



January 23, 2025 Blog

Over the last few years several people have expressed concern about the Township spending on the new public works shop (Zorra Maintenance Facility, ZMF) and the new office (Zorra Municipal Centre, ZMC).

And in the end the 2025 budget financing all the repayment of all the debt for both buildings built in results in a 5.26% increase (1.9% inflation and 2% for police services...), or \$53 increase for the average residential property.

The total cost of the ZMF was \$10,113,374, and the total cost of the ZMC was \$7,428,667. But because of the way they were financed the ZMF actually cost \$8,641,600 new tax dollars and the ZMC actually cost \$ 0.00 new tax dollars.

How can this be? Well of course it's all tax dollars, but some was debentures (borrowing), some was reserves (savings), and some was surplus land sales. To keep owning the previous old buildings would have meant saving, borrowing, and spending more money over the next fifty years than it is to sell those properties and build new facilities: retiring old expensive assets and replacing them with new less expensive assets. The new buildings will do a better job of serving residents, and cost less. We don't need to do additions, or replace roofs, or repave parking lots. New buildings are also more energy efficient and result in lower energy bills.

All part of the long-term financial plan for the Township. Full details are available in various reports, and of course the 2025 budget (all online at [zorra.ca](http://zorra.ca)). It's in the tax bill already. We are paying the bill already. We are reaping the savings already.

Zorra Council approved a development application that will see over 1,000 residential units developed on the former Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) lands in Thamesford. This will be the largest development in Zorra's history and fulfills Council's vision for this brownfield project. The Township purchased the former MLF lands in 2019 and then solicited development proposals to create a vibrant, mixed-use community that welcomes a diverse range of incomes, household configurations and lifestyles. Council also required enhanced physical and visual connections to the Thames River and a community that stands as a model of excellence in the fields of design, sustainable living, accessibility, and environmental conservation. The development proposal submitted by Kingwood Homes and approved by Council meets all of those objectives.

The next phases propose to construct 18 single-detached dwellings, 660 townhome units, and 372 low rise apartment units in seven buildings. In addition, Kingwood is also proposing to develop seven acres of commercial lands. Central to this development is a proposal that would see the Thames Valley District School Board construct a new public elementary school and an 88-space childcare facility. The TVDSB has submitted an application for funding to the Ministry of Education, with a decision expected in early spring of 2025 which would allow construction to commence in late 2025.

Now we have a transformative development that will allow us to provide a much-needed housing mix, additional commercial space, park development along the Thames River and a co-build school facility with the TVDSB. This unique neighbourhood will be walkable, pedestrian friendly and have easy access to the new commercial core, Thamesford's existing downtown and existing recreation amenities and services.

And lastly, before the War of 1812 the US President said invading Canada would be "a mere matter of marching".

He was wrong.

#Trump is wrong too.

We fought and won.

It ended with us setting fire to the Whitehouse.

Canadians are patriotic.

Usually quietly.

Now we need to be loud.

#canadaisnotforsale

As always, feel free to contact me on any issue:

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