

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Application for Official Plan Amendment (OP 22-22-5) and Plan of Subdivision (SB 22-10-5) Kingwood Riverside Commercial Ltd.

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Community Planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council approve Application OP 22-22-5, submitted by Kingwood Riverside Commercial Ltd. for lands described as Part of Park Lots 6-8, Conc. 1 (North Dorchester) Pt. Lot 18 and Part of St. Patrick Street and Pt. Lots 22 & 23, Registered Plan No. 45, in the Village of Thamesford, to redesignate the subject lands from 'Industrial', 'Low Density Residential', 'Medium Density Residential' and 'Open Space' to 'Low Density Residential', 'Medium Density Residential', 'Village Core' and 'Open Space' to facilitate the development of the lands for a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses;
2. And further, that Council approve the attached Amendment No. 335 to the County of Oxford Official Plan and raise the necessary by-law to approve Amendment No. 335;
3. And further, that Oxford County Council grant draft approval to proposed mixed-use residential plan of subdivision, Application SB 22-10-5, submitted by Kingwood Riverside Commercial Ltd., for lands described as Part of Park Lots 6-8, Conc. 1 (North Dorchester) Pt. Lot 18 and Part of St. Patrick Street and Pt. Lots 22 & 23, Registered Plan No. 45 in the Village of Thamesford, with a lapsing date of 3 years from the date of draft plan approval, and subject to the conditions attached to this report as Schedule "A" being met prior to final approval.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Official Plan Amendment application proposes the re-designation of the subject lands from 'Industrial', 'Low Density Residential', 'Medium Density Residential' and 'Open Space' to 'Low Density Residential', 'Medium Density Residential', 'Village Core' and

'Open Space' to facilitate the development of the lands for mixed-use residential purposes and to include site-specific policies to recognize a density above what is currently permitted within the Medium Density Designation.

- The Draft Plan of Subdivision Application proposes a mixed-use residential development consisting of approximately 45 ha (111 ac) and includes an Institutional block for a new elementary school, 2 commercial blocks, 18 lots for single detached dwellings, 11 medium density residential blocks for townhouse dwellings, 2 blocks for stormwater management purposes, 2 blocks for six-storey apartment buildings, a park block, and an open space block containing a multi-use trail. The development is to be serviced by municipal water and wastewater services.
- Planning staff are recommending that County Council support the proposal, with some recommended modifications, as it is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and the Official Plan with respect to low and medium density residential development through a draft plan of subdivision within a serviced 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 these applications 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 and notice of public meeting regarding this proposal was provided to surrounding property owners on December 19, 2024. As of the writing of this report, staff have received phone calls and an email with questions regarding the proposal to which staff, in consultation with the owner, responded.



No questions from the public were raised during the Public Meeting held on January 15, 2025 at Township of Zorra Council.

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> <p>Goal 1.4 – Connected people and places</p>		<p>Goal 3.2 – Collaborate with our partners and communities</p> <p>Goal 3.5 – Advocate for Oxford County</p>

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

DISCUSSION

Background

Owner: Kingwood Riverside Commercial Ltd., c/o Jim McGorman and Lou Yordanou
3060 Mainway, Suite 100, Burlington, ON, L7M 1A3

Agent: Drewlo Holdings Inc. c/o Carrie O'Brien
680 Waterloo Street, London, ON, N6A 0B3

Location:

The subject lands are described as Part of Park Lots 5-6, Conc. 1 (North Dorchester), Pt. Lot 18 and Pt. of St. Patrick Street and Pt. Lots 22 & 23, Registered Plan No. 45. The lands are bound by Middleton Street to the west, Brock Street to the north, the Middle Thames River to the east and by Road 66 R/A to the south and are municipally known as 12 Middleton Street and 131 and 149 Brock Street, in the Village of Thamesford, Township of Zorra.

County of Oxford Official Plan:

Existing

Schedule “Z-1”	Township of Zorra Land Use Plan	‘Settlement’
Schedule “Z-2”	Village of Thamesford Land Use Plan	‘Industrial’ ‘Low Density Residential’ ‘Medium Density Residential’ ‘Open Space’
Schedule “C-3”	County of Oxford Settlement Strategy Plan	Serviced Village

Proposed

Schedule “Z-1”	Township of Zorra Land Use Plan	Settlement
Schedule “Z-2”	Village of Thamesford Land Use Plan	Low Density Residential Medium Density Residential Village Core Open Space

Proposal:

The draft plan of subdivision application is proposing a mixed-use development which is to be serviced by municipal water and wastewater services.

