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Date	August 8, 2024
To	Council – August 14, 2024
From	Heather James, Manager of Planning and Development
Report No.	PLAN 25-24
Report Title	Summary of Aylmer Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Background Memo

Recommendation

That Report PLAN 25-24 Summary of Aylmer Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Background Memo be received for information purposes.

Executive Summary

Stantec Consulting Ltd., the firm retained by the Town to assist in the assessment of candidate lands for inclusion in the Town's proposed corporate boundary expansion has prepared a background memo (see attached) to start this project. The memo provides an overview of the existing land use conditions as part of Phase 1 in the scope of work for this project and identifies the next steps for Phase 2.

Background

The background memo provides a summary of the existing land use conditions within the Town of Aylmer. The Town has relied on intensification and the development of a limited number of vacant properties to accommodate growth. Historically, the Town has consistently faced challenges regarding an insufficient and limited land supply within its settlement area. The Town is further restricted in its ability to readily expand its settlement area boundary to address this issue, given

that the Town's settlement area boundary is the same as its corporate boundary. As such, any expansion of Aylmer's settlement area would require inter-municipal coordination, and an acquisition of lands from the surrounding Township of Malahide.

In recent years, the Town of Aylmer has undergone two (2) corporate boundary expansions to expand their settlement area and to accommodate growth. The previous boundary adjustments were made under the authority of Section 173 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 and were modest in size. The Town is now in a position to consider a larger corporate boundary adjustment that would set a timeframe of growth beyond 25 to 30 years. The new Draft Provincial Planning Statement (Draft PPS), 2024 contains policies that would permit municipalities to plan for land supply beyond the current limit of a 25-year planning horizon. The new Draft PPS, 2024 would also allow for the planning of infrastructure, public service facilities, strategic growth areas, and employment areas to extend beyond this new time horizon (Draft PPS, 2024, S. 2.1.3).

Analysis

The following existing studies have been reviewed:

- Town of Aylmer Land Needs Study, 2016
- Elgin County Population, Housing and Employment Forecasts and Associated Land Needs Analysis, 2022
- Town of Aylmer Growth Projections Update, 2024

Overall, the studies indicate that the Town is deficient in residential, commercial and industrial lands. Through this boundary adjustment process/project, there is flexibility in terms of extending Aylmer's corporate boundary beyond the intended new settlement area boundary, and there is the potential for a corporate boundary expansion larger than the settlement area boundary expansion. In this scenario, additional lands would be incorporated into Aylmer's corporate boundary, in excess of the projected needs for a 25-year planning horizon, and in excess of the amount of land that will be added to Aylmer's settlement area boundary.

The results of the land needs analysis from the background memo reflects the most up-to-date projections for Aylmer. As such, conclusions of the memo will form the basis for current work being undertaken. It will help establish a recommendation for the ultimate size, configuration, and location of the preferred corporate boundary expansion for the Town. The findings of the memo, establishes a basis for negotiating the size of the proposed corporate boundary expansion with the Township of Malahide.

The following planning policy documents have been reviewed:

- Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS, 2020) (In effect)

- New Draft Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS, 2024) (Not yet in effect – anticipated August 2024 implementation)
- County of Elgin Official Plan, 2015 (In effect)
- New Elgin County Official Plan, 2024 (Not yet in effect – Plan adopted May 2024, awaiting MMAH approval)
- Town of Aylmer Official Plan, 2021 (In effect)

Relevant key policy changes that may affect the boundary expansion process and related considerations:

- Planning horizon time frames (Provincial level)
- Comprehensive review requirement for settlement area expansions (Provincial level)
- Phasing requirements (Provincial and County level)
- Restrictions on settlement area creation and settlement area boundary expansions (County level)
- Land supply sufficiency (County level)
- Permission to remove lands from agricultural designations for the purpose of settlement area boundary expansions (County level)

Elgin County is the approval authority for Local Official Plans and Official Plan Amendments, which would include any settlement area boundary adjustments. Any expansion of a settlement area boundary must conform to policies of the County OP (County of Elgin OP, 2015, S.F10.2). The expansion of a settlement area, such as the one currently being considered for Aylmer, requires a County Official Plan Amendment.

Next Steps

Phase 2 consists of the development of a scoring methodology to score candidate parcels once they have been identified in subsequent phases. The scoring methodology will be based on a number of factors and criteria including but not limited to:

- Criteria for settlement area boundary expansions, as listed in Section 1.1.3.8 and 1.1.3.9 of the PPS, 2020;
- Locational criteria for settlement boundary expansions, as set out in the County of Elgin Official Plan, 2015 (S. B2.8.3);
- Consideration for the priority of intended land use required (e.g., parcels suitable for residential, vs commercial or industrial), and which type of lands (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial) are in the greatest deficit over the short, medium and long term, with the greatest demand and urgency to increase supply;

- Consideration for the ideal or desirable size and scale of the boundary expansion, accounting for the Town and County's growth projections and land needs analyses;
- Consideration for the ratio of the size of corporate boundary expansion vs. size of settlement area boundary expansion, and whether these boundaries will be expanded concurrently (i.e., the new corporate boundary will continue to be the new settlement area boundary for Aylmer);
- Existing use(s) and condition of the land parcels surrounding/abutting Aylmer's current settlement area boundary, which may be considered for inclusion;
- Consideration for development constraints of newly incorporated lands (i.e., new candidate parcels that the Town is hoping to add into the corporate boundary). Development constraints may include hazard lands (e.g., floodplains, watercourses, and other Conservation Authority Regulated Lands), natural heritage features on or adjacent to candidate parcels (e.g., significant woodlands, wetlands or other water bodies), etc., which may reduce the development potential of a land parcel;
- Existing surrounding agricultural operations and livestock facilities, given consideration for MDS requirements;
- Ability for candidate parcels to be connected to municipal servicing (i.e., capacity and feasibility of servicing extensions in a certain direction of growth/boundary expansion), as well as associated costs and timeframes in which such extensions can be completed; and
- Geotechnical and soil conditions of the surrounding land parcels, which may influence future development, as well as ease of establishing new municipal servicing connections.

This list is not exhaustive and serves as a starting point for the development of a scoring methodology as part of Phase 2.

Financial Impact

Costs for the consulting component of this project are anticipated in accordance with the award of contract by Council.

Strategic Priorities

This report supports the goals and objectives set out in [Council's Strategic Pillars](#). The goals it supports include: Pillar Two – Planning for the Future and Pillar Three – Economic Vitality.

Conclusion

A background review of existing conditions, previous reports and studies, and relevant policies has been completed. This review establishes a framework and foundation for future work to be built upon. Key points from the background review are summarized in the attached memo, which concludes Phase 1 of the project. Ultimately, assessment of candidate parcels to develop a recommendation for the preferred boundary expansion, will include three key components: the direction of growth; the size and scale of boundary expansion; and the configuration of this boundary adjustment.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather James
Manager of Planning and Development

Reviewed by Andy Grozelle, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix

Attachments

1. Attachment A: Aylmer Settlement Area Boundary Expansion – Background Review and Existing Conditions Memo, prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd..

Follow Up

In adopting this report, what follow up action is required?

By-law

Agreement(s)/document(s) to be signed by Mayor and/or Clerk

Social media/Website update or communication

Other communication – Specify: Post to the Town of Aylmer website and provide to the members of the All Parties Advisory Group