



Proposed Boundary Adjustment between the City of Woodstock and Norwich Township

Background

In May 2023, Woodstock City Council approved the establishment of a Boundary Adjustment Committee and entered into discussions with Norwich Township to explore possible boundary adjustments.

One of the driving factors for exploring a boundary adjustment between the City of Woodstock and Township of Norwich is to allow for the realignment of Pattullo Avenue to intersect Highway 59 further from the 401 ramps.

The realignment is required by the MTO to allow for industrial development along the north side of Pattullo Avenue. The boundary adjustment is needed to bring the realigned roadway into Woodstock City Limits because the City cannot own or build a road in another jurisdiction.

There continues to be strong demand for land that can be developed for employment (ie. Industrial) purposes. As such, the Boundary Adjustment Committees also considered the need for future employment lands and if those needs could potentially be met by the proposed lands.

Under the Municipal Act, there is a very strict process for considering boundary adjustments. At this stage, nothing is finalized, however before the final proposal can be submitted to Woodstock City Council and Norwich Township Council for consideration, we must consult with the public.

To accommodate different schedules, two public meetings have been scheduled for **Thursday, June 27th. The first meeting will take place from 1 – 3 p.m. and a second from 6 – 8 p.m.** Staff from the Township of Norwich and the City of Woodstock will provide an overview of the proposal. There is an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. The meetings will take place at the Oxford Centre Hall located at 505386 Old Stage Road, Township of Norwich.

Following the meetings, staff will review the feedback provided and finalize the boundary adjustment proposal for consideration by the Township, City and Oxford County Council. If the three local councils approve the proposal, it will be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for review and approval.

FAQs

Questions about the Boundary Adjustment Process

Why is a boundary adjustment required?

As part of the development of the industrial lands north of Pattullo Avenue, the MTO is requiring the realignment of Pattullo Avenue so that the intersection with Highway 59 is further away from the 401 ramps. The City completed the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study which identified the road realignment location. The route extends through Norwich Township and because the City cannot own the roadway outside of its border nor be the proponent of the development of this new road, the land must be brought into the City limits.

Why is such a big area being proposed?

Undertaking a boundary adjustment is an extensive process. It is important to think proactively about future needs while addressing the immediate needs of the roadway realignment. The two Boundary Adjustment Committees explored short- and long-term needs and opportunities to come up with a proposal that was mutually beneficial.

The lands proposed to be included in the boundary adjustment are ideally suited for potential future employment land development based on their proximity to existing services and transportation systems.

Is this a done deal?

No. Township Council and City Council have only approved bringing the proposal to adjust their mutual boundary to a public meeting for input. The Councils cannot vote on whether to support or oppose this proposal until they have consulted with the public.

What are the benefits for Norwich Township?

The proposed agreement between the City and the Township includes financial compensation for the Township for lost tax revenue. This means the City of Woodstock will pay Norwich Township the amount of taxes the Township is currently collecting from properties within any boundary adjustment area.

The City of Woodstock will also pay the Township a portion of the future taxes collected. Under the negotiated proposal, the joint prosperity compensation is 20 per cent for the Commercial Tax Class and 24 per cent for the Industrial Tax Class.

Further, once the road realignment is complete, the Township will also benefit from the joint prosperity compensation from the 2017 boundary adjustment agreement, for new commercial and industrial development along the north side of Pattullo Avenue.

What are the benefits for the City of Woodstock?

In the near term, the boundary adjustment will allow the City to complete the road realignment and support industrial and commercial development and create employment opportunities for Oxford County residents close to home.

Long term, the lands will provide additional property tax revenue and an increased inventory of employment land within Woodstock that could potentially be developed when the property owner chooses to sell the land. Ensuring the availability of land for development within the City helps bolster the local economy and private and public investment in our community.

What is the process for a boundary adjustment?

There is a formal process for boundary adjustments under the Municipal Act (Part V, Sec. 171-173). The municipalities involved must develop a proposal that outlines the details of the proposed restructuring. They must then hold at least one public meeting to get feedback from the public before seeking approval to submit the proposal to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. The proposal can only be submitted to the province for approval if it receives support from both municipal Councils and the County of Oxford.



Figure 1 Process for Submitting a Restructuring Proposal

What is the proposed effective date of the boundary adjustment?

If approved, the date the boundary adjustment will take effect is January 1, 2025.

Questions about Public Input into the Boundary Adjustment Process

What is the purpose of the public consultation?

Under the Municipal Act, as part of any boundary adjustment we must hold at least one public meeting to consult with the public. Using the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of engagement definition of “Consult”, the purpose of the public meeting is to obtain feedback from the public on the proposal. Staff and members of both Councils will listen to the questions and concerns from the public and take the feedback received into consideration when preparing the final proposal for Council’s consideration.

If the municipal councils approve the boundary adjustment, do I as a taxpayer have any right to appeal the decision?

If the boundary adjustment is passed, there is no opportunity for taxpayers to appeal the decision. After the public meeting, the Councils will review the feedback and make any revisions to the draft boundary adjustment proposal. The draft proposal must be approved by Township, City and County Councils before it can be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for their approval.

Questions Related to Individual Properties

What are the benefits for property owners in the proposed boundary adjustment area?

In the immediate future, there is little change for property owners. By being part of an urban centre, instead of a rural township, property owners will receive additional city services and be able to connect to municipal sewer and water services once available.

Property owners will often see an increase in the value of their property and realize a higher sale price if they choose to sell their property. There is no requirement for any property owner to change the land use of their property as a result of a boundary adjustment.

What are the drawbacks for property owners within the proposed boundary adjustment area?