The overall development is proposed to consist of:

- 18 lots for single-detached dwellings (Lots 1-18);
- 11 blocks for a variety of townhouse-style dwellings (Blocks 19-24 and 26-30);
- 2 blocks for apartment dwelling units (Blocks 25 and 31);
- 2 blocks for stormwater management (Blocks 36 and 38);
- a park block (Block 35);
- an open space/trail block (Block 37);
- 2 commercial blocks (Blocks 33 and 34); and
- an Institutional block (Block 32).

The subdivision will be served by extensions of both George and St. Patrick Streets and include 4 new local streets (Veterans Drive, Riverside Drive, MacLeod Lane and Cold Springs Drive). As currently proposed, the plan of subdivision would accommodate a total of approximately 1,030 dwelling units at full build out.

The Official Plan Amendment application proposes to redesignate the subject lands from Industrial to Medium Density Residential, Village Core and Open Space, and to include site-specific policies to recognize a density above what is currently permitted within the Medium Density Designation.

A Zone Change application has also been submitted to rezone the subject lands from 'General Industrial Zone (MG)', 'Special Restricted Industrial Zone (MR-2 and MR-3)', and 'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp)' to 'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp)', 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R3-sp)', 'Special Central Commercial Zone (CC-sp)', 'Institutional Zone (I)' and 'Open Space Zone (OS)'. Special provisions are required to permit reduced lot frontages, yard depths and lot coverage.

The subject lands comprise an area of approximately 45 ha (111 ac) and were previously owned and occupied by a Maple Leaf Foods facility (formerly Cold Springs). The proposed development is proposed to be completed in two servicing phases, and numerous construction phases.

Surrounding land uses include existing low and medium density residential development, the open space areas associated with the Thames River Valley, a sewage treatment plant, and the new Township administration centre. The subject lands are also within proximity to a range of community facilities (e.g. a school, library, parks and other recreational facilities) and services (e.g. retail, restaurants, pharmacy, dental office, etc., along Dundas Street). The subject lands previously had a draft plan of subdivision approved (in 2002). Previous approvals are to be replaced with the proposal outlined in this report.

A number of supporting studies were submitted with the subject applications. These studies include environmental impact study, traffic impact study, slope stability analysis, planning justification report, geotechnical investigation, preliminary servicing and stormwater management reports.

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.

Comments

2024 Provincial Planning Statement

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) provides direction on matter 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.

With respect to the subject applications, Section 2.1.4 requires that planning authorities provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities required 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 2.2.1, 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:
 - i) 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
 - ii) 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, General Policies for Settlement Areas indicate that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development. Within settlement areas, growth should be focused in, where applicable, strategic growth areas, including major transit station areas.

Section 2.3.1, 2) states that land use patterns within settlement areas should be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:

- a) efficiently use land use resources;
- b) optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public facilities;
- c) support active transportation;
- d) are transit supportive, as appropriate, and,
- e) are freight supportive.

Section 2.8 – Employment speaks to supporting a modern economy, and 2.8.1, 1b) notes that planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses. In addition, 2.8.1, 1d) speaks to encouraging intensification of employment uses and compatible, compact, mixed-use development to support the achievement of complete communities.

Section 3.5 – Land Use Compatibility, directs that major facilities and sensitive land uses shall be planned and developed to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential adverse impacts from odour, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long term operational and economic viability of major facilities in accordance with provincial guidelines, standards and procedures.

Section 3.6, Sewage, Water, and Stormwater, directs that 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. Further, it outlines that planning for sewage and water services shall:

- a) accommodate forecasted growth in a timely manner that promotes the efficient use and optimization of existing municipal sewage services and municipal water services and existing private communal sewage services and private communal water services;
- b) ensure that these services are provided in a manner that:
 - i. can be sustained by the water resources upon which such services rely;
 - ii. is feasible and financially viable over their life cycle;
 - iii. protects human health and safety, and the natural environment, including the quality and quantity of water; and
 - iv. aligns with comprehensive municipal planning for these services, where applicable;
- c) promote water and energy conservation and efficiency;
- d) integrate servicing and land use considerations at all stages of the planning process;
- e) consider opportunities to allocate, and re-allocate if necessary, the unused system capacity of municipal water services and municipal sewage services to support efficient use of these services to meet current and projected needs for increased housing supply; and,
- f) be in accordance with the servicing options outlined through policies 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4 and 3.6.5.

