This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 4:02:02 2026 / +0000 GMT

County Official Plan approved

The first County of Dufferin Official Plan was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing late last month with some modifications. A Notice of Decision was issued March 27th with the last date to appeal the decision being April 16th, 2015. Once the appeal process is complete the Plan will come into effect and the County of Dufferin becomes the approval authority for all future Official Plan Amendments (OPA) for the Townships and the Town of Shelburne and Town of Grand Valley.

The Minister of Municipal affairs and Housing approved an amendment to the Ontario Planning Act in 2013 which required mandatory adoption of Official Plans by all counties. According to a report to Council, only Dufferin County and four others were impacted by this amendment as all other counties in the province already had Official Plans in place. Consequently, in July of 2013 the County of Dufferin Council approved a process to move forward with the process to develop an Official Plan for the County.

Although the report stated that ?there has been considerable positive feedback received from local Councillors, stakeholder participants and members of the public on the process, there were numerous difficult policy decisions to be made. These included Growth Plan allocations and intensification targets; rural settlement area delineation; aggregates; and the administration of the Plan itself.

The report outlined three specific decisions made by County Council addressing the delegation of planning authority:

1. To delegate consent and subdivision and condominium approval to the local municipalities effective the date of approval of the Plan
2. To add a part-time/contract planning position at the cost of between $40-$70,000 annually following the adoption of the Plan
3. To delegate approval of Official Plan Amendments under Section 17 of the Planning Act to Orangeville and Mono as approved by the Minister and to delegate the OPAs for the other six municipalities to the County planning position

According to the report, the decision to hire a part-time contract planner to take on planning at the County avoids the cost of a full-time staff person until a proper assessment of the workload and volume of applications can be made. Council decided to facilitate the need for planning expertise to carry out the new responsibilities and become familiar with the ?new County Plan, local Plans and the relationship between the County Plan and various provincial plans and local issues.?

The report addressed the concern that insufficient resources at the County might result in a delay in the approval process. However, the report noted, ?One of the advantages of the County taking on planning from the province is that it provides the opportunity for matters to be dealt with more quickly and with a better understanding of local issues.?

By Marni Walsh