
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDS-03-2025 Community and Development Services 2023-2024 Biennial Update



For Consideration by Council in Committee on March 18, 2025

OBJECTIVE:

To update Council on the 2023-2024 initiatives and activities of the 5 Divisions of the Community and Development Services Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDS-03-2025 Community and Development Services 2023-2024 Biennial Update be received.

Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Report CDS-03-2025 has been prepared to update Council on the initiatives, activities and statistics that have taken place within the Community and Development Services Department throughout the past 2 years, in particular as it relates to development, community participation, health and safety, and vibrancy matters.

BACKGROUND:

As part of ongoing efforts to be able to communicate the activities, initiatives and impact of the Community & Development Services (CDS) Department's programs to Council and ratepayers, in late 2011 annual performance measures were developed, and in January 2012 a quarterly 'activity' report and an annual report on performance was developed to provide interim updates. In 2019, CDS shifted to provision of an annual report and presentation, and in 2023 we transformed to a biennial report and presentation providing a summary of activities and accomplishments every other year. That summary, which captures years 2023 and 2024, is included as Attachment 1.

ANALYSIS:

Key Highlights for 2023 and 2024

Over the past 2 years, having moved further from the slow downs, closures and cancellations that transpired in the beginning of the decade, the Community & Development Services (CDS) Department continued to experience growth in activity and interest/uptake of its services. In many service areas, across all divisions, record levels of activity were established, driven in large part to the continued growth being experienced across Haldimand. Despite the increased demands, staff have continued to deliver quality services, in a timely fashion. Staff have found themselves often doing 'more with the

same' and have managed to be successful through a combination of process changes, adoption/growth of various technologies, training up staff, formation of technical teams and overall strong leadership. On the whole, the CDS Department enjoyed an immense amount of accomplishment and success over the last 2 years. The full details of that work output and the associated community benefit is expressed in Attachment 1, but included below is a sampling of the transformative work that was completed in the 2 years gone by:

- Presentation and approval of the County's first **Fire Master Plan** which will serve as the guideline for future service delivery enhancements, modifications and studies, and to inform future capital and operating budget proposals for the next 10+ years.
- Finalized design, secured all development approvals (site plan, building permit), developed preliminary program plans, finalized staffing requirements, and continued with community fundraising supports, all relating to the **Hagersville Library and Active Living Centre**.
- Developed a **Municipal Housing Pledge** which sets out strategies to guide Haldimand in meeting the objectives of building more homes.
- Developed and provided response to the Province's imposed **Housing Target and the Housing Affordability Task Force** recommendations.
- Worked with **NPCA and GRCA to develop and execute agreements** for the delivery of various programs and services for the next five years.
- Developed a new **Fire Dispatch Agreement** and secured 14-year contract (agreement) with preferred service provider (City of St Catharines).
- Completed the first stage of the **Comprehensive Signage Strategy** including creation of shop drawings, production of prototypes and preliminary implementation plan.
- **Physician Recruitment Strategy** approved and 3-year program launched with successful recruitment of Physician Recruitment Coordinator, development and execution of Letter of Agreement with the GHHN that outlines the service delivery expectations of the program, securement of partner funding from two County hospitals and Haldimand Family Health Team, developed updated marketing and promotion materials, established relationships with several community ambassadors and started attending job fair/recruitment events.
- Completed the quinquennial **Building Permit Fee Review**, including public consultation and development of a new fee schedule.
- Completed all negotiations and purchase of **JL Mitchener property** for future recreation development, and developed/executed agreement for 25-year operating contribution from Grand Erie District School Board.
- Completed and obtained approval for **Phases 1 and 2 of North Caledonia Employment Lands Strategy**, covering off location analysis, market research, target sector assessment, servicing analysis, concept development, and a financial analysis and business plan, that analyzed both operating and capital impacts as well as mitigation measures of various development scenarios.
- Developed and executed a new **Joint Use Facilities Agreement** with the Grand Erie District School Board.
- 'Go live' with **electronic planning application** intake process through CityView Portal (public launch/promotion, public user education).
- Finalized and secured approval of the **Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy** which will guide the development and provision of sport, cultural and community wellness projects, services and activities for the next 20 years.
- Completed major updates to the County's **Facilities and Parks Management** and **Community Halls** policies which ensure supports, roles and responsibilities are better aligned with asset management.

