



INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT TO:	CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT:	DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
PREPARED BY:	Will Nywening, Senior Planning Official
REVIEWED BY:	Corrine Nauta, Manager, Development Services Jason Cole, P. Eng., General Manager Stéphane Thiffault, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE:	October 15, 2025
INFORMATION ITEM:	County Official Plan Review

BACKGROUND

The County Official Plan (the “**COP**”) is a planning document that sets community goals, policies, and priorities and guides growth at a regional level. Local Official Plans, By-Laws, and *Planning Act* decisions must conform to the COP. The existing COP was adopted by County Council in 2017.

The *Planning Act* requires that Official Plans be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they reflect evolving community goals and conform to current provincial legislation and policy. The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (the “**PPS**”), which came into effect in October 2024, sets out the policy direction that must guide this review. The COP and its review must therefore be consistent with the PPS.

DISCUSSION

Draft population, employment, and housing projections, along with a Land Needs Assessment (“**LNA**”), have been completed as part of the ongoing review of the COP. NPG Planning Solutions has been engaged to oversee the review process. Their review team includes subcontractors metroeconomics and Parcel Economics, who have produced the following documents:

1. Lambton County Projections by Municipality (metroeconomics – Attachment 1)
2. Lambton County Official Plan Review Land Needs Assessment (Parcel Economics – Attachment 2).

Projections

Population forecasting is an important component of the COP review and is the first step in determining any need to revise settlement boundaries. The PPS enables the County to utilize a planning horizon of up to 30 years and requires projections to be based on the Ministry of Finance population projections.

metroeconomics has produced projections for population, housing needs, and employment for each municipality in Lambton County for the 30-year period, 2021 to 2051, which aligns with Census years. Each municipality is expected to see growth in each of these three categories over the planning horizon.

Total projected County growth is:

- Population 32,658
- Number of Dwellings 15,473
- Employment 8,984

metroeconomics report (Attachment 1) summarizes their methodology. Individual municipalities' projections are included in Exhibits 3, 4, and 5 of their report.

Land Needs Assessment

Parcel Economics has conducted a LNA (Attachment 2) for residential, employment (industrial), and commercial/institutional land uses.

Using the metroeconomics report, the LNA estimates the number of hectares of land required to accommodate this projected growth. It estimates the split between "intensification" and "greenfield" development and quantifies the degree to which the existing land supply within designated urban boundaries can accommodate projected greenfield growth. Lastly, the LNA identifies where there are shortfalls in the land supply that would justify settlement boundary expansions.

The LNA assesses each municipality's projected growth and land supply balance individually. The report and its appendices contain a description of the LNA methodology, detailed calculations and results for each municipality, and mapping showing the existing land supply. The LNA approach allows a municipality to designate land to meet a shortfall in land supply, notwithstanding that there may be a surplus in other municipalities or the County as a whole.

Section 7 of their report provides a summary of the report's conclusions, which are briefly outlined below:

- Residential: The County, as a whole, has a surplus of residential lands. Looking at individual municipal land supply balances, however, there is a shortfall of greenfield residential lands in Enniskillen, Sarnia, and St. Clair.
- Employment (Industrial): The County, as a whole, has ample land to meet projected employment land needs. There are, however, modest shortfalls in

employment lands in Brooke-Alvinston, Dawn-Euphemia, Enniskillen, Oil Springs, Plympton-Wyoming, and Point Edward.

- Commercial*: The County has a surplus of commercial lands overall; however, there are shortfalls in Dawn-Euphemia and Plympton-Wyoming.
- Institutional*: There is a general shortfall of institutional lands across the County.

As noted in the LNA report, there may be opportunities to accommodate the employment and commercial/institutional land needs shortfalls within existing settlement boundaries.

**Note: the City of Sarnia completed a comprehensive review as part of its Official Plan update in 2022. The City's review did not quantify vacant commercial and institutional lands. The Parcel Economics LNA projected commercial and institutional land needs for all municipalities, but the lack of land supply information prevents the LNA from identifying if there is a surplus or shortfall of commercial or institutional lands within Sarnia.*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding to undertake these studies as part of the COP review was included in the approved County of Lambton 2024 Budget.

CONSULTATIONS

The projections and LNA will be forwarded to local municipalities for comment and posted for public consultation prior to final consideration by Lambton County Council early in 2026 as part of the COP review.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Area of Effort #1 - Economic Development and Prosperity - the County will focus on economic growth and prosperity. Working with organizations such as the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, and the Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park, the County will contribute to economic growth and prosperity by:

- Adopting policies and practices to increase the County's population to support economic growth and evolving workforce demands.

Area of Effort #2 - Services and Communications - the County is focused on the provision of responsive services and programs, independently and through partnerships, and is committed to progressive and effective communications in promoting the same, by:

- Anticipating and aligning service delivery to emerging needs and expectations (including changing demographics).

Area of Effort #3 – Community Development, Health, and Wellness - the County's divisions follow various Council-approved strategic planning documents that provide direction in respect to Community Development, Health and Wellness. The County is committed to capitalizing on opportunities that enrich the quality of life and future prospects of the community, by:

- Consulting with the community and stakeholders on ways to increase housing options and affordability, and innovative programs and initiatives that focus on poverty reduction and promote social belonging.

Area of Effort #5 – Partnerships - the County is committed to developing strong relationships with community partners, municipalities, and First Nations by:

- Hosting regular engagement opportunities to facilitate information sharing with partners.

CONCLUSION

The projections and LNA shall be considered by Council following a period of public consultation, as part of the process leading to the eventual recommended adoption of updates to the 2017 COP.

The projections and LNA will be posted for public consultation for approximately six weeks. Revisions will be undertaken as appropriate, based on feedback received from the public, agencies, and municipalities. The finalized documents will be brought to County Council in the new year for review and adoption.

While the projections and LNA are an important element of the COP review, they represent just one component of a broader process. The consultant team is working with staff to review the current COP and develop a list of recommended updates. Future public engagement sessions will be held to gather input on community goals and priorities. A list of draft amendments will be prepared, reflecting both consultant recommendations and public feedback.

Toward the conclusion of the COP review process, a finalized list of proposed amendments will be presented to Council for its review and proposed adoption. All amendments to the COP must then be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as the approval authority for the COP.