

STAFF REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

From: Stephen Paul, Director, Community & Development Services
Re: County Official Plan - Adoption
Date: September 22, 2015

This report includes information on the process implemented and followed by the County in order to produce a revised draft that is now appropriate for adoption by Council.

A report from Mr. Nick McDonald of Meridian Planning, entitled "Official Plan Recommendation Report" is attached and outlines the key requirements and considerations that needed to be addressed as part of this project. The report also contains Mr. McDonald's professional planning opinion and recommendation.

In March 2013, the Province of Ontario amended Ontario Regulation 352/02 to require the County of Lennox and Addington to adopt an Official Plan by March 31, 2015. On the basis of this Provincial directive, the County of Lennox and Addington initiated the process leading to the adoption of an Official Plan.

In October of 2013, Meridian Planning (Nick McDonald) was selected by the County to assist in the development of the County Official Plan. The process officially commenced nearly two years ago. Over the course of two years, there have been numerous meetings with our local municipalities, 4 open houses and the holding of a formal public meeting on July 29, 2015.

Some of the more significant changes to the Public Draft (released in July 2015) that have occurred include:

- Bedrock Resource Mapping
- Housing Forecast
- Benn's Point Proposal
- Source Protection Policies

In accordance with The Planning Act, any policies contained in the Official Plan must comply with any applicable Provincial Policy. In this regard, the report prepared by Mr. McDonald states that the Official Plan is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

Ontario Regulation 352/02, as amended, under The Planning Act, requires the County of Lennox and Addington to adopt a County Official Plan. The adoption of this Official Plan will satisfy O.R. 352/02.

In accordance with the requirements of The Planning Act and Ontario Regulation 543/06, Notice of Adoption will be sent to those that requested and to all prescribed agencies and organizations. In addition, the adopted Official Plan (and all necessary supporting material) will be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. It should be noted that the Ministry's decision is appealable to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Recommendation:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT County Council receive the "Official Plan Recommendation Report" and the Final Draft Official Plan;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT County Council adopt, by By-law, the first Official Plan for the County of Lennox and Addington;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the adopted Official Plan, together with all the necessary supporting information and material, be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval in accordance with The Planning Act;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT Notice of Adoption be provided to persons, agencies and governmental bodies in accordance with The Planning Act.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION



OFFICIAL PLAN RECOMMENDATION REPORT



September 23, 2015



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INTRODUCTION

On December 10, 2012 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing ('MMAH') advised the County that the Province was amending Ontario Regulation 352/02 under the Planning Act to require upper-tier municipalities that are currently without an Official Plan (such as Lennox & Addington) to adopt one. Subsequently, on March 19th, 2013 the Deputy Minister of MMAH confirmed that the amendments to Regulation 352/02 have been made and the County will be required to adopt an Official Plan by March 31, 2015.

Section 16(1) of the Planning Act indicates that "an Official Plan shall contain goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic and natural environment of the municipality or part of it, or an area that is without municipal organization."



Given that the four lower-tier municipalities in the County already have Official Plans, it will not be the intent of the County Official Plan to deal with land uses and policy issues that should much more properly be dealt within the context of the lower-tier Official Plans. This means that the Official Plan should deal primarily with land use issues that cross municipal boundaries. These include growth and settlement, economic development and the protection of resources such as natural heritage resources, water resources, prime agricultural areas, cultural heritage and archaeological resources, minerals and petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources. Direction is also provided in this Plan on natural and human-made hazards.

The purpose of this final report to Council is to briefly summarize all of the work that has been completed on the Official Plan and to make a recommendation to Council with respect to the adoption of the Official Plan.

1.0 ESTABLISHING A VISION

While an Official Plan is essentially a policy document that is intended to provide Council with the basis for making decisions on development applications, changes in land use and community improvements, an Official Plan should have a well-articulated vision at the beginning of the document to establish the basis for the policies that follow.

Establishing a well-articulated vision also assists in ensuring the interpretation of policy is easier because every policy should be traceable in some way to the vision. The vision should also be supported by a series of principles that are intended to articulate how the vision is to be implemented. These principles in of themselves are not policies, but they are intended to provide the basis for the interpretation of the policies that follow.



