

**Peterborough Watershed Plan
Phase One Engagement Summary Report**



**OUR WATERSHED
OUR BLUEPRINT**

Executive Summary

Prepared by LURA Consulting
For the City of Peterborough
November 2019



Executive Summary

This Engagement Report documents the results of the First Phase of Public Engagement for the Peterborough Watershed Study. It highlights the engagement methods used to capture public input as well as an analysis of the feedback that was received. The key messages from Phase One of the study will be reviewed and considered by the project team and will influence the development of the Watershed Plan’s vision statement and goals. The report concludes with a review of next steps for the project including engagement opportunities for Phase Two.

Project Overview

The City of Peterborough is undertaking a Watershed Planning Process, which will assess the cumulative impacts of activities across the watershed. The completion of the Watershed Study will lead to the creation of a Watershed Plan that will provide the City and neighbouring municipalities with a vision and a framework of established goals, objectives and direction to protect water resources. The resulting Plan will help the City make decisions relating to urban growth and land use planning and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Engagement Methods

Engagement for Phase One of the project was executed between June 13, 2019 and August 18, 2019 and included multiple engagement methods. In total, 586 people were reached over the two-month engagement period. Participants who provided feedback in Phase One of the engagement program were asked to provide input on preliminary elements of the Watershed Plan. A multi-method engagement plan was developed to increase awareness about the watershed study and solicit feedback from community members and stakeholders. The infographic below demonstrates the engagement methods used and the rates of participation (Figure 1).

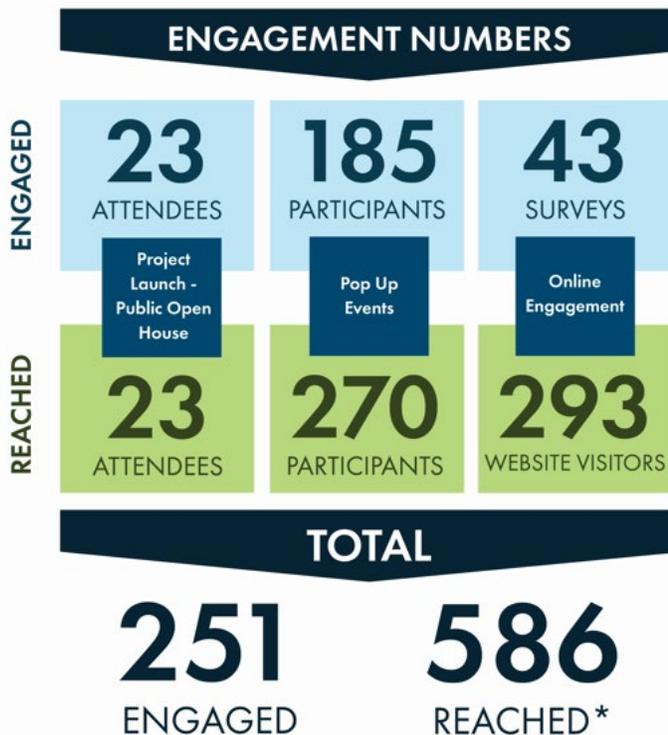


Figure 1: Engagement Numbers

*During some engagement methods, there were individuals who engaged with the information, but did not provide feedback. Those numbers are included in the reached rates.





What We Heard: Key Feedback

The public engagement process for Phase One of the Watershed Study resulted in feedback related to the following subjects:

1. A Vision for the Watershed
2. Areas of Concern for Watershed Health and Sustainability
3. Additional Feedback



This section draws out the key messages that emerged from an analysis of participant feedback from the open house, pop-ups and the online survey. The key messages detailed in this section will influence the development of a vision for the Watershed Plan and will lay the foundation for setting goals to address potential threats to watershed health and sustainability.

1. A Vision for the Watershed

The Open House, Pop-Ups and Online survey all posed the same question, “**What is your vision for a healthy and sustainable watershed?**” Five key messages emerged. The key messages synthesized from participant feedback will be used to develop inform the vision for the Watershed Plan.



Key Message: A Healthy Ecosystem

Participants envision a healthy aquatic ecosystem that provides high water quality to support aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, as well as human life. Residents also want efforts to preserve the watershed to move beyond a mindset of sustainability and towards a mindset of regeneration, ensuring a healthy watershed for future generations.



Key Message: The Prioritization of Clean Water

Participant responses indicated that clean water is critical for the future of a healthy and sustainable watershed. The watershed should provide a clean supply of drinking water and safe recreational activities for generations to come. The City should work to ensure that the industrial and agricultural sector are supported in reducing any negative impacts on watershed health (e.g. runoff).



Key Message: Smart Development

Participant feedback related to development focused on the need for compact development to limit urban sprawl. For some participants, this means ensuring urban boundaries are set to prevent construction of single-detached residential subdivisions beyond previously urbanized areas of the City. The concern is that more development will encroach upon sensitive ecosystems (e.g., wetlands and waterbodies).



