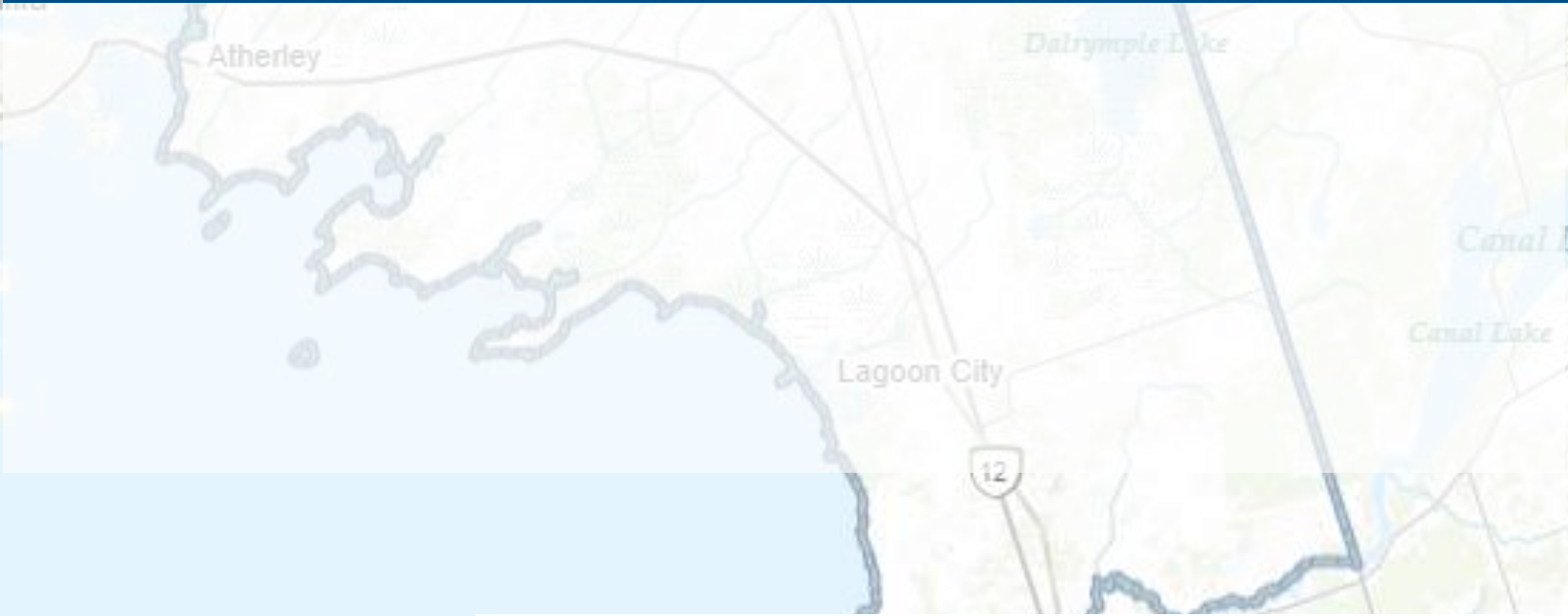


**Zoning By-law Review and Update  
Community Engagement Strategy  
May 2026**



D.M. Wills Reference No. 25-84032  
Prepared For: The Township of Ramara  
Prepared by: D.M Wills Associates Limited



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# 1.0 Introduction

D.M. Wills Associates Limited (Wills) has been retained by the Township of Ramara (Township) to assist with the review and update of the Township of Ramara Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL). The update will bring this document into conformity with the recently updated and approved Township of Ramara Official Plan. As the CZBL implements the policy direction of the Official Plan, a timely update is required to ensure the zoning provisions are reflective of and align with the objectives and goals of the Township.

In response to the Official Plan update, and as outlined in the Planning Act (Section 26(9)), the Township's Zoning By-law must be updated within 3 years of an Official plan coming into effect. As part of the update, the Township is required to hold one statutory public meeting, however, to ensure meaningful and robust community consultation, the CZBL update will include a wide variety of consultation events to garner feedback from the community, interested stakeholders, agencies and Indigenous communities.

To initiate this process, the Township has prepared a Community Engagement Strategy (Strategy) to outline how the Township will consult, engage, and inform the community on the proposed changes to the CZBL. The key message and objective of this Strategy is to notify the public of the opportunities they have to engage with the Township and ensure the Township itself is providing sufficient opportunity for the public to interact. The Strategy outlines anticipated dates and opportunities for residents to contact the Township to voice their concerns and comments on what they would like to see in their community.

