

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Application for Official Plan Amendment OP 20-14-3 and Draft Plan of Subdivision SB 20-05-3 - Stubbe's Property Development Inc.

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Community Planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council approve Official Plan Application OP 20-14-3, submitted by Stubbe's Property Development Inc. for the lands described as Part of Lot 10, Concession 4 (North Norwich), Township of Norwich, to redesignate the subject lands from 'Low Density Residential' and 'Open Space' to 'Low Density Residential', 'Open Space' and 'Medium Density Residential – Special Policy Area', to facilitate the development of the subject lands for residential development;
2. And further, that Council approve the attached Amendment No. 326 to the County of Oxford Official Plan and raise the necessary by-law to approve Amendment No. 326;
3. And further, that Oxford County Council grant draft approval to the proposed plan of subdivision, Application SB 20-05-3 submitted by Stubbe's Property Development Inc. for the lands described as Part of Lot 10, Concession 4 (North Norwich), Township of Norwich, located on the west side of Spring Street, between Main Street West and Quaker Street in the Village of Norwich, subject to the conditions attached to this report as Schedule 'A' being met prior to final approval.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The proposed draft plan of subdivision would consist of approximately 229 units, comprised of 81 lots for single-detached dwellings, 5 blocks for semi-detached and townhouse dwellings, and an apartment block (to contain two 6 storey apartment buildings) as well as two open space blocks, a stormwater management block and 4 new local streets.

- The purpose of the Official Plan Amendment is to redesignate portions of the subject lands from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential and to include site-specific policies to recognize a density above what is currently permitted within the Medium Density Residential Designation. Other areas will be designated to reflect their existing and proposed use as Open Space.
- Planning staff are recommending approval of the applications as they are consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement and are generally in-keeping with the strategic initiatives and objectives of the Official Plan respecting development in a designated settlement.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

These applications will be implemented in accordance with the relevant objectives, strategic initiatives and policies in the Official Plan.

Financial Impact

The approval of this application will have no financial impact beyond what has been approved in the current year's budget.

Communications




In accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act, notice of complete application regarding this proposal was provided to surrounding property owners on July 29, 2024 and notice of public meeting was issued on September 24, 2024. At the time of writing this report, multiple comments have been received from the public citing concerns related to increased density, drainage onto abutting properties and additional traffic on Spring Street. Letters received have been appended to this report.

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 support the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
<p>Goal 1.1 – 100% Housed</p> <p>Goal 1.2 – Sustainable infrastructure and development</p> <p>Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being</p>		

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

DISCUSSION

Background

Owner: Stubbe’s Property Development Inc.
30 Muir Line, Harley, ON N0E 1E0

Agent: GSP Group Inc. (c/o Brandon Flewwelling)
72 Victoria Street S, Suite 201, Kitchener, ON

Location:

The subject lands are described as Part of Lot 10, Concession 4 (North Norwich), Township of Norwich. The lands are located on the west side of Spring Street, between Main Street West and Quaker Street. The lands do not have an assigned municipal address.

County of Oxford Official Plan:

Existing:

Schedule “C-3”	County of Oxford Settlement Strategy Plan	Serviced Village
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Schedule “N-1”	Township of Norwich Land Use Plan	Settlement and Agricultural Reserve
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Schedule "N-2"	Village of Norwich Land Use Plan	Low Density Residential and Open Space
Proposed:		
Schedule "C-3"	County of Oxford Settlement Strategy Plan	Serviced Village
Schedule "N-1"	Township of Norwich Land Use Plan	Settlement and Agricultural Reserve
Schedule "N-2"	Village of Norwich Land Use Plan	Low Density Residential Medium Density Residential (site specific policy area) Open Space

Proposal

Applications for Official Plan Amendment, draft plan of subdivision approval, and zoning by-law amendment have been received by the County of Oxford and Township of Norwich to facilitate a residential subdivision development.

