



# Committee of the Whole

**Meeting Date:** July 18, 2023

**Submitted by:** Abby Heddle-Jacobs, Planner

**Subject:** Planning and Development Mid-Year Update

## BACKGROUND:

This report summarizes planning activity within Middlesex County for the first half of the year and compares current activity with previous years' activity.

## ANALYSIS:

Planning application activity for the first half of 2023 remained steady when compared to previous years despite uncertain housing market conditions. Since 2019, the County has seen a surge in development activity when compared to years prior. The following activity occurred in the first half of the year compared to previous years:

Planning Applications								½
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Official Plan Amendments	9	12	11	10	13	15	11	8
Zoning By-law Amendments	105	99	120	125	129	133	104	56
Minor Variances	65	96	74	90	83	117	105	49
Consents to Sever	129	142	98	136	116	117	97	61
Site Plan Approval	32	33	23	43	52	49	45	17
Part Lot Control Approval	6	4	1	3	0	2	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>191</b>

Plans of Subdivision / Condominium								½
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Applications	3	11	4	8	11	15	13	5
Draft Plan Approvals	3	5	8	4	6	10	9	3
Extension of Draft Plan Approvals	1	7	6	9	3	8	6	6

Change to Draft Plan Approvals	4	6	5	6	7	3	2	0
Final Plan Approvals	9	12	10	9	13	12	8	7
Open Files	43	47	46	53	52	54	62	61
Active Files	21	36	42	48	47	54	56	54

Looking at the rest of the year, staff anticipate that applications will continue at a similar rate as the past six months. Staff continue to receive large volumes of inquiries from the public and pre-consult with applicants regularly. Should applications continue at a steady rate until end of year, the overall numbers would be similar to the last five years. There may however be some slowdown in the number of subdivisions that are brought onto the market if the housing market remains uncertain. It is also noted that there has been an increase in the number of Ontario Land Tribunal appeals that the County and local municipalities have received.

The implementation of CloudPermit, the Digital Planning System online platform, is underway. This system allows for the digital submission and processing of planning applications. Applicants are also able to submit pre-consultation requests, formal applications, share documents, and communicate with staff through the platform. Public use of the system is available for minor variance applications and site plan applications. Consent and Zoning By-law applications will be publicly available this summer and all remaining planning application types this year.

In terms of special project / policy work of note, staff are assisting the Economic Development Department with the Provincial Investment Property request “Strengthening Ontario’s Competitiveness for Future Investments”. Staff sourced designated vacant industrial land throughout the County and completed investment information sheets with Economic Development staff for submission to the Province.


Staff continue to respond to changes to the Planning Act and other Provincial statutes introduced by various Provincial Housing initiatives. Staff have prioritized implementation in response to the more pressing changes that affect day-to-day practices. Additionally, staff are considering impending changes that are expected as a result of a Provincial decision on the proposed Provincial Planning Statement. The uncertainty and almost constant provincial change are a challenge for municipal implementation and also for private development interests.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

A County Planning Application Fee By-law update was undertaken in March however to-date fees are trending lower than projected.

## ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
<p>Strengthening Our Economy</p> 	<p>Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector</li><li>• Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments</li><li>• Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County</li></ul>
<p>Promoting Service Excellence</p> 	<p>Innovate and transform municipal service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations</li><li>• Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities</li></ul>