To: **Committee of the Whole**

Agenda Section: Corporate Services
Division: Engineering, Planning and Environment
Department: Planning

Item Number: **CCW - 2026-010**

Meeting Date: February 10, 2026

Subject: **Township of Ramara Official Plan**

Recommendation

That the Township of Ramara Official Plan, as adopted by the Township of Ramara Council by By-law 2025.36 dated June 2, 2025, and modified as per Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 to Item CCW-2026-010 dated January 13, 2026, be approved;

That the County's approval does not apply to the following Non-Decisions:

Non-Decision No. 1:

All lands that are proposed to be designated 'Industrial' on Schedule B2- *Brechin Village Settlement Area* Map, and all lands that are proposed to be designated 'Employment Area' on Schedule A1 – *Land Use,* hereby attached in Schedule 3 to report CCW-2026-010; and the following list of policies that apply to those lands;

6.13 Protected Employment Areas;

Non-Decision No. 2:

All parcels of land described below that are proposed to be designated 'Industrial' on Schedule A1 – *Land Use,* hereby attached in Schedule 3 to report CCW-2026-010:

- Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 7 South, Part Lot 8 (Mara), municipally addressed as 1932 Concession Road 1;
- Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 9, municipally addressed as 2008 Concession Road 1

- Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 9, municipally addressed as 2026 Concession Road 1
- Concession Road 1 Part Lot 9 and 10, municipally addressed as 2002 Concession Road 1
- Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 10, municipally addressed as 1569 Highway 12
- Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 10, municipally addressed as 1603 Highway 12
- Concession 2 West, Part Lot 10, municipally addressed as 1915 Highway 12; and

That staff are directed to issue a Notice of Decision of the Official Plan for the Township of Ramara in accordance with the *Planning Act.*

Executive Summary

It is a legislative requirement under Section 26 (1) of the *Planning Act*, for the council of a municipality to revise their official plan every 10 years and to update the Plan every 5 years thereafter.

An official plan is a general policy document that includes a statement of goals, objectives and policies for managing growth and development within an entire municipality's geographic area. It sets out a comprehensive framework for land uses, resource management, community configuration, and decision-making.

The Township of Ramara's Official Plan was last comprehensively updated and approved by the County of Simcoe on July 31, 2003. Since then, there have been many Provincial policy and legislative changes. In particular, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has consolidated the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, as amended, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020, as amended, into one policy document now referred to as the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS, 2024).

On June 2, 2025, Township Council adopted the Township of Ramara Official Plan 2025 (OP 2025), by By-law 2025.36. Following the adoption, Township staff forwarded a package to County staff to review the new adopted OP 2025 and ultimately have County Council make an approval.

County Planning staff have reviewed the Township of Ramara's adopted OP 2025 and objectives, the local planning staff to make necessary modifications to ensure that the OP 2025 is consistent with the now in-effect PPS, 2024, and conforms to the goals, objectives and policies of the Simcoe County Official Plan (SCOP).

County staff can confirm that public and agency comments were considered and that the document is consistent with the applicable provincial policies and conforms to the SCOP. This work is a common part of the County's review and approval process, leading to County Planning staff's recommendation for approval to County Council.

County staff are recommending approval of OP 2025, with modifications largely to ensure consistency with the PPS 2024. Some modifications were to site specific properties to be consistent with Provincial Agricultural Systems as well as to align their secondary plan with recent policy frameworks.

County staff are recommending a Non-Decision with respect to lands to the east of Brechin proposed to be designated Employment Area, as well as lands to the south of Brechin adopted as Industrial but within the County Agricultural designation, until further work has been completed to support the Township's employments needs and the appropriate lands for the employment/industrial designation. Where policies are subject to a non-decision by County Council, the previous Township of Ramara's Official Plan 2003 will continue to be in effect. In circumstances where OP 2003 policy is in effect and make reference to other sections of the official plan, the OP 2025 shall apply, unless they form part of the non-decision policies.