Section 3.6.7 states that planning authorities may allow lot creation where there is confirmation of sufficient reserve sewage system capacity and reserve water system capacity.

Section 4.1, Natural Heritage, provides direction on the protection of natural features and areas, with specific direction provided to ensure development and site alteration is not permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.

Official Plan

The subject lands are located within the Village of Thamesford, designated as 'Serviced Village' according to Schedule "C-3" County of Oxford Settlement Strategy Plan and Schedule "Z-1" Township of Zorra Land Use Plan, respectively, and further designated as 'Industrial', 'Low Density Residential', 'Medium Density Residential' and 'Open Space' according to Schedule "Z-2" Village of Thamesford 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 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 densities for Medium Density Residential areas with a minimum net residential density of 22 units per hectare (9 units per acre) and a maximum net residential density of 50 units per hectare (20 units per acre).

The Official Plan requires that, as part of draft plan approval, County Council will require the applicant to satisfy various conditions prior to final approval and registration of the plan. Should the conditions not be met within the specified time, 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 Township and, where necessary, the County, prior to final approval of the plan.

Section 6.3.1.1 provides direction for the 'Village Core' designated lands within the rural settlements and identifies that the Village Core will continue to be the most intensive and dominant business area within the settlement serving both village residents and those within the wider rural area.

In addition to the foregoing, the Area Council may limit the range of residential uses permitted in the implementing Zoning By-Law. Residential proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the policies of Section 6.2. Section 6.3.1.1 also includes criteria for new development / expansions / redevelopment which look at details such as building orientation, height and coverage, environmental policies, and general site planning criteria such as parking, buffering, drainage, municipal services and traffic.

Section 6.4.2 identifies that, prior to the re-designating of industrial lands on isolated parcels of industrially designated or zoned lands, which are not part of an employment area, the following conditions shall be met:

- An adequate supply of unconstrained industrially designated land will remain to accommodate employment forecasts and to meet expected needs during the planning period, including land which provides visibility and exposure to the public road system;
- The proposal will not have an adverse effect on the availability or adequacy of municipal water supplies and wastewater facilities;
- The proposal and its location are more compatible with surrounding land uses than the use of the lands for industrial purposes; and,
- Where the development is on vacant lands, approval of such proposals shall not preclude the development of adjacent designated industrial lands either by the physical layout of the proposal or through the introduction and encroachment of non-compatible uses into the industrial area.

The subject lands are immediately west of the Middle Thames River, and have areas of floodplain, slope hazard and significant natural heritage features to the east of the proposed development limit. 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 within or adjacent to a Natural Heritage designation that require a Planning Act approval shall not be permitted, unless 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.

Zoning By-law

The zoning applying to the subject lands is currently 'General Industrial Zone (MG)', 'Special Restricted Industrial Zone (MR-2 and MR-3)', and 'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp)'. The associated zone change application submitted to facilitate this development proposes to rezone the lands to 'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp)', 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R3-sp)', 'Special Central Commercial Zone (CC-sp)', 'Institutional Zone (I)' and 'Open Space Zone (OS)'. Special provisions are required to permit reduced lot frontages, yard depths and lot coverage.

On January 15, 2025, Township of Zorra Council approved 'in principle' the requested Zoning By-law amendments associated with the proposed draft plan of subdivision and Official Plan Amendment.

Agency Comments

Enbridge and Canada Post have each provided comments regarding the subject applications and draft plan conditions have been included to address these comments.

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. In addition, County Public Works offers the following comments:

