

# Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

## Growth & Sustainability

### Community Planning



**To:** Mayor & Members of Council  
**From:** Aaron Hair, MCIP, RPP, Division Leader – Community Planning  
**Date:** December 2, 2022  
**Subject:** Greenhouse Study Update

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### Recommendation

Request the Mayor to send a follow up letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs outlining Council's ongoing concerns with large scale greenhouse development; and

Direct Administration to proceed with Option 2, to revise the Official Plan policies, Zoning By-law regulations pertaining to Large Scale Greenhouse Facilities, and Design Guidelines for Large Scale Greenhouse Facilities as outlined in Attachment 1, titled Lakeshore Greenhouse Study Final Report, as presented in the report entitled Greenhouse Study Update presented at the December 13, 2022 Council meeting.

### Background

On March 9, 2021, Council approved By-law 13-2021 being a By-law to establish an Interim Control By-law, respecting Greenhouses in the Municipality of Lakeshore. An Interim control by-law puts a temporary freeze on a land use while the municipality is studying or reviewing its policies. The temporary freeze is for 1 year, but may be extended for an additional year, and on February 15, 2022, Council extended the By-law until March 9, 2023.

In the Spring of 2021 Lakeshore engaged Storey Samways Planning Ltd. (SSPL) to assist with preparing the terms of reference for the study. The purpose of the study was to look at the impacts of greenhouse developments, and to come up with best practices on how to regulate them, not to prohibit them.

In August & September 2022, Lakeshore hosted 1 virtual and 2 in-person meetings to go over the Draft Greenhouse Study Report prepared by SSPL, with approximately 450 attending the various sessions. After the public open houses, Lakeshore received 77 email comments, 9 written submissions, 21 comment cards, and a petition opposing greenhouses with 1656 signatures. Basically, all the comments from the public opposed greenhouses in Lakeshore, based on the experiences in Leamington and Kingsville. Section 6 of the attached report outlines the main themes that were heard.

On October 12 Council passed a resolution advising that Lakeshore opposes large commercial greenhouses in rural areas, and that the province consider reclassifying greenhouses to an industrial use.

Administration supports recommendation #2 as it is consistent with the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement, while addressing the majority of the concerns that were expressed through the public consultation.

## **Comments**

Section 8 of the attached report outlines 4 options for Council consideration. They are as follows.

### ***Option 1 – Receive the report and Do Nothing***

The Official Plan (OP) and Zoning By-law (ZBL) contain basic policies that permit Large Scale Greenhouse Facilities (LSGF) recognizing them as an agricultural use. The original purpose of the study was to update these policies to recognize the experiences of Leamington and Kingsville so as to avoid the negative impacts in those municipalities. Although these policies/regulations are regarded as being consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and County OP (COP), the proper tools developed over time to regulate greenhouses would be lacking. It should be noted that if no action is taken these policies/regulations will come back into force at the Interim Control By-law expiry date of March 9, 2023.

### ***Option 2 – Proceed as Presently Directed by the terms of reference*** (Administration's Recommendation)

Through Option 2, the existing Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations are modernized based on the most up-to-date information, widespread agency consultation and public consultation submissions.

As part of this approach, it is also proposed that the Lakeshore Zoning By-law be amended so as to remove LSGF as a permitted use: i.e., they would no longer be permitted as-of-right as they currently are under the zoning regulations. A site-specific Zoning By-law amendment would be required to establish a LSGF along with a site plan agreement.

A report would be brought to Council with the draft Official Plan amendment and Zoning by-law amendment and would be presented at a public meeting.

In addition, visual design guidelines would be developed for Council approval that would deal with setbacks, landscaping and screening requirements, arrangement of buildings,

pedestrian and vehicle movements, along with the rules governing the location and built form of worker housing. These costs would be built into the Draft 2023 Budget.

### **Option 3 – Proceed within a Limited Geographic Area**

This approach, to create a sort of business park, is described briefly in the study and was supported by many agencies and utilities. It proposes to delineate a certain limited geographic area where LSGF would be permitted. It is noteworthy this approach was proposed in several public submissions as well. This approach is beyond the terms of reference of the current study. It would require a separate substantial study to determine how large the area should be; how cost-sharing for utilities and services would be managed; where the business park should be; and what special policies would be necessary. It also might require a partnership with the LSGF industry. Should Council choose, this option could be pursued at a future date.

### **Option 4 – Prohibition of Large-Scale Greenhouse Facilities**

The option to prohibit Large-Scale Greenhouse Facilities is not consistent with the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement as greenhouses are considered an agricultural use. Option 4 will likely be opposed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs and possibly Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers. For this reason, Administration does not recommend prohibiting LSGF, but instead, recommends regulating them.

Regarding the Council resolution which was passed advising that Lakeshore opposes large commercial greenhouses in rural areas, and that the Province consider reclassifying greenhouses to an industrial use, the resolution was sent to the Premier and the provincial Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). To date, a response has not been received from the Province. Council could consider passing an additional resolution to be forwarded to the OMAFRA Minister for her consideration.

### **Others Consulted**

The option that Council chooses will be circulated to external agencies and the public for review and comment, prior to the final study and draft Official Plan amendment and Zoning by-law amendment being presented at a public hearing.

### **Financial Impacts**

The financial impact on the next steps would depend on the option Council chooses. To date the total cost of the study is \$53,000 and is funded from the approved Department's Consulting Services budget. To date, the study is projected to be on budget.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1 - Lakeshore Greenhouse Study Report 20221129

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Greenhouse Study Update.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Lakeshore Greenhouse Study Report 20221129.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Dec 8, 2022

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

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