



## Committee of Whole

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**Meeting Date:** September 27, 2022  
**Submitted by:** Durk Vanderwerff, Director of Planning and Development  
**SUBJECT:** County Official Plan Amendment No. 3; Ministry Suspension of Review Timeline

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Amendment No. 3 to the County's Official Plan was adopted by Council on July 19, 2022 and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval on July 26, 2022. The Ministry acknowledged receipt of the materials on July 27, 2022 and on September 8, 2022 posted Amendment No. 3 on the Environmental Registry of Ontario for a 30-day comment period.

The Planning Act provides the Minister 120 days to make a decision on official plan amendments for which the Minister is the approval authority. Staff were hopeful that the Provincial review would take less than 120 days given the extensive involvement of the Province in the County's process prior to adoption.

As previously reported to Council, Bill 109 the More Homes for Everyone Act, introduced a new discretionary authority for the Minister to suspend the approval timeline for official plan amendments that are before the Minister – sometimes called the 'stop the clock' authority. On September 12, 2022 the County received a letter from Minister Steve Clark (attached) indicating that the Province had suspended the 120-day timeline for the review of Amendment No. 3.

### **ANALYSIS:**

In speaking to other Counties, it appears that the review timelines for most if not all adopted county official plan amendments have similarly been suspended. An alternative timeline or reasons for the suspensions have not been provided. This appears to be counter to the intent of Bill 109 to provide more transparency, stability and certainty for the provision of housing and land use planning decisions. In any event, staff will continue to work with Ministry staff on their review of Amendment No. 3 so that when the Ministry is ready to make a decision, they have all necessary information.

There are two primary implications as a result the indefinitely suspended timeline.

First, there are a number of important changes within Amendment No. 3 that are on hold until approved by the Province. These include policies related to the provision of housing (such as Additional Residential Units), that would further County policy changes (such as moving to a 'sliding 10-year date' for surplus farm dwellings), and that would further Provincial policy requirements (such as reflecting changed PPS requirements).

Second, there are cascading implications in relation to the County's review and approval of local official plan amendments. The Planning hierarchy as set out in the Planning Act requires that any County Council approvals reflect Provincial policies and County policies that are approved by the Province. This puts the County in the difficult position of being unable to move forward on aspects of local official plan approvals where the policies do not reflect the current approved County Official Plan. This especially impacts the larger official plan updates that several municipalities have adopted. Staff are considering how the County can proceed with what would amount to partial approvals of adopted local official plan amendments for policy areas that are unaffected by the Ministry's non-approval of Official Plan Amendment No. 3.

*Attachment*