- a) The shutdown of a major industrial plant (Maple Leaf Foods) substantially decreased average daily water and wastewater (W/WW) flows in Thamesford. In response, the Thamesford WWTP reconfigured some of its unit process to improve efficiency. This included a reduction of the WWTP's rated capacity down to an interim capacity. The Owner shall be aware that coordination will be required to complete upgrades and increase the interim capacity at the Thamesford WWTP to accommodate full build-out of the proposed development.
 - i. Thamesford WWTP improvements are identified in the County's 2024 W/WW Master Plan and Development Charge Background Study; tentatively scheduled for completion in the next few years, subject to County Council approval of associated budgets, etc.
- b) The MECP provides guidance for land use planning authorities on what type of land uses are appropriate near sewage treatment plants. Separation distance is dependent on capacity of the treatment plant. The future rated capacity of the treatment plant is 2,500 m³/day. MECP specifies a minimum separation distance of 100 metres and a recommended separation distance of 150 metres for capacity that exceeds 500 m³/day but is less than 25,000 m³/day.
- c) Unless otherwise waived, select lots in proximity to existing WWTP should have appropriate warning clauses (in agreements of purchase/sale/tenancy) to advise of potential noise/odours related to operation and maintenance of the WWTP.
- d) It is understood that various developable Blocks (e.g. medium density residential; commercial; institutional) within the proposed subdivision will be subject to Site Plan Control approval; water and wastewater capacity to be allocated/approved at time of Site Plan approval.
- e) The Owner should be aware that the following County Public Works (PW) fees will be required throughout the subdivision planning/development process. Select referenced fees below are based on the current 2024 County Fees and Charges By-Law (subject to change). Fees, as applicable, will be based upon latest fees and by-laws at time of payment.

The Township Chief Administrative Officer, Township Director of Public Services and Township Director of Corporate and Protective Services have each provided comments and a number of conditions of draft approval which have been incorporated into the recommended conditions of draft approval.

With respect to both the proposed future school block and the central commercial blocks, the Township Chief Administrative Officer, both in 2022 and 2024, advised that these blocks should not include any permissions for residential use. The central commercial blocks are essential to provide further employment opportunities as well as a number of services / amenities for the residents of both Thamesford and Zorra, and as such, should not be removed for the purpose of facilitating a purely residential development rather than one which provides for mixed uses, as the Township strives to create complete communities.

The Township Chief Building Official has provided comments on the proposed draft plan and requested zoning. The building department is satisfied with the requested zoning and had requested a construction phasing plan (now provided). Further, draft plan conditions have been provided addressing details such as required easements and any drainage / grading matters.

The Township Manager of Emergency Services / Fire Chief provided comments regarding the placement of fire hydrants throughout the development. These comments have been included as a draft plan condition.

Thames Valley District School Board has provided comments regarding the development and provided wording for proposed draft plan conditions speaking to the timing of the proposed school development.

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority has provided comments on the applications, as well as technical review comments on the environmental impact study, slope stability report, geotechnical and functional servicing reports. A number of comments from the CA are to be addressed via appropriate draft plan conditions and items such as the future trail, stormwater management pond and landscaping within the development limit will require approval from the UTRCA.

Township of Zorra Council

Township of Zorra Council recommended support of the proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision and Official Plan Amendment, while also approving the proposed Zone Change Application 'in-principle', at the Township's regular meeting of Council on January 15, 2025.

Township Council supported the draft plan of subdivision as presented and noted that the Township will require that the establishment of the future trail, located in Block 37, be completed as part of the first registered phase of development.

Specific conditions of draft plan approval requiring that the establishment of the trail be completed to the satisfaction of the Township, County and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) have been included as an attachment to this report.

No concerns or questions were raised by community members in attendance at the Public Meeting on January 15, 2025.

Planning Analysis

The proposed applications are intended to facilitate a residential development and supporting commercial and institutional uses in the Village of Thamesford. The development will consist of single detached and townhouse dwelling units, apartment dwelling units, commercial blocks, an institutional block, local roads, blocks for open space and stormwater management and a park block. The development is proposing to achieve significant densities relative to the typical densities existing or proposed within Serviced Villages and will provide for a range of housing forms and types, as well as appropriately sized and located blocks for commercial and institutional uses, to serve the current and future residents of the Township.

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

2024 Provincial Planning 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 existing settlement lands and municipal services and infrastructure. The development also provides for alternative housing types in the Village of Thamesford and will contribute towards providing an appropriate supply and variety of housing for residential development 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 and planning for people and homes.

Regarding complete community policies of the PPS, the proposed development accommodates an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options, employment, public service facilities and other institutional uses (including schools and associated child care facilities) recreation, parks and open space, and other uses. It is the opinion of staff that the development will work towards meeting long term needs of not only the Village of Thamesford, but also the Township as a whole.