The purpose of the Official Plan Amendment is to re-designate portions of the subject lands from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential and to include site-specific policies to recognize a density above what is currently permitted within the Medium Density Designation. Other areas will be designated Open Space, as recommended by an Environmental Impact Study prepared for the proposed subdivision development.

The proposed draft plan of subdivision consists of:

- 81 lots for single detached dwellings (Lots 1-81);
- four blocks for semi-detached dwelling units (Blocks 82-85);
- one block for townhouse dwelling units (Block 86);
- one block which is proposed to contain two apartment buildings, comprising 136 dwelling units (Block 87);
- four open space blocks – two to accommodate a wetland area, one for stormwater management (Block 89) and one for a park (Block 90); and
- remaining blocks for turning circles, sight lines, and 0.3 m reserves.

The proposed draft plan of subdivision will be served by extensions of Bailey Street and Mary Street, and 4 new local streets and full municipal water and wastewater services.

A related consent application (B24-49-3), to allow for the severance of a portion of the agricultural parcel to the north to provide for a lot addition to enlarge Block 96, was approved by Oxford County Land Division Committee at their October 1, 2024 meeting. The purpose of the consent was to facilitate the creation of a wetland within Block 96 to satisfy a recommendation of the Environmental Impact Study work undertaken in support of the development.

The purpose of the zone change application is to rezone the subject lands to a variety of residential and open space zones to facilitate the proposed draft plan of subdivision and to recognize the existing and proposed natural heritage features and parkland. Holding provisions will be applied throughout the development in order to confirm sufficient water and wastewater capacity and will be removed once available capacity has been confirmed.

A portion of the lands, along the northeast property line, are regulated by Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA). Block 91, which contains an existing woodlot, is proposed to be conveyed to LPRCA as an extension of the Norwich Conservation Area located to the northeast of the subject lands.

The subject lands comprise approximately 13.42 ha (33 ac) of vacant land, currently in agricultural production (cash crop). The westerly and northerly limit of the subject lands also correspond with the settlement boundary of the Village of Norwich. Surrounding land uses include existing low density residential development to the east, industrial lands to the south (also owned by the applicant), Norwich Conservation Area to the northeast, and agricultural lands to the northwest and west of the subject lands.

Plate 1, Location Map with Existing Zoning provides the location of the subject property and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity.

Plate 2, Aerial Map (2020) with Existing Zoning provides an aerial view of the subject property and surrounding uses with the existing zoning.

Plate 3, Existing Official Plan Designations illustrates the land use designations of the subject property and surrounding area

Plate 4, Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision illustrates the proposed draft plan of subdivision layout and lot configurations.

Plate 5, Phasing Plan for the Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision illustrates the proposed phases for the development.

Comments

2024 Provincial Planning Statement

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement was released on August 20, 2024, and replaces the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement which came into force and effect on October 20, 2024. The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, where a municipality is exercising its authority affecting a planning matter, such decisions, “shall be consistent with” all policy statements issued under the Act.

Section 2.1.3 directs that sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area by maintaining at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through lands which are designated and available for residential

development, and to maintain at all times where new development is to occur, land with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned, including units in draft approved or registered plans.

Section 2.1(6) of the PPS states that the achievement of complete communities accommodates an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing and transportation options, employment, public services facilities, recreation and parks, and open space to meet long-term needs. Further, complete communities improve accessibility for people of all ages and abilities and improve social equity and overall quality of life.

Section 2.2.1- Housing provides that Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

- a) establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households, and coordinating land use planning and planning for housing with Service Managers to address the full range of housing options, including affordable housing needs;
- b) permitting and facilitating:
 - 1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and wellbeing requirements of current and future residents, including *additional needs housing* and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities; and
 - 2. all types of residential intensification, including the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional sites (e.g. shopping malls and plazas) for residential use, development and introduction of new housing options within previously developed areas, and redevelopment, which results in a net increase in residential units in accordance with policy 2.3.1.3;
- c) promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation.

Section 2.3.1 of the PPS indicates that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which;

- a) Efficiently use land and resources;
- b) Optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
- c) Support active transportation;
- d) Are transit-supportive as appropriate, and
- e) Are freight supportive.

