



Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: August 12, 2025

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Subject: Village of Newbury Hybrid Official Plan Procedures

BACKGROUND:

The Village of Newbury's existing Official Plan, first adopted in 1985, no longer conforms with current provincial or County planning policies. In recognition of this, and following collaborative discussions between County and Village administration, and a formal request from Newbury Council, Middlesex County Council passed the following resolution on May 11, 2021:

THAT County Council endorse the concept of including local official planning policies for the Village of Newbury within the County Official Plan and that staff examine any administrative measures that would be necessary to implement this.

To implement this direction, Middlesex County approved the consideration of a hybrid planning approach that addresses Newbury's unique policy needs within a broader regional framework by integrating Newbury-specific policies as a dedicated chapter within the County of Middlesex Official Plan. This structure enables the Village to rely on the County's established policy framework for matters of provincial and regional interest, while providing a locally responsive planning context to guide development related to distinct community priorities.

This model, drawn from similar practices in counties such as Renfrew, Wellington, Peterborough, and Grey, is expected to reduce administrative duplication, optimize resource use, and deliver planning outcomes that reflect Newbury's scale and development context.

To operationalize this hybrid structure, the County will need to formalize supporting procedural and administrative mechanisms, including:

- Establishing a defined process for Newbury-related Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), ensuring local public meetings and Village Council advisory recommendations precede County Council consideration;
- Reviewing the Tariff of Fees By-law to address application processing fees and potential local remittances;
- Amending or clarifying the Delegation By-law and Council Procedural By-law to reflect the revised approval pathway; and
- Coordinating communication protocols and administrative responsibilities between County and Village staff.

The overarching goal is to ensure compliance with all applicable requirements of the Planning Act while safeguarding Newbury's ability to guide local development through a practical and context-sensitive planning process.

The development of a formalized procedure to consider Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) to the Newbury chapter of the Middlesex County Official Plan is more complex given that the Village of Newbury is a local municipality without representation on Middlesex County Council. This context reinforces the need for a bespoke, transparent, and locally responsive process that remains compliant with the Planning Act and respects the principles of good governance and procedural fairness.

ANALYSIS

To inform the development of a Newbury hybrid process, County staff undertook a landscape analysis of other upper-tier municipalities in Ontario that maintain similar hybrid official plan structures, specifically those that include local municipal chapters within a county-wide Official Plan. This outreach sought to identify existing procedural frameworks, delegation by-laws, fee structures, and local council engagement protocols.

The findings from the jurisdictional review highlight a consistent two-tier procedural model across other counties with hybrid Official Plans. In general, these counties follow a process that includes:

- Application submission
- Local consideration, including a public meeting
- Local council recommendation or adoption
- County council decision

By contrast, the proposed Middlesex–Newbury hybrid model preserves this general sequence but modifies specific roles to reflect Newbury’s unique governance structure.

Key distinctions include:

- Public meetings for Newbury-specific amendments are held by Newbury Council rather than the County
- Newbury Council’s resolution serves as an advisory recommendation rather than formal adoption
- Middlesex County Council retains sole approval authority, ensuring compliance with the Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statement and consistency across the County Official Plan

For the purposes of contrasting the respective processes, the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Procedure is attached hereto as Appendix ‘A’. The Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Procedure – Newbury Chapter is attached hereto as Appendix ‘B’.

To facilitate the implementation of these processes an amendment to the Middlesex County By-law No. 7263 - Delegation of Duties would need to be completed as follows:

Delegation	Delegate(s)	Legislative Authority	Conditions/Restrictions
Authority to hold a statutory public meeting for applications to amend the Middlesex County Official Plan – Newbury Chapter.	Council of the Village of Newbury, under the direction of the Director of Planning & Development	Municipal Act, 2001, Section 23.1; Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990	<p>Must be conducted in accordance with procedures approved by Middlesex County Council for processing Official Plan Amendments affecting the Newbury Chapter.</p> <p>Must adhere to the Middlesex County Procedural By-law governing public meetings.</p> <p>All records of the public meeting, including minutes and any resolutions passed by Newbury Council, are to be provided to the Director of Planning & Development and shall form part of the County’s planning report.</p> <p>Any position or resolution adopted by Newbury Council is advisory only and shall not bind Middlesex County Council, which retains sole authority for all decisions under the Planning Act.</p>

Collectively, these procedural, administrative, and governance mechanisms establish a clear and consistent process tailored to the Village of Newbury's unique context. In doing so, the County reinforces its commitment to procedural fairness, inter-municipal collaboration, and streamlined planning service delivery. This hybrid approach exemplifies the strengths of a two-tier planning system, leveraging the benefits of regional coordination while enhancing responsiveness to local priorities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:


The implementation of a dedicated Newbury Chapter within the Middlesex County Official Plan will require an amendment to By-law No. 7218 - the County Planning Tariff of Fees By-law to introduce a new application fee specific to Official Plan Amendments affecting only the Newbury Chapter.



It is proposed that:

- The application fee for a privately initiated amendment to the Middlesex County Official Plan - Newbury Chapter be set at \$2,000.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Priority	Goal	Objectives
Economic Development 	Enhance overall economic well-being and community prosperity by fostering a sustainable and thriving local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development approach for the County, focusing on key priorities, actions, and areas of growth while providing strong support for small businesses and entrepreneurs, including agriculture-related businesses.• Work towards providing access to ready-to-build land with the infrastructure and services needed to create jobs and grow the local economy.• Advance the County's planning framework that balances diverse land uses while protecting farmland and natural environment.

Strategic Priority	Goal	Objectives
Collaboration & Partnerships 	Strengthen collaboration with local municipalities and regional partners to improve economic efficiency, enhance service delivery, and support regional development in alignment with community priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize service delivery through inter-municipal collaboration and shared services to improve efficiency and seamless operations. • Build and enhance relationships with municipal, regional, First Nations, community, and private sector partners to align priorities, share resources, and implement joint initiatives that improve community well-being and economic growth. • Improve communication and transparency through open engagement, accessible information, and informed decision-making.
Adaptability and Agility 	Modernize the County's administrative capabilities to strengthen decision-making, improve service delivery, and achieve better community outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform, modernize and continuously improve administrative systems and processes to increase efficiency and enhance the experience of residents and partners.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Middlesex County receive the Newbury Hybrid Official Plan Procedures Report for information;

THAT Middlesex County Council approve the procedural documents titled Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Procedure (Appendix 'A') and Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Procedure – Newbury Chapter (Appendix 'B'), establishing formalized processes for considering amendments to the County Official Plan and the Newbury Chapter therein;

THAT staff be directed to seek a Newbury Council resolution in support of the Newbury Official Plan Procedure;

AND THAT subject to Newbury Council support resolution:

1. Staff be directed to bring forward, for Council consideration, an amending by-law to Middlesex County By-law No. 7263 – Delegation of Duties, to delegate to the Council of the Village of Newbury, under the direction of the Director of Planning

& Development, the authority to hold statutory public meetings for applications to amend the Newbury Chapter of the Middlesex County Official Plan, in accordance with applicable County procedures and the Planning Act;

2. Staff be directed to bring forward, for Council consideration, an amending by-law to Middlesex County By-law No. 7218 – Tariff of Fees for Planning Matters, to establish an application fee of \$2,000 for privately initiated amendments to the Newbury Chapter of the Middlesex County Official Plan.

Attachments.