In order to make recommendations on what the Vision and Principles should be, a review of each of the four lower-tier Official Plans (including proposed amendments as a result of recent Official Plan Updates, where applicable) was carried out in an effort to understand what the basis for these plans are. The product of this work was summarized in an Issues Paper dated April 1, 2014 and the draft vision and guiding principles was presented and discussed at that time.

As the Official Plan development process continued, refinements to the Vision and Guiding Principles were made and the final version is now included in Sections A1 and A2 of the Official Plan. It is my opinion that the Vision and Guiding Principles establish the appropriate context for the first Official Plan for the County.



2.0 PROVINCIAL POLICY

Sections 1.2.4 and 1.4.2 of the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement below indicate very clearly what is required when planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality, such as it will be in the County of Lennox & Addington when the Official Plan is approved:

- 1.2.4 *Where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality, the upper-tier municipality in consultation with lower-tier municipalities shall:*
- a) **Identify, coordinate and allocate population, housing and employment projections for lower-tier municipalities.** *Allocations and projections by upper-tier municipalities shall be based on and reflect provincial plans where these exist;*
 - b) **Identify areas where growth will be directed,** *including the identification of nodes and the corridors linking these nodes;*
 - c) **Identify targets for intensification and redevelopment** *within all or any of the lower-tier municipalities, including minimum targets that should be met before expansion of the boundaries of settlement areas is permitted in accordance with policy 1.1.3.8;*
 - d) *Where transit corridors exist or are to be developed, identify density targets for areas adjacent or in proximity to these corridors, including minimum targets that should be met before expansion of the boundaries of settlement areas is permitted in accordance with policy 1.1.3.8; and,*
 - e) **Identify and provide policy direction for the lower-tier municipalities on matters that cross municipal boundaries.**

1.4.2 *Where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality:*

- a) *The land and unit supply maintained by the lower-tier municipality identified in policy 1.4.1 shall be based on and reflect the allocation of population and units by the upper-tier municipality; and,*
- b) *The allocation of population and units by the upper-tier municipality shall be based on and reflect provincial plans where these exist.*

As will be described in this report, the requirements set out above have been met in the Official Plan that is recommended to Council for adoption.

3.0 POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

The Official Plan contains population, employment and housing forecasts in order to be consistent with Provincial policy. **Table A** below identifies the population growth forecast to 2036, as set out in the April 1, 2014 Issues Paper.

TABLE A
Population Growth Forecast by Municipality 2011 – 2036

Municipality	Population Growth (2011 to 2036)	Growth Rate (2011 to 2036)
Greater Napanee	3,663	23.61%
Loyalist Township	4,177	25.75%
Stone Mills	1,272	16.83%
Addington Highlands	282	11.15%
Total	9,395	22.46%

Table B below identifies the employment growth forecast to 2036, as set out in the April 1, 2014 Issues Paper.

TABLE B
Employment Growth Forecast by Municipality 2011 – 2036

Municipality	Employment Growth (2011 to 2036)	Growth Rate (2011 to 2036)
Greater Napanee	1,710	23.61%
Loyalist Township	720	25.75%
Stone Mills	122	16.83%
Addington Highlands	68	11.15%
Total	2,552	22.46%

Table C below establishes the housing forecast, which was prepared after the April 1, 2014 Issues Paper with input from the local municipalities.

TABLE C
Housing Forecast by Municipality 2011 – 2036

Municipality	Low Density	Medium Density	Total
Greater Napanee	1,040	247	1,287
Loyalist Township	1,328	374	1,702
Stone Mills	400	0	400
Addington Highlands	83	0	83
Total	2,851	6,21	3,472

4.0 OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

The Official Plan is divided into the following sections:

Section A (Vision, Guiding Principles and Land Use Concept) contains the vision of the County. This vision is based on an understanding of past and future trends and the wishes of the County's residents and business owners. The guiding principles that form the basis of the Plan flow from the vision.

Section B (Growth Management) contains the policies that provide the basis for accommodating expected growth in the County to 2036.