Section 2.3.1.3 also directs that planning authorities shall support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities, including by planning for a range and mix of housing options and prioritize planning and investment in infrastructure and public service facilities.

Section 3.6 of the PPS addresses infrastructure and public service facilities and states that infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in an efficient manner while accommodating projected needs. Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management so that they are;

- a) Financially viable over their life cycle, which may be demonstrated through asset management planning;
- b) Leverage the capacity of development proponents, where appropriate; and,
- c) Are available to meet current and projected needs.

Before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities, the use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized and opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible.

Municipal sewage services and municipal water services are the preferred form of servicing for settlement areas to support protection of the environment and minimize potential risks to human health and safety. Municipal sewage services and municipal water services include both centralized servicing systems and decentralized servicing systems.

Planning for stormwater management shall;

- a) Be integrated with planning for sewage and water services and ensure that systems are optimized, retrofitted as appropriate, feasible and financially viable over their full life cycle;
- b) Minimize or, where possible, prevent or reduce increases in stormwater volumes and contaminant loads;
- c) Minimize erosion and changes in water balance including through the use of green infrastructure;
- d) Mitigate risk to human health, safety, property and the environment;
- e) Maximize the extent of function of vegetative and pervious surfaces;
- f) Promote best practices, including stormwater attenuation and re-use, water conservation and efficiency and low impact development; and
- g) Align with any comprehensive municipal plans for stormwater management that consider cumulative impacts of stormwater from development on a watershed scale.

Section 4.1 of the PPS provides that natural heritage features and areas shall be protected for the long term. The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems should be maintained, restored, or where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.

Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in significant woodlands unless it is has been demonstrated that there will be no net negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.

Official Plan

The subject lands are located within the Village of Norwich, which is designated as 'Serviced Village' according to Schedule "C-3" County of Oxford Settlement Strategy Plan and Schedule "N-1" Township of Norwich Land Use Plan, respectively, and further designated as 'Low Density Residential' and 'Open Space' according to Schedule "N-2" Village of Norwich Land Use Plan.

According to Section 2.1.1 (Growth Management), in order to manage growth, it is a strategic initiative of the Official Plan to ensure designated growth settlements are developed with efficient land use patterns and densities to minimize land consumption, to control infrastructure costs, and to limit growth pressure in rural areas. Further, Section 4.1 (Strategic Approach) states that the County shall aim to ensure existing designated land supplies and infrastructure will be efficiently utilized, including achievement of intensification targets, prior to designating new areas for growth.

Section 4.2.2.4 (Serviced Villages) directs that serviced villages are settlements characterized by a broad range of uses and activities which have been developed, or are proposed for development, on centralized wastewater and water supply facilities.

Section 6.2.1 (Objectives for Rural Settlement Residential Designations) states that compact urban form and residential infilling, as well as a range of housing types, shall be promoted in all rural settlement areas where appropriate given the level of infrastructure available.

Further, the Official Plan (Section 6.2.2) directs that Low Density Residential areas in serviced villages are those lands that are primarily developed or planned for a variety of low-rise, low density housing forms consisting of single detached, semi-detached, duplexes, converted dwellings, and street fronting townhouses.

The Official Plan establishes densities for Low Density Residential areas with a maximum net residential density of 22 units per hectare (9 units per acre), and a minimum net residential density of 15 units per hectare (6 units per acre). Net residential density is defined as the number of housing units per hectare of residentially designated lands, exclusive of lands required for open space, environmentally sensitive areas, and transportation and servicing infrastructure, including stormwater management.

Section 6.2.3 (Medium Density Residential Areas) directs that Medium Density Residential areas in Serviced Villages are those lands primarily developed or planned for low profile multiple unit development that exceeds densities established for Low Density Residential areas and, further, all proposed Medium Density Residential development shall be subject to Site Plan Control.

