

**To:** Warden and Members of County Council

**From:** Director of Community Planning

## Community Planning Resource Considerations

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. That Report No. CP 2023-250, titled “Community Planning Resource Considerations” be received;
2. And further, that Council provide initial direction to staff on the level of planning service, as generally outlined in this report, that they would like to further consider;
3. And further, that Council request that staff bring a follow-up report back for Council’s consideration as part of the 2024 *Business Plan and Budget* process to provide further detail on the proposed business plan and associated resource needs for their preferred level of planning service;
4. And further, that Report No. CP 2023-250 be circulated to the Area Municipalities for information.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

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- The Province has recently enacted and/or proposed a broad range of changes to various planning related legislation, regulations, policies, programs and other implementation measures as part of the implementation of their ‘Housing Supply Action Plans’ that will have a significant impact on how municipal land use planning is implemented, resourced and funded.
- This report builds from a previous report on Municipal Resource Impacts Resulting from Bill 23 (Report No. [CS 2022-49](#)) that was presented to Council in December 2022, by providing an update on the recent actions taken by the Community Planning Office (CPO) to address staffing and other resource needs and outlining a number of potential further CPO resource options and related considerations for Council’s review and direction.

- Based on the initial direction received from Council on desired level of planning service, planning staff will proceed to prepare more a detailed business plan and budget for Council's further consideration as part of their 2024 budget deliberations.

## **Implementation Points**

Bill 23 and a number of the other legislative, regulatory, policy and other changes (i.e. proposed new provincial planning statement) currently being considered and/or proposed by the Province, will have significant implications for the local implementation of land use planning, development charges, parks planning, environmental and heritage protections and various other matters. These changes will require substantial review and/or update of various County and Area Municipal policies, documents, processes and standards, as well as consideration of related staffing and financial resource implications. Given that many of these changes have or will directly or indirectly impact and/or involve the CPO, planning staff are continuing to monitor and report on these potential resource implications to ensure early and appropriate actions can be taken to ensure the CPO is able to continue to provide the expected level and quality of planning services to the County and Area Municipalities in a timely manner.

## **Financial Impact**







The Provincial changes identified in this report could have significant financial impacts for the County and Area Municipalities. An initial assessment of these financial impacts was presented to Council in December 2022 through Report No. CS 2022-49, with additional potential high level resource impacts identified through a number of subsequent reports related to the review of *Review of A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (APTG)* and the *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*.

The focus of this report is primarily on the potential need for additional planning staff and other resources and the potential financial considerations associated with the provision of those resources, particularly given the recent elimination of Development Charges (DCs) as an available source of funding for growth related studies.

## **Communications**

Communication is proposed to be through the inclusion of this report on the County Council agenda and related communications and circulation to the area municipalities. Any changes to the budget or business plan processes that may arise from consideration of this report will be further communicated as part of those processes.

**Strategic Plan (2020-2022)**

					
<b>WORKS WELL TOGETHER</b>	<b>WELL CONNECTED</b>	<b>SHAPES THE FUTURE</b>	<b>INFORMS &amp; ENGAGES</b>	<b>PERFORMS &amp; DELIVERS</b>	<b>POSITIVE IMPACT</b>
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**DISCUSSION**

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**Background**

Over the last few years, the Province has enacted and/or proposed a broad range of sweeping changes to various planning related legislation, regulations, policies, programs and other implementation measures as part of the implementation of their 'Housing Supply Action Plans'. Many of these changes have had, and will have, a significant impact on how municipal land use planning is implemented, resourced and funded. Further, it is expected that more changes will be forthcoming from the Province as part of the next phases of their *Housing Supply Action Plan* implementation.

To date, Council has received a number of staff reports outlining these various changes and their potential impacts on land use planning at the municipal level, including increased demand on staffing and other resources, while at the same time eliminating or reducing various source of funding (i.e. development charges, parkland dedication etc.). Some of the more recent reports in this regard are as follows:

- *More Home For Everyone Act*, 2022 (Bill 109), Report No. [CP 2022-180](#);
- *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23), Reports No. [CP 2022-407](#) and [CP 2022-413](#);
- Municipal Resource Impacts Resulting from Bill 23, Report No. [CS 2022-49](#); and
- *Review of A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (APTG) and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Reports No. [CP 2023-126](#), [CP 2023-144](#) & [CP 2023-194](#).

