



Introduction

Planning Division facilitates the planning application process, provides professional recommendations on proposed developments and produces and maintains a policy framework that reflects provincial direction, public interest and the values and needs of the community.

In 2021 the Planning Division returned to a single tier service delivery model and provides planning services to each lower tier through a shared services agreement on a five-year term. In 2022, a total of 4 new planners were hired, representing half of the division size. While new staff are trained and mentored the division continued progression toward more efficient procedures, greater transparency and solutions-oriented planning, reflecting the stated needs of the municipalities within Perth County.

Service Strategy

Planning Division provides professional advice to the Planning Authorities (Committee of Adjustment, Township Council, Municipal Council, Land Division Committee and County Council) in the decision-making process for applications under the Planning Act. Statutory requirements for notice, public engagement and decision timelines are coordinated by the staff within this Division.

Assisting the public in navigating and understanding planning application process as regulated by the Planning Act is also a service provided by the Division which includes identifying requirements from various legislative and policy documents for individual development proposals. Planning Division Staff collaborate with County staff from various departments at the lower tier regarding planning matters and assist the public with property inquiries.

Individually, planners are held accountable to provincial legislation, the Provincial Policy Statement, local by-laws and policies as well as to the public interest and the profession of land use planning by a professional organization, the Ontario Institute of Professional Planners.



Key Customers and Stakeholders



Core Business

- Facilitate the land use planning process throughout the County;
- Provide Pre-Consultation for proposed planning applications and identify requirements for submission of planning applications;
- Conduct and/or coordinate procedures and tools such as application forms for the processing of applications under the Planning Act including:
 - Consent
 - Subdivision and Condominium
 - Official Plan Amendments
 - Zoning By-law Amendments
 - Minor Variance
 - Site Plan Control



- Exemption from Part Lot Control.
- Review and assist the Municipality in setting fees for planning applications with the goal of cost recovery;
- Assist the public with inquiries about property, land use and planning policy and the application process;
- Provide professional recommendations and advice on planning and development proposals or planning and development matters;
- Administration of the County Official Plan;
- Administration of the County's Land Division Committee;
- Long range policy development and maintenance;
- Assist and collaborate with GIS to ensure the maintenance and stewardship of land use data;
- Public consultation and engagement on land use and planning matters;
- Lead, partner and/or participate in community programs and projects related to land use matters;
- Expert witness at Ontario Land Tribunal;
- Delegated Planning Approval Authority for:
 - Plans of Subdivision – final approval;
 - Undisputed provisional consent;
 - Exemption from Part Lot Control;
 - Execute Agreements imposed as requirements of planning approvals;
 - Provision of Notice of a complete application.

Legislated Standards

Land Use Planning in Ontario is subject to a variety of legislation, including:

- Provincial Policy Statement, 2020;
- Planning Act RSO 1990;
- County of Perth Official Plan, By-laws & Policies;
- Member Municipality's Official Plans, By-laws & Policies;
- Building Code Act;
- Aggregate Resources Act;
- Clean Water Act;
- Source Water Protection Plans;
- Condominium Act;
- Development Charges Act;
- Environmental Assessment Act;
- Environmental Protection Act;
- Conservation Authorities Act;
- Endangered Species Act;
- Municipal Act;



- Heritage Act;
- Nutrient Management Act.

In addition, the Planners of the Department are guided by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) Professional Code of Practice and Standards of Practice. Please see the attached links for further information:

- OPPI Professional Code of Practice <http://ontarioplanners.ca/Knowledge-Centre/Professional-Code-of-Practice>
- OPPI Standards of Practice <http://ontarioplanners.ca/PDF/Standards-of-Practice.aspx>

Key Linkages with Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Growth and Economic Development

- The New Official Plan and expanded boundaries of serviced settlement areas to provide a 25-year land supply for both neighbourhood and employment uses;
- Maintenance of policy to protect prime agricultural land and other natural and cultural resources;
- Policy for the development of On Farm Diversified Uses as per the provincial guideline including agri-tourism opportunities;
- Intensity and redevelopment targets and policy included in the New Official Plan;
- Policy development as foundation for future Community Improvement Planning;
- Intensification and affordability/attainability targets for housing and neighbourhood development;
- Official Plan and Zoning provisions for additional dwelling units with outreach for the development community;
- Coordination with lower tiers to support and facilitate planning for water, sanitary and storm water services. This is a critical growth management task.