Section C (Land Use Designations) sets out the objectives and policies for the land use designations that apply in the County and the conditions under which development may be permitted within those land use designations.

Section D (Resource Areas, Hazards and Other Constraint Areas) contains objectives and policies on natural heritage, water, cultural heritage and archaeological, minerals and petroleum and mineral aggregate resources in the County. Policies on natural and human-made hazards are also included within this part of the Plan.

Section E (General Development Policies) contains objectives and policies that, where appropriate, must be considered as part of the land use planning process.

Section F (Plan Implementation and Administration) describes how the vision, guiding principles, goals, objectives and policies of the Official Plan will be implemented.

The Official Plan contains five land use designations as set out below:

Urban Area - The Urban Areas in the County are settlement areas that have both water and wastewater services (Amherstview, Bath, Odessa and Napanee).

Rural Settlement Area - Rural Settlement Areas in the County are settlement areas that are not Urban Areas.

Agricultural Area - This designation applies to lands that are considered to be the County's prime agricultural area.

Rural Area - This designation applies to all lands within the rural area that are not within the County's prime agricultural area and are not included within the Environmental Protection Area designation.

Environmental Protection Area - This designation applies to all Provincially significant wetlands as identified using evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

5.0 TRANSFER OF APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Section A4 of the recommended Official Plan indicates the following:

“Upon approval of this Plan by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the approval authority for local Official Plans, local Official Plan Amendments and Plans of Subdivision and Condominium will be the County of Lennox & Addington. Upon obtaining this approval authority function, the County shall support the delegation of that approval authority, where permitted by the Planning Act, to local municipalities. The approval authority for consents is not subject to this policy since that approval authority has already been delegated to the local municipalities and it is the intent of the County to maintain this relationship. Notwithstanding any of the above, any changes to the nature of the approval authority shall not require an Amendment to this Plan.”

Once the Minister approves the County Official Plan, and no appeals are received, it comes into effect on the date of the Notice of Decision. It is expected that it will take up to six months following Council adoption for a Notice of Decision to be issued. If appeals are received, the Official Plan will come into effect at a later date and as decided upon by the Ontario Municipal Board. In any event, once the Official Plan does come into effect, the County is assigned two Ministerial authorities:

- To approve subdivisions and condominiums (Section 51(5) & 51(5.1); and,
- To approve local official plans and amendments (Section 17(2) & (4)).

The County may choose, after the Official Plan is in effect, to delegate subdivision and condominium approval to the local municipalities in accordance with Section 52.2(2) of the Planning Act. The County would be required to pass a ‘Delegation By-law’ in accordance with Section 52.2(4) and give notice in accordance with Ontario Regulation 297/97. The approval of the Province is not required for this action to be taken and the timing of this action would be at Council’s discretion.

If the County wishes to delegate the approval authority for Official Plans and Amendments, County Council is required to ask the Minister (through a Council resolution) to authorize the County to pass a by-law exempting any or all local Official Plans or Official Plan Amendments from its approval in accordance with Sections 17(9) and (10) of the Planning Act.

However, such an order (if granted) would not allow for the exemption to apply to a local Official Plan or Official Plan Amendment that includes new or updated policies that are proposed in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act (Official Plan updates). This means that the approval authority would be the County in this case. The approval authority for future County Official Plan Amendments would continue to be the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

6.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

In previous discussions with Council, questions were asked about the need for County Official Plan Amendments after the County Official Plan is in effect.

As discussed throughout the process, the intent of the County Official Plan is to be strategic in nature and incorporate policies where required by the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement ('PPS'). In addition, it is not the intent of the Official Plan to include policies that deal with process, since these types of policies are already included within local Official Plans.