Report CS 2022-49 outlined some of the potential planning staffing and other resource needs that were expected to result from the various changes being proposed as part of Bill 23 and related provincial initiatives including, but not limited to, eliminating the ability to fund growth related studies through development charges, shortened application processing timelines and fee refunds, updated requirements for additional residential units, and proposed changes to the provincial policy statement, natural heritage planning and natural hazard regulations.

Planning staff have since taken a number of actions to begin addressing the resource needs identified in that report, including retaining additional staffing and consulting support. Planning staff have also begun to assess the initial impacts of Bill 109 and Bill 23 on planning processes and resources and also have a preliminary understanding of the range and degree of the proposed changes to the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and their potential implications for municipal land use planning activities and resources.

Further, County Council has recently expressed a desire for the CPO to take a more proactive leadership role in advocating on behalf of the County with respect to various provincial land use planning and housing related matters, including supporting the collective actions of a number of municipal organizations (i.e. WOWC, AMO, RISWG etc.). Planning staff have also been recently requested to undertake a number of planning related projects and initiatives (e.g. identifying and implementing options to increase residential intensification and density in the County, reviewing current height permissions in Woodstock's Central etc.). Although timely and important, these requests will place additional demands on planning staff and potentially other resources (i.e. consulting services for supporting studies). In recognition of this, planning staff were asked to prepare a report to advise Council on the potential additional resources that CPO would require to provide the capacity and expertise necessary to take timely action on these and other important planning related initiatives going forward.

The purpose of this report is to outline a number of potential options for Council's consideration and initial direction, so that planning staff can work to prepare a more detailed business plan and budget for Council's consideration as part of their 2024 budget deliberations.

## **Comments**

Building on report CS 2022-49, planning staff have recently undertaken a further review of existing and potential resource needs in relation to anticipated demands on CPO resources moving forward.

Based on this review, planning staff have prepared the following high level summary of potential options for the level of planning service that could be provided by the CPO (i.e. to address the above noted Provincial changes and other Council priorities and objectives) and the associated resource (i.e. staffing and other) and financial implications for Council's initial consideration and direction.

### **1. Level of Planning Services**

To provide an initial basis for Council's discussion and consideration of potential increases in the desired level of planning service moving forward, staff have outlined potential options, as follows:

a) *Maintaining Existing Planning Service Level*

This option would ensure sufficient staffing and other resources are in place to meet Planning Act processing timelines and maintain the base level and calibre of development review and other planning services that have come to be expected from the CPO. This option takes into consideration the potential impacts of the above noted Provincial changes and recent levels of growth and development activity to the extent known, recognizing that further Provincial changes are still pending and/or anticipated.

This option does not currently include the additional staffing and other resources (i.e. consulting services etc.) that would be required to undertake various larger scale, proactive planning projects and initiatives that may be required to comply with or address a number of the above noted Provincial changes (i.e. development of a new Official Plan and new Area Municipal Zoning By-Laws together with supporting background/technical studies to ensure consistency with the new PPS and sustainably plan for higher levels of expected growth) and/or to achieve other County and/or Area Municipal priorities and objectives (e.g. taking more proactive role in Provincial advocacy, identifying and implementing options to increase residential intensification/density, area and/or topic based planning studies, assisting in development of new/updated master plans, economic development related initiatives etc.)

The CPO has traditionally undertaken mandatory OP reviews and semi-regular zoning by-law updates in-house, as time permitted. However, the development of a new OP and Zoning By-Laws would require an ongoing commitment (i.e. at least 2-3 years) of resources that far exceed the existing capacity and, in some case (i.e. certain specialized policy areas), expertise of the CPO to undertake without additional staffing and/or consulting support. Further, undertaking and/or assisting with other larger scale, proactive planning and development related projects and initiatives has typically been considered beyond the standard scope of CPO planning services and is currently at the discretion of the director, where time/staffing resources permit. Although CPO has typically tried to accommodate such requests as they arise, they can get substantially delayed and/or sidelined due to the need to address immediate development pressures and planning priorities.

As has been previously noted, given the high levels of development activity that the County and area municipalities have recently experienced and continue to experience, it has been challenging at times for the CPO to maintain timely and high quality development review services with existing staffing levels, particularly while also trying to move forward other important planning related projects and initiatives (i.e. zoning by-law updates, local planning process updates and improvements etc.).

This challenge has only been compounded by the seemingly continuous and wide ranging legislative, regulatory, and policy changes the Province has been bringing forward over the last few years, which have often pulled one or more senior and/or experienced staff away from work on other important planning projects and initiatives (i.e. Official Plan updates, secondary planning etc.) to assess and respond to the changes. In the last several years, this additional demand on staffing has been virtually continuous.

