



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, November 01, 2023

Subject: Summary of Comments from the Public Meeting-
OPA to modify CIP Policies

Report #: 2023-1101-IPS-R38-RB

Purpose

To summarize the comments received at the public meeting regarding the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to amend the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Policies in the County Official Plan and to recommend adoption of the associated by-law.

Background

Further to reports that were provided to County Council on September 7, 2022, and July 19, 2023 which summarized the process to enable the County to participate in grant programs aimed at contributing to our local municipalities that have Community Improvement Plans, the statutory public meeting was held on October 4, 2023.

In preparation for the public meeting, notice of the public meeting was listed in the Windsor Star and on the County's website seeking public and agency feedback. The associated July 19, 2023 County Council Report was also sent to all local municipal Planning Departments along with the Official Plan Amendment for review and response.

Discussion

No comments from the public were received regarding Official Plan Amendment (OPA) No. 3. A letter of support was received from Invest WindsorEssex along with the comments received from Marion Fantetti during the public meeting. Several of the municipalities along with Invest

WindsorEssex have requested to participate in the review of the CIP Program Guide prior to finalization. The comments received from the local municipalities were supportive. Consideration was requested during the public meeting to develop the program guide with criteria that would support employment uses in all of the seven local municipalities to the greatest extent possible.

County Planning identified in the October 4, 2023 report that additional CIP policy areas including funding opportunities for affordable housing are being considered as part of the County Official Plan review process. A fulsome review and response to broadening the CIP policy program to include affordable housing requires a separate assessment of financial implications and can be provided to County Council as this information is available.

As the program guide is developed it will be circulated to the local municipalities for comments and then brought back for County Council's review and approval.

It is intended that each requested CIP grant will be brought forward for County Council approval along with an associated agreement with the applicant.

Financial Implications

Adopting CIP policies in the Official Plan, which will enable the County to provide grant funding, will generate costs related to the value of the awarded tax increment grants and costs to administer the program (review applications, calculate and pay grants on an annual basis and maintain records). In the case of grants for large scale industrial developments, costs would be offset by the increased tax assessment generated by the new development as well as the benefit of the additional job creation and spin-off industry.

Due to the more recent requests to consider applying this program to smaller scale commercial development, agri-tourism and affordable housing the financial implications resulting from providing the tax grants are different and need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

The proposed draft Official Plan Amendment establishes the policy regime to support the County's ability to participate in lower-tier CIP incentive programs, however, the amendment does not provide the specific eligibility criteria for the County's participation. County Council will maintain control over the financial implications, if any, through the development and approval of the program guide.

County Council has the option of discontinuing the program in the future at any time should the strategic development targets be achieved. Should Council approve the advancement of matching CIP grant funding, the 2024 Budget would include an estimate of the financial impact.

The program guide would also include direction on topics such as: potential annual funding caps, longevity of the program and prioritization of projects should demand exceed financial capacity.

Consultations

All seven local Municipal Planning Departments and Invest WindsorEssex are participating in the advancement of OPA No. 3 to the County Official Plan.

The Official Plan Planning Advisor and Administration from NPG Planning Solutions have been consulted during this initiative.

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive 2023-1101-IPS-R38-RB, from the Planner, with regard to the proposed Official Plan Amendment No. 3 and adopt By-law 2023-52.

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,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
1	Refer to By-law 2023-52 OPA No. 3 to the County Official Plan – Item 15.2 on November 1, 2023 Agenda