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Report 2025-050

Report Title: Adoption of County Official Plan Amendment No. 2 - Growth Forecast and Major Employment Area

Committee Name: Economic Development, Tourism and Planning

Committee Meeting Date: March 5, 2025

Prepared by: Dwayne Campbell, RPP, MCIP
Director
Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Initiatives

Approved by: Jennifer Moore, CAO

Council Meeting Date: March 19, 2025

Strategic Plan Priorities: ☐ Innovate for Service Excellence
☒ Ignite Economic Opportunity
☒ Foster a Thriving Community
☒ Propel Sustainable Growth
☐ Champion a Vibrant Future

Recommendation

That the Economic Development, Tourism and Land Use Planning Committee, having considered Report 2025-050 'Adoption of County Official Plan Amendment No. 2 - Growth Forecasts and Major Employment Area', recommend that County Council adopt Official Plan Amendment No. 2; and

Further That the Committee recommend that County Council enact a by-law to adopt Amendment No. 2 to the Northumberland County Official Plan at the March 19, 2025 County Council Meeting; and

Further That the Committee recommend that County Council direct staff to issue a notice of adoption and forward Amendment No. 2 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval; and

Further That the Committee recommend that County Council direct staff to send a copy of Report 2025-050 and the attachments to Northumberland County's seven member municipalities for information."

Purpose

This report seeks to adopt an amendment to the Northumberland Official Plan to incorporate population, employment and housing forecasts prepared as part of the Official Plan Update, Northumberland Next. The amendment will also establish a new Major Employment Area at County Road 28 and Highway 401 in Port Hope. The recommended amendment is the second in a series of amendments for the Official Plan Update.

Background

In 2021, a Growth Forecast and Land Needs Analysis report addressed the County-wide growth forecasts, local municipal population and employment allocations and provided an assessment of long-term urban land needs to the year 2051. A draft official plan amendment was prepared and proposed changes to the Official Plan to allocate growth in accordance with the Land Needs Analysis and bring the Official Plan up-to-date and in conformity with the Provincial Growth Plan.

Open house and public meeting events were held in 2022, and again in 2024 following significant changes to the Ontario Planning system, including the repeal of the Provincial Growth Plan and new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, coming into effect.

Consultations

County Report 2024-131 summarized the comments made in the 2024 public sessions and was presented to the Economic Development, Tourism and Planning Committee on October 2, 2024. The majority of public feedback involved the proposed expansion of the Port Hope, Grafton and Codrington settlement areas for residential uses.

Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations

Any changes to the Official Plan that get adopted by Council will need to be submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval before coming into effect. It is noted that Provincial legislation prevents any public appeals of a Minister decision.

Discussion / Options

The recommended amendment will incorporate County growth forecasts (i.e. 122,000 people, 44,000 jobs by 2051), allocate local municipal population and employment forecasts, and expand the Port Hope Urban Area to accommodate forecasted employment uses with the designation of a Major Employment Area. A future report will consider the residential settlement area expansions for Port Hope, Grafton and Codrington as well as rationalize the boundaries for a number of rural settlement areas that were proposed in the previous draft.

The attached memorandum report, prepared by Meridian Planning Consultants, provides details and a professional planning opinion of the recommended Official Plan Amendment No. 2 (refer to attachment 1).

Financial Impact

Funding for the County Official Plan Update was approved as part of the 2020 budget process. Given the changes to the Ontario Planning system in 2022 (i.e. Bill 23) and may other changes to Provincial legislation that were made, and then un-made; and the repeal of the Growth Plan and new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 coming into effect, the original project budget has been exhausted. Staff are currently exploring options and will prepare a report to fund the remaining amendments of the Official Plan Update.

Member Municipality Impacts

Member municipal planning staff have been involved throughout the project. Once an official plan amendment is approved by the Minister, member municipalities will need to update their local official plans for consistency.

Conclusion / Outcomes

A report prepared by Meridian Planning Consultants includes the second amendment to the County Official Plan to update policies and mapping in accordance with the Council endorsed Growth Management Assessment and Land Needs Analysis for Northumberland. It is recommended that Council adopt Amendment No. 2 to the County Official Plan; and authorize staff to issue a notice of adoption and send the amendment to the Province for approval.

Attachments

- 1) Report 2025-050 ATTACH 1 'Memorandum Report, Recommended Growth Management Amendment Phase 1, Meridian Planning (January 21. 2025)'
- 2) Report 2025-050 ATTACH 3 'A By-law to Adopt Amendment No. 2 to the Northumberland County Official Pan'
- 3) Report 2025-050 ATTACH 2 'Official Plan Amendment No. 2'