Even without the impacts from Bill 23 and other proposed provincial changes, a comprehensive review of CPO staffing resources was needed to ensure the currently expected level and quality of planning service could continue to be provided. So, with Bill 23 and the other proposed provincial changes placing ever further demands on planning staff, the CPO will require higher levels of staffing than in the past to address both short term and longer term/ongoing resource demands.

As a first step in addressing these additional staffing needs, 2.7 FTEs were added to the CPO staff complement through the 2023 budget process (0.7 FTE Co-op student, 1.0 FTE Administration Support and 1.0 FTE Development Planner), bringing the current approved total to 17.7 FTEs. The approved administrative support and student position have since been filled. However, the additional planner position remains unfilled due recruitment challenges. These recruitment and other staffing related challenges are discussed in more detail under the Staffing Resources section of this report.

Further, the CPO has taken action to address the resource gap that resulted from the Province’s removal of the ability of Conservation Authorities to provide natural heritage review services for applications under the Planning Act starting in January 2023. This was accomplished by retaining a qualified consulting firm to provide natural heritage peer review services on behalf of the County for an initial period of 2 years. This is intended to serve as an interim measure to address the immediate need for such services and allow time for planning staff to assess the need for/benefit of having in-house environmental planning expertise to provide such services (i.e. environmental planner/ecologist).

The current approved CPO full staff complement is as follows:

<b>Position</b>	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Director/Managers	3	
Senior Planner	1	
Development/Policy Planners	8	Currently 1 position vacant
Administration/Support	5.7	Includes administrative staff, technical planner, LDC secretary and a co-op student
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.7</b>	

It is noted that, even with the recent approved increases in staffing, CPO staffing levels are still relatively modest in comparison to other jurisdictions that provide a similar level and range of planning services. For example Brant County, which had roughly 1/3 the total population (i.e. 39,375) and growth (i.e. 3,835 persons over 5 years) of Oxford County, according to 2021 Census, currently has a planning staff complement of 17 FTEs (14 planners/managers and 3 admin/support), plus a general manager who is also a professional planner.

The CPO is currently looking at options to try to reach the full approved 2023 staff complement before year end. As such, planning staff are not yet at the point where we can fully assess how well the current planning work load and level of service expectations can be managed with that full complement. Keeping in mind that it will also be dependent on the level of knowledge and experience of any new staff and the ability to retain existing experienced staff. That said, it does

appear clear that further planning technical support (i.e. GIS and other planning related data development, compilation and analysis, specialized mapping, development tracking, site plan administration etc.) will be required in order to maintain current service level expectations. As such, planning staff have been working to identify the best options to address that particular resource need.

With respect to the capacity of CPO to complete the planning projects recently requested by Council and the area municipalities, it is expected with the full 2023 approved staff complement and technical resource support/needs identified above addressed, planning staff would be in a position to:

- Maintain a continued proactive, leadership role in Provincial advocacy on proposed changes to land use and housing related legislation, policies and programs that are of key interest to the County and/or area municipalities;
- Work with the area municipalities over the next year to identify and undertake a number of initial actions to facilitate increased density, such as:
  - Implementing and/or updating ‘additional residential unit (ARU)’ policies and zoning for the three urban municipalities;
  - Reviewing and updating policies and zoning for low density residential areas to increase the required minimum density and/or housing type mix;
  - Reviewing the zoning for the Central Areas to identify opportunities to support increased height and density within the context of the existing OP policies;

More comprehensive actions to facilitate increased height and/or density would likely require additional consulting support for technical studies and, depending on desired timing and other Council priorities, additional planning staff resources.

In terms of the potential need for other resources (i.e. consulting services for technical studies) to adequately support this and the other options outlined below, recent changes to the Development Charges Act (DCA) have eliminated the ability for municipalities to recover the cost of growth related studies through DCs. As such, additional sources of revenue/funding will need to be identified to continue to fund those projects going forward. These considerations are discussed in further detail in the Financial Considerations section of this report.

b) *Moderately Increased Level of Planning Service*

This option would entail ensuring sufficient staffing and other resources are in place to provide the additional capacity for CPO to be able to more consistently take on and/or support the timely completion of various larger scale, proactive planning related projects and initiatives that may be identified or requested by the County and/or Area Municipalities as a priority. Some examples include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Regular review and updates of Area Municipal Zoning By-Laws;
- Investigating the potential benefit of alternative planning tools (i.e. community planning permit system, community benefit charges, inclusionary zoning etc.)