The Strategy outlines the goals and objectives and outlines specific opportunities the public will have to interact with the current and proposed updates to the CZBL. A further breakdown of each opportunity with anticipated timing is included below.

## 2.0 Strategy Goals and Objectives

### 2.1 Goal

The Township is committed to inclusive decision-making and transparency when updating their CZBL which directly impacts the community.

### 2.2 Objectives

The following objectives are established:

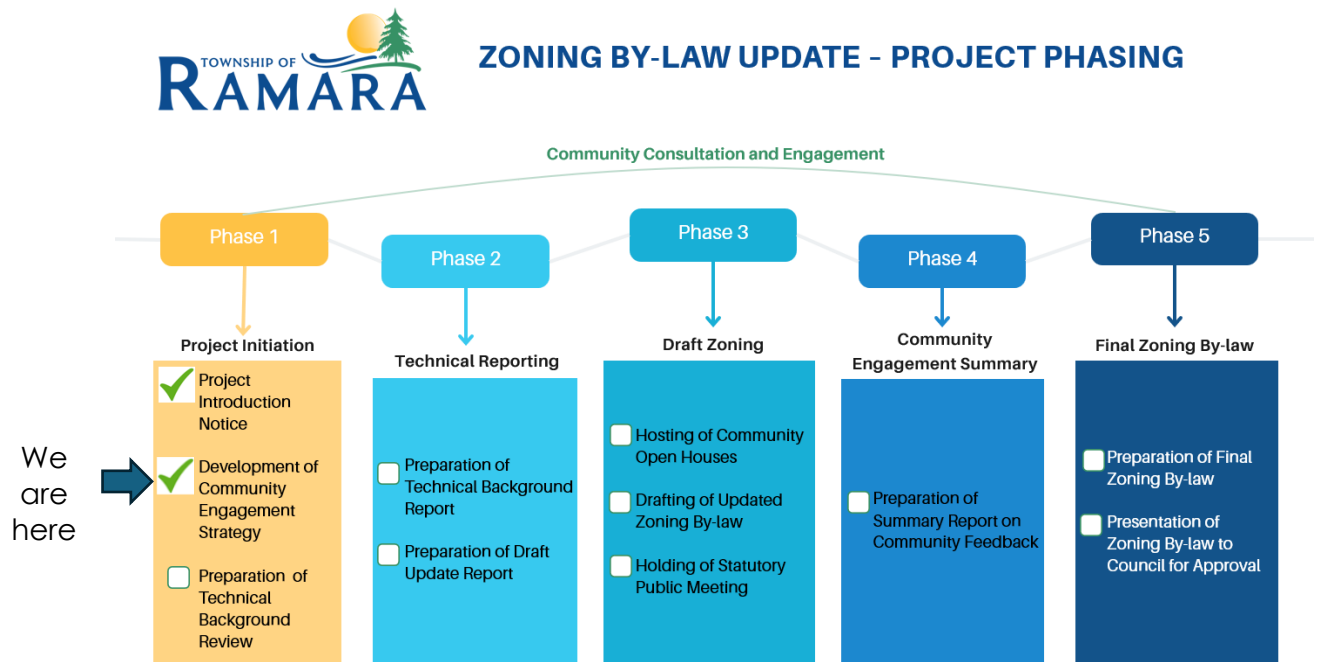
- Community engagement will commence early in the review process and be generally thorough
- To provide sufficient opportunity and notice for public engagement (i.e., advance notice regarding the date and time of the open houses, etc.)
- For public engagement to be meaningful for both the Township and residents

- For the identified concerns and proposed revisions to be transparent with the community

### 3.0 Community Engagement Strategy

In support of the goals and objectives of the Strategy and to inform the CZBL update, the following is proposed to ensure adequate public consultation will be undertaken to garner feedback from the community and identify where amendments can be made to better reflect the community's objectives. The bulk of the public consultation will be offered and available during the first three phases of the CZBL Update Work Plan as shown in **Figure 1 – Zoning By-law Update – Project Phasing**.

**Figure 1 – Zoning By-law Update – Project Phasing**



The strategy has been divided into two stages: Stage 1 – Preliminary Consultation and Stage 2 – Proposed Zoning Consultation. The first stage of public consultation and engagement will give the opportunity for the public to comment and identify issues with the current CZBL. This could include, but not limited to, the public commenting on what their property is currently zoned and any impacts to the development/use of the lot, zoning provisions such as setbacks that may impact use of land, and what uses the community would like to see or not see incorporated into the CZBL. The second and final stage of public consultation will be to review the draft updated CZBL that is prepared in response to changes in provincial legislation, the newly updated Official Plan, and comments provided by Township staff, the public and applicable agencies.

