

## **Employment Land Strategy Implementation: Commercial/Industrial Policy Framework Review**

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Recommended by:	General Manager of Growth and Infrastructure
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### **Report Summary**

This report provides information regarding the process and timeline for completion of a review of the City's Commercial/Industrial Land Use Policy Framework as recommended by the City of Greater Sudbury's Employment Land Strategy (ELS).

### **Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans**

This policy review aligns with Council's Strategic Priority of "Business Attraction, Development and Retention" by ensuring the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law support projected economic growth and development. This project supports the creation of compact, complete communities, Goal 1 of the CEEP.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Employment Land Strategy (ELS) Background**

The ELS was initiated and funded by the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation in 2019 and completed and approved by Council in September 2022. The goals of the ELS were:

- To improve the City's economic competitiveness and encourage the development of employment land;
- Ensure that the Employment Land Strategy, policies, and incentives support projected economic growth and development; and
- Maintain an employment land inventory by applying a planning methodology that promotes the provision of an appropriate amount of serviced industrial land.

Three broad recommendations emanated from the Employment Lands Strategy to achieve desired outcomes:

1. Infrastructure upgrades were recommended in Strategic Employment Areas that did not currently have water and wastewater capacity to support additional growth and intensification;
2. Development of incentive programs for industrial development; and
3. Review and update of the land use planning framework for Commercial and Industrial development.

Implementation of the first two recommendations has begun. Through the Employment Land Implementation Strategy presented in 2022, Council approved a 10-year Strategy for completing infrastructure improvements for the five strategic employment areas that require upgrades. Council also approved \$19 Million for infrastructure upgrades in the Lasalle/Elisabella Strategic Employment Area which commenced in 2024.

With respect to the second recommendation, the Employment Land Community Improvement Plan (ELCIP) was approved by Council in June 2023 and offers Tax Increment Equivalent Grants to eligible industrial projects for a 3 to 10 years period based on the scoring matrix which considers location, strategic industries, construction value and job creation and retention.

### **Commercial/Industrial Policy Framework Review Project Scope**

The City has, with funding support provided by the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, retained WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) to assist with the remaining recommendation to ensure the Official Plan and Zoning By-law continue to support Council's strategic goal of Business Attraction, Development and Retention and appropriately respond to the recommendations of the Employment Land Strategy. This review will also provide an opportunity to consider current and future trends in zoning for employment lands.

The overall goal of the project is to ensure the Official Plan and Zoning By-law support projected economic growth and development. The goal is to ensure the City has the appropriate policies and guidelines in place to encourage and support employment land development, intensification, and investment. In order to attract and retain the workforce in the changing digital economy, the City must ensure consideration is given to designing for complete communities and the regeneration of employment areas, while considering active transportation and climate change. For example, the City has investigated the attraction of Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) sector industries with respect to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, and updates to the local planning framework may be necessary to incent this type of development. While not intending to focus on one sector, these modern types of industries and uses have not been considered in development of current zone standards. The review will also consider the changes to the Provincial Planning Statement including changes to employment areas policies and/or agricultural policies.

The outcomes of the project will include:

- modernizing the commercial and industrial zone categories including simplifying zones and/or definitions, along with related Official Plan policy changes;
- reviewing zone standards with respect to modern requirements (e.g. lot size, frontage, parking ratios); and
- recommendations that respond to specific recurring issues that have been identified by staff as well as those that emerge through discussion with internal and external priority audiences.

## Process and Next Steps

WSP will be working to receive input and prepare recommendations over Q1 and Q2, with their findings to be finalized by Q3. Input from stakeholders will be received through focused meetings in Q1 and again in Q2 when recommendations are available, as well as through the Over to You website. The formal Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning process will occur in Q4 and will include public consultation as required by the Planning Act. WSP is a consulting firm that provides land use planning advisory services, with demonstrated experience in developing employment land use planning frameworks.

<b>Project Stage</b>	<b>Status/Anticipated Timing</b>
Phase 1 Priority Audience Consultation	Q1
Draft Background Report	Q1
Phase 2 Stakeholder Consultation	Q2
Final Background Report	Q2/Q3
Formal Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning Process	Q4

## Resources Cited

1. Employment Land Strategy, <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/planning-and-development/employment-land-strategy/>