As a consequence, amendments to the County Official Plan will only be required if a local municipality wishes to expand the boundary of an urban area or rural settlement area. In addition, an amendment to the County Official Plan would be required to implement the establishment of a natural heritage system as discussed in Section 7.0 of this report. With respect to other uses and land use designations, the following is provided for information purposes:

1. Amendments to the County Official Plan would not be required for any use of any scale that is proposed within the boundaries of an urban area or rural settlement area, since the County Official Plan defers to local Official Plans for policies that apply in urban areas and rural settlement areas.
2. Within prime agricultural areas and the Agricultural Area designation, the uses permitted in the County Official Plan are exactly as they are within the PPS. If a non-agricultural use is proposed within a prime agricultural area, the County Official Plan will provide for the consideration of such a non-agricultural use through an amendment to the local Official Plan only. In other words, a County Official Plan Amendment would not be required to permit a non-agricultural use in the Agricultural Area designation.
3. The uses permitted within the Rural Area designation are exactly as they are within the PPS. In addition, the County Official Plan defers to local municipalities with respect to rural lot creation. As a consequence, if a use was proposed in the Rural Area designation that was not permitted in the Rural Area as per the County Official Plan, then it could not be permitted in local Official Plans either because such a use would not be permitted by the PPS. However, new uses such as golf courses, resort commercial use and other similar uses would not require an amendment to the County Official Plan.
4. Amendments to the County Official Plan would also not be required to support the establishment of a new pit or quarry, or the expansion of an existing pit or quarry.
5. For lands within the Environmental Protection Area designation, the Official Plan clearly indicates that the boundaries can be refined without the need for an Official Plan Amendment.

7.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS

7.1 Comments made at Public Meeting

The formal public meeting on the Official Plan was held on July 29, 2015.

Of the eight members of the public who spoke at the public meeting, seven had a number of questions and comments about a range of issues related to solar farm development and related traffic and future pit and quarry development in the Wilton Valley area. A number of questions were also posed regarding the bedrock resource mapping and the Environmental Protection Area mapping in this area and with respect to the timing of the initiation of the establishment of a natural heritage system. Comments on the bedrock resource mapping issue and the need for a natural heritage system are responded to below (Sections 7.2 and 7.3 below).

Interest was expressed by a few members of the public in establishing a natural heritage system because there are concerns about the limited amount of area included within the Environmental Protection Area designation in the County Official Plan in the Wilton Valley area. In this regard and in response, only lands that are considered to be a Provincially significant wetland are included within the Environmental Protection Area designation at this time. However, other natural heritage features and areas including areas of natural and scientific interest and significant wildlife habitat are included on Schedule B. The intent is that additional features will be included as necessary in the future when a natural heritage system is developed.

One of the suggestions made by the public merits a minor change in the Official Plan. In this regard, the suggestion was made that the County Official Plan should be explicit in indicating that any decisions respecting a Planning Act matter should also take into account the mapping of environmental features included within a local Official Plan (which at this point is more detailed). In this regard, a minor change to Section D1.12.13 (Environmental Impact Studies) has been made to ensure that regard has had to the policies of the local Official Plan and the mapping of environmental features when an environmental impact study is prepared.

The other comment made at the public meeting related to the Pye property in Loyalist Township. In this regard, it was indicated that concerns regarding mapping and other related matters affecting the lands have since been rectified through conversations with County staff and Meridian Planning Consultants and that they wish to receive the Notice of Decision on the Official Plan.

7.2 Bedrock Resource Mapping

A number of concerns have been expressed by local municipalities (and by members of the public at the public meeting), about the accuracy of the bedrock resource area mapping provided by the Province. The concern is that the current Provincial mapping of bedrock resource areas is either inaccurate or over-represents the amount of land that could (or should) be identified as a bedrock resource area. Suggestions have also

been made about refining whatever mapping is determined to be accurate to screen out areas that are not appropriate for future extraction.

It is clear that further analysis is required. On the basis of the discussions with the Province, it has been agreed that the issue of where bedrock resources should be mapped in the County Official Plan will be dealt with through a future amendment to the Official Plan. This means that bedrock resources would not be shown on Schedule C of the Official Plan to be adopted by Council and these resource areas will not be added later through a Ministry modification before Ministry approval.