With respect to the direction provided in the PPS with respect to employment lands, it is recognized that while the subject lands were historically utilized as employment lands and are proposed to become predominantly residential, blocks are included within the plan that will be utilized for employment purposes (i.e. commercial and institutional). The commercial blocks, as well as the institutional block, are anticipated to accommodate a variety of uses which will provide both services to residents and employment opportunities (i.e. medical centre, grocery store, restaurant and an elementary school). Based on vacant land mapping prepared by the Community Planning Office, there is approximately 2.9 ha (7.2 ac) of land in Thamesford (excluding the subject property) that will remain designated for Institutional, Commercial and Industrial (ICI) purposes if this development is approved, as well as 32 net ha (79 ac) of land in the Village of Embro that is intended for ICI uses as per the approved Secondary Plan. Further, inclusion of the proposed commercial and institutional lands within the draft plan of subdivision will both add needed commercial and institutional employment lands to the Village and increase the range of services and employment opportunities for residents. As such, planning staff are satisfied that the overall supply of ICI land and opportunities in the Township will not be negatively impacted by the proposed development, in this case.

Regarding Section 2.2.1 – Housing, the PPS has a strong focus on the 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. It is the opinion of staff that the promotion of densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities are all addressed by the subject applications. The increased densities, variety of housing forms and types, and inclusion of blocks for commercial and institutional uses works to create not only a development which achieves substantial residential densities but also aims to establish a complete community by offering lands for future

uses which aim to serve not only the development, but the broader Thamesford / Zorra community as a whole.

The PPS provides direction on development within areas with full municipal servicing, indicating that these areas are prioritized for future growth and development. Planning staff are satisfied that infrastructure and public facilities are available to accommodate all phases of the development, as proposed. County Public Works has indicated that sufficient capacity currently exists within the Thamesford wastewater system, however capacity will be assessed in accordance with the proposed construction phasing plan, as provided by the applicant.

Official Plan

As previously noted, the Official Plan establishes minimum and maximum net densities for Low Density Residential areas of 15-22 units per ha (6-9 units per ac) and Medium Density Residential areas of 22-50 units per ha (9-20 units per ac). The proposed development would result in an overall net residential density of approximately 21 units per ha (8 units per ac) for lands designated as Low Density Residential, approximately 75 units per ha (30 units per ac) for the proposed Medium Density Residential townhouse blocks and approximately 100 units per hectare (40 units per ac) for the proposed Medium Density Residential apartment blocks. The overall net residential density of the entire development would be approximately 60 units per ha (24 units per ac).

Development proposed on specific blocks (Block 25, 30 and 31) within the Medium Density Residential designations will exceed the maximum permitted densities for Medium Density residential areas. The applicant is requesting site specific Official Plan policies to permit a density of 100 units per hectare (40 units per acre) for the block proposed to contain the future six-storey apartment buildings, with a total of 372 apartment dwelling units. Planning staff generally consider the proposed density for these blocks appropriate in this instance, as the lands will be served with full municipal services, the proposed apartment blocks are located near the open space block proposed to contain a future trail, and in close proximity to the services within Thamesford's Village Core. Further, the blocks will provide for adequate parking, be well integrated into the existing and planned residential development in the vicinity, and provide an alternative housing option for residents of the Township.

Further, it has been the direction of Council (both Township and County) that there is a desire to increase and promote densities, where appropriate. With respect to the criteria contained in the County Official Plan for Medium Density Residential uses, the criteria indicate that Area and County Council shall be guided by site-specific criteria which include items relating to servicing, stormwater management, location of vehicular access points, parking and the availability of, and proximity to, existing or proposed services and amenities, such as schools, leisure facilities, and parks to serve the new development. It is the opinion of staff that the proposed development not only achieves these criteria, but will also provide for a variety of housing forms and types, will draw in new services and amenities such as a school site and new commercial uses and provide for increased densities within a fully serviced settlement, consistent with the direction provided in both the PPS and the County OP. The comments received from County Public Works which notes the proximity of proposed low-density residential uses (single-detached dwellings) to the existing wastewater treatment plant, has also been addressed to their satisfaction. Public Works staff note that the proposed 18 lots for single detached dwellings will maintain the same existing setback as many of the existing townhouse dwellings established along the south end of Middleton Street.

High Density Residential 'HDR' uses (i.e. apartment buildings above 4 storeys) were not specifically contemplated for Serviced Villages at the time the current Official Plan policies were originally established. However, with the current need for and focus on increased housing supply and options, there is now merit to considering specific opportunities to achieve higher densities in the Village via site-specific Official Plan Amendments, as proposed in the subject applications.