New areas proposed for Medium Density Residential development require an amendment to the Official Plan, subject to the following criteria:

- The property abuts a major road, such as a County Road or Provincial Highway, or will be situated such that movements from the site do not flow through any adjoining Low Density Residential areas;
- The property will be in close proximity to community serving facilities such as schools, shopping facilities and recreational and open space areas;
- The proposal shall be fully serviced by centralized water and wastewater facilities and storm sewers, power and gas distribution facilities will be available to accommodate the proposed development;
- Stormwater run-off from the proposal will be adequately controlled and will not negatively affect adjacent properties;
- The size, configuration and topography of the site is such that there is sufficient flexibility in site design to mitigate adverse impacts on the amenities and character of any adjacent Low Density Residential areas through adequate buffering and screening;

- The location of vehicular access points and the likely impacts of traffic generated by the proposal on adjacent streets has been assessed and is acceptable;
- Adequate off-street parking and outdoor amenity areas can be provided; and,
- The effect of the proposed development on environmental resources or the effect of environmental constraints on the proposed development will be addressed and mitigated.

The Official Plan establishes a net residential density range for Medium Density Residential areas, with a minimum of 22 units per hectare (9 units per acre) to a maximum of 50 units per hectare (20 units per acre).

A small portion of the southwesterly corner of the subject lands is designated as 'Open Space', according to Schedule "N-2" Village of Norwich Land Use Plan, as contained in the Official Plan. Lands designated as Open Space typically include regulatory floodplain and floodway lands, Conservation Authority owned lands, Earth Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and parks, pathways, recreation areas, and stormwater management facilities.

The general intent of the Open Space designation is to maintain ecological functions, conserve environmental areas and provide opportunities for both active recreation and passive enjoyment of the environment in its natural state. Permitted uses within lands designated for Open Space include active and passive recreation and structures that are accessory or ancillary to the Open Space use.

Section 10.3.3 (Plans of Subdivision and Condominium) identifies that County Council and Area Councils will evaluate applications for a plan of subdivision on the basis of the requirements of the *Planning Act* as well as criteria, including, but not limited to:

- The plan effectively accommodates environmental resources and mitigates environmental constraints in accordance with the relevant Official Plan policies;
- The plan is designed to reduce negative effects on surrounding land uses, including transportation networks and significant environmental features;
- The plan is designed to be integrated with adjacent developments; and,
- The plan is designed to be compatible with the natural features and topography of the lands, extensive areas of cut and fill will be discouraged.

Section 3.3.3.1 (Noise, Vibration and Safety) provides that the County of Oxford and the Area Municipalities recognize that there may be noise or vibration affecting noise sensitive land uses located in proximity to industrial uses, major roads, railways and airports. The objective of this policy is to prevent or minimize the encroachment of noise sensitive land uses upon industrial land uses and vice versa. Noise sensitive land use and industrial land use are considered to be incompatible.

The development of noise sensitive land uses will not be permitted within the following Provincially subscribed minimum separation distances:

- where such development is within 20 metres (65 feet) of an existing or proposed Class I industrial facility;
- where such development is within 70 metres (230 feet) of an existing or proposed Class II industrial facility;

- where such development is within 300 metres (984 feet) of an existing or proposed Class III industrial facility; and
- where such development is within 300 metres (984 feet) of an existing rail yard.

These minimum separation distances apply to lands that are zoned and/or designated for industrial uses.

Notwithstanding these minimum separation distances, the County and/or Area Municipality may reduce the requirement for the minimum separation distances from industrial facilities or rail yards in areas where infilling or redevelopment for residential or mixed use is taking place, provided that a feasibility assessment is undertaken and that the appropriate attenuation measures are implemented in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment guidelines.

The Official Plan requires that, as a condition of draft plan approval, County Council will require the applicant to satisfy conditions prior to final approval and registration of the plan. Should the conditions not be met within the specified time period, the draft plan approval may lapse. Additionally, to provide for the fulfillment of these conditions, and for the installation of services according to municipal standards, Council shall require that the applicant enter into a subdivision agreement with the area municipality and, where necessary, the County, prior to final approval of the plan.