However, the Official Plan to be adopted by Council is recommended to contain a 'placeholder' policy that will commit the County to initiating a process to deal with the bedrock resource mapping issue and adopt an Official Plan Amendment within 12-18 months of the adoption of the County Official Plan. As mentioned previously, this will allow for a fulsome discussion of the issues that involve all interested parties, and given that the issue will be dealt with through an amendment process, members of the public.

Proposed revisions to Section D5.2 are shown in yellow highlight below:

D5.2 Location

- a) Known **deposits of mineral aggregate resources** are shown on Schedule C of this Plan as selected sand and gravel resource areas of primary and secondary significance. ~~and selected bedrock resource areas.~~ The boundaries of these areas are considered to be approximate. ~~The identification of these deposits on Schedule C does not imply support by the County for any license application under the Aggregate Resources Act in these areas or for any application to establish mineral aggregate operation through a local Planning Act process.~~
- b) There is potential for **deposits of mineral aggregate resources** to exist outside of the areas mapped on Schedule C.
- c) This Plan does not identify the location of select bedrock resource areas on Schedule C. In recognition of the need to establish appropriate mapping, a review of where select bedrock resource areas should be mapped will be carried out by the County in consultation with local municipalities, the Province and other agencies and the public with the product of that review being an Amendment to this Plan. Such an amendment shall be adopted within 12-18 months of the adoption of this Plan. The review will consider all available mapping, potential constraints to resource extraction and the associated policy framework, which may identify the criteria that should be considered when an application is submitted.
- d) Licensed **mineral aggregate operations** are shown on Schedule C of this Plan. These licensed **mineral aggregate operations** have been identified for information purposes. The **development** of a new **mineral aggregate operation** or the expansion of an existing **mineral aggregate operation** is

subject to the policies of the local Official Plans and does not require an Amendment to this Plan.

The nature of the process to be followed should be the subject of a future report to County Council. This report would address the scope of the future Official Plan Amendment and consider whether the County would undertake a process that involves both the identification of resource areas and the fine-tuning of that mapping based on the carrying out of a constraint exercise.

Adding the second component is potentially a significant exercise that involves the weighing of a number of competing interests, with such a process potentially being very controversial. In addition, the mapping exercise in of itself has no impact on where an Aggregate Resources Act application can be considered according to Provincial policy.

7.3 Natural Heritage System

As mentioned above, a number of comments were made at the public meeting on the timing of the establishment of a natural heritage system. The need to establish a natural heritage system is now a requirement of the 2014 PPS as per Section 2.1.3, which indicates that “*natural heritage systems shall be identified.... recognizing that natural heritage systems will vary in size and form in settlement areas, rural areas and prime agricultural areas.*” The requirement to establish a natural heritage system only applies to lands that are south of the Canadian Shield.

The definition of natural heritage system in the PPS was also significantly expanded in the 2014 version of the PPS. Below are the additions to the definition in bold:

*“Natural heritage system: means a system made up of natural heritage features and areas, **and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes** which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. **These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. The Province has a recommended approach for identifying natural heritage systems, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.**”*

The definition of natural heritage system in the PPS (2014) expands upon the nature of the features and functions that need to be considered in developing such a system and it recognizes that municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used. The requirement for the Lennox & Addington Official Plan to establish a natural heritage system is mandatory.

It is recognized that the local municipalities have already completed work on the establishment of a natural heritage system. However, this work will need to be

updated and the criteria that will be relied upon to identify natural features will have to be consistently applied. In addition, a number of definitions in the PPS have changed and will have to be considered.

The scope of work required to establish a County Natural Heritage System is not known at this time however, it is not expected to be significant because of the work already completed by the local municipalities. With respect to scope of work, local participation/funding, agency participation/funding, project oversight/accountability, provincial involvement/funding and implementation should be explored and assessed fully. Establishing a requirement for the process to be initiated within three years of the approval of the Official Plan is appropriate (as proposed in the recommended Official Plan) and allows for the County to consider its options before initiating the project.

7.4 Housing Forecast

In early June 2015, Meridian Planning Consultants asked each local municipality to indicate what the housing forecast should be for their municipality. The intent was to obtain local input into what the housing forecast should be based on the population forecast already included within then Draft Official Plan.