- Successful roll out of **extended by-law enforcement services** with benefits including evening lighting assessments, ‘after hours’ parking patrols, late day property owner connections, and follow up case supports.
- Secured provincial approval—with minimal number of modifications—of the County’s **Official Plan** which will guide development for the next 20+ years.
- Developed and obtained approval of new **Population, Household and Employment Forecast** which will inform a variety of key long-range studies and strategies (Official Plan, Master Servicing Plan, Development Charge Background).
- Successfully obtained 5-year **Superior Tanker Shuttle Service Accreditation** from the Fire Underwriters Survey which benefits rural property owners with reduced insurance rates and high service levels.
- Completed and obtained approval of the **Business Retention & Expansion Action Plan**, including strategies for enhanced business supports and workforce development.
- Expansion of the **Community Paramedic Program** to a 24/7 service and a client base of 480+ persons.
- Provided a variety of supports and property assessments to the **Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice** organization in its search for land to build a new community hospice, ultimately resulting in a Jarvis location being selected.
- Obtained all approvals and entered into a license agreement with Grand River Rafting Company for the operation of a **river outfitting business** in York Park and Cayuga Kinsmen Park.
- Developed and obtained approval of a **Recreation and Museums Programming Policy** to introduce a fair, clear and consistent policy to address inclusion and refunds in recreation and museums programming provided by the County.
- Reviewed and provided formal comments to the Province on the changes and impacts proposed by the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (Bill 185)* and new **Provincial Planning Statement**.
- Developed and obtained approval on a new **volunteer firefighter compensation** structure with the aim of modernization and bolstering recruitment and retention efforts.
- Designed and coordinated all Minister’s Zoning Order (Nanticoke) **public consultation** efforts; reviewed and provided Council with information options relative to the new **Minister’s Zoning Order Framework**.
- Completed a fulsome assessment on the options of permitting **seven day gun hunting** in Haldimand County, including public consultation, engaging with key stakeholder groups and completion of municipal and legislative scans.
- Planned and executed **Volunteer Recognition Night** in celebration of 80+ volunteers and partner groups.

Highlighted Annual Performance Metrics for 2023 and 2024

Development Activity – Planning Approvals:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number of Planning Applications reviewed	174	156	205	221
Total Number of Residential Units approved	2,039	1,981	1,377	1,453
Number of Engineering Documents reviewed	1,306	944	577	526
Number of Maps produced	1,432	1,577	1,542	1,425

Development Activity – Permitting Activity:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number of Building Permit applications	1,865	2,121	1,923	1,782
Construction Value	\$305,000,000	\$533,000,000	\$469,200,000	\$265,850,000

Economic Development:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Community Improvement Grants – Value of Construction Activity	\$88,712	\$1,328,694	\$190,697	\$76,808
Rural Water Quality Program – Value of Project	\$70,900	\$16,275	\$69,920	\$54,374
Business Inquiries	539	372	498	416
Business Visitation (<i>a mixture of virtual and in-person visits</i>)	206	384	185	277

Municipal Enforcement:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number of By-law Inquiries addressed	312	450	145	656
Number of By-law Complaints addressed	1,360	1,843	959	2,472* <i>*driven by COVID-related</i>

Programs:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number of Summer Camp users	1,606	1,661	1,579	1,002*
Number of Public Swim participants	39,365	34,356	32,428	27,606**
Number of Swimming Lesson participants	2,706	2,951	2,528	1,514**
Annual # of Regular Public Skating Participants	13,858	11,123	12,960***	6,036***
Number of Heritage and Culture Users	9,213	9,343	8,255	3,302
Special Events on Haldimand County Property	99	92	70	23
<p><i>* In 2021, March Break Camp was cancelled. In 2021, Camp HaldiFUN and Creative Campers (full-week option) were offered; all camps operated with lower capacities. (Many events returned in September 2021.)</i></p> <p><i>** In 2021, bather loads at the pools were reduced. Swimming lessons and public swimming programs were offered with limited capacities.</i></p> <p><i>*** In 2021 & January 2022, arena closures and capacity limits resulted in a reduction in the total number of on-ice participants and the types of skating programs permitted.</i></p>				

Partnerships:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Number of Community Partners Engaged	300	457	455	96
Number of approved CPP projects	13	6	12	4
Partnership Grant Program – Value of Investment	\$875,690 (CPP \$289,100; Other County \$101,700; Community \$484,890)	\$183,859 (CPP \$63,887; Other County \$0; Community \$119,972)	\$1,192,105 (CPP \$417,237; Other County \$0; Community \$774,868)	\$39,200 (CPP \$11,200; Other County \$0; Community \$28,000)
Beautification Grant – Value of Investment	28 projects totaling \$171,950 (HC \$76,300; Community \$95,650)	24 projects totaling \$160,142 (HC \$67,425; Community \$92,717)	22 projects totaling \$193,267 (HC \$71,050; Community \$122,217)	18 projects totaling \$131,153 (HC \$50,250; Community \$80,903)

Fire:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Total Fire Incidents	1,253	1,166	1,143	1,034

EMS:

Metric	2024	2023	2022	2021
Paramedic Service Calls	15,215	13,870	13,381	10,384

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. Haldimand County, Community and Development Services 2023-2024 Summary.
2. Community and Development Services 2023-2024 Biennial Report Presentation.