The northeasterly portion of the subject lands contains an area of significant woodland. Section 3.2 of the Official Plan requires that, where site alteration is occurring within or 50 m adjacent to Significant Valleylands or Significant Woodlands, an Environmental Impact Study be prepared.

New permitted uses, or expansions/enlargements to existing uses, buildings, or structures that require a Planning Act approval and are to be located within or adjacent to a natural heritage feature, may only be permitted if it can be demonstrated through an Environmental Impact Study (EIS), prepared to the satisfaction of the Municipality in accordance with the policies contained in Section 3.2 of the Plan, that there will be no negative impacts to the natural heritage features and/or their ecological functions.

Section 10.3.7 (Holding Zones) provides that Area Councils may use a holding symbol (H) for development of lands considered to be premature or inappropriate for immediate development for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to:

- Where existing infrastructure services and facilities, such as sanitary sewers, stormwater management facilities, water supply, roads, parks, schools, and community support services have been determined to have insufficient capacity to service the proposed development;
- To ensure that natural areas or specific natural features are protected and the proposed development is consistent with the policies of Section 3.2;
- To ensure that potential hazards or constraints are effectively mitigated, consistent with the policies of Section 3.2, prior to development;
- Where it is necessary to require phasing of an overall development for logical and orderly land use, and to mitigate or secure commitments consistent with the Official Plan policies; and/or

- Where development is contingent upon other related matters occurring first, such as consolidation of land ownership to ensure orderly development and phasing, or to secure financial agreements on necessary infrastructure or services.

Holding provisions may be applied municipal wide, to portions of a municipality such as servicing catchment areas, drainage sheds or flood plains, as well as on a site-specific basis.

Removal of a holding provision may occur once conditions have been satisfied, including satisfying appropriate financial and servicing requirements of a municipality, approval of studies, and/or the signing of necessary agreements under the provisions of the *Planning Act*.

Zoning By-law

The subject lands are currently zoned 'Special Development Zone with Holding Provision (D-7(H))', 'Special Open Space (OS-3)' and 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' in the Township Zoning By-law.

The applicant is proposing to rezone the subject lands to a variety of residential and open space zones to facilitate the proposed draft plan of subdivision and to recognize the existing and proposed natural heritage features and parkland. Holding provisions are also being proposed to ensure that sufficient water and wastewater capacity is available for each phase of the development.

Agency Comments

Enbridge requests that as a condition of final approval that the owner/developer provide to Enbridge the necessary easements and/or agreements required by Enbridge for the provision of gas services for this project, in a form satisfactory to Enbridge.

County of Oxford Backflow Prevention Compliance Officer indicated that the property use is subject to By-law No. 6544-2023.

Canada Post provided standard conditions of approval for the provision of community mailboxes and mail service for the proposed development.

Bell Canada requested the following conditions be included:

- The Owner acknowledges and agrees to convey any easement(s) as deemed necessary by Bell Canada to service this new development. The Owner further agrees and acknowledges to convey such easements at no cost to Bell Canada.
- The Owner agrees that should any conflict arise with existing Bell Canada facilities where a current and valid easement exists within the subject area, the Owner shall be responsible for the relocation of any such facilities or easements at their own cost.

The County of Oxford Public Works Department has provided a number of conditions of draft approval, which have been incorporated as recommended conditions of draft approval.

The Township Chief Administrative Officer has provided comments and a number of conditions of draft approval which have been incorporated to the recommended conditions of draft approval.

Thames Valley District School Board has indicated no concerns or objections regarding the proposed zoning applications.

Township of Norwich Council

Township of Norwich Council recommended support of the proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision and Official Plan Amendment and approved 'in principle' the proposed Zone Change Application at their October 8, 2024 meeting.

Planning Analysis

The applications are intended to facilitate a proposed residential development in the Village of Norwich which will consist of single detached, semi-detached, townhouse and apartment dwelling units, local roads, blocks for open space and stormwater management and a park block.

