

Municipality of East Ferris

Report to Council

Report No.: COMM-2026-01

Date: January 13, 2026

Originator: Greg Kirton, Director of Community Services

Subject: Official Plan Subdivision Policies

RECOMMENDATION

That Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of East Ferris direct staff to prepare amendments to the subdivision policies in the East Ferris Official Plan, specifically section 5.5.6, and bring them forward to the East Ferris Planning Advisory Committee for review.

BACKGROUND

The East Ferris Official Plan contains broad ranging policies that guide long-term community development in the municipality. Official Plans are living documents that require ongoing evaluation and amendment to ensure that they are achieving what we intend them to. Occasionally, after some time working with a policy, issues will arise that were not clear and obvious at the time of the development of those policies.

The East Ferris Official Plan contains the following policy in section 5.5.6:

“5.5.6 Estate Residential - Phasing

Development will be phased to ensure that there is a substantial take-up of lots, (e.g., 75% or more), before new applications are considered. For this reason, only one designation at a time will be considered. However, if a developer does not actively pursue development of the subdivision within a reasonable time period, Council may consider a new application.

New applications will require an amendment to this Plan and will be reviewed on the basis of the supply and demand for Rural Estate Development, the impact of demand on the urban housing supply, and the locational attributes of the site. Regard shall be given to the resource management policies of this Plan in making such selections.”

The general intent of this policy is largely focused on preventing a scenario where the municipality has a significant number of partially finished subdivision projects active at one time. The intent of this policy has merit in the sense that partly developed subdivisions with a lack of

demand to finish them are problematic for a number of reasons. However, the policy as written also has glaring problems from an implementation perspective.

The first key problem is that it does not allow for developments with varying designs to be considered or built concurrently. The style of development in an estate residential subdivision can vary significantly based on location, topography and access. The estate residential designation is the official plan designation used for all new subdivision applications outside of lakefront or village areas regardless of housing type, size or scale of lots, or number of lots in the development. It is problematic to hamstring non-competing development proposals on this distinction. A similar problem exists for geographic area, where it may be desirable to have one project active in Corbeil and one in Astorville; however, the current policy does not allow for that.

The second key problem with these policies is that it can effectively give one developer control over the entire subdivision development process. If one developer has a project that is about to be 75% built out, as per the policy, they can have their next application in hand as they get the building permit that hits that threshold, effectively locking out other land owners from the development application process, if adhering to a strict interpretation of the policy.

It is also important to note that the broader provincial planning framework matters in the context of municipal Official Plan policies. Land use planning in Ontario is implemented in a top-down framework where municipal plans must conform to provincial plans above them. Current provincial policies prioritize flexible housing policies and policies that allow for greater ease in housing and lot development.

While all Official Plan policies will be reviewed through the mandatory 10-year Official Plan review process, staff are of the opinion that this policy is especially problematic and warrants immediate action prior to the 10-year review, which can often take a significant amount of time from initiation to policy implementation.

OPTIONS

1. Option 1

That Council for the Corporation of the Municipality of East Ferris direct staff to prepare amendments to the subdivision policies in the East Ferris Official Plan, specifically section 5.5.6, and bring them forward to the East Ferris Planning Advisory Committee for review.

2. Option 2

That no action be taken at this time, leaving current Official Plan policies in effect.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that staff prepare amendments to the subdivision policies in the East Ferris Official Plan, specifically section 5.5.6, and bring them forward to the East Ferris Planning Advisory Committee for review

Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Kirton, RPP, MCIP
Director of Community Services

I concur with this report,
and recommendation



Jason H. Trottier, HBBA, MPA, CPA, CMA
CAO/Treasurer