



**Meeting Date:** January 20, 2021

**Submitted by:** Dan FitzGerald MPI, Planner

**Report No:** PLA-17-2020

**Subject:** Request for Council Resolution – Review and Study of  
Prerequisites to Farm Consolidation

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Council direct that Staff review and study the prerequisites for the occurrence of farm consolidation in the Middlesex Centre Official Plan, as they apply to land use in the Municipality, and to consider whether or not it may be necessary or prudent to modify those provisions..

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to recommend a resolution by Council for Staff to review and study the residence surplus to a farm operation policies, with specific regard to the prerequisites for the occurrence of farm consolidation in the Middlesex Centre Official Plan, as they apply to land use in the Municipality; and to consider whether or not it may be necessary or prudent to modify those provisions.

**Background:**

The Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”) directs that new residential lots in Prime Agricultural Areas are not permitted, except for an exception in the PPS, being section 2.3.4.1(c). The 2.3.4.1(c) exception provides that new residential lots in prime agricultural areas may be permitted, and generally are permitted in the Middlesex Centre where:

- a) there is a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation;
- b) the new lot is the minimum size required for servicing; and
- c) new residential dwellings are prohibited on the farm remainder of the severed parcel.

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is currently undertaking a review of the Official Plan, which is expected to be completed in the latter-half of 2021. This review includes the review and study of land use policies in the Municipality of Middlesex Centre.

**Analysis:**

With respect to the PPS section 2.3.4.1(c) exception described in the Background, and specifically to the ‘as a result of farm consolidation’ portion of the applicable planning test, there is no definition of ‘consolidation’ included in the PPS. A local municipality’s planning policies are impactful in determining whether or not a farm consolidation has or has not occurred for the purposes of approving new land uses. Middlesex Centre’s policies are included in section 10.3.2.1 of the Official Plan. The subject of prerequisites for the occurrence of a farm consolidation is included in the broad overall scope of Middlesex Centre’s Official Plan review, however, Council can specifically direct for that review and the question of whether or not it is necessary or prudent for the Municipality’s planning policies concerning the prerequisites for farm consolidation be considered an important planning consideration in the review.

In my planning opinion, whether or not municipalities have clearly defined and sufficient consolidation prerequisites is important, as those prerequisites form part of the planning test which determines the approval or prohibition of new land uses in Prime Agricultural Areas in the Municipality. Given the above, Staff recommends that Council direct Staff to review and study the residence surplus to a farm operation policies, with specific regard to the prerequisites for the occurrence of farm consolidation in the Middlesex Centre Official Plan, as they apply to land use in the Municipality, and to consider whether or not it may be necessary or prudent to modify those provisions.

**Financial Implications:**

None.

**Strategic Plan:**

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- 1b. Planning & Positioning: Preserving rural heritage.
- 3c. Quality of Life: Meeting the needs of both current and future citizens.
- 5d. Operational Excellence: Building a common municipal vision.

**Appendices:**

None.