A Planning Justification Report, Functional Servicing Report - including Stormwater Management Plan, Archaeological Assessment, Traffic Impact Study, Environmental Impact Study, Phase II Environmental Assessment, Hydrogeological Report, and Phasing Plan have been submitted in support of the applications.

Provincial Policy Statement

As the proposed draft plan of subdivision is located within a designated settlement area and will be serviced by municipal water and wastewater facilities, the development represents an efficient use of lands designated for residential purposes and municipal services. The development also provides for a range of alternative housing types in the Village of Norwich, while maintaining compatibility with existing residential uses in the surrounding neighbourhood. As such, Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed development is consistent with the relevant 2024 Provincial Planning Statement policies respecting residential development in settlement areas.

Planning staff are also satisfied that the proposal is consistent with Section 4.1 of the PPS, as the applicant has provided an Environmental Impact Study demonstrating no negative impacts to the natural heritage features present and on adjacent lands, provided the recommendations are implemented. In this regard, the applicant is proposing to construct a new wetland on the northern portion of the lands through the Alternatives Avoidance Form, approved by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to meet the requirements of the Provincial Endangered Species Act with respect to potential impacts to the habitat of Blandings Turtles.

County of Oxford Official Plan

As previously noted, the Official Plan establishes minimum and maximum net residential densities for Low Density Residential areas of 15-22 units per hectare (6-9 units per acre) and for Medium Density Residential areas of 22-50 units per hectare (9-20 units per acre). The proposed development would result in an overall net residential density of approximately 15 units per hectare (6 units per acre) for lands designated as Low Density Residential and approximately 100 units per hectare (40 units per acre) for the lands designated as Medium Density Residential. More specifically, Block 86 has a net density of 30 units per hectare (12.5 units per acre) which is consistent with minimum net density requirements established in the Official Plan. Overall, the

combined net residential density for the proposed development would be approximately 32 units per hectare (13 units per acre).

The development proposed on one specific block (Block 87) within the Medium Density Residential designation will exceed the maximum permitted density for Medium Density residential areas. As such, the applicant is requesting site specific Official Plan policies to permit a density of 108 units per hectare (43.7 units per acre) to allow for two six-storey apartment buildings with a total of 136 apartment dwelling units on that block. Planning staff consider the proposed increased density appropriate in this instance as the apartment blocks will be located near the parkland block, adequate parking will be provided, the site is situated in a manner that allows for an appropriate transition to the existing and planned lower density residential development in the vicinity and will provide an alternative housing option for residents of the Township.

In terms of the road access for the proposed Medium Density Residential development, the Traffic Impact Study did not identify any concerns with respect to increased traffic along Spring Street and Centre Street and North Court Street West, which are both designated as Major Roads on Schedule 'N-2' of the Official Plan, are located within close proximity. Further, the Township has requested a condition of draft plan approval to require the applicant to reconstruct Spring Street to a full urban cross section to ensure it can accommodate any increased traffic. As such, staff are satisfied that the proposal generally satisfies the locational criteria and is not anticipated to have adverse impacts on the existing Low Density Residential areas within the vicinity of the development.

Planning staff are also satisfied that the proposed residential uses are in-keeping with the Official Plan policies respecting noise, vibration and safety. The subject lands are currently designated for residential uses. Although the lands to the south are currently designated and zoned for industrial uses, the current use of the land is for an industrial mall, which is considered a lower intensity industrial use (i.e. a Class 1 or 2 industrial facility). As such, the stormwater management block and park block should provide sufficient buffering and separation distance between the industrial use and the proposed residential development. If the industrially zoned lands were to be re-developed for a more intensive industrial use in the future they would be more constrained by the presence of existing adjacent residential development fronting onto Spring Street than the residential development proposed through these applications. Further, development on the industrial lands would also be subject to site plan approval, where noise feasibility studies could be required to ensure that any proposed industrial uses will remain generally compatible with planned and existing residential development in the vicinity. For these reasons, Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed residential development is consistent with the Official Plan policies in Section 3.3.3.1.

