



## **Administrative Report**

### **Office of the Manager, Planning Services**

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Rebecca Belanger, MCIP, RPP  
Manager, Planning Services

**Date:** Wednesday, April 05, 2023

**Subject:** Statutory Public Meeting Section 26(3) of the Planning Act, County of Essex Official Plan Review

**Report #:** 2023-0405-IPS-R07-RB

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#### **Purpose**

To provide County Council with information pertaining to:

- The purpose of this statutory public meeting under Section 26(3) of the Planning Act regarding the County's Official Plan review process;
- the work program for Phases 2 and 3 of the Official Plan Review.

#### **Background**

Further to the report that was provided to County Council on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Administration has been authorized by Council to retain the services of NPG Planning Solutions to assist County Council with the preparation of the County's new Official Plan.

Section 26(3) of the *Planning Act* requires that before an Official Plan is updated, that Council shall, consult with the approval authority (the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and with prescribed public bodies with respect to the revisions required; and to hold a special meeting of Council, open to the public, to discuss the revisions that may be required.

The County's Official Plan came into effect in April of 2014, and since this time there have been several changes to the planning framework at the Provincial level that need to be addressed. For example, the *Planning Act* requires Municipalities ensure that their Official Plans have regard to matters of provincial interest and are consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement*

(PPS). The PPS was revised in 2020, and as a result, the County's Official Plan needs to be examined and updated to ensure consistency. There is also further Provincial legislation that has been created or amended, which will impact policies in the County's Official Plan.

The County is engaging the Province, Local Area Municipalities, Indigenous communities, County Council, Conservation Authorities, the public and other stakeholders, to obtain input on the comprehensive review.

The updated Official Plan when adopted will guide and provide direction to landowners, business owners, developers/homebuilders, and the community at large on matters such as:

- the location and extent of urban settlement areas, and how growth is managed, communities are serviced, and new lots are created;
- population, employment and housing projections, and corresponding land resources needed to meet these growth forecasts;
- agricultural land and natural heritage protection and enhancement;
- how people and property are protected from flooding and other hazards;
- other policy matters and implementation tools as required to responsibly address *Planning Act* and *Provincial Policy Statement (2020 PPS)* requirements.

## **Discussion**

Based on previous reports to County Council, Phase 1 of the County's Official Plan Review process has been completed with the preparation of the new 30-year County and local population, household and employment forecasts. Of note, from 2021 to 2051, the County is anticipated to accommodate a population increase of approximately 69,000 to 116,000 persons and will require between 29,700 and 42,900 additional homes. During this time frame, the County is also anticipated to provide for an increase of 36,000 to 52,000 jobs.

A Phase 1 Background Report was also prepared that summarizes consultation held with County Council and stakeholders on issues, opportunities and constraints. The Phase 1 Background Report provides valuable insight into the priorities for the community including: addressing housing and affordability, growing the economy, agricultural lands and issues, the commitment to active transportation, protecting the natural environment and working in partnership with the seven local municipalities.

Prior to advancing with the Phase 2 work program, it is appropriate to host the statutory public meeting. The purpose of the public meeting is to provide an opportunity for members of County Council and interested residents to provide comments regarding any issues or matters that should be considered as part of this Official Plan review. Community engagement is a critical component to the success of this initiative. NPG will be working with the County to develop a strategy to build off community engagement that has taken place to date. There will be additional opportunities for consultation with the public and various stakeholders during key milestones in this project.

During Phase 2, additional technical studies will be prepared to address key issues, challenges and opportunities identified during Phase 1. This additional technical work will include a comprehensive analysis of future urban land requirements County-wide. The technical reports will feed into a Policy Options Report focusing on achieving the established vision for the County of Essex, as well as ensuring Provincial Policy conformity.

Phase 3 involves the preparation of the draft new Official Plan, and the circulation/ presentation to County Council, to local Councils (and to senior staff from each of the local municipalities), to adjacent municipalities, to Indigenous communities, and to provincial ministries and agencies for their review, and to obtain their input and feedback.

In accordance with the *Planning Act*, the notice of public meeting appeared in the Windsor Star on February 24, 2023 and March 3, 2023 (copy attached). The notice was also published in the Essex Free Press, Harrow News, Rivertown Times and Southpoint Sun.

## **Financial Implications**

None

## **Consultations**

Larry Silani, the Official Plan Planning Advisor was consulted during the preparation of this report.

## **Recommendation**

That Essex County Council receive this report and information provided by NPG Planning Solutions regarding Phases 2 and 3 of the County's Official Plan review.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Rebecca Belanger*

Rebecca Belanger, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Allan Botham*

Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Mary Birch*

Mary Birch, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Appendix Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Notice of Statutory Public Meeting- County of Essex Official Plan Review