The following outlines the two stages of public consultation that will occur throughout the CZBL Update.

### **3.1 Stage 1- Preliminary Consultation**

#### **3.1.1 Information Sheets**

Information sheets (sheets) have been prepared to support the Strategy and will be made available to the public via the Township's website and paper copies will be available at Municipal facilities. The intent of the information sheets is to provide the public with a basic understanding of what a Zoning By-law is, what requires a Zoning By-law Amendment, and what is considered a Minor Variance. The sheets will ensure the public has a foundational understanding of what these key components of the update are to cultivate a more thorough and robust engagement with the public. The Information Sheets will also provide website links and ways to contact the CZBL Update Project Team if additional information is needed.

#### **3.1.2 Community Survey**

A Community Survey (Survey) will be prepared asking respondents various questions regarding what they would like to see and permit within their community as it relates to land use. The survey will be posted on the Township's website, Interactive Zone Mapping feature (further details below), and paper copies will be available at various Township facilities to garner general details of the who is commenting and what their concerns are regarding the current CZBL or what is important to maintain in the CBZL. The Survey will ask questions regarding demographics (i.e. age, residence area, location of employment, etc.), history of applying for planning applications (i.e., If the respondent has ever applied for any Minor Variances or Zoning By-law Amendments), and request respondents opinion on new and upcoming changes based on provincial planning legislation (i.e. Additional Residential Units (ARUs), transportation initiatives, on-farm diversified uses, etc.). If low participation occurs, the survey will remain open for a longer period of time in an effort to garner more feedback. The additional time will be determined at a later date, if required. All responses will be compiled and reviewed to help guide and influence the update to the Zoning By-law. It is anticipated that the survey will be active in May 2026.

#### **3.1.3 Interactive Zone Mapping**

The Interactive Zone Mapping (Mapping) will act as a both an educational and collaborative tool to engage with residents regarding the permitted uses they would like to see in a certain area. The Mapping will also act as one of the forums to relay the Community Survey as indicated above. The Mapping will serve two primary functions. The first layer will provide the basic information on the property (i.e. by highlighting a property, the address/location, the zone and the corresponding abbreviation, and a link to the current Zoning By-law will be provided). The second function will request for feedback and comments regarding a more general area in the Township (i.e. Rural, Shoreline Residential, Hamlet). By clicking on the area, a comment box function will appear permitting the viewer to provide feedback specific to that area. This gives the

public the opportunity to comment on the existing uses and proposed new uses in a certain zone or area. It is anticipated that the Interactive Zone Mapping of the existing zoning will be active in May 2026 and will remain active throughout the duration of Stage 1.

### **3.1.4 Introductory Open House**

The Introductory Open House will be hosted jointly by Wills and Township staff at the Township of Ramara Municipal Office in the Council Chambers to act as a centralized way to engage the public. This Open House will be held in-person. The Open House event is scheduled for July 22, 2026, from 6:00 pm – 9:00pm to ensure maximum participation by property owners. Notice will be provided via the Township Website, advertised on social media platforms, and in local media outlets (i.e. Orillia Matters & Simcoe.com). The Introductory Open House will be an informal event with display boards illustrating the current zoning maps, proposed zoning maps changes to reflect the updated Official Plan, a list of the amendments already made to the CZBL in response to changes to provincial legislation. The Open House will also allow for direct discussion between the public and staff to discuss any concerns, questions or to seek clarification regarding the CZBL and the update process. Comments sheets and contact information will also be made available for interested parties to document and submit their comments after the meeting and throughout the process. For those who cannot attend, the Project Team encourages you to call or email to ask questions and provide feedback. Contact information for the Project Team can be found on the Township's Website and the Zoning By-law & Minor Variance Applications Information Sheets. Two subsequent Open Houses will be held during Stage 2 of the Community Engagement Strategy.

### **3.1.5 Task Force Steering Committee Meeting**

A Task Force Steering Committee will be assembled by Wills and Township staff consisting of members of the Township staff and key agencies. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to discuss, provide feedback, and make recommendations on how to improve and update the CZBL to be more user-friendly, applicable to current legislation, and revise any provisions that may require clarification or adjustments for better implementation and use by the Township, agencies and residents. The Steering Committee will be responsible for reviewing the updated documents for comment and feedback.

The first Steering Committee Meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 2026. Two additional Steering Committee Meetings will be held as part of Stage 2 of the Community Engagement Strategy.

### **3.1.6 Conclusion of Stage 1 – Comment Response Matrix**

Wills, in correlation with Township staff, will prepare an overall summary of all the comments, questions, and considerations from the public during Stage 1 – Preliminary Consultation in a Comment Response Matrix (Matrix). The Matrix will organize and group reoccurring comments into themes for ease of reference and to ensure efficiency in

responses to the public. This summary will inform the updates to the Zoning By-law and will act as an active document to collect all public input.

