

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Agreements – Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 (Parkinson Road / Towerline Road) Intersection Improvements, City of Woodstock

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Public Works

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That County Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Public Works to execute an agreement with the Ministry of Transportation (for the Province of Ontario), to allow staff to proceed with the future design and construction of intersection improvements at Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 in the City of Woodstock;
2. And further, that County Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Public Works to execute an agreement with MEL (WOODSTOCK 1) INC. / MEL (WOODSTOCK 2) INC, to allow staff to proceed with the future design and construction of intersection improvements at Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 in the City of Woodstock.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of this report is to obtain County Council approval to execute agreements with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and with MEL (WOODSTOCK 1) INC. / MEL (WOODSTOCK 2) INC. (hereafter referred to as the “Developer”) that are required to support development and facilitate growth-related transportation network improvements at the intersection of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 (Parkinson Road / Towerline Road) within the City of Woodstock (City).
- In order to accommodate area development growth, improvements to the intersection of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 have been identified within the 2024 *Business Plan and Budget*, 2024 *Oxford County Transportation Master Plan* and the 2024 *Oxford County Development Charge Background Study*.

- MTO has conditionally agreed to conceptual transportation improvements at the existing location of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 intersection, subject to completion of a Harmonized Municipal / Provincial Class Environmental Assessment Study (Class EA Study) by Oxford County.
- Staff will apply best efforts and endeavour to have the preferred transportation improvements (identified through the Class EA Study) designed and constructed by January 1, 2027 to suit the Developer's targeted timeline for building occupancy.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Following Council's approval of this report, staff will proceed with execution of the agreements as required between the County and MTO as well as the County and the Developer.

Upon execution of the agreements, staff will initiate the procurement process for the Harmonized Class EA Study to obtain a consultant that is approved to work for MTO (registered through their RAQS system), with a target completion date of Q2 2025. Upon completion of the Harmonized Class EA Study, land acquisition and detailed design will be completed in 2025 to permit construction in 2026. Accordingly, the County seeks to use best efforts to complete the Road Improvements by January 1, 2027 in line with the desired developer occupancy date.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with the execution of the agreements.

A Harmonized Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the intersection of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 was planned for in the 2024 *Business Plan and Budget*. Additional project budget will be requested as part of 2025 and 2026 capital budget requests for anticipated property acquisition, detailed design and construction of the preferred design alternative, to be confirmed through the Harmonized Class EA Study process.

Consistent with the County's Local Services Policy, the project cost for the intersection improvements is 90% recoverable from Development Charges net of exemptions from Development Charges, as set out in the 2024 Oxford County *Development Charge (DC) Background Study* (identified as *Transportation Project Number 67, Table 5-1: Services Related to Highway*). Approximately 15% of the total growth-related cost is considered a post-period benefit (benefit to growth beyond the 10-year DC forecast period), which would be funded by the County on project completion, and then recovered through Development Charges in a future period.

Industrial developments (including Site Plan approved lands proposed by the Developer related to this project) are exempt from Oxford County Development Charges. The DC exemption estimated for the Site Plan approved development is estimated to be over \$7 million, which will have to be funded from the levy and rates at the time of building permit.

Communications

Staff will communicate with the Developer and MTO representatives to have the agreements executed in an efficient and timely manner. Staff has already been working collaboratively with MTO to establish a mutual understanding of requirements for the Harmonized Class EA Study.

Once a consultant has been retained, the project team will prepare a consultation and communication plan for the Harmonized Class EA Study (and ultimate implementation of the project) in collaboration with MTO and the County’s Strategic Communications and Engagement team. Furthermore, a stakeholder registry / contact list and project webpage will be created, amongst other engagement and communication tools.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendations in this report supports the following Strategic Plan pillars and goals:

		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
<p>Goal 1.2 – Sustainable infrastructure and development</p> <p>Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being</p> <p>Goal 1.4 – Connected people and places</p>		<p>Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions</p> <p>Goal 3.2 – Collaborate with our partners and communities</p> <p>Goal 3.4 – Financial sustainability</p>

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

The intersection of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 (Parkinson Road / Towerline Road) is owned by the County and is located in the southeast quadrant of the City of Woodstock, approximately 200 m east of Commerce Way and 300 m west of the westbound on / off ramps of provincial Highway 401 – Exit Number 236. Ownership of Towerline Road transitions from the County to the Province of Ontario (represented by MTO) approximately 100 m east of the Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 intersection, within MTO's Highway 401 interchange corridor. Surrounding land consists of existing and future industrial development, including Woodstock Southeast Secondary Plan employment lands, which were recently annexed and adopted into the Official Plan in 2022.