Goal 2: Regionalization and Service Effectiveness

- Single tier service delivery with Planners in the local offices while being part of, and supported by, a centralize team;
- Shared subject matter and local expertise through team coordination and communication;
- Facilitated workload sharing to back up heavy intake periods for planning applications;
- Coordinated notice preparations and public meeting scheduling between Planning Technician and local staff;
- Increased collaboration with lower tier staff by being stationed in local offices and through regular performance consultation with lower tier staff and Councils;
- Coordinated pre-consultation with static schedule and regular input for lower tier staff;
- File tracking mechanism with automatic or log in access for lower tier staff;
- Increased web-based communication, application capabilities and planning resources;
- Cost recovery next steps, monitoring and adjustment on an annual basis for all planning applications.

Goal 3: Customer Service Excellence

- Planner available in lower tier offices for all planning applications;



- Planning Technician to track all files and coordinate all notices;
- Web presence enhancements to provide comprehensive access to planning application and public engagement resources;
- Written procedures to foster consistency and facilitate evaluation;
- Solutions-based culture and progressive staff mentorship;
- Semi-Annual evaluation and reporting of performance metrics (stats) and indicators (satisfaction);
- Coordination with GIS to ensure stewardship of land use planning data;
- Delegated Approval Authority for minor modifications to conditional consent approval, and draft plan approval of subdivisions and condominiums.

Goal 4: Community Development and Planning

- New Official Plan with updated and progressive policies;
- Updated Zoning bylaws;
- Semi-Annual evaluation of community- based projects or policy needs with priority setting and planning for workload and resource allocation to selected projects;
- See Goal 1 for policy to protect agriculture and provide for diversity in housing options. Policy framework and encouragement for multi-unit dwellings, rental stock and mixed-use developments. Enhanced policy for intensification, redevelopment and density targets;
- Collaboration with community partners to ensure policy framework is relevant to community housing needs and participation in outreach opportunities;
- Land base availability for neighbourhood and employment uses;
- Promote walkability and 'complete' neighbourhoods through Official Plan policy.

Goal 5: Corporate Sustainability

- Build and maintain a culture of support, kindness, solutions and transparency;
- New hires are Registered Professional Planners with professional obligations, code of conduct and accountability for continued learning and professional development;
- Desire to collaborate with Economic Development staff, lower tier staff and community partners on all Planning and land use related topics. Collaboration would include research efforts, policy development and other projects while maintaining that the core business of planning application review and long-range policy maintenance is critical and takes priority.

2022 Achievements

- Approximately 240 planning applications reviewed/processed;
- Approximately 44 Certificate of Official issued for Consent, 2 final approvals on subdivisions and 1 condominium plan.
- Formal Training/Professional Development Activities:
 - Part Lot Control Exemption
 - Archaeological Assessment – organized and offered to lower tier staff
 - Non-Violent Communication;
 - Report Writing;
 - Latest Research on On-Farm Diversified Uses (University of Guelph);



- Coordinate an updated Municipal Comprehensive Review (growth projections and land needs assessment with Watson and Associates;
 - Vacant Land Inventory for each lower tier (residential, institutional, commercial)
 - Coordinate building permit data collection 2017-2021
- Develop Residential Intensification Guidelines – to be published;
- Review and draft revised Site Plan Control guidelines for two lower tiers;
- Facilitate and draft Site Plan procedures for two lower tiers;
- Redesign standardized pre-consultation tools and procedures;
- Official Plan Progress:
 - Two Natural Environment workshops for County Council;
 - Develop and Launch Natural Environment Landowner Consultation:
 - Work with GIS to develop interactive mapping for public
 - Correspond with 2800 landowners
 - Provide one on one consultation for 250 landowners and begin site visits
 - Plain language and Perth identity edits on the draft policy;
 - Policy review in draft text and edits;
 - Growth Plan proposal development and constraints mapping;
 - Coordinated Minimum Distance Separation calculations for all livestock facilities within 1.5km of service settlement areas;
 - Double check approximately 700 individual property designations;
- Provide content/context for Planning Process Mapping Exercise and workshop;
- Catch up Zoning Bylaw Consolidations – 2 of 4 on track for completion by year end with 2 more in first quarter of 2023;
- Implemented file status reporting for County Council;
- Drafted and collaborated with lower tier staff to produce a Planning Procedure Manual;
- Semi Annual Performance Monitoring for Shared Services Agreement including staff/council survey, CAO interviews and reporting:
- Hire and train 4 new planners – half of the division staff.
- Developing relationships with external agencies including: Stratford Social Services and Planning, Development Directors Ontario, Stratford and Area Building Association, Avon Maitland District School Board and Ducks Unlimited.
- Council Orientation Workshop – Planning 101

