



Committee of Whole

Meeting Date: May 11, 2021
Submitted by: Durk Vanderwerff, Director of Planning
SUBJECT: VILLAGE OF NEWBURY OFFICIAL PLAN PROJECT

BACKGROUND:

The Village of Newbury Official Plan was approved in 1985 and although there have been a few amendments since, the document does not reflect current Provincial or County planning policies and generally does not reflect current circumstances. Planning staff have worked with Village administration to consolidate the planning decisions that have occurred to-date and to explore moving forward with a new official plan project.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's acceptance of a non-conventional approach to this project whereby rather than creating a new official plan for the Village, a Newbury policy chapter would be included within the County's Official Plan. This hybrid approach would allow Newbury to rely on the existing County Official Plan for most planning policy but include Newbury specific policies to address local issues.

Staff believe that this approach would save time and resources, would serve the Village well, and would not impact the other municipalities within Middlesex. This has not been done within Middlesex before and would require an amendment to the County Official Plan; therefore, prior to initiating the project staff wanted to bring this before Council.

ANALYSIS:

Within a traditional two-tier land use planning framework, the County has an official plan that contains policies dealing with issues of Provincial and County interest but that does not address in detail those planning matters that are most appropriately dealt with locally. Each local municipality has a more detailed official plan that encapsulates Provincial and County policy but that also reflects local priorities and circumstances.

As Newbury is a village without a large land base, many of the policies that are contained in a typical local official plan are of limited applicability and therefore could be addressed by relying upon the policies within the existing County Official Plan. For example, policies related to agriculture such as the severance of a residence surplus to a farming operation, natural heritage system, source water protection, aggregate resources, or related to the County transportation network. Supplemental information would need to be included in the Newbury chapter to address issues such as the main street, the hospital and associated healthcare related development, etc.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing have confirmed that a hybrid approach is permitted by the Planning Act. Staff have completed some preliminary best practices research and have found a few Counties (Renfrew, Wellington, Peterborough) where this occurs.

In addition to an amendment to the County Official Plan, the County's administrative practices would have to be examined to deal with operational matters. For example, in the future should an official plan amendment be proposed to the Newbury chapter, a procedure should be in place whereby the public meeting is held in Newbury and Village Council makes a recommendation to County Council. There likely are other operational matters that staff have not yet identified.

The Planning Department completes non-core projects for local municipalities based on resources and Newbury's Official Plan project has been identified as an area of need. The implementation of this project would occur based on resources / capacity and it is noted that Newbury has experienced modest development and growth pressures over the last number of years.

In summary, the Village of Newbury Official Plan is outdated and does not reflect current Provincial or County planning policies. Rather than create a new official plan, we have investigated the option to include a Newbury specific chapter within the County's Official Plan. Staff believe that a hybrid approach would save resources and would serve the Village and the County well going forward and therefore, it is recommended that council endorse this approach, with it being noted that this does not presuppose County Council's responsibility as the approval authority for any future official plan amendment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The inclusion of Newbury specific policies within the County Official Plan, compared to a stand-alone local official plan, would represent a savings of County (and Village) resources.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

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

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
Strengthening Our Economy	Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector• Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments• Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County
Promoting Service Excellence	Innovate and transform municipal service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities• Build organizational capacity and capabilities

RECOMMENDATION:

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.