The Developer owns and has Site Plan approval for the development of two large parcels on the west side of Oxford Road 4, as shown in Attachment 1. Based on proximity to the Highway 401 corridor, the Developer's lands are located within MTO's controlled area; therefore, MTO Building and Development Permits are required prior to the City issuing building permits.

Existing spacing between the intersection of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 and the Highway 401 west terminal ramps does not meet current MTO standards. Accordingly, MTO originally requested that Oxford Road 4 be realigned to achieve the required minimum separation of 400 metres. Furthermore, MTO indicated that they would not issue a Building and Development Permit for the subject lands (or other proposed area developments) until a Harmonized Class EA Study for the realignments and subsequent relocation of the Oxford Road 4 and Parkinson Road intersection was completed.

Comments

Considering forecasted area growth and level of service, the intersection was identified as a road improvement project within the County's 2024 *Business Plan and Budget, 2024 Transportation Master Plan* and 2024 *Development Charge Background Study*.

Recent collaborative discussions between stakeholders (the Developer, MTO, City and County) have resulted in the development of a plan to move forward with development and associated road network improvements. The devised plan includes a compromise by MTO to withdraw its requirement to realign the intersection provided that alternative improvements (at the existing intersection location) are implemented to the satisfaction of the Road Authorities (MTO and Oxford County). The Developer has provided an updated Traffic Impact Study to demonstrate and technically support an alternative conceptual design that has been considered substantially acceptable to the Road Authorities.

The collaboration between the Developer, MTO and the County have led to two agreements, that upon execution, would allow for building permits to be issued by MTO for the Developer sites. The first agreement, between MTO and the County includes, but is not limited to, the following areas of note:

- The County is authorized to design and construct Intersection Improvements within the Ministry's jurisdiction, including necessary road widening for turning lanes.
- The County must conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with Class EA standards for both Provincial and Municipal requirements. Property acquisition may be necessary, and a Harmonized Class EA Study is deemed acceptable by MTO.
- The County will prepare the design according to Ministry standards, which includes an eastbound left-turn lane, a westbound right-turn lane, and signalization of the intersection.
- The County must enter into a Road Improvements Agreement with MEL (WOODSTOCK 1) INC. / MEL (WOODSTOCK 2) INC. regarding the Developer's proposed Development by the end of July 2024, ensuring that building occupancy does not occur before January 1, 2027.

The second agreement between the County and the Developer, as reference above in the MTO / County agreement includes, but is not limited to, the following key areas:

- The Developer agrees that building occupancy on their lands will be deferred until the Road Improvements at the intersection of Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 are completed, or until January 1, 2027, whichever comes first.
- The County commits to using best efforts to complete the Road Improvements by January 1, 2027.

The timeline for the intersection improvements at Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 is somewhat advanced; however, staff believe that project completion by January 1, 2027 can be achieved with Council's agreement on this project being a priority (financially and in resources).

Unforeseeable project delays / challenges (e.g. associated with provisional utility relocations or acquiring necessary land for improvements) are areas that could impact project timing completion and; therefore, will require careful oversight and management by County staff. If challenges do arise with anticipated land acquisition, expropriation proceedings will need to commence in an expedient fashion in an attempt to maintain the project schedule.

The MTO and Developer have accepted the terms and conditions of the respective agreements.

CONCLUSIONS

As a timely and critical next step in order to ensure that future design and construction of necessary intersection improvements at Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 15 can proceed, it is considered appropriate for County Council to authorize the execution of the relevant agreements with MTO and the Developer.

SIGNATURES

Report author:

Original signed by

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Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Melissa Abercrombie, P. Eng., PMP
Acting Director of Public Works

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

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Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Project Location Map