The County of Simcoe is the approval authority for local municipal official plans as per Section 17 of the *Planning Act,* R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13, as amended. Therefore, it is the responsibility of County Council to make a decision on official plans that are adopted by local municipalities. The OP takes effect upon County Council approval, provided no appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) are received.

Background/Analysis/Options

It is a legislative requirement under Section 26 (1) of the *Planning Act*, for the council of a municipality to revise their official plan every 10 years and to update the plan every 5 years thereafter. Regular updates ensure that a municipality's official plan conforms with provincial policy, has regard to matters of provincial interest, and is consistent with provincial planning statements issued by the Minister.

An official plan is a general policy document that includes a statement of goals, objectives, and policies for managing growth and development within an entire municipality's geographic area. It sets out a comprehensive framework for land uses, resource management, community configuration, and decision-making. The purpose of an official plan is to ensure that future planning and development will accommodate the growth in population over long term and meet the specific needs of a community while protecting and enhancing the natural and built environments.

The following provides a summary of the Township of Ramara's Adopted Official Plan, 2025:

Proponent: Township of Ramara

Location: All lands within the Township of Ramara

Proposal: The purpose of the Township of Ramara's OP update is:

1. To bring the OP into conformity with the County of Simcoe Official Plan (SCOP 2016), save and except policies that have yet to be updated to conform with the PPS 2024; and,

2. To ensure the OP is consistent with, and does not conflict with, the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024).

County File: RA-OP-2501

The Township of Ramara's Official Plan was last comprehensively updated and approved by the County of Simcoe July 31, 2003. There were site specific appeals made to the Official Plan and were subsequently heard before the Ontario Land Tribunal and disposed of, with all parts coming into force and effect, on April 3, 2007.

The Township of Ramara undertook their initial review of their Official Plan (OP) in 2017 with the aid of a consultant and further decided to amend and revise the OP between 2023 and 2024 internally, to align their policies with all of the Provincial changes. The Ramara new OP was updated to include public and agency comments along with changes to be consistent with all of the recent Provincial legislative changes.

Since the last official plan approval, there have been many Provincial policy and legislative changes. In particular, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has consolidated the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, as amended, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020, as amended, into one policy document now referred to as the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS 2024).

The Township of Ramara commenced their provincial plan conformity exercise under Section 26 (2.1) of the *Planning Act* in 2017, to incorporate Provincial, County and local policies, including the new Provincial Policy Statements and the proposed Simcoe County Official Plan Amendment 7 (SCOPA 7) which includes a Land Budget to the year 2051.

The Township held Open Houses on November 18, 2019, and again from July 25, 2023 – July 27, 2023. A public meeting was held on August 12, 2024. Though staff presented a draft new Official Plan to Council (report BP-32-24), August 12, 2024, further changes were required due to the release of PPS 2024.

On June 2, 2025, Township Council adopted OP 2025, by By-law 2025.36. Following the adoption, Township staff forwarded a package to County staff for review and ultimately recommend an approval to County Council.

County staff have reviewed OP 2025 for consistency with the PPS 2024 and conformity with the County Official Plan, as well as all other applicable provincial legislation. County staff, in collaboration with Township staff, have identified some modifications to the adopted version of the OP 2025. A "Tracked Changes" version showing the modifications made to the OP 2025 are attached as Schedule 1 to this report, CCW-2026-010. All

comments received through the public process were addressed and a summary can be found in Schedule 4 attached to report CCW-2026-010.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

A public process is required when updating official plans. The Township of Ramara commenced their public process in 2017 with the release of a background paper, followed by a public open house pursuant to Section 17(15)(d) of the *Planning Act.*

Appropriate notice was provided to the prescribed agencies, Indigenous communities, and the public as per the requirements of the *Planning Act.* Public consultation included a background paper released in 2017, a community roundtable held on November 20, 2017, a key stakeholders meeting held on November 20, 2017, an open house on November 18, 2019, as well as July 25, 26, and 27, 2023, a special public meeting was held on August 12, 2024.

