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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report CDS-04-2023 Summary of MZO Public Consultation

For Consideration by Council on May 8, 2023

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### OBJECTIVE:

To provide Council with a summary of the public comments received as part of the MZO consultation sessions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDS-04-2023 Summary of MZO Public Consultation be received.

**Prepared and Respectfully submitted:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager of Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Public consultation on the Minister's Zoning Order (Nanticoke) was completed over the course of several weeks in April. A virtual meeting (April 19<sup>th</sup>), in person meeting (April 27<sup>th</sup>) and written submissions received by the Clerk's Office resulted in a total of 70 submissions for Council's consideration. The subject report provides a 'key themes' summary as well as more detailed summation of verbal submissions at the two public meetings.

### BACKGROUND:

At the February 28, 2023 Council in Committee (CIC) meeting, Council considered a motion that would direct staff to coordinate public consultation relative to the Nanticoke Minister's Zoning Order (MZO). That motion, and the associated direction to staff, was ratified at the March 6, 2023 Council meeting.

At the March 21, 2023 CIC meeting, staff presented a public consultation process for the Nanticoke Minister's Zoning Order (MZO). The proposal consisted of two (2) public meetings with multiple opportunities for the public to provide their comments – in person, virtual or in writing. After some refinements to meeting dates, the consultation plan was approved by Council as follows:

- Virtual meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>;
- In-person meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup> at HCAB;
- Opportunity to provide written comments to the Clerk's Office leading up to the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting

Broad public notice was distributed through various means including County website, local radio, weekly newspapers and social media. A dedicated webpage was also developed to allow the public to obtain knowledge on the MZO process and project details.

With the public meetings now complete, staff is providing Council with a summary of 'what was heard' as was committed to as part of the approved consultation program.

## ANALYSIS:

The following summarizes the public participation in the process:

- a total of 44 written comments were received;
- a total of 7 speakers participated in the virtual public meeting;
- a total of 20 speakers participated in the in-person public meeting.

Staff have summarized ‘what was heard’ and ‘what was read’ into two categories – Concerns and Benefits – while also providing themes within each of those broader categories. The below represents the general summary while a more fulsome account of comments received, including all written submissions, can be found as the Attachments 1 to 3 to this report.

### 1. Concerns

#### Infrastructure Supports

- Strains on institutional infrastructure – hospitals/health care, schools, nursing homes, EMS, Fire, OPP are all stressed or deficient at present and this project will exacerbate that
- Strains on municipal infrastructure – water, wastewater, roads/bridges – the County’s hard infrastructure is at capacity and cannot accommodate development already on the books. How can it then handle this influx of development/people?
- Traffic – existing road network (Highways 3 and 6 in particular) cannot accommodate current levels of traffic; how will new volumes be accommodated?
- There is no public transit to move residents (of affordable housing in particular) to larger urban centres for work, services, etc. (Hamilton, Brantford)
- Waste generation will be significant and there are concerns that landfill capacity/shipping for a new city will be challenging

#### Impacts to Industry/Economy

- Impacts to viability of Stelco – this project will limit expansion, could force them to close the facility and leave Haldimand County. That would lead to job loss and impact the economy
- Stelco will likely have to address many more complaints (already receive many from Nanticoke residents) and as a result, will have to spend lots of money on improved/additional mitigation (odour, noise, etc.). Pollution is a health concern for this area
- Residential development in this area will deter new industry from locating here

#### Rural / Agricultural Impacts

- The new city will impact rural lifestyle – it will change area character with people ‘living on top of each other’, lots of additional hard surface, disappearing farm buildings/open areas, more pollution (from more vehicles on the road)
- The expansive project will consume hundreds of acres of valuable farmland and reduce ability to grow food
- New city in this location will negatively impact on agricultural operations in the area – machinery moving along roads will be challenging, nighttime operations will lead to complaints, etc.

#### Environmental Impacts

- Light pollution will be created by thousands of cars and houses that get added to this area
- Removes/impacts natural features, such as watercourses, woodlots, animal habitat – these need to be protected/preserved not removed or threatened

## Housing Challenges

- Affordability of the homes – there is a need for affordable housing to be built, not new subdivisions that will be beyond the price range of most people
- Who will live in these homes/who will move here – what areas will this be drawing from?
- Where will all the new residents work and does that create commuting issues?
- Should focus on Townsend for new residential development to meet Province's targets/requirements – that area is already designated and serviced

## Land Use Compatibility

- Close proximity between residential and industry – can these two uses actually co-exist?
- How will the residential development impact existing industry and its ability to continue to operate effectively into the future?
- Quality of living in this area – there is air pollution, soil pollution, water pollution, noise, dust, etc from existing industry which equates to increased health risks
- There will be on-going construction activity for many years = disruption

## Process of MZO

- The proposal contravenes Provincial policy so it should not go ahead – need to respect the protections afforded in both Provincial policy (Provincially Significant Employment Zone) and the County's Official Plan (Industrial Influence Area)
- Title and ownership of the lands is disputed between Stelco and Empire and has not been resolved – this is all premature
- There is no need or urgency for this project – the County has sufficient development land - and the Minister (of Municipal Affairs) should not be overriding local planning authority
- Concerns around the approach to/extent of consultation on this issue – previous and current - as well as the use of this tool (MZO) in general (should be reserved for emergencies)
- Are Indigenous interests fully recognized/respected in this process and project?

## General

- The new residents will benefit Norfolk business due to proximity to Port Dover, Simcoe
- New development will cost current taxpayers to provide services, infrastructure, on-going maintenance, etc.

## 2. Benefits

### Infrastructure Supports

- Housing brings needed infrastructure, including services that support community growth (recreation, etc)
- New services – EMS, Fire, policing – can be funded by the increased tax base
- Recreational amenities could be a great benefit for the County – more trails, a pool, sports facilities, etc.
- Could improve the area, including the type/level of commercial and services offered, but must be planned properly
- Development in this area and need for infrastructure could also benefit industry and provide the services needed for industrial growth, as well as potential employees
- Potential relationship for regional infrastructure systems

## Housing

- Housing in this area is a better addition than more industrial development

## MZO and Construction Process

- Any concerns raised will be addressed by way of conditions within the Council approved MZO
- Will be a phased build out – not all 15,000 homes at one time; this will be gradual change

## Taxes & Financial

- Rising property values will result from this project and benefit existing residents
- Additional tax base – County needs additional assessment growth and this will provide that
- Most infrastructure will be funded by the developer – at no cost to the County taxpayer

## Employment

- Brings jobs, business and people to the community = economic development

## Schools

- New residents could serve to save some of the County's under-populated schools

## Next Steps

Based on what was heard over the course of the public consultation, as summarized and documented herein, Council will now need to use this information to determine its next steps relative to the MZO. Regardless of the position Council takes coming out of this process, subsequent communication to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be required – i.e. to either express Council's continued support for the MZO or Council's desire for amendment/withdrawal of the MZO.

## **FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Not applicable.

## **STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

Not applicable.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

## **REFERENCES:**

None.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Summary of Verbal Comments – April 19<sup>th</sup> Virtual Meeting.
2. Summary of Verbal Comments – April 27<sup>th</sup> In-person Meeting.
3. Written Submissions.