



## Committee of Whole

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**Meeting Date:** May 9, 2023  
**Submitted by:** Durk Vanderwerff, Director of Planning and Development  
**Subject:** Thames Centre Official Plan Amendment No.29; File No. 39-TC-OPA29; Housekeeping Amendment

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Municipality of Thames Centre initiated an Official Plan Amendment to implement policies as a result of recent amendments to the Planning Act through 'Bill 13 – Supporting People and Businesses Act', 'Bill 276 – Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act' and 'Bill 109 – More Homes for Everyone Act'.

Cumulatively, the changes to the Planning Act primarily focus on increasing housing supply by changing municipal decision-making processes. The changes include the requirement to refund certain application fees where timelines are not met, changes to site plan control (approval timeframes, mandatory delegation to staff, etc.), the optional delegation of minor zoning by-laws to staff, and others.

Some of the Planning Act changes can only be used by municipalities if there is enabling policy within the local official plan. Amendment No. 29 would include policies within the Municipality's Official Plan to address these matters and enable the Municipality to utilize the new authorities. A copy of Amendment No. 29 and the local planning report are appended to this report.

County Council is the Provincially delegated Approval Authority for local official plan amendments. This report summarizes the planning policy context and provides a planning recommendation for Council from the perspective of the Approval Authority. More detailed local planning analysis, as provided to Thames Centre Council, is provided within the attached local planning report.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The amendment was initiated by the Municipality on February 6, 2023 and adopted by Thames Centre Council at their March 6, 2023 meeting. The submission was accepted as complete by the County and a further agency / ministry circulation was not undertaken given the nature of the changes. During the local process, the Municipality

undertook public and stakeholder engagement. The Municipality did not receive public comments although agency comments were provided. No written submissions containing objections or concerns were received County concerning Amendment No. 29.

As noted above, there are several changes to the Planning Act that cannot be used by municipalities until the local official plan is updated. For example, municipalities are now allowed to require for site plans 'complete applications' but only if there are policies within the official plan. This authority allows municipalities to "pause the clock" where a 'complete application' is not submitted. Another example, in order for a municipality to utilize the optional delegation of minor zoning by-laws to staff, the official plan must specify the types of by-laws that may be delegated. The delegation of this authority is discretionary and requires municipal council to subsequently pass a delegation by-law.

I have reviewed Amendment No. 29 against the Provincial Policy Statement, the County Official Plan, and the Thames Centre Official Plan. I am satisfied that Amendment No. 29 is consistent with the PPS, conforms to the intent and purpose of the County's Official Plan and the Thames Centre Official Plan, and represents sound land use planning. Amendment No. 29 would directly implement recent legislative changes. I am therefore recommending approval of Official Plan Amendment No. 29.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Application fees are not collected for Approval Authority applications that are initiated by local municipalities.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:**

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

<b>Strategic Focus</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
Strengthening Our Economy	Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county	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

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Amendment No. 29 to the Thames Centre Official Plan be approved and that staff be directed to circulate a Notice of Decision as required by the Planning Act, and that the Notice of Decision indicate that no written submissions were received concerning this application.

Attachment 1- Official Plan Amendment

Attachment 2- Local Planning Report