A summary of the public comments received throughout the process is provided in Schedule 4 to Item CCW-2026-010. The response matrix includes all comments received from both public and agency stakeholders. Over the course of the Official Plan review period, the Township received many comments submission and resubmissions during the open houses and public meetings. All comments have been addressed and taken into consideration for the new OP 2025. Many comments were on a site-specific basis, requesting changes to the designation. An Official Plan review is not an exercise to circumvent the Official Plan Amendment public process. Ad hoc and individual land redesignation, unless created in error or to respond to Provincial policy and legislation updates, would be deemed inappropriate. Please see Schedule 4 to this report (CCW-2026-010) to review the comment response matrix.

County planning staff circulated the adopted OP 2025 on June 20, 2025, to agencies, internal departments, and known stakeholders for further review and comment. County staff received no further agency comments and received one further comment from a resident with respect to the incorrect mapping of a former private waste management site. That comment resulted in a change to correct the error. The modification is captured in the following section to this report.

RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS

In collaboration with Township of Ramara Planning Department staff, modifications are recommended to the adopted OP 2025. Aside from any grammatical or nomenclature modifications to adopted OP 2025, noteworthy modifications were made as follows:

Section	**Modification**
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 3, Part Lot 11 (Mara), municipally addressed as 2230 Concession Road 3, are designated from ‘Highway Commercial’, to “Agricultural” as shown on Schedule ‘A1’- *Land Uses;*

Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 8 North, Part Lot 24 (Mara), municipally addressed as 3819 McRae Park Road, are designated from "Highway Commercial" special exception to "Agricultural" with a special exception as shown on Schedule 'A1'- *Land Uses:* a. Notwithstanding the above permitted uses under section 7.3, the subject lands are permitted the following uses: i. An outdoor recreational vehicle storage facility
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 9 North, Part Lot 16, municipally addressed as 4058 Highway 12, are designated from "Rural" to "Agricultural" and "Greenlands"
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 9 North, Part Lot 16, Parts 1 and 2 on RP;51R33392 municipally addressed as 4076 Highway 12, are designated from "Rural" to "Agricultural" with a special exception as shown on Schedule 'A1' – *Land Uses:* 1. Total Marine Inc. 4076 Highway 12 Notwithstanding Section 7.3.2, the permitted use of the lands is limited to a small-scale commercial establishment that services, repairs and sells marine equipment, utility trailers and accessories, including ancillary recreational vehicle service and repair.
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 9, Part Lot 1 RP:51R36081 Parts 1 to 5, municipally addressed as 1132 Concession Road 9, are designated from "Shoreline Residential" to "Agricultural".
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 9, Part Lot 1 RP:51R36081 Parts 6 to 8, municipally addressed as 1126 Concession Road 9, are designated from "Shoreline Residential" to "Agricultural".
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 9, Part Lot 1 RP:51R36081 Parts 9 and 10, municipally addressed as 1120 Concession Road 9, are designated from "Shoreline Residential" to "Agricultural"
Schedule E – Land Fill Activity	The designation/identification of a "Private Waste Disposal Site" has been removed from Part Lots 16 to 18; Part Gore Lot B, RP;51R23718 Parts 2, 4, 6, and RP 51;R12667 Parts 5 to 10, 12, and 13, lands municipally addressed as 3800 Longford Mills Road, as it was incorrectly identified on this property. The designation/identification of a "Private Waste Disposal Site" has been corrected and added to Part Lot 16 RP;51R23718, parts 5 and 1, lands municipally addressed as 3821 Longford Mills Road.

The above noted text and schedule modifications have been thoroughly reviewed and are supported as good planning by Township and County staff and are shown as track changes in Schedule 1 to this report, CCW-2026-010. Many of the modifications are required to conform with County Official Plan mapping and Provincial mapping that currently designates the lands Agricultural within the Agricultural System. Schedules to OP 2025 have also been modified and attached as Schedule 2 to this report, CCW-2026-010.

