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| <b>Report To:</b>                   | Township of Southgate Council                                                 |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b>                | 2025-06-18                                                                    |
| <b>Report Number:</b>               | PL2025-052                                                                    |
| <b>Title:</b>                       | Official Plan Amendment – Alternative Notice options                          |
| <b>Open/Closed Session:</b>         | Open Session                                                                  |
| <b>Prepared By and Approved By:</b> | Kenneth Melanson, MCIP, RPP<br>Director of Development Services               |
| <b>Reviewed By:</b>                 | Bill White, MCIP, RPP<br>Senior Planning Consultant – Triton Engineering Ltd. |
| <b>Reviewed By:</b>                 | Lindsey Green<br>Clerk                                                        |
| <b>Approved By:</b>                 | Jim Ellis<br>Chief Administrative Officer                                     |

#### **Executive Summary:**

Staff are seeking direction to investigate Official Plan Amendments (OPA) to utilize Alternative Notice options within the *Planning Act*. Given recent Canada Post issues, examining alternative means of notice for planning applications will help avoid disruption to planning applications. Staff are recommending Council give direction to include this proposed amendment in the OPA work authorized via [report PL2025-040](#).

#### **Recommendation:**

**Be it resolved that** Staff Report PL2025-052 be received for information; and  
**That** Council direct Staff to bring forward the recommended amendments through the planning process as resourcing allows.

#### **Background – Alternative Notice options:**

The *Planning Act* requires that notice of various applications be given through mailed notices to property owners, signage on site or a newspaper advertisement (or some combination thereof). Recent changes to the Act have included notice being provided on a municipal website.

The option to use alternative notice options, was added to the *Planning Act* in recent years and provides a municipality the flexibility to now utilize digital means of notice versus physical notices or advertising in a newspaper. This also gives municipalities more flexibility, particularly with the concentration of news media and the loss of local newspapers. It has taken on greater consideration, given ongoing and regular service issues with Canada Post. It also adds options to consider feedback on issues using a variety of tools, like surveys and other forms of engagement.

**Discussion – Alternative notice options:**

The *Planning Act* gives municipalities flexibility to establish, through an OPA, how and what means would be used to give notice of an application. All types of *Planning Act* applications can have alternative notice provisions. Alternative options also gives municipalities the flexibility to consider alternative forms of engagement in a variety of projects, like a Zoning By-law or Official Plan update.

If an OPA was created – all types of planning applications dealt with by Council, or the Committee of Adjustment could be subject to alternative notice options. While Subdivisions could be considered – since this is a delegated decision to the County of Grey (Upper Tier), the County notification process would be used.

Alternative notice options provide a suite of options, which might not already be considered. Given continued consolidation of news organizations and loss of local media providers – having alternative options ensures there is no disruption to the planning process.

Staff also recognize that with any suite of options, recognition that many residents (including those of the Horse and Buggy community) have no access to the internet. Any options brought forward would recognize this issue and provide options for consideration. The potential options also recognize that there is no one newspaper that covers the Township.

Staff are seeking approval from Council to add this amendment to those approved via [report PL2025-040](#). Staff will analysis options on how to move forward for Council consideration, as part of a public engagement process. Until any amendments enacted, standard *Planning Act* notification processes will continue to be followed.

**Conclusion:**

Staff recommend including investigation of these amendments in future Official Plan updates, to continue to improve and refine operational processes.

**Link to Township of Southgate Strategic Plan:**

Priority: Operational Excellence

Goal: Goal 13: Advance Strategic Priorities and Improve Community Engagement

Action Item: 13 e). Increase Opportunities for Council to Engage with the Public Through Events and Outreach

**Attachment(s):**

None.