Because the level of service offered by the City of Woodstock is higher than a rural township, many property owners will see a tax increase. We are proposing a holding period, followed by a phase in period for the taxes for current residential and farm property owners. Properties will have access to services including Woodstock Fire, Woodstock Police and municipal sewer and water.

My property is part of a Municipal Drain, will it continue to be?

If the boundary adjustment is approved, properties currently part of a municipal drain will continue to be and provisions under the Municipal Drainage Act will still apply.

If approved, who would collect my garbage?

If the boundary adjustment is approved, we do not anticipate any change to garbage collection as this area is under a multi-year contractual arrangement through the County. If there is a change all property owners will be notified.

If approved, will City bylaws apply to my property?

If the proposal is approved, City of Woodstock bylaws will extend to the properties in the boundary adjustment area except those that are specifically excluded in the boundary adjustment agreement. An example of an exempted bylaw is the zoning bylaw. The Township of Norwich zoning bylaw will continue to be in force until amended by the City of Woodstock.

I have a well & septic system; how long will I have before I have to connect to the County's water and sanitary sewer system and how much will it cost?

There are several actions that need to take place if the boundary adjustment is approved, including secondary planning and servicing studies. Once municipal sewer and water services are available, the County will set a time period for the mandatory connection to the municipal systems.

A connection charge will apply at the time of hookup or once the County passes a connection bylaw, whichever occurs first. An estimate of the fee will be provided during the public consultation for the water services design process.

If approved, will my address change?

The past practice of the City has been to leave the "911" addresses in place until new city addresses are assigned and then give residents notice of the address change.

If approved, who will provide fire protection services and police protective services?

If approved, the properties in the boundary adjustment area will receive fire protection services from the City of Woodstock's fire department and policing service from the Woodstock Police Service. Mutual aid agreements will remain in force for the Township to assist in Fire Services when needed.

Will the speed limits on the roads in the boundary adjustment area change?

If the boundary adjustment is approved, there will be no immediate change to speed limits in the area being proposed. The traffic patterns will be monitored and adjustments made as needed as the area develops.

Questions Related to Land Use

Are we losing valuable farmland as a result of the potential boundary adjustment?

The boundary adjustment process itself has no impact on land use or property ownership. Existing zoning will continue to apply. Within the area being considered, there are a variety of zone types including:

Zone	Description
A1	Limited Agricultural
A2	General Agricultural
AB	Agricultural Business
HC	Highway Commercial
I	Institutional
ME	Aggregate Industrial
MR	Restricted Industrial
RE	Residential Existing
REC	Recreational
RR	Rural Residential

What is the process to determine the future use of the lands that are within the area of the boundary adjustment?

If the boundary adjustment is approved, the City and County will typically retain the services of a planning consultant to undertake a study of the selected area and produce a Secondary Plan to ensure orderly development. This study will include engineering elements for the extension of centralized sewer and water services and transportation/road improvements. As part of the Secondary Planning process there is an opportunity for input from the public.

Once a Secondary Plan is completed and endorsed by City Council, the City would then typically file an Official Plan Amendment to provide the policy framework for the zoning bylaw. This again is a public process with an opportunity for comments from the public and various agencies.

Individual property owners or the City can also file planning applications to rezone the lands to bring the land into conformance with the Official Plan. This is also a public process.

Questions Related to Property Taxes

Will property owners within the proposed boundary adjustment area see property tax increases?

Tax increases will be phased in for Residential and Farm property classes. If the proposal moves forward, property owners in these tax classes will receive a credit in the amount of the initial increase on their annual tax bill for five years. The increase would then be phased in over the next five years (2030 – 2034), by reducing the amount of the annual credit.

Other tax classes will begin paying municipal property taxes as of 2025 based on City of Woodstock tax rates.

How will the proposed tax relief be structured?

Under the proposed agreement, residential and farm tax classes will receive a credit based on the difference between the current Township tax rate and the current City tax rate, applied to their tax bill for the first five years. If the property changes hands or receives planning approval for redevelopment, the credit will be eliminated.

After the first five years, the credit will be reduced equally over five years (from 2030 – 2034).

For example:

The proposed credit will be calculated as follows:

2024 assessment X 2024 city tax rate – 2024 assessment X 2024 township tax rate = credit

	Assessment Value	Residential Tax Rate <i>(Own Purposes)</i>	Residential Taxes	Farm Tax Rate <i>(Own Purposes)</i>	Farm Taxes
Norwich Township	\$100,000	.00642403	\$642.40	.00139851	\$139.85
City of Woodstock	\$100,000	.01122469	\$1,122.47	.00244362	\$244.36
Difference <i>This is the amount of the tax credit on your annual tax bill from 2025 - 2029 (per \$100K in assessed value)</i>			\$480.07		\$104.51

From 2030 – 2034 your tax increase (per \$100,000 assessed value) will be phased in by a diminishing credit on your annual tax bill, as follows:

Tax year	Residential Tax Credit Reduction	Farm Tax Credit Reduction
2030	\$384.06	\$83.61
2031	\$288.05	\$62.71
2032	\$192.04	\$41.81
2033	\$96.03	\$20.91
2034	\$0.00	\$0.00

Where do I pay my taxes?

If the proposal proceeds, beginning in January 2025, all taxes including any outstanding amounts will be due to and collected by the City of Woodstock. Your 2025 tax bill would be from the City and will include any credits identified in the proposal.

Until December 31, 2024, or if the proposal is not approved, you will continue to pay your taxes to the Township.

I am currently set up with the Township under a Pre-authorized Payment plan. What will happen if my property is brought into the City of Woodstock?

The City of Woodstock also offers pre-authorized tax payment plans. Property owners wishing to participate must complete a PAP (pre-authorized payment) form and provide banking information. The taxes on the property must also be up to date.