With respect to the proposed maximum height of 6 storeys, rather than the current 4 storey maximum, staff are of the opinion that this request for increased height is generally appropriate in this instance. The proposed six storey height will be similar to the previously existing Agri-Co-op buildings located on the subject lands, and the increased height is a way to introduce additional housing units/density without occupying additional lands. The requested additional height is not expected to pose concerns from a firefighting perspective as the apartment buildings will need to satisfy the provisions of the Ontario Building Code with respect to fire protection and suppression and Township staff have worked to establish service agreements with neighbouring municipalities to ensure that firefighting capabilities are adequate.

In addition to the foregoing, Staff also recognize that in order to support a variety of housing forms and types, deviations from the current maximum height provisions as they pertain to apartment buildings may be warranted on a site-specific basis. In this case, the increased height for the proposed apartment buildings will facilitate a 'new' housing form for the Village of Thamesford. Mid-rise apartment buildings currently do not exist in the Township, and those which are proposed via the subject applications will offer a substantial number of units contributing to the available rental housing stock – and to that end, will fill a much-needed gap in the available housing inventory.

With respect to overall connectivity and local services, the subject lands are centrally located within the Village of Thamesford. They are within close proximity to community serving facilities such as schools, shopping facilities and recreational and open space areas, 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 and lastly, the location of vehicular access points and the likely impacts of traffic generated by the proposal on adjacent streets has been assessed and is determined to be acceptable.

In addition, it is the opinion of staff that the variety of uses being proposed by the subject applications will further enhance the community. In addition to the recently constructed Zorra Municipal Centre and Child Care Centre, the new commercial blocks will serve to accommodate a range of potential future uses (e.g. medical centre, grocery store, restaurants etc.) to serve the needs of the Thamesford community and, to an extent, the Township as a whole.

A portion of the lands are regulated by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA). Block 37, proposed to be conveyed to the Township as part of the parkland dedication requirements, encompasses much of the regulated area of the subject lands. The development limit, identified on the plan, is the greater extent of the natural hazards, as identified by Beacon Environmental / Chung & Vander Doelen in the Environmental Impact Study and the Geotechnical and Slope Stability technical submissions. Given the intention to develop a multi-use trail along the Middle Thames River, continued engagement with the UTRCA will be required. A draft plan condition speaking to both the development limit and the proposed trail are included as part of this report.

Regarding the specific review criteria for plans of subdivision (Section 10.3.3), County Public Works staff have 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 prior to registration of the phase. Community facilities and utility infrastructure exist in the surrounding Village of Thamesford and the existing road network will be extended to permit access to the site. Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposal represents an efficient use of existing services and lands designated for residential use, and the proposed single detached, townhouse dwellings, apartment building and proposed residential density will provide for a new range of housing options, including more affordable options for residents, within a serviced settlement area while remaining compatible with surrounding residential uses.

Respecting Section 6.4.2 of the Official Plan, the redevelopment of the subject lands for non-industrial purposes is both appropriate and consistent with the direction of both the PPS and the County OP. The criteria of the OP in this regard are satisfied as the subject proposal; reflecting higher density ranges than is currently permitted; is reasonable based on the adequacy of municipal water and wastewater facilities; is in keeping with the surrounding area which is developing as a medium density residential neighbourhood; is more compatible with surrounding land uses than the former use of the lands for industrial purposes; and, has exposure to a public road network able to service the proposed development.

Traffic Impact Study

A traffic impact study (TIS), and a supplementary Traffic Impact Memo were prepared by RC Spencer Associates Inc. Consulting Engineers to address concerns surrounding vehicular movement / flow resulting from the proposed development. The study, utilizing a 'worst-case' approach, provided a number of recommendations and conclusions addressing what will need to happen to satisfactorily address the anticipated increased volume from the proposed development.

Both Township and County Public Works staff have reviewed the TIS documents, with comments from both respective departments indicating they have no concerns with the findings, however, a final TIS will be required to be completed as part of the conditions of Draft Plan approval. Accordingly, a draft plan conditions speaking to the study itself, and the implementation of its recommendations and findings, is included in the conditions of Report CP 2025-54 for Council's consideration.

