for health care facilities, etc.).
- There is frustration in dealing with the province on multiple issues (for example, there are issues with MTO re: bridges, unsafe roads/highways, etc.).

What makes ‘a priority a priority’ for the Haldimand County Strategic Plan — what criteria do you consider?

- The item must improve quality of life in the community.
- The resident voice: the number of people who have identified the issue/want/need — and the ability to make a compelling case for it.
- Fiscal responsibility — including the impact on finances/reserves and the general economic well-being of the County.
- The relative costs and benefits associated with the item (and the results of this type of analysis).
- Something that produces benefit across the greater County area and that is to the benefit of the County as a whole (not just a smaller local area) — but that appreciates and balances local ward desires/wants.
- Something that is achievable — an outcome that is significantly within the County’s sphere of influence and/or control.
- Impact on health and safety — either the risk to the public or the potential for the item to deliver community benefit (e.g. road safety, enhanced health care, etc.).
- The impact on accessibility or the need to address an accessibility issue.

What are the *essential* planning and change drivers?

- Issues of geography – the County’s large area, which includes a diffuse population, varying needs, and considerable distances from one another and to/from various places.
- More specifically, the varying needs of both urban and rural areas.
- Fiscal imperatives — the importance of ‘dollars and cents/sense.’
- Availability of resources to execute changes/initiatives.
- Managing growth – and ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is in place at the right time.
- Challenges relating to policing and public safety.
- The relationship to the GTA — the impact of County proximity on everything from the ability to recruit staff, to service provision expectations, to economic development challenges, etc.).
- The challenges associated with becoming a bedroom community.
- The imperative to protect the land base, natural heritage and agricultural resources.

Potential Priorities

Councillors and the County's CAO engaged in a 'pair and share' exercise to identify a potential set of priorities for the current term of council (recognizing that a number of key initiatives were carried over from the last term). In total, ten items were identified. These were further prioritized by inviting Councillors only to identify their 'top three' most important items — these are listed in the table below in descending order beginning with the items most frequently mentioned.

'Pair and Share' Outcome Items	Top Three Votes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible growth and the supporting comprehensive financial strategy. 	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic management strategy (that addresses safety, speeding, truck traffic, etc.) – including the potential for roving/traffic-specific police. 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County website/communication improvements. 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the path forward re: the indoor pool/recreation facility. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ward realignment. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A housing plan (in support of more affordable/attainable housing). 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to the province for the water sale program to Norfolk, Caledonia and Six Nations. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Haldimand attraction committee – focused on attracting tourism and industry. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and implement a staff recruitment and training strategy. 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A physician recruitment strategy. 	0

A subset of the above noted potential priorities was further explored as per the tables that follow — again, shown in descending order beginning with the highest scoring items with the most 'top three' votes (please note that some questions were skipped in the interest of time and brevity).

Priorities Exploration

<p>Potential Priority: Responsible growth and the supporting comprehensive financial strategy. [Received 6 ‘top three’ votes]</p>
<p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill 23 has implications for the County that must be addressed. • There are concerns about growth not paying for growth. • There is a question about how will we generate cash flow in other areas. • The effectiveness of the County’s financial management is at stake. • There are taxation implications. • There is a need to identify strategies in this area (our talented staff can do so). • The topic has housing implications. • There is a need for infrastructure to support growth and to determine how best to finance it.
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue was already topical/important and needed to be addressed — Bill 23 has reinforced the importance of moving forward and mapping-out long range considerations, financial and otherwise.
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone in the County, including developers. • The growth areas in particular (both Caledonia and Hagersville) – and those areas requiring services/infrastructure. • Those in established neighbourhoods who may be impacted — for example, through changes in frontage, higher densities, etc.
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County must act on the growth management strategy and its residential targets. • Need to implement the updated Official Plan – identify lands and appropriate places for development to occur. • Be open to hearing about and assessing all types of relevant development opportunities (be open-minded to growth). • Need to develop a sustainable financial plan to support the growth and challenges associated with it (understanding both the revenue and cost side of the equation). • Need to help ensure a ‘predictable outcome’ for the County. • Need developers and other stakeholders to go ‘beyond the call of duty’ in supporting/investing in the community and its objectives.
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the sustainable financial plan to support the growth — be visionary and look into the future. • Grasp and act on Bill 23.
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The above entails a huge scope of work and will require some outside assistance/resources. • There will likely be a need to look at multiple scenarios and their implications. • Need to define what ‘responsible’ is as part of this process.