## **3.2 Stage 2 – Proposed Zoning Consultation**

### **3.2.1 Second Community Survey**

A second Community Survey will be conducted asking respondents various questions regarding the proposed updates to the CZBL. The survey will follow the same format as the initial survey and will be posted on the Township's website, Interactive Zone Mapping feature and available at various Township facilities to garner feedback on the public's opinion to the proposed amendments. All responses will be compiled and reviewed to consider any alterations or further amendments to the Zoning By-law. The Second Community Survey is anticipated to be distributed and active in spring of 2027.

### **3.2.2 Interactive Zone Mapping**

The Interactive Zone Mapping (Mapping) will be updated to show the current zone and the proposed new zone of properties either through an existing application for amendment or as recommended by the project team and staff. This will display to the public the properties that have been identified for updates to better reflect existing conditions and future land uses. It will also highlight areas where new zoning provisions will apply. Similar to the function provided during Stage 1, a comment box function will be active for the public to provide feedback and comments on the proposed changes. This is an easy way for the public to learn the existing zone of their property, the potential change of zoning, and what new provisions may apply. The Mapping will continue to act as one of the forums to access the second Community Survey. The Interactive Zone Mapping with the proposed zoning amendments is anticipated to be active in spring of 2027.

### **3.2.3 Open Houses**

The remaining two Open Houses will be hosted jointly by Wills and Township staff at available municipal facilities throughout the Township. The Open Houses will maintain the format as the previous, Introductory Open House and will be held in-person. The Open Houses will occur during the summer of 2027, however, specific details regarding date and time are yet to be determined. Further details will be provided via Notice on the Township Website, advertised on social media platforms and in local media outlets (i.e. Orillia Matters & Simcoe.com) The Open House will include display boards and information packages outlining the changes proposed to the CZBL based on the background review and public consultation conducted this far. The Open Houses will act as a way for the public to comment on the proposed changes to the CZBL that will be used to inform the final draft CZBL. For those who cannot attend, the Project Team encourages you to call or email to ask questions and provide feedback. Contact information for the Project Team can be found on the Township's Website and the Zoning By-law & Minor Variance Applications Information Sheets.

### **3.2.4 Task Force Steering Committee Meetings**

Two Task Force Steering Committee Meetings will be held to discuss, provide feedback, and make recommendations on the proposed draft and final CZBL. Consulting with the Steering Committee ensures that the proposed updates remain user-friendly, consistent with all current provincial legislation, and does not create conflicting information with other municipal processes i.e. building permits. The final Two Task Force Steering Committee Meetings will be held in Spring and Summer of 2027.

### **3.2.5 Statutory Public Meeting**

Once all the opportunities for public engagement outlined above have been completed, the draft CZBL will be presented to Council through a Statutory Public Meeting. This meeting presents the draft document to Council and gives the public the opportunity to voice any comments prior to the preparation of the final CZBL document. Any comments made at the Statutory Public Meeting will be considered during the final review before the Final CZBL is presented to Council for a decision. The anticipated date of the Statutory Public Meeting is the Fall of 2027.

### **3.3 First Nations Consultation**

The Chippewas of Rama First Nation is a neighbouring community to the Township and will be consulted throughout the entire Zoning By-law Update. The Chippewas of Rama First Nation has implemented their own 'Consultation and Accommodation Protocol' which will be followed for sufficient and fulsome feedback and engagement. The Township will begin consultation by issuing a written Notice and Request to Consult to the consultation employees, the Chief, and Council. The Zoning By-law Update is a government land use planning process and is subject to a Level 2 (Special Consultation Process) with the First Nation Community. The Rama First Nation will also receive all community surveys and notices for all other public consultation opportunities.

The other six Williams' Treaty First Nations Communities will be consulted, if desired. If other First Nations Communities show an interest in further engagement with the Zoning By-law Update, then Wills and Township staff will undergo their implemented consultation process (if applicable). If no established consultation process has been implemented, then Wills and the Township will consult the First Nations Communities in the desired way.

### **3.4 Community Engagement Plan Report**

A summary of all the comments, concerns, and questions raised during the Community Engagement Strategy will be documented in a Community Engagement Plan. The Community Engagement Plan (Plan) report will outline and summarize the opportunities for public engagement and how the feedback was addressed or incorporated into the CZBL update. This Plan is the only deliverable during Phase 4 – Community Engagement Summary and will be made available on the Township's website once the process is completed.