Key Message: Resiliency

Residents are concerned about the resiliency of their neighbourhoods and communities in relation to climate change. Participant feedback indicates that the Watershed Plan should consider how adaptive and preventative measures to limit the consequences of flooding can be addressed by the City.



Key Message: Ongoing Engagement, Education and Coordination

Feedback highlighted the importance of community engagement and education to help residents understand how their actions affect the watershed, and the steps they can take to help reduce and

mitigate these impacts. Participants also noted that the City should continue to engage partner organizations to allow for the ongoing coordination of efforts between such organizations.

2. Areas of Concern for Watershed Health and Sustainability

Participants were also asked to provide feedback regarding areas of concern related to the health and sustainability of the watershed. Feedback indicated several trends which have been distilled into key messages related to each area of concern.

Key Messages cover the following themes:

- Urban Growth and Sprawl
- Water Quality Degradation
- Water Supply
- Flows and Water Levels (Flooding)
- Ecosystem Health
- Climate Change



The following section provides more detail on each of the key messages. These messages will be used by the project team to help develop goals and objectives for the Watershed Plan.



Key Message: Urban Growth and Sprawl

Feedback from all participation channels indicates that urban growth and sprawl is perceived to be a top factor influencing the health of the watershed. Residents do not seem to be concerned about the growth of the City's population but want to see a measured approach that respects the health and sustainability of the watershed.



Key Message: Water Quality Degradation (Run-off)

Concerns related to water quality degradation demonstrates that the residents see run-off from urban areas, industrial effluence, agricultural activities and road salt as the key contributor to water quality degradation. The feedback suggests that a goal should be considered to address run-off and other contamination sources to maintain and enhance water quality in the future.



Key Message: Water Supply

Overall, water supply does not appear to be a priority concern. However, drought is somewhat of a concern for residents tied to climate change. Some participant feedback indicated an interest in seeing the municipality enhance its approach to monitoring various water sources (e.g., groundwater and aquifers).



Key Message: Flows and Water Levels (Flooding)

Participant feedback indicates that flooding is a concern for residents as it relates to safety and property damage. There is a desire to see the City expand and bolster existing infrastructure designed to withstand extreme weather events. Related to the flooding of rivers and streams, responses imply the perceived need for strengthened regulation regarding development in flood-prone areas. The idea is that no one should feel exposed, perhaps unknowingly, to flood-related risks.



Key Message: Ecosystem Health

Wetland quality is a top concern for residents related to overall ecosystem health. Participant feedback indicates that there is a perceived lack of protection for wetlands in the City. It was clear that

this type of natural feature is viewed as a significant piece that supports the overall health of the watershed.



Key Message: Climate Change

Feedback related to climate change implies that extreme weather and flooding are primary concerns for residents. Extreme rainfall events and changes in seasonal precipitation patterns are perceived to have significance influence on the health of the watershed.

3. Additional Considerations

A few additional questions were posed to Phase One participants. They were the following:

1. How has the watershed changed in the past 10-15 years?
2. What should we focus most of our efforts on over the next 10 years to maintain and restore the watershed?



Key Message: Recent Watershed Changes

Feedback related to changes in the watershed mirrored the feedback related to the areas of concern. Participants noted that human interference related to development has increased within the last 10-15 years. Development was said to have led to greater stormwater run-off, sedimentation, and flooding. Participants also feel that urban growth and sprawl has led resulted in the loss of or damage to important habitat such as wetlands. Participants noted that the effects of climate change have become more apparent through events such as algae blooms due to warmer water temperatures and nutrients, more erosion, higher water levels, and more frequent flooding.



Key Message: Ten-Year Maintenance and Restoration Priorities

Responses from the open house and online survey identified several areas of concern that should be addressed within the next 10 years. Participant feedback indicated a need to take a measured and careful approach to development that favours intensification over sprawl and limits impacts on the watershed. Input also indicates a desire to see a focus on stewardship and restoration that seeks to maintain greenspace, restore shorelines, preserve wetlands and increase the tree canopy. Acknowledging a changing climate, residents want to see the plan address how resiliency to extreme weather can be enhanced in the City. Finally, responses demonstrate that the public want to see a Watershed Plan that is implemented and enforced to ensure the maintenance and restoration of the watershed.



Next Steps

Public participant feedback from Phase One of the Peterborough Watershed Study will be used to inform the development of the vision and goals for the Watershed Plan. The development of these core plan elements will be done in conjunction with feedback from the WCC, the TWG, stakeholders and First Nations to develop these plan elements. These Plan elements will also be informed by technical studies completed by the Project Team.

A second opportunity for public consultation will begin in the Summer of 2020. At this time, the public will be asked to provide feedback on draft solutions and scenarios to address the primary issues facing the watershed. Phase Two will be carried out through pop-up events and will continue to raise awareness about the Watershed Study and development of the Watershed Plan.