- Identifying and implementing measures to increase height and/or density (i.e. as generally outlined in staff Report No. [CP 2022-397](#) and subsequent density workshop); and
- Other potential area and/or topic based studies (i.e. new/updated master plans, urban design guidelines, intensification capacity, emerging economic development opportunities etc.)

It is noted that such projects may still require consulting support to address matters outside of staff's expertise. However, in those cases planning staff would generally be able to develop the terms of reference and manage that consulting project on behalf of the County and, where requested and appropriate, the Area Municipality.

Effectively implementing this option would likely require securing the additional technical support identified in the first option as well as two additional planner FTEs (assuming current levels of growth and development interest/pressure continue and/or increase). It is expected that the addition of these planner FTEs would provide the capacity for:

- At least one planner FTE to be able to consistently focus on supporting the policy team and area planners/municipalities with identifying and undertaking various proactive and/or special planning related projects and initiatives; and
- One planner to focus on coordinating and supporting regular Zoning By-Law reviews and updates for all eight Area Municipalities (e.g. to ensure timely conformity with current legislation, regulations, policies and address any area municipal implementation concerns etc.) and support other planning functions, as time permits.

Dedicating staff specifically to these areas would allow other planning staff to focus more of their time on core responsibilities (i.e. providing strategic and day to day planning advice and development review services to the area municipalities) which should, in turn, increase their ability to provide a higher level of service in those areas.

This option, together with budgeting for any required growth related studies/consulting support, should provide the CPO with the necessary resources to dedicate staffing to completing the planning initiatives noted in Option 1, as well as initiate additional, more comprehensive actions. For example, undertaking an intensification study/strategy for all the Serviced Villages and Large Urban Centres (i.e. including Woodstock's Central Area) to identify target sites, potential, and capacity for further intensification and/or increased height, as well as associated siting and design considerations to inform any necessary interim updates to policies and zoning.

Over the longer term, this option would also help to provide additional staffing capacity to support the development of a new Official Plan beginning in late 2024, including associated background studies and policy updates (i.e. consideration of nodes and corridors structure and policies where appropriate, updated design/compatibility policies for residential intensification, updated employment/mixed use area policies etc.) to support more coordinated and comprehensive intensification, density, and unit mix requirements for all Oxford's fully serviced settlements.



If this service option were to be considered, the desired level of planning service could continue to be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis (e.g. annually) to determine if any additional staffing may still be required.

For Council's information, the preliminary estimated 2024 cost for a development/policy planner FTE would be approximately \$135,000, not including one time capital costs (i.e. laptop).

*c) Comprehensive In-House Planning Service*

This option would entail a more comprehensive review of the CPO structure and planning services, with the goal of ensuring sufficient staffing and other resources were in place to be able to provide a broad spectrum of planning services and expertise to the County and Area Municipalities that would be typical of a more urban municipality of similar size and/or level of growth to Oxford.

These municipalities often have a full-time planning staff complement of 20+, including more specialized planning expertise/roles in such areas as:

- Environmental planning (e.g. natural heritage, water resource systems, natural and man-made hazards, aggregates etc.)
- Sustainability;
- Community engagement;
- Growth management;
- Housing;
- Urban/community design;
- Cultural heritage (i.e. archaeological/built heritage resources, Indigenous consultation);
- Infrastructure and public services (i.e. schools, parks/trails, transit, servicing capacity allocation, nitrate/hydro-g studies etc.)

The above are simply some examples and not meant to imply that expertise in all of these areas would necessarily be required and/or beneficial in Oxford. However, there may be a potential business case for considering in-house expertise in some of these areas, depending on the level of planning service/support desired by the County and Area Municipalities and/or the cost, frequency and effectiveness of retaining related consulting services. This option might also provide an opportunity to improve overall corporate engagement with the community and Area Municipalities on planning and development related matters.

For example, as previously noted, the CPO has recently retained an environmental consulting firm to provide environmental peer review services. Planning staff intend to closely monitor this arrangement over the next 1-2 years to determine whether there may a business case for having a full-time in-house environmental planner and/or ecologist that could provide that service, as well as on-going support for various other environmental initiatives (i.e. policy review/development, bio-diversity strategy, monitoring, stewardship and incentive programs etc.).

It is noted that the CPO currently happens to have staff with expertise in some of these specific areas that has been drawn upon from time to time. However, given that these are not specialized positions and are often more senior staff, there is no certainty that such planning expertise will continue to be available within the CPO and these staff are often only able to devote a small fraction of their overall time to such matters.