<p>Potential Priority: Traffic management strategy (that addresses safety, speeding, truck traffic, etc.) – including the potential for roving/traffic-specific police.</p> <p>[Received 4 ‘top three’ votes]</p>
<p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic volumes have increased dramatically in various places within the County. • There is some speeding and red-light running – and related safety issues/concerns. • Police resources are consumed with multiple issues and not sufficient to address all of the traffic issues. • The public are talking about it/asking for improvement (there is a ‘strong public want’ in this area). • Truck routes are problematic for some – there is a perceived need to get trucks off of roads in highly public areas, near schools, etc.
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [See above]
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle users and the public generally. • Police services. • The Province (MTO).
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The police have a role in terms of allocating additional resources to traffic-related issues. • The OPP could share more information/statistics/plans with the community. • The County can advocate to MTO for required changes. • The County can look at developing a truck route strategy. • The County (and others) can do some education around the issues of concern. • [There is a need to clarify what is and what is not in the County’s sphere of control regarding this issue area — the County has limited influence/control over certain items of interest.]
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of targeted initiatives that are supported by the budget (so there is money available to act on some of the above noted concerns). • Improved statistics (for example: reduced fatalities, accidents, speeding, etc.). • Implementation of new initiatives that are appreciated by the public (and that demonstrate County commitment and willingness to initiate positive change).
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to understand the resources to be allocated to this – and put them to the greatest and most productive use.

Potential Priority: Website/communication improvements. [Received 4 ‘top three’ votes]
<p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County website is not user-friendly (it requires looking at multiple pages and engaging in multiple steps to find desired information). • There is a need to think about how the website speaks to businesses as well (in addition to residents) — the ‘business focus’ of the website is weak. • There is a need to move more toward digital communication and engagement approaches that are more user-friendly (there is a public expectation of this in an increasingly digital world). • Consideration needs to be given to how best to reach all demographic segments – in particular, those who may not be tech-savvy. • There is a need to modernize the County’s mediums of communication (including more innovative tactics and multifaceted communication).
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County must act given legislated accessibility requirements that must be met. • The web is becoming increasingly important as a source of information — people expect easy and immediate access to information. • There is less traditional media (e.g. newspapers) than there used to be to meet the information needs of the community. • Communication is key – people expect and want better communication from government. • Our website says a lot about how the County views/offers customer service (it sends an important message to those we serve).
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public and businesses generally.
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of capital dollars to address the issue. • Revitalize the website to optimize its function and accessibility.
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more user-friendly and effective website that better meets the needs of County residents and businesses. • Greater County focus on digital communication. • Clear metrics to gauge the usefulness of the improvements/enhancements that are to be made (i.e. more people happy with the website and County communication). • More innovative County communication.
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Nothing recorded]

Potential Priority: Determine the path forward re: the indoor pool/recreation facility. [Received 2 ‘top three’ votes]
<p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are frustrated that the County does not have an indoor pool (this circumstance does not reflect well on the County). • A pool is an opportunity for people of all ages to exercise and recreate — there is a lack of programming for seniors and youth (a pool could address these). • There is strong public interest in this issue. • The longer we wait, the more expensive the proposition of building a pool becomes. • There is a need to view pools the way we view arenas — that is, as an important community resource — and there is a need to reconceptualize the issue.
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [See above]
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community as a whole and pool users in particular.
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County needs to decide whether to proceed with a pool(s) and, if so, where it or they would be placed. • The County needs to start by developing the business and societal case for the pool. • As part of the above, there is a need to: determine what the cost would be today; explore alternative means of funding; explore the potential for a hybrid model; and determine the ongoing implications (financial and otherwise) of operating the pool. • The County needs to ask taxpayers if they are willing to pay for a new pool (once the cost has been determined).
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council makes an informed decision based on well thought-out options, including the financial implications (and is prepared to respond effectively to residents regardless of what the decision is). • That the determination is made to proceed with a pool (even if it is not built in this term of council).
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxpayers need to be informed of the implications of the pool and be involved in the process. • Is this the right time to be considering a pool, given the current operating environment, inflation and overall fiscal environment? • There are likely many sources of revenue that can be tapped to build the pool.

Potential Priority: Ward realignment. [Received 2 ‘top three’ votes]
<p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 3 is the most affected at present – there have been significant increases in population in certain areas and these areas deserve greater representation at Council. • Ward boundaries as they currently exist may not make the most sense given the areas/populations included at present. • This issue is of interest to and affects the whole County. • The time for action on this issue is long overdue — change is required, especially for Caledonia. • Some Wards need reconfiguration plain and simple.
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [See above]
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents. • Elected officials.
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to engage external/objective expertise in the task of developing and assessing Ward realignment options. • There is a statutory process for changing the Ward boundaries that would need to be followed/adhered to. • Need to set parameters/criterion/guidelines to inform when and how realignment might take place. • The County can look at what might be warranted given demographic changes that have been and will be occurring.
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the procedures and criteria — that is, do the background work — to lay the foundation for Ward realignment. • Be ready to move forward if the ‘criteria are hit/action is triggered.’ • Develop and assess the different options for realignment.
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process would have to be concluded by 2025 (given that the process is appealable). • Need to ensure that the solution does not divide the County. • Need a logical process that is supportable and defensible. • Need to consider the budget impact of realignment (both as part of the option assessment process and to implement the chosen direction).