RECOMMENDED NON-DECISION

The properties subject to a non-decision are listed below. A non-decision is appropriate at this time until the County's Northern Regional Market Area (NRMA) Employment Lands Project is completed, and the employment land needs for the Township have been confirmed. Further work with the Township will also occur to identify the most appropriate locations for local employment lands and any associated settlement area boundary expansions that may be required to meet provincial policies. More specifically, upon the completion of the NRMA, further policy consistency would be required.

1. Lands to the east of Brechin would require a settlement boundary expansion to allow any type of conversion from Agricultural to any other land designation, as current PPS 2024 policies do not permit the conversion of Agricultural lands unless it is through a settlement area boundary expansion.
2. The Industrial lands to the south of Brechin would require a review of the current Agricultural lands mapping, as they are currently designated in the County OP and Provincial mapping as Agricultural.

The amount, location and need for future employment lands are expected to be determined by the end of 2026, to which the Township can complete the remaining work. The lands recommended to receive a non-decision by County Council would be anticipated to be updated within 1-year post OP 2025 approval to be consistent with the employment policies of the PPS 2024.

Section	**Non-Decision**
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 3 North, Part Lot 9 (Mara), municipally addressed as 3555 County Road 47, proposed designation from 'Agricultural' to 'Employment Area' in adopted Official Plan 2024
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 3, Part Lot 9 (Mara), municipally addressed as 2402 County Road 47, Proposed designation from 'Agricultural' to 'Employment Area' in adopted Official Plan 2024
Policy 6.13	Protected Employment Areas.
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 7 South, Part Lot 8 (Mara), municipally addressed as 1932 Concession Road 1, proposed designation "Industrial"
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 9, municipally addressed as 2008 Concession Road 1, proposed designation "Industrial"

Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 9, municipally addressed as 2026 Concession Road 1, proposed designation “Industrial”
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 1 Part Lot 9 and 10, municipally addressed as 2002 Concession Road 1, proposed designate “Industrial”
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 10, municipally addressed as 1569 Highway 12, proposed designation “Industrial”
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession Road 1 South, Part Lot 10, municipally addressed as 1603 Highway 12, proposed designation “Industrial”
Schedule A1 – Land Uses	Concession 2 West, Part Lot 10, municipally addressed as 1915 Highway 12, proposed designation “Industrial”

POLICY REVIEW

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The document supports a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to planning. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the new PPS 2024, bringing it into force and effect date of October 20, 2024.

County staff reviewed adopted OP 2025 for consistency with the PPS 2024. Staff of are the opinion that OP 2025, as modified, is consistent with PPS 2024, save and except for the lands proposed to be designated ‘Employment Areas’ and ‘Industrial’, as described in Schedule A1: *Land Use*, attached to this report as Schedule 2 (CCW 2026-010 Schedule 2) and policy 6.13 *Protected Employment*. These lands are the subject of the recommended Non-Decision referenced with further discussion outlined further below.

The policies of PPS 2024 require municipalities to plan and promote economic development and competitiveness by providing an appropriate mix and range of employment uses to meet the needs of a growing population. Employment Areas, as defined by PPS 2024, are to be protected and planned for within Settlement Areas by planning for uses such as manufacturing, warehousing and goods movement within settlement areas that have appropriate servicing. The Employment Areas are to prohibit other sensitive land uses that are not ancillary to those permitted under the PPS 2024 definition, and to be protected long term, unless otherwise justified through a consistency exercise with the PPS 2024.

The Township of Ramara has identified a need for Employment Area lands and identified lands adjacent to the Brechin settlement area to be designated “Employment Areas”, as defined by PPS 2024. However, those lands identified have not been evaluated as to the appropriateness of their location, nor the feasibility of extending municipal services to accommodate a settlement boundary expansion. The lands are currently designated Agricultural in the SCOP, and the Province has made it clear in the PPS 2024, that lands designated prime agriculture are to be protected for long term. The redesignation of those

lands from Agricultural to any other designation would need to go through a rigorous test to justify the conversion.

