

Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

Growth and Sustainability

Community Planning



To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Tammie Ryall, RPP, Corporate Leader - Growth and Sustainability
Date: September 11, 2024
Subject: Greenhouse Business Park Plan Study Update

Recommendation

- (1) As there are limitations to selecting a single ideal site for a Greenhouse Business Park, direct Administration to not proceed to prepare an Official Plan amendment to identify a Greenhouse Business Park location;
- (2) That Lakeshore request the County of Essex to make a modification to Section 6.2.1 (h) of OPA No. 18 (Greenhouse Official Plan Amendment) to state that: monitoring and review of the Official Plan policies will be undertaken to identify trends in greenhouse issues in the Region, to analyze the impact of future water main expansions, as well as trends in the price of land and demand for Large Scale Commercial greenhouses in Lakeshore. Reporting back to Council on the monitoring of the policies and issues will be in the form of annual briefings or status reports;
- (3) That Administration revisit the Greenhouse Business Park concept and the Greenhouse Priority Area concept in five years to determine if further study or update of the Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. and J.L. Richards & Associates Limited Report is required;
- (4) That should a Greenhouse operator come forward in the meantime to locate a Large Scale Greenhouse operation in Lakeshore, Administration use the Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. and J.L. Richards & Associates Limited Report to identify the high scoring parcels and the areas of constraint to inform land use planning decision making; and
- (5) Direct Administration that no further public consultation on the Greenhouse Business Park concept take place at this time; all as presented at the October 1, 2024 Council meeting.

Strategic Direction

4 c) – Becoming an Economic Leader in Essex County – Plan and design the Greenhouse Business Park.

Background

This report is intended to provide Council with an update on the study reviewing the development of a Greenhouse Business Park Plan located within Lakeshore. The consultant, Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. (HCA) and J. L. Richards & Associates Limited (JLR) will present their Report to Council at the October 1, 2024 meeting.

At the February 14, 2023, Regular Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

Direct Administration to bring a report describing the scope and estimated cost of a study to consider designating a Greenhouse Facility “Business Park”.

At the June 13, 2023 Regular Council Meeting, the following motion was passed:

Award the tender for the Greenhouse Business Park Report to the partnership of Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. (HCA) and J.L. Richards & Associates Limited (JLR) and approve up to \$65,000 funded from the Plans and Studies Reserve to cover the cost of the work, as presented at the June 13, 2023, Council meeting.

At the March 5, 2024 Regular Council Meeting, a report was presented to provide an update on the Official Plan Amendment No. 18 and Zoning By-law Amendment 2-2023 (the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments regulating the development commercial greenhouses) as well as an update on the Greenhouse Facility “Business Park” study. At that meeting, the following motion was passed:

“Direct Administration to continue discussions with the County of Essex and Provincial Ministries on Official Plan Amendment No. 18 to the Municipality of Lakeshore Official Plan and related Zoning By-law Amendment 2-2023, and report back to Council, as presented at the March 5, 2024 Council meeting; and Receive the update relating to the Greenhouse Business Park for information only at this time.”

Regarding the County review of Official Plan Amendment No. 18, and the related Zoning By-law amendment, Administration met after March 5, 2024 with the County, the Essex Region Conservation Authority and provincial representatives. The County of Essex Manager of Planning expects to issue a draft decision in the near future with suggested modifications for Lakeshore Council to consider. Administration will bring a report to Lakeshore Council on this matter later this fall.

Comments

In April of 2023, the Municipality put out a request for proposals for a “Greenhouse Business Park Plan”. In late June of 2023, the Municipality of Lakeshore retained HCA and JLR to complete the works.

Administration has been working with the HCA and JLR team regularly through the summer of 2023 and into 2024.

As part of the work, the team met with the following stakeholders:

- A large-scale greenhouse farm operator which included a facility tour
- Hydro One
- Enbridge
- Leadership from other municipalities
- Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers

The HCA and JLR team completed many elements of the proposed scope of work and completed the study to be presented at this meeting. Still outstanding is the potential for public consultation, and the creation of design and zoning guidelines for the development of a greenhouse business park.

County of Essex Official Plan

It has also come to Administration’s attention that the County of Essex has a new Official Plan with policies added into the recent draft version that make references to the County completing a study on large scale commercial greenhouses.

The references are contained in policy 5A e) and 5.A.8.4 (emphasis added).

“5.A – AGRICULTURE

This section contains the general directive, goals and policies for lands designated “Agricultural” on Schedule “A1” of this Plan. The “Agricultural” designation pertains to all of the lands that are not otherwise designated as “Settlement Areas” or “Natural Environment”

GOALS: e) **Completing a Greenhouse study for the County of Essex;**”

“5.A.8.4 The County shall complete a separate implementation study of Greenhouses in Essex County. This study is **to address the location needs, infrastructure needs, water quality impacts, road impacts and more related to the Greenhouse use and the Greenhouse economy.**”

It is anticipated that the County of Essex Official Plan will be adopted by County Council on October 16, 2024. It will not go into effect until approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Should the policies go into effect, a County wide Greenhouse study could potentially inform the future consideration of a Greenhouse Business Park in Lakeshore.

Report Recommendations:

The HCA and JLR report concludes that there are challenges to identifying a single Greenhouse Business Park location in Lakeshore due to various constraints. The following are quotes from the Recommendation Section of the Report. Administration has added comments in the right column with recommended timing for implementation.