<p>Potential Priority: Develop a Haldimand attraction committee – focused on attracting tourism and industry. [Received 1 ‘top three’ vote]</p>
<p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are significant economic development opportunities and resulting potential implications for the County. • It is important to get public input on these issues. • Geographically, the County can accommodate business growth in various areas — there are unrealized opportunities that need to be explored. • The County has the potential to capitalize on its close proximity to heavily populated areas within the Golden Horseshoe. • There is an opportunity to coordinate with various parties who are doing good work in this area. • Promoting business growth is and should be a priority for the County. • The County operates in a competitive environment – we need to do our best to win and attract businesses. • There are many tourism opportunities that can harness the benefits associated with Lake Erie.
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase the tax base (beyond the residential component). • The County has available industrial space that needs to be filled. • There are Lake Erie erosion-related issues that need to be addressed. • The initiative has some degree of alignment with staff priorities regarding retention and attraction of talent.
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residents and visitors to the County. • Businesses (including industry and tourism interests).
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set-up and help administer the Attraction Committee.
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the goal and mandate of the Committee – have it be operational. • Identify the County’s strengths and weaknesses – and what people are looking for from Haldimand. • Establish a strategy that aligns with what has already been planned. • The public see enhanced employment and an expanded tax base. • New employers come to the County who are paying ‘good wages.’
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Nothing recorded]

<p>Potential Priority: A physician recruitment strategy. [Received 0 ‘top three’ votes]</p> <p>What’s the issue area ‘itch’ that we’re trying to scratch — what’s the underlying need, problem or opportunity we’re trying to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of doctors across the County (and family physicians in particular). • Shortage of other health care professionals as well (nurses, PSWs, etc.). • A lack of clarity and agreement on what the County’s role can/should be in this issue area. • Changing demographics – a growing community with more young families and an aging community — that results in greater health needs that are going unmet to some degree.
<p>Why is this something that needs to be addressed in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [See above]
<p>Who is affected or impacted by what we might do in this issue area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public generally, but those with health challenges in particular.
<p>What’s the County’s role regarding the issue area — and who are other key players and what are their roles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a minimum, the County can play a supportive ‘cheerleader’ role – participating in various activities to get the word out about the County and what it has to offer (and why health professionals would want to locate here). • Ongoing County promotion of Haldimand as a desirable place to live, work and play. • As a County, we need to develop a compelling and consistent sales pitch and key messages. • The County should consider/look at the potential of providing spaces to assist practitioners (i.e. make it even easier/more desirable to locate in Haldimand). • The County may need a budget line item for the above and other related initiatives.
<p>What’s success — what are your aspirations for what we realistically hope to achieve in this issue area in this term of council?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what we can do as a County — and launch some initiatives with the potential to deliver results.
<p>Other?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should look at the family health team model and explore the implications for Haldimand. • Physician and health care personnel recruitment and attraction is not really our role, but we need to have some involvement in this (given that the lack of medical resources in Haldimand is real and pronounced).

Note: The following three potential priorities were also identified, but not explored given their relatively lower ‘top three’ scores and time available:

- **A housing plan (in support of more affordable/attainable housing).** [Received 1 ‘top three’ vote]
- **Advocate to the province for the water sale program to Norfolk, Caledonia, Six Nations.** [Received 1 ‘top three’ vote]
- **Establish and implement a staff recruitment and training strategy.** [Received 0 ‘top three’ votes]

Open Forum

Participants were provided with an opportunity to share additional comments/observations and outstanding questions. One councillor noted the desire to see more support for the tree planting/forestry initiative that had been more of a priority previously. In addition, there were some complimentary remarks about the value of the session, the facilitation and participant contributions.

Look Ahead/Next Steps

Craig Manley, the County's CAO, shared the following observations and overview of next steps:

- Thank you to Council for their contributions to the session – it was a great discussion and a great exchange of ideas.
- GLPi will tighten and 'clean' the summary notes from this session and make them available [Done by way of this document].
- Staff will take the meeting notes and develop a report that outlines priorities and the related scopes for them.
- The above will come back to council for their consideration, feedback and further discussion.
- Staff will work with Council to finalize the strategic priorities.
- Thanks again to all involved!