If this service level option were to be considered, the added staffing capacity and specialized expertise would further increase the ability of the CPO to provide on-going professional advice and recommendations on a greater range of more specialized planning matters (i.e. environmental peer review, urban/community design review, cultural heritage resource review/identification etc.) and to undertake and/or support a greater number and range of planning projects and initiatives in-house (i.e. new Official Plan and Zoning By-Laws, area studies, archaeological master plans, heritage resource listings/designations, urban/community design guidelines, streetscape master plans, neighbourhood studies etc.), with less reliance on consulting support and associated costs. However, it is expected that it would take some time to resource/build this level of service, particularly in the current competitive hiring environment.

## 2. Staffing Considerations

### a) *Planning Staff Resources*

To date, Oxford has had the benefit of having attracted, developed and retained some extremely knowledgeable and experienced professional planning staff. This can likely be credited to a range of factors, including: the positive, team focused working environment; effectiveness of the planning service delivery model/structure; strong collaborative working relationships with the area municipalities and other County staff; on-going mentorship from experienced senior staff; exposure to a full spectrum of planning issues and challenges (i.e. from rural to large urban); and level of responsibility and autonomy.

However, with the current extremely competitive job market for experienced planning staff (i.e. direct solicitation of existing staff, multitude of other job opportunities/postings, increasing compensation offers etc.) it has become more and more difficult to recruit and retain more experienced planning staff. This is of particular concern given that the loss of even one or two key experienced/senior staff would have a substantial long term impact on the ability of CPO to continue to provide the current high level and quality of planning service and expertise that has come to be expected. Further, with some of CPOs more senior/experienced planning staff having recently retired and/or being eligible for retirement in the next few years, there is a relatively limited window of opportunity for knowledge transfer, continuity/succession planning, cross-training, and staff development/mentoring. As such, appropriate and timely action needs to be taken to ensure that these existing more experienced/senior staff are retained, that less experienced staff can continue to be developed, and that new qualified staff can be recruited, when required.

Such actions may include, but are not necessarily limited to reviewing and improving job titles/descriptions, ensuring compensation remains competitive, and increased focus on staff development, mentoring and knowledge transfer. Further, ensuring staff remain challenged, have

adequate opportunities for growth, are appropriately recognized, and are able to maintain manageable workloads would also assist in maintaining job satisfaction and preventing burnout.

Ensuring sufficient staffing resources and capacity could certainly assist in addressing some of these challenges, by ensuring workloads are manageable, allowing senior planning staff to focus more time on mentoring, training and developing less senior staff to increase their knowledge, capacity, confidence and level of responsibility, while also facilitating increased cross training, knowledge transfer, and continuity/succession planning.

As such, immediate action is required on many of the above considerations and will need to remain a key focus for the CPO over the next few years.

*b) Public Works Staffing Resources*

In 2023 Public Works hired a new Supervisor of Development to assist in managing the increased development volumes, new legislative deadlines for application review and other responsibilities and expectations resulting from the Provincial changes. The need for this position was identified in Report CS 2022-49 and approved through the 2023 budget process. That report also indicated that any additional public works staffing needs to assist with development review would be further assessed once the Supervisor of Development was in place.

In preparing this report, planning staff had a brief discussion with the Supervisor of Development regarding the potential need for additional Public Works staffing to facilitate timely development review and support for other planning/development related projects and initiatives. Their initial indication is that, given the increased level and complexity of development (i.e. more large scale industrial and high density intensification etc.), greater focus on improved communication (enhanced development review outreach to Area Municipalities), and increased involvement in secondary planning and other planning/ development related projects and initiatives (i.e. capital works field inspection, infrastructure related policies, improving development related processes, guidelines and standards, intensification capacity review, etc.) additional staffing support is likely required. As such, Public Works will be further considering the need to prepare a more formal business case for additional development review staffing resources.

### 3. Financial Considerations

In addition to the financial considerations that would be associated with the potential need for additional staffing as discussed above, there are a number of other financial impacts that will also require consideration as part of the upcoming 2024 budget process:

*a) Loss of DC Funding for Growth Related Studies*

Virtually all of the recent changes to the Development Charge Act (DCA) will result in less DC revenue being collected by municipalities to fund the costs of growth-related infrastructure that supports new housing and commercial and industrial development. With specific respect to the planning services currently provided by the CPO, the costs of certain growth related studies will no longer be deemed eligible capital costs. In Oxford, the growth related studies that are currently recovered for through DCs include: Official Plan reviews/updates (including related background

studies), secondary plans and servicing strategies (i.e. required to consider settlement expansions) and growth forecast updates and land needs studies. These changes to the DCA place municipalities in the position where other funding sources will need to be identified to cover the funding shortfall for these types of studies (i.e. property tax, application fees etc.).

