

Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

Growth and Sustainability

Planning Services



To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Daniel Mercer, urbaniste, RPP, MCIP, Division Leader - Community Planning

Date: April 10, 2025

Subject: Community Planning Division Quarterly Status Update – Q1 2025

Recommendation

This report is presented for information only at the May 6, 2025 Council meeting.

Strategic Objectives

3b) Modernizing and Enhancing Municipal Functions - Revise business processes to establish and employ a risk management framework, improved workflow management, and financial modelling to inform management of reserves

Background

This report is to provide a summary of all Planning Act applications underway from Q1 2025 (January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025). Typical processing times, and ongoing or upcoming continuous improvement initiatives, are also included.

Planning Applications

The following applications are included as part of this review:

- Pre-consultation (PCN)
- Site Plan Control (SPC)
- Temporary Patio (SPC-Temp Patio)
- Zoning By-Law Amendment (ZBA)
- Part Lot Control Applications (PLC)
- Condominium (C-A)
- Subdivision (S-A)
- Minor Variance
- Consent

During the last Council meeting dedicated to *Planning Act* matters on February 4, 2025, charts with annual year-over-year comparisons of total applications were included for the 2021 to 2024 calendar years. As this is a quarterly report, only the activities for Q1 2025 are included. Tracking is currently done on an annual basis, so quarterly comparisons are not available. As explained below, the Community Planning Division will be moving towards a more effective means of tracking files, including developing key performance indicators for service delivery.

The following chart outlines total applications being processed from January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025. These totals do not identify the number of applications approved or denied.

Type	Volume	Comments
Pre-Consultation (PCN)	9	Total applications received in Q1.
Site Plan Control (SPC)	4	Total number of files deemed complete in Q1.
Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA)	2	Total applications received in Q1.
Condominium (C-A)	0	No new applications received in Q1, however, 3 remain open from previous years.
Subdivision (S-A)	0	No new applications have been received in Q1, however, 12 remain open from previous years.
Minor Variance	7	7 applications processed in Q1; 5 remain open.
Consent	3	3 applications processed in Q1; 7 remain open.
TOTAL	25	

Currently Community Planning Services is actively processing an estimated 30 planning applications through the system. These include a number of proposals that require a high level of technical analysis. These include subdivision applications, site plan applications, and zoning by-law applications that, depending on complexity, can take more than a year to process.

Site Plan Agreements

As per the reporting requirements in the Site Plan Control Area By-Law (106-2024), the Division Leader – Community Planning exercised the delegated authority of site plan approval for the following applications for Q1 2025 (January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025):

- 1) Site Plan Amending Agreement (file SPC-02-2023) was fully executed on April 8, 2025, over lands known as 472 Blanchard Drive. The purpose of the amendment was to allow the construction of Phase 2 (Building D, E, and G) of their original Site Plan executed in 2016. The applicant will recognize Building A as two separate buildings, whereas it was planned and depicted as one building on the original site plan.
- 2) Site Plan Amending Agreement (file SPC-10-2024) was fully executed on April 7, 2025 over lands known as 21 Amy Croft Dr. The purpose of the amendment was to allow the development of additional commercial space for Building B, Building F, and Building H.
- 3) Site Plan Amending Agreement (file SPC-10-2023) was fully executed on February 19, 2025 over lands known as 390 Talbot St. N. The purpose of the amendment was to allow the expansion of the existing service garage with 4 additional bays.

The last report to Council on Site Plan Agreements (SPAs) was on October 1, 2024, including SPAs approved up to August 30, 2024. The following SPAs were approved from September 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024:

- 1) Site Plan Agreement (SPC-07-2024) was fully executed on December 2, 2024, 0 Creekside Road, 0 Essex Kent Road, and 2825 Essex Kent Road. The registered owners of these lands have entered into a long-term lease agreement or easement agreement with Boralex Inc. for the development of a battery energy storage system (BESS).

To be included in this quarterly report of executed agreements, the following conditions need to be met:

- 1) The SPA is signed by the owner or member of the corporation who has the authority to bind the company
- 2) The SPA is signed by the Clerk;
- 3) The SPA signed by the Mayor;
- 4) Securities are collected by Lakeshore (currently at the set value of \$4,000.00 for Minor Site Plan Agreements and \$25,000.00 for Major Site Plan Agreements); and
- 5) The Legal Division confirms that the agreement is registered on title.

In addition to the agreements noted above, there are approximately ten SPAs that are nearing completion.

Planning Process Timelines

The following chart outlines our expected timelines for planning applications to be processed by the Community Planning Division. These figures are developed from our average processing times, omitting outliers that are either overly complex or are of an unusually poor quality requiring additional technical analysis or significant review time. While clients often view timelines from the first point of contact with the Municipality, the average timeline listed below starts once the application is deemed complete (i.e.: once all supporting documents have been submitted thereby allowing the file to be reviewed).