With regard to the specific review criteria for plans of subdivision (Section 10.3.3), the County Public Works Department has advised that sufficient municipal water and wastewater capacity is available to service Phase 1 of the development, but will be subject to confirmation by the Public Works Department prior to registration of the phase. Community facilities and utility infrastructure exists in the surrounding area and the existing road network will be extended to provide access to the site. Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed mix of unit types and residential density represents an efficient use of existing services and lands designated for residential use and will provide for an appropriate range of housing options and densities within a serviced settlement area, while also remaining compatible with surrounding residential uses.

The Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was triggered by the presence of woodland features, and the proximity to Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) regulated lands (Norwich Conservation Area). The EIS was completed to ensure that adequate surveying and field study was completed to satisfy the relevant agencies. Review of MECP Species at Risk (SAR) mapping and available Natural Heritage mapping and resources, as well as field work and surveying, resulted in the identification of multiple sensitive bird species, bats, nocturnal amphibians and a Blanding's Turtle, which was observed in the abutting lands of the Otter Creek Reservoir. Some characteristics and features on the subject lands suggested that such turtles could use the lands as a nesting habitat. As a result of these findings, an Alternatives Avoidance Form (AAF) was prepared and submitted to MECP for review and approval. The AAF was approved to allow for the alternative of creating a wetland habitat for turtle nesting at the northern portion of the development (which is being added to the subdivision lands through consent application B24-46-3). The approved alternative will be implemented within the proposed draft plan of subdivision. The draft conditions of approval reflect the recommendations of the EIS with respect to the implementation of avoidance, mitigation, enhancement and monitoring plans. In light of the foregoing, planning staff consider the proposed residential development to be consistent with the Official Plan policies respecting development adjacent to significant woodlands and natural heritage features.

Township Zoning By-law

The applicant proposes to rezone the subject lands to a variety of residential zones and open space zones to facilitate the proposed draft plan of subdivision, and to recognize the existing and proposed natural heritage features and parkland. The proposed zoning will facilitate a variety of dwelling types and densities while protecting natural heritage features for the long-term. Holding provisions have also been included to ensure that sufficient water and wastewater capacity is available for each phase of the development. Township of Norwich Council approved the zoning in principle at their October 8, 2024 Council meeting.

Summary

For Councils information, the capacity within the Norwich Wastewater Treatment Plant is undergoing studies to prepare for an upgrade in the future based on the County's 2024 Water & Wastewater Masterplan and Development Charges Background Study. At this time there is limited capacity for new development and a servicing allocation protocol (the "Protocol") has been established in order to facilitate development based on available servicing. The applicant has provided a logical and appropriate phasing plan based on the Protocol that has been reviewed by County Public Works. There is sufficient capacity to allow for at least the first phase of the development and holding provisions will be utilized in conjunction with the zoning in order to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol. The applicant will be required to request from the Township that the holding be lifted once the previous phase is complete, at that time the availability of sufficient wastewater treatment capacity will be required to be confirmed by the Oxford County Public Works Department for each phase and holding removal.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the foregoing, Planning staff are satisfied that the proposed applications are consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement and are in-keeping with the strategic initiatives and objectives of the Official Plan respecting development in designated settlement areas, and further, can be supported from a planning perspective.

SIGNATURES

Report author:

Original Signed By _____

Amy Hartley
Development Planner

Departmental approval:

Original Signed By _____

Paul Michiels
Director of Community Planning

Approved for submission:

Original Signed By _____

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Plate 1, Location Map and Existing Zoning
- Attachment 2 - Plate 2, Aerial Photography (2020)
- Attachment 3 - Plate 3, Existing Official Plan Designations
- Attachment 4 - Plate 4, Proposed Official Plan Designations
- Attachment 5 - Plate 5, Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision (Phase 1)
- Attachment 6 - Public Comments
- Attachment 7 - Official Plan Amendment No. 326
- Attachment 8 - Conditions of Draft Approval