



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
AGENDA

PEDC 10-2020

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

1:00 p.m.

Meeting will be held by electronic participation only

This electronic meeting can be viewed on Niagara Region's Website at:

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/council/>

Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to protect all individuals, the Council Chamber at Regional Headquarters will not be open to the public to attend Committee meetings until further notice. To view live stream meeting proceedings, visit:
[niagararegion.ca/government/council](https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/council/)

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
3. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u>	
3.1. <u>Supporting and Enhancing Buy Local Campaigns in Niagara</u> Katie Desharnais, Strategic Marketing Manager	3 - 7
4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	
5.1. <u>PDS 36-2020</u> Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee Refinements	8 - 10
5.2. <u>PDS 39-2020</u> Town of Lincoln Waterfront Investment Program Extension Request	11 - 19
5.3. <u>ED 18 -2020</u> Tourism Adaption and Recovery Fund <i>This item has been removed from the agenda.</i>	

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| 6.1. | <u>ED 17-2020</u>
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Economic Development | 20 - 24 |
| 6.2. | <u>PDS-C 28-2020</u>
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Planning and Development Services | 25 - 28 |
| 6.3. | <u>PDS 33-2020</u>
Ecological Land Classification Mapping Project (and BE CIRCULATED to the Area Municipalities, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and the Greenbelt Foundation)

A presentation will precede the discussion of this item. | 29 - 45 |
| 6.4. | <u>PDS 35-2020</u>
Niagara Official Plan - Consultation Update (and BE CIRCULATED to Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA))

A presentation will precede the discussion of this item. | 46 - 86 |
| 6.5. | <u>PDS 38-2020</u>
Growth Management Survey Results (and BE CIRCULATED to Local Municipal Planning Directors)

A presentation will precede the discussion of this item. | 87 - 130 |

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

Supporting and Enhancing Buy Local Campaigns in Niagara

Planning and Economic Development

December 9, 2020

Katie Desharnais, Strategic Marketing Manager

SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING BUY LOCAL CAMPAIGNS IN NIAGARA





SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING BUY LOCAL CAMPAIGNS IN NIAGARA

Local Economic Development offices and municipalities have been working throughout the pandemic to champion their business communities.

Using a three-tiered approach, Niagara Region's Economic Development team will **amplify**, **support** and **compliment** these municipal "Buy local" campaigns during holiday season.

NED will also run a complimentary, Niagara-wide campaign to advocate for local business, and connect residents with existing buy-local initiatives in their community.

SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING BUY LOCAL CAMPAIGNS IN NIAGARA

AMPLIFY

the outreach of planned and existing 'Buy local' campaigns by municipalities

SUPPORT

those municipalities who do not have a fulsome 'Buy Local' campaign by creating customized, collaborative campaigns

DEVELOP

and run a Niagara-wide multi-channel awareness campaign on the benefits of buying local





SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING BUY LOCAL CAMPAIGNS IN NIAGARA

Next Steps:

- For a full list of 'Buy Local' Campaigns by municipality visit **NiagaraCanada.com**
- Regional Council toolkit distributed – look for opportunities to participate and share with your networks
- Progress update to be shared at January PEDC

Subject: Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee Refinements

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the reporting structure for the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee **BE TRANSFERRED** from Planning and Economic Development Committee to Public Works Committee.
2. That this report **BE CIRCULATED** to Public Works Committee.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Planning and Economic Development Committee an update on the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee (GNCRC).
- The GNCRC was established in the early 1990s to advise Regional Council on the completion of the Greater Niagara Circle Route and to collaborate with appropriate agencies to complete the project.
- The original mandate of the GNCRC has been achieved. The trail is now in a position where it requires operational oversight.
- Planning staff and Public Works staff ask that the GNCRC be transitioned to an operational oversight role to support the work of the Active Transportation Sub-Committee (a Public Works Advisory Committee).

Financial Considerations

This report and its recommendations have no financial impact to the corporation.

Analysis

Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee (GNCRC)

The GNCRC was established in the early 1990s to advise Regional Council on the completion of the Greater Niagara Circle Route and to collaborate with appropriate

agencies to complete the project. At the time the GNCRC was struck, Planning and Public Works reported to Regional Council through the same standing committee. This standing committee structure ultimately evolved to each department reporting to Regional Council separately. During this evolution, the GNCRC remained with Planning Services, as the development of the trail was a land-use planning exercise in collaboration with the local municipalities.

The trail was substantially completed in 2007, with several side projects added in the intervening years. As the trail has achieved significant completion, the original mandate of the Committee has been accomplished. The GNCRC Terms of Reference (TOR) remain original to when the Committee was struck, and are no longer relevant.

The GNCRC did not meet between 2016 and 2019. However, the GNCRC has now been repopulated with municipally-appointed representatives. The group met on February 5, 2020, with a new focus of supporting the work of the Active Transportation Sub-Committee (a Public Works Advisory Committee) and aims to provide operational oversight for the trail system. At this first meeting, the Committee provided input on updating the GNCRC TOR.

Providing that the transfer of reporting to Public Works Committee is approved, Public Works staff will bring forward an updated GNCRC TOR for approval via the Transportation Steering Committee.