Environmental Impact Study, Geotechnical Study and Slope Stability Analysis

An Environmental Impact Study was completed by Beacon Environmental. The report indicates that the proposed development was designed to avoid areas occupied and/or constrained by natural heritage features and hazard lands and associated setbacks and buffers. In addition, the EIS provided recommendations speaking to an erosion and sediment control plan (ESC) being prepared prior to construction of the phase of the development adjacent to the significant features. Further, landscaping plans, particularly for the SWM block, should utilize a diversity of local native species that are complementary to the adjacent valley corridor. The study also recommended that a wetland restoration plan be prepared at the detailed design stage. A number of draft plan conditions have been included to address the recommendations of this study.

The Geotechnical Study, prepared by Chung & Vander Doelen, assessed the proposed development relative to its proximity to the Middle Thames River. A condition relating to the submission of a final geotechnical report has been included as part of the draft plan conditions attached to this Report. In addition, it is noted that the geotechnical report and its findings were utilized to inform the established development limit, and further, provide recommendations on excess soil which the developer will be required to adhere to and will be identified in all future subdivision agreements affecting the subject lands.

The last of the technical submissions which were prepared to establish the proposed development limit, as well as address overall site conditions, was a slope stability assessment. The Slope Stability and Setback Assessment, prepared by Chung & Vander Doelen, was completed to determine the appropriateness of the phases of development nearest the Middle Thames River.

The location of a future trail alongside the Thames River (and within Block 37) will have to be recognized in a final EIS submission and be in keeping with the recommendations and findings of the technical studies relating to the hazard lands. It is noted that a draft plan condition recognizing the need for final studies to be updated and provided prior to the establishment of a trail will be required by the developer. Additionally, the final EIS should note any additional plantings that may be required to occur within Block 37 as a result of any tree removal previously done elsewhere on the site, in keeping with the Township of Zorra Tree By-law.

Functional Servicing Report

A functional servicing report, prepared by DevEng Inc, was submitted in support of the proposed draft plan. The submissions highlight the existing conditions and assesses the viability of the proposed development. From a servicing standpoint, the development will be serviced by municipal water and wastewater, and the stormwater management facility, existing from a previous draft plan, is to be modified and utilized to service the proposed development.

County Public Works staff, as well as the Township of Zorra, have provided comments on the Functional Servicing Submission generally indicating that while many of the details are to be confirmed at the detailed design stage, some matters, particularly as they relate to Stormwater Management, remain to be addressed. To date, confirmation has been provided from Township staff (via the Township review engineer) indicating that there would appear to be a 10-15% deficiency in the available SWM capacity based on utilizing the existing facility. It is understood that sufficient area exists within the proposed SWM block that if additional lands are required for stormwater management, they can be accommodated within the proposed 2.5 ha (6.1 ac) block as generally shown on the proposed draft plan. Any additional requirements relating to functional servicing / stormwater management are to be addressed as part of the detailed design and have been included as conditions attached to this Report.

Future Site Plan Applications / Agreements

For Council's information, staff would note that given the subject draft plan is largely comprised of multi-unit dwelling types (specifically townhouses and apartment buildings), as well as other non-residential land uses (school site and commercial blocks), large portions of the lands will be subject to site plan approval (excepting residential blocks with fewer than 10 units). The site plan approval process will address site level details relating to the development being proposed.

Details such as landscaping, snow storage areas, amenity areas, parking and drainage details will be provided as part of the site plan approval process for these blocks.

With respect to both the proposed school block and the apartment blocks, preliminary site plans and renderings have also been provided. Further, staff would highlight that for the commercial blocks shown as Block 33 and 34, additional studies / reports (e.g. Noise Study) may be required to assess compatibility with surrounding planned residential development, once the specific uses are known.

In addition to the site plans noted above, the developer will be required to provide an overall landscaping plan for the subdivision. Staff have been advised that this work is underway and will be finalized as part of detailed design. In addition to the overall landscaping plan, the stormwater management block will have its own planting plan provided. It is expected that landscaping plans will also address how the development is providing compensation for all tree removal which occurs as part of the development. Details surrounding both landscaping plans and tree removal/compensation are included as part of the draft plan conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

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

SIGNATURES

Report author:

Original signed by _____
Spencer McDonald, MCIP, RPP
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 & Existing Zoning
- Attachment 2 – Plate 2, Aerial Map (2020)
- Attachment 3 – Plate 3, Existing Official Plan Designations
- Attachment 4 – Plate 4, Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision
- Attachment 5 – Recommended Conditions of Draft Approval
- Attachment 6 – Official Plan Amendment No. 335