A non-decision of the proposed Employment Area designated lands in OP 2025 is appropriate until such time the County of Simcoe completes the NRMA Employment Lands 2051 Project and the tests of PPS 2024 consistency with regard to settlement area boundary expansions are completed. As this study is currently underway, and a boundary adjustment through the OP 2025 update would not be consistent with the PPS 2024 settlement boundary expansion policies, County Planning staff are recommending no decision be made by County Council on section 6.18 and the lands designated Employment Areas (i.e. recommend a Non-Decision).

County Planning staff are currently updating the SCOP employment land needs of protected employment lands and update policies to be consistent with PPS 2024. The County is currently working with a consultant to complete this work that includes the Township of Ramara as part of the NRMA Employment Lands 2051 Project. Once completed, OP 2025 will be updated to ensure consistency with PPS 2024. Until such time, a non-decision is necessary, and the Township of Ramara's OP 2003 will remain in effect for the above noted properties subject to the recommended non-decision.

The seven (7) parcels of land, identified in the chart above, located to the south of Brechin are currently mapped 'Agricultural' in the Simcoe County Official Plan Schedule 5.1 - *Land Use,* are currently designated 'Industrial' in the Ramara OP, and are proposed to be designated 'Industrial' in the Ramara OP 2025. The subject lands will be taken into consideration through the NRMA Employment Lands 2051 Project. The needs for those employment lands will be concluded at the completion of that study. Additionally, the Township will need to review the Agricultural mapping and policy framework to confirm if those lands should be designated 'Agricultural' to conform to the County OP mapping. Until the work can be completed, the County finds a non-decision appropriate.

The SCOP provides a policy framework to implement provincial policies, determine growth and projected population numbers, and determine land needs for protected employment areas for local municipalities throughout the County. The SCOP is currently undergoing an update to implement growth allocation and population projections which subsequently affects employment land needs.

Since PPS 2024 was recently brought into force and effect on October 20, 2024, the County has not yet had an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive consistency exercise with the new policies. The SCOP, in its current approved form, also has some inconsistencies with PPS 2024. However, where there may be inconsistencies between Provincial and upper tier policy frameworks, PPS 2024 subsection 6.1.7 states, "*Where a planning authority must decide on a planning matter before their official plan has been updated to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, or before other applicable planning instruments have been updated accordingly, it must still make a decision that is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement."* Therefore, where there may be a matter of inconsistency, the County has an obligation to support policy

conformity with PPS 2024 above its own official plan policies prior to completing an official plan update. The policies of OP 2024, as modified, conform with the County Official Plan, 2016 and are consistent with PPS 2024, save except for employment lands policies.

SUMMARY

It is the opinion of County Planning staff that the Township of Ramara's adopted OP 2025, as modified by Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 to this report, CCW-2026-010, is consistent with the PPS 2024 and conforms to the SCOP 2016, as amended.

Financial and Resource Implications

There may be financial implications associated with this Item with respect to staff time spent on future policy and mapping updates related to resolving the non-decisions. Additionally, if the County's decision is appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) there may be legal costs associated with that process. In the event of an appeal, staff will report back seeking authority to proceed with involvement in related OLT proceedings.

Relationship to Corporate Strategic Plan

Approval of the Township of Ramara Official Plan as recommended supports the County's ability to provide Growth-Related Service Delivery and pursue continued Environmental Sustainability.

Reference Documents

There are no reference documents associated with this Item.

Attachments

Schedule 1 – Tracked changes version of the Official Plan as modified by County Staff
Schedule 2 – Schedules to Official Plan, as modified, by County Staff
Schedule 3 – Clean version of the Official Plan as modified by County Staff
Schedule 4 - Comment Matrix
Schedule 5 – Adopted Official Plan June 2, 2025, by Township of Ramara Council

Prepared By Julie Nolan, RPP, Planning Program Supervisor, Innovation & Acceleration

Approvals	**Date**
Nathan Westendorp, Director of Planning, Chief Planner	January 27, 2026
Rob Elliott, General Manager, Engineering, Planning and Environment	Click here to enter a date.
Trevor Wilcox, General Manager, Corporate Performance	Click here to enter a date.
Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer	Click here to enter a date.