Alternatives Reviewed

Council could choose to not to accept this recommendation, however, due to shift in mandate, the GNCRC can be better supported by Public Works.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

An updated TOR for the GNCRC and reassignment of reporting will strategically enforce a commitment to healthy and vibrant communities.

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

Prepared by:

Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP
Manager Community Planning
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Doug Giles, BES, MUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Judy McPherson, Transportation Services Coordinator, and reviewed by Carolyn Ryall, Director of Transportation Services.

Subject: Town of Lincoln Waterfront Investment Program Extension Request

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the Town of Lincoln's request for an extension of the Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre project which was allocated funding through the Region's 2018 Waterfront Investment Program **BE APPROVED** by Regional Council; and
2. That a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Town of Lincoln.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding a request by the Town of Lincoln for a second extension under the 2018 Waterfront Investment Program (WIP) for the Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre.
- In 2018, the Town of Lincoln was allocated \$250,000 by Niagara Region through WIP. The project was scheduled to be completed by December 2019 with final WIP reporting due no later than February 15, 2020.
- Per program parameters, staff have delegated authority to provide one extension per project. Following Regional staff inquiry in June 2020, the Town indicated the project was not complete and requested an extension, which was approved by Regional staff with a new completion deadline of December 18, 2020 (Appendix 1).
- The Town has now requested a second extension for WIP final reporting on this project to May 31, 2021 (Appendix 2), which must be reviewed and direction provided by Regional Council. Details of the project and this request are outlined below.

Financial Considerations

A total of \$250,000 in funding for this project was allocated in 2018, to be disbursed on approval of final reporting following project completion. Approval of the Town of Lincoln's WIP 2018 project extension request would require a 2020 encumbrances of funding to support the 2021 disbursement. If required, this will be included in the 2020 Year End Results and Transfer Report.

Analysis

In 2018, the Town of Lincoln was allocated \$250,000 in funding under the WIP for the Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre project. This project was originally slated to be complete in December 2019, with final reporting due to the Region no later than February 15, 2020.

Regional staff contacted the Town in June 2020 requesting an update on the project, and the Town requested at that time an extension through December 18, 2020. The explanation provided was that it took longer to secure additional funding for the project, resulting in a delayed start and construction schedule. However the Town noted that despite pandemic-related shutdowns, it believed the project would be complete by December 2020. Under WIP parameters, Regional staff have delegated authority to approve one extension per project, which was immediately provided (Appendix 1).

In November 2020, the Town requested a second extension for the project based on information received from its general contractor. The rationale for this request, outlined in Appendix 2, includes supply chain issues delaying the delivery of key components and thus projected work and timelines, and limits regarding number of workers onsite due to covid-19 restrictions. The Town currently estimates that 77% of the project is complete, with 15% more expected to be completed by end of year. Total project completion is now estimated to be Q1-2 2021, with most of the remaining work anticipated to relate to trades and services as opposed to large, supply chain-related components. Given the nature of the remaining work and the impossibility of predicting potential pandemic-related policies which may affect it, the Town is asking for a new WIP final reporting extension date for this project of May 31, 2021.

Alternatives Reviewed

Given the unforeseen effects of the pandemic on this project, the amount of work accomplished to date, and the clear and realistic workplan in place to complete it, it is recommended Council approve this request by the Town of Lincoln for a project extension and related WIP reporting requirements.

The alternative, which is not to approve, is not recommended.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Capital projects funded under WIP such as the Town of Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre align with Council Strategic Priority (1) Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth.

Other Pertinent Reports

PDS 16-2018 Waterfront Investment Program 2018 Funding Recommendations

Prepared by:

Marian Bannerman, PhD
Program Manager Grants & Incentives
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Doug Giles, BES, MUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P. Eng
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Letter to Director of Community Services, Town of Lincoln, June 17, 2020

Appendix 2 Letter from Director of Community Services Town of Lincoln, November
11, 2020



Planning and Development Services
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON L2V 4T73
905-980-6000 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215

June 17, 2020

Shannon McKay
Director of Community Services
Town of Lincoln
4800 South Service Road
Beamsville, Ontario
L0R 1B1

Dear Shannon,

Thank you for your recent email requesting an extension to complete the Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre project funded in part through the 2018 Waterfront Investment Program (WIP).

As you may know, the WIP provides for one extension per project which may be approved by Regional staff. We have reviewed your request and the rationale and timelines provided, and are agreeable to granting an extension for a final reporting date for this project of December 18, 2020 with the understanding that the project will be completed and all report forms and supporting documents will be submitted by that date. Regional funding will be provided upon approval of this final reporting. As per the project agreement, failure to comply with this extension means that Regional Council may review the project and revisit the terms of its funding.

We look forward to hearing more about the project as it finishes and receiving your final reporting in December.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Marian Bannerman".

Marian Bannerman
Program Manager, Grants and Incentives

Cc: Sarah Ane, Associate Director, Recreation and Culture, Town of Lincoln



November 11, 2020

Ms. Marian Bannerman
Program Manager, Grants and Incentives
Planning and Development Services
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Marian,

Further to the Town of Lincoln's extended final reporting date of December 18, 2020 for the Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre project funded in part through the 2018 Waterfront Investment Program (WIP), this letter provides an update on the status of this capital project. Outlined below are the very recent details regarding further unforeseen delays and a formal request to have the Town of Lincoln's the final reporting date extended to May 31, 2021.

