

REPORT TO: Mayor and Members of Council

PREPARED BY: Abby Heddle-Jacobs, Planner

DEPARTMENT: Administration & Finance

DIVISION: Planning

MEETING DATE: January 22, 2025

SUBJECT: Official Plan Review – Process Update

PROPOSED MOTION

THAT Council receive this report for information;

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is intended to provide Council with a brief update on the status of the Official Plan Review project.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Leadership: To Create a Positive, Open Organizational Culture With Open, Respectful and Responsible Leadership

Plans: To Support Robust Industrial, Commercial and Residential Growth By Managing Growth And Land Use Wisely

Prosper: To Support Economic Strength, Foster Entrepreneurship And Attract Investment By Strengthening The Municipality's Long-Term Finances

BACKGROUND

Council directed staff to undertake an Official Plan Review in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act on June 19th, 2024. A new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024) was announced and brought into effect, which triggered a brief pause on the Official Plan Review given the changing legislative and policy environment. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief update on the project now that the new PPS is in place.

DISCUSSION

As Council will recall, the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS) came into force on October 20, 2024, and all land use planning decisions made as of that date shall be consistent with the new PPS. The PPS encompasses a single, province-wide land use planning policy instrument that provides direction to planning authorities on matters of provincial interest. Several other land use planning changes have recently been made as part of the Provincial ‘Housing Supply Action Plan’. The Planning Act and the PPS require that planning authorities keep their Official Plans up-to-date to ensure that they provide clear, reasonable and attainable policies to protect provincial interests and facilitate suitable development.

Given the recent implementation of the PPS 2024, County Council directed staff to undertake an update to the County Official Plan on January 14th, 2025, which will consider topics including housing, agriculture, economy and growth and development. Further, the update to the County Official Plan will include updated population, housing and employment projections based on the Ministry of Finance projections, which is a new requirement of the PPS, 2024. Population Projections for Middlesex County are included within the County’s Official Plan and are intended to be used by the County and local municipalities to assist in managing growth and development.

It is considered timely to update the projections for a number of reasons. The 2021 projections were completed for a 25-year planning horizon, as was required by the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) in place at that time, whereas the PPS now provides for a 20 to 30-year planning horizon. Provincially, it is now a requirement of the PPS that municipalities base population, housing and employment projections on the Ministry of Finance projections. Locally, there has been an uptick in development activity. The projections are therefore being updated to reflect a 30-year planning horizon, the most recent Ministry of Finance numbers, the uptick in development that is occurring across the County and locally in North Middlesex, as well as the passing of time.

In terms of work occurring locally in North Middlesex, staff have continued to work on the natural heritage, agricultural, housing and economic development background reports as well as consideration of draft policies, which will continue in conjunction with the work occurring at the County. The Official Plan Review being undertaken in conjunction with the

County will ensure that a redlined document is before Council in a timely manner and largely accounts for any policy changes made at the County level.

As Council may recall, staff had previously proposed a timeline that would see a final redlined Official Plan before Council in July of 2025. This timeline predated the announcement and implementation of the new PPS and as such staff are proposing to complete much of the work over the next six to eight months with the goal being to achieve a draft Official Plan Amendment in the early Fall and local adoption in November. The Official Plan would then be forwarded to the County of Middlesex for approval.

FINANCIAL

The approval of development and the accompanied community growth has indirect long-term financial implications for the Municipality and partners. The Planning Act states that no public work shall be undertaken, and no by-law shall be passed that does not conform to the official plan.

ATTACHMENT

Prepared By: Choose an item.

Reviewed By: Choose an item.

Approved By: Choose an item.