Each local municipality did provide a response. I reviewed each of the submissions made and based on this input; there would be a need for 4,374 new dwelling units in the County by 2036. Given that the population forecast is 9,395, this translates into an average household size for the new dwelling units of 2.14, which is relatively low.

As a consequence, it is my opinion that the combined household forecast as collectively proposed by the local municipalities should not be included in the Official Plan as is since it essentially indicates that all of the new residents expected will require new housing, and does not take into account the availability of the existing housing stock for new residents, particularly as the baby boom generation ages.

On this basis, the household projections provided by the local municipalities have been reduced by 20% across the board in the Official Plan being recommended for adoption. However, in response to comments made by Stone Mills, some minor changes to Section B5 are recommended as set out below in the yellow highlight:

B5 HOUSING FORECAST

Table C below establishes the housing forecast for each of the local municipalities. These forecasts are considered to be guidelines that are to be considered by each local municipality when their Official Plans are amended to conform with this Plan. In this regard, lower tier municipalities may adjust the housing forecast **higher or lower** and **in-particular** the housing mix as appropriate taking into account the nature of existing planning approvals, **historical building trends, the nature of the expected housing demand** and the policies of the local Official Plan.

The above policy as modified means that lower tier municipalities may adjust the housing forecast and in particular the housing mix as appropriate taking into account

the nature of existing planning approvals and the policies of the local Official Plan. The above essentially also means that each local municipality will be required to accommodate the population target, however, the means by which this will be accommodated in terms of the amount of new housing required and the housing mix would be up to the local municipality. In carrying out this work, the amount of new housing expected as intensification would have to be taken into account.

7.5 Benn's Point Proposal

A request was made by the owner of the lands subject to Official Plan Amendment 33 in the Municipality of Greater Napanee. OPA 33 has the effect of changing the land use designation in the Greater Napanee Official Plan to Shoreline Residential to permit a shoreline residential subdivision.

Given this change in the local Official Plan, a request was made to ensure that the County Official Plan also reflected this change, since the County Official Plan includes the subject lands in the Agricultural Area designation. Given that the County Official Plan does not contain a shoreline residential designation, it is recommended that the affected lands be designated Rural Area, which much more closely reflects the approvals that have been granted by Greater Napanee.

The last day for appeal of the decision of OPA 33 is October 1, 2015, which is one day after the adoption of the County Official Plan by County Council. If we determine prior to September 30, 2015 that an appeal of that decision has been lodged, it will be recommended at the September 30, 2015 Council meeting that the Official Plan being adopted by Council revert the subject lands back to the Agricultural Area designation. If there is no knowledge of an appeal before September 30, 2015 and one happens to be lodged on October 1, 2015, the Ministry will be notified and asked to modify the County Official Plan at the appropriate time.

7.6 Source Protection Policies

In an email dated July 29, 2015, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requested that some minor changes be made to the policies dealing with source protection to accurately reflect Provincial regulation, policies and procedures. All of these changes are considered to be minor and have been made as appropriate.

7.7 Other Provincial Comments

In an email dated July 28, 2015, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs requests that Section B1 c) be amended to add the following words shown in underline: *“Local municipalities shall develop growth management strategies that are intended to implement this section of the Plan and ensure that rural residential development occurs on a limited basis.”* In response, it is not recommended that this change be made because the concept of “limited” is already captured in Section C4.1 e) and Section C4.4 (vi).

7.8 Other Editorial Changes

The County Roads Department also made a number of minor comments respecting the Official Plan and for the most part, these changes have been made. Changes were made to correct errors and improve readability.

8.0 PLANNING OPINION AND RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the work completed to date, the comments received from agencies, the public, the lower tier municipalities and Council, an Official Plan that is considered suitable for Council adoption has been prepared. It is my opinion that the Official Plan is appropriate and representative of good planning, since it deals with policy areas that should be dealt with in a County Official Plan while providing direction to lower-tier municipalities on the preparation of policies that are more appropriate in lower-tier Official Plans.

It is my opinion that the Official Plan as prepared is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. On this basis, it is recommended that Council adopt the Official Plan on September 30, 2015.