The report states: “Given the current limitations to selecting a single ideal site for a LSGF, no Official Plan amendment is recommended at this time to establish a LSGF Business Park location. In lieu of this, we offer the following recommendations for the Municipality:”

HCA and JLR Recommendations	Response from Administration
<p>1. Reassess the need for a LSGF Business Park in five years’ time. In the interim, the Municipality should continue monitoring demand and interest in LSGFs. Should an operator come forward with interest in locating an LSGF in Lakeshore, the analysis of this report can be used to identify high scoring parcels and the areas of constraint.</p>	<p>Agree – revisit the Greenhouse Business Park concept in 5 years.</p> <p>Agree – if a greenhouse proposal comes forward, use the analysis of the report to inform decision making.</p>
<p>2. Consider further assessment of a LSGF Priority Area approach, similar to that of the Town of Kingsville, as an alternative to the Business Park model. This model would permit LSGF within the Agricultural Area Designation, with policy and incentives to encourage co-location in Priority Areas, with development subject to servicing and land use compatibility requirements, including the constraints identified within the above analysis.</p>	<p>Agree – to assess the Priority Area approach, but it is recommended that this be implemented in 5 years.</p>
<p>3. Request an amendment to Section 6.2.1 (h) of OPA 18 (LSGF Official Plan Amendment), to include the following statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Monitoring and review of these policies will be undertaken to identify trends in greenhouse issues in the Region, to analyze the impact of future water main expansions as well as trends in the price of land 	<p>Agree – it is recommended that this be implemented immediately. This policy will commit Lakeshore to monitor the demand for greenhouses in Lakeshore and to be able to react to any trends or issues.</p>

HCA and JLR Recommendations	Response from Administration
and demand for Large Scale Commercial greenhouses in Lakeshore. Reporting back to Council on the monitoring of the policies and issues will be in the form of annual briefings or status reports.	
4. Conduct further assessment and consider policy to support private infrastructure innovation and partnerships for LSGF operations, with particular attention to water servicing.	Agree – this recommendation for further assessment can be implemented in 5 years, and the need be monitored on an annual basis.
5. Pass a By-Law to regulate light emission during particular hours of the day or night, taking lessons from Leamington and Kingsville experiences.	The need to pass such a By-law can be part of the monitoring.
6. Pass a By-Law for Temporary Farm Workers residences to regulate the design of large bunkhouses with adequate amenities as part of LSGF development plans. The practice of Kingsville and Leamington can again serve as a model.	The need to pass such a By-law can be part of the monitoring.

Based on the recommendations of the Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. and J.L. Richards & Associates Limited Report, and Administration’s responses, the following are in the Recommendation Section:

(1) As there are limitations to selecting a single ideal site for a Greenhouse Business Park, direct Administration to not proceed to prepare an Official Plan amendment to identify a Greenhouse Business Park location;

(2) That Lakeshore request the County of Essex to make a modification to Section 6.2.1 (h) of OPA No. 18 (Greenhouse Official Plan Amendment) to state that: monitoring and review of the Official Plan policies will be undertaken to identify trends in greenhouse issues in the Region, to analyze the impact of future water main expansions, as well as trends in the price of land and demand for Large Scale Commercial greenhouses in Lakeshore. Reporting back to Council on the monitoring of the policies and issues will be in the form of annual briefings or status reports;

(3) That Administration revisit the Greenhouse Business Park concept and the Greenhouse Priority Area concept in five years to determine if further study or update of the Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. and J.L. Richards & Associates Limited Report is report is required;

(4) That should a Greenhouse operator come forward in the meantime to locate a Large Scale Greenhouse operation in Lakeshore, Administration use the Harry Cummings and Associates Inc. and J.L. Richards & Associates Limited Report to identify the high scoring parcels and the areas of constraint to inform land use planning decision making; and

Due to the recommendation that an Official Plan amendment for the Greenhouse Business Park not proceed at this time, Administration is also recommending that no further public consultation on the Greenhouse Business Park concept be undertaken at this time as per Recommendation No. 5:

(5) Direct Administration that no further public consultation on the Greenhouse Business Park concept take place at this time.

Should Council wish to direct that a light emissions By-law and Farm Worker By-law be proactively advanced at this time, recommendations (6) and (7) could be added:

(6) Direct Administration to prepare a report regarding a By-Law to regulate light emission during particular hours of the day or night.

(7) Direct Administration to prepare a report regarding a By-Law to regulate the design of large bunkhouses with adequate amenities as part of LSGF development plans.

Next Steps

If Council concurs, Administration will implement recommendations 1-5 as set out in the Recommendation Section. HCA and JLR will remove the two public engagement sessions from the workplan. In addition, HCA and JLR will complete and provide the design guidelines for Greenhouse Development, as set out in the workplan, for future use.

Financial Impacts

The total approved budget for this project is \$65,000, with total spending to date of \$47,726.59. The available remaining funding is \$17,273.41. Any remaining funds will be returned to the Plans and Studies Reserve.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Large Scale Greenhouse Facilities in Lakeshore Report – HCA and JLR

Attachment 2 – Link to County of Essex Draft Official Plan

<https://www.countyofessex.ca/en/doing-business/resources/Documents/20240808-Draft-OP-Consolidated-V4.pdf>

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Greenhouse Business Park Study Update.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Large Scale Greenhouse Facilities in Lakeshore Report - HCA and JLR.docx
Final Approval Date:	Sep 20, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Prepared by Tammie Ryall

Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team