Major Initiatives for 2023

Complete the New Official Plan

- Complete growth plan.
- Complete Natural Environment consultation.
- Review draft with Committees and present to Council.
- Conduct public engagement and edit.
- Council Adoption.
- Submit to Province



Implement file tracking software system

- Coordinate with IT to select a file management software that can be integrated with lower tier programs and provide access via login.
- Upload/Input active file data.
- Begin upload/input historic file data.

Conduct a fee review

- Review cost recovery amounts using program mapping and staff input.
- Include fees not updated last round and new fees based on legislative changes.
- Collaborate with lower tier treasurers for fee bylaw amendments

Implement procedural changes from Bill 109 and Bill 23

- Draft specific procedural changes.
- Report to Councils.
- Update procedure Bylaw

Continued improvement on shared services performance monitoring processes

- Provide stats, survey and use feedback to improve the process (Semi-annual)

Review Delegated Authority processes

- Evaluate and report recommendations for any amendments to Delegated Authority processes

Initiate reporting on land availability and lot supply for each lower tier

- Develop standardized analysis and reporting

Begin review of lower tier zoning bylaws

- Engage development planners in systematic review of zoning bylaws, identifying policy gaps and drafting new text

Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) and consultant roster to streamline process for development review involving studies

- Ecologists
- Noise Engineer
- Traffic Engineer
- Hydrogeologist

Complete Records Management tasks

- In coordination with Legislative Services



Major Initiatives for 2024 and 2025

Evaluate effectiveness of intensification, density and redevelopment policies

- An effective growth management strategy

Implement new long-range policy and/or project work

- The growth over the 2022 and 2023 years will have significant impact on what long range work may need to be addressed

Ongoing performance management and revision of process if necessary

- Coordinate with the Management Committee on any adjustments to performance management tracking, analysis and reporting

Ongoing coordination with lower tiers on servicing master plans.

- Encourage and participate in growth management planning to coordinate water, sanitary and storm water infrastructure with suitable lands for development.

Ongoing reporting for consumption of land and available lots.

- Required tracking for growth planning efforts.

Financial Allocation Plan

Service	FTE Requirements by Year			
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Planning and Development				
Total Program FTE Requirements	8.33	8.33	7.33	7.33

FTE Variances

- Student position accounts for .33 FTE – engage undergrad or graduate student part time over majority of the calendar year.
- Existing 4 full time development review Planners and 1 Senior Planner.
- Existing full time Land Division and Planning Clerk
- Existing Manager of Planning.
- Temporary/Contract policy Planner – contract ends August 31, 2023.



Training and Development

An updated training and professional development plan is included in the “Single Tier Service Model for Perth County: Program Document 2020”. It recognizes cost-effective opportunities through Ontario Professional Planners Institute and Canadian Institute of Planners. Further, the training and professional development program for this department is intended to support individual learning and skill development so that each Planner and Technician can build on their own specific strengths. Professional development opportunities must be tailored to the duties of the assigned roles, with a vision for succession planning within the department.

Comments:

Completing a New Official Plan for Perth County is the most important project for the Planning Division in 2023. The project involved an incredible amount of work and has been challenging to complete with high rates of staff turnover, a high demand development environment and a focus on the new service model and updated procedures. The community and the municipalities are in great need of a new Official Plan.

The Planning Division has experienced significant growth and change over the past year. Despite that, the review of development applications and advancement of policy has been delivered with integrity, professionalism and increasing efficiency. The current team wholly fosters a collaborative approach to planning and carries out day to day activities with kindness and due diligence. The coming year is sure to be one of continued improvements and successes from this resilient group of staff.