DCs are currently the primary source of funding for growth related studies in the County and to some extent the Area Municipalities and, with the recent higher levels of growth the County has been experiencing, the need for and total cost of such studies is only expected to increase.

The County's 2019 DC background study currently identifies approximately \$1.6 million for growth related planning projects, with a similar amount identified for such projects in the area municipal DC background studies (i.e. collectively). With these projects no longer being DC eligible, this represents a substantial amount of funding that will now need to be obtained from other sources to allow such projects to continue. These projects are all fundamental to ensuring growth in our communities (in particular housing) can continue to be accommodated in a coordinated, efficient and timely manner.

It is staff's understanding that municipalities will be able to continue collecting DCs for the growth related studies identified in their current DC background studies until such time as the current DC By-Laws expire (i.e. most will expire in mid 2024), or are replaced. However, at such time, any remaining funds in the associated DC reserve will need to have been spent on/allocated to a specific growth related study, or transferred to another non-DC reserve that can continue to be drawn upon for such studies (i.e. Official Plan Review Reserve). However, from that point forward, municipalities will no longer be able to collect DCs to recover the growth related costs of such studies.

It is currently estimated that the remaining DC reserve balance that will be available to fund growth related planning studies, including remaining DC funds to be collected up until the DC by-laws are replaced in mid-2024, will be approximately \$180,000. Any funding deficit for growth related studies to be undertaken in 2024 and beyond, including any new/additional studies, will need to be off-set by alternative sources of funding. From a CPO standpoint, potential new/additional studies may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- *Comprehensive Review and Secondary Planning/Servicing Strategy Studies* (i.e. to facilitate settlement expansions identified through upcoming updates to the County and Area Municipal growth forecasts and lands needs study, once the new PPS is in place)
  - It is currently anticipated that at least three such studies will likely need to be undertaken within the next 5 years (note: 50% of the cost of such studies is typically covered by the applicable area municipality)
- *Growth Forecasts and Land Needs studies* (approximately every 5 years);
- *Official Plan Review* (generally required every 5 years - primarily for any required technical study updates);
- *Other Growth Related studies* – Further studies are expected to be identified through the development of the workplan for the new County Official Plan and/or through consultation with the Area Municipalities on local planning priorities and initiatives (e.g. nitrate studies,

intensification capacity/potential, nodes and corridors plan, employment areas/land strategies, urban design/intensification guidelines etc.)

It is expected that the County's share of the total cost of such additional studies could easily exceed \$1.5 million over the next 5 years, which would be in addition to the \$1.6 million in growth related studies already identified in the County's 2019 DC background study.

As such, the amount of any remaining DC reserve funding that will be available to fund these studies will need to be confirmed, with the remainder to be covered through alternative sources of funding. These sources of funding will need to be identified and considered as part of the upcoming 2024 budget process.

b) *Potential Sources of Funding*

The loss of DC funding for growth related studies (as discussed above), together with any budget increases that may be required for any increased staffing that may result from Council's direction on desired level of planning service (as outlined in Section 1 of this report), will require the consideration of additional and alternative funding sources. The two most likely sources of this funding would be taxation and user fees (i.e. planning application fees).

To date, planning application fees in the County and Area Municipalities have generally remained extremely competitive and are typically considerably lower than those in many other municipalities. As such, there would be considerable benefit to undertaking a detailed review of both County and Area Municipal planning application fees to determine to what extent those fees could potentially be increased to off-set some the potential additional costs and loss of DC revenue, as discussed in this report.

## **Conclusion**

The Province has recently enacted and/or proposed a broad range of changes to various planning related legislation, regulations, policies, programs and other implementation measures as part of the implementation of their 'Housing Supply Action Plans' that will have a significant impact on how municipal land use planning is implemented, resourced and funded.

To address these anticipated resource impacts and/or otherwise provide the level of CPO planning service desired by the County and Area Municipalities, planning staff have identified a range of potential planning service options and the associated resource (i.e. staffing and other) and financial implications for Council's initial consideration and direction.

The primary purpose of this report is to seek initial feedback and direction from Council on these potential options, so that planning staff can begin preparing a more detailed business plan and budget for Council's further consideration as part of the upcoming 2024 budget process.

## SIGNATURES

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### Report Author:

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