



Planning and Development

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September 24, 2025

Shavindra Fernando, Planning Assistant
Township of Southgate
Sent via email to: sfernando@southgate.ca

RE: County Comments on Official Plan Amendment OPA5-25 (OPA 10), Inactive Applications

Dear Mr. Fernando,

This correspondence is in response to the above noted Township initiated official plan amendment on inactive applications. We have had an opportunity to review the application in relation to the *Planning Act*, Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and the County of Grey Official Plan. We offer the following comments.

Proposal Summary

The Township has described the proposed official plan amendment (OPA) as follows:

"The proposed Official Plan amendment would provide create policies to address various types of planning applications where an application is paused for indefinite periods of time or fail to respond to issues raised during the review. The policies would allow for cancellation of applications after a defined period of inactivity, the application of an administrative fee if applications are 'dormant' and cancellation of applications if the administrative fee is not paid. These policies would not affect applications administered by the County of Grey, on behalf of the Township (Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium). Township Council gave direction to initiate the creation of these policies through report PL2025-040, at the May 21, 2025 meeting."

County Comments

County staff applaud the Township for being proactive in their planning process, and for exploring all tools to streamline planning processes. Alongside the materials with OPA5-25, Township staff shared staff report PL2025-040. Within that staff report several

potential improvements are outlined, including official plan updates related to stalled / paused applications.

As per above, the effect of OPA 5-25 appears to be as follows:

1. Enable the application of a monthly maintenance fee one year after deeming the application complete, and
2. Deeming an application to be 'abandoned' should the maintenance fee not be paid, or should there be a period of inactivity after two years of the application having been deemed complete.

The notice further makes it clear that the policies do not apply to applications administered by the County of Grey e.g., subdivisions and condominiums, but that is not explicitly made clear in the proposed OPA 5-25 and the proposed policies at 7.20 of the Township official plan. The Township may consider adding this notation directly into the proposed policies.

With respect to item # 1 above, the County would defer to the Township i.e., any fees charged by the Township are at the discretion of the Township through its fee by-law.

With respect to item # 2 above, County staff are not aware of any such enabling provisions in the *Planning Act* to deem an application 'abandoned'. Broadly, the Act allows municipalities to approve, provisionally approve with conditions for some application types, refuse, or defer making a decision on applications. There are appeal rights that exist within the Act related to approvals, conditions, refusals, or failure to make a decision. Applicants also have the ability to withdraw their applications, should they no longer wish to proceed. However, County staff are unaware of any provisions which would permit a municipality to simply deem an application to be 'abandoned' and cause an applicant to 'start over' should they wish to proceed. Based on the specific appeal rights applicable to approvals or refusals, staff are not certain how such rights would apply to proposed OPA 5-25 and an 'abandoned application'.

County staff see merit in 'keeping applications moving' and not having applications sit dormant for extended periods of time. Rather than deeming applications 'dormant' and 'closing the file', perhaps there could be policies which speak to the conditions under which the Township would consider refusing a file, and/or where further updates or progress reports or action is required by an applicant. County staff recommend that the Township consider some changes to OPA 5-25 which clarify some of the above-noted matters related to periods of inactivity.

Although not specifically an official plan policy update, the Township may also wish to add clear verbiage to their application forms relating to defined periods of inactivity, including an acknowledgement with respect to potential timelines and next steps.

Neither the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement, nor the County official plan contain any policies on inactive applications.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Truly,

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, MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning

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