Application Type	Average Timeline	Comments
Pre-consultation (PCN) (Purpose: Conduct a preliminary review and provide guidance on information required to deem application complete)	2 to 3 weeks (From first point of contact until meeting is held)	Formal meeting notes are provided to the applicant within 2 to 4 weeks following the date of the pre-consultation meeting.
Site Plan Control (SPC)	6+ months	Does not require Council approval 5-6 weeks for each circulation
Temporary Patio (SPC-Temp Patio)	2 weeks	All reviews are completed internally Does not require Council approval
Zoning By-Law Amendment (ZBA)	4+ months	Requires Council approval 5-6 weeks for each circulation
Part Lot Control (PLC)	2 months	Requires Council and County of Essex approval
Condominium (C-A)	4+ months	Requires Council and County of Essex approval 5-6 weeks for each circulation
Subdivision (S-A)	6+ months (usually 1 year +)	Requires Council and County of Essex approval

		5-6 weeks for each circulation Municipal Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance Approval (CLI ECA) (Timeline: 80 working days).
Minor Variance and/or Consent	3 to 4 months	Requires Committee of Adjustment approval.

Community Planning Services – Continuous Improvement

The Community Planning Division continues to seek improvements in service delivery with the broader aim of building public trust in the planning system. As noted in the previous report, the digitization of the planning approvals process, one of the key recommendations of the Service Delivery Review, has been completed. Community Planning has now concluded its first full year using Cloudpermit as the division's digital platform.

In the Strategy Corp report presented to Council in May 2024 as part of that same review, the most significant gap identified within Community Planning Services was the absence of a long-term strategic vision. The Division remains primarily focused on current planning (i.e., application review) as opposed to forward planning (i.e., long-term policy development and implementation) while it continues to be 'right sized'. While this current orientation reflects the need to align service delivery with development pressures, client expectations, and available resources, incremental improvements are being pursued where feasible.

Since the last Community Planning Status Update to Council on February 4, 2025, the implementation plan for the Round 2 Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF2) grant has been approved. This includes a partnership with the University of Windsor's Centre for Cities, as well as the creation of several critical staff positions across both the Community Planning and Operations. These new roles, with focus on supporting annual housing supply growth targets, will be publicly advertised in the coming weeks.

Lakeshore's HAF2 Approved Action Plan Initiatives emphasizes public engagement, policy improvements, and density-related Zoning By-law changes. While the work does not directly target enhancements to current planning operations (e.g.: a planning approval guide/manual, or a Lean process improvement exercise to map the process and target specific pinch points), the systematic changes aim to achieve similar outcomes for improved long-term planning service delivery. However, in order to improve the system or implement control measures, the processes must first be defined, measured, and analyzed.

To support these outcomes, the Community Planning Division will continue its efforts to define and implement specific key performance indicators (KPIs) beyond 'average approval times' identified above. KPIs for municipal planning teams in Ontario are used to measure how effectively these teams are achieving strategic, operational, and community-focused outcomes. Since municipalities operate within the framework of the *Planning Act*, *Municipal Act*, and Provincial Planning Statement, KPIs often align with provincial priorities alongside local objectives. As such, KPIs can include both operational application processing-related as well as client satisfaction-type or Division objectives metrics. As Community Planning continues this analysis, the HAF2 Initiatives will be considered.

Well-designed KPIs should measure progress toward clearly defined goals. For the Municipality of Lakeshore, this means selecting indicators that align with the Official Plan and Strategic Plan, and that reflect activities having the most significant impact on the Division's goals. For discussion purposes, it's critical to ensure that when planning and development indicators are taken in total, they are balanced and assess how well development outcomes positively impact the full community. The full suite of the Division's indicators should collectively assess how well development contributes to environmental, social, and economic well-being, rather than focusing too narrowly on a single domain.

When selecting KPIs, it is important to align them with the strategic goals of Lakeshore, ensuring they are comprehensive and address key areas such as land use, infrastructure development, and community engagement. This holistic approach will provide a more accurate and meaningful assessment of progress. A finalized list is still under development, but anticipated KPI categories may include:

- 1) Planning Process Efficiency
- 2) Community Engagement and Transparency
- 3) Housing and Land use
- 4) Economic Development and Revitalization
- 5) Environmental and Sustainability Goals
- 6) Internal/Operational Performance

In determining KPIs for future information of Council the industry's SMART standard will be employed: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Financial Impacts

As this is a report for information as an update on the activities of the Community Planning Division, there are no direct financial impacts.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Community Planning Division Quarterly Status Update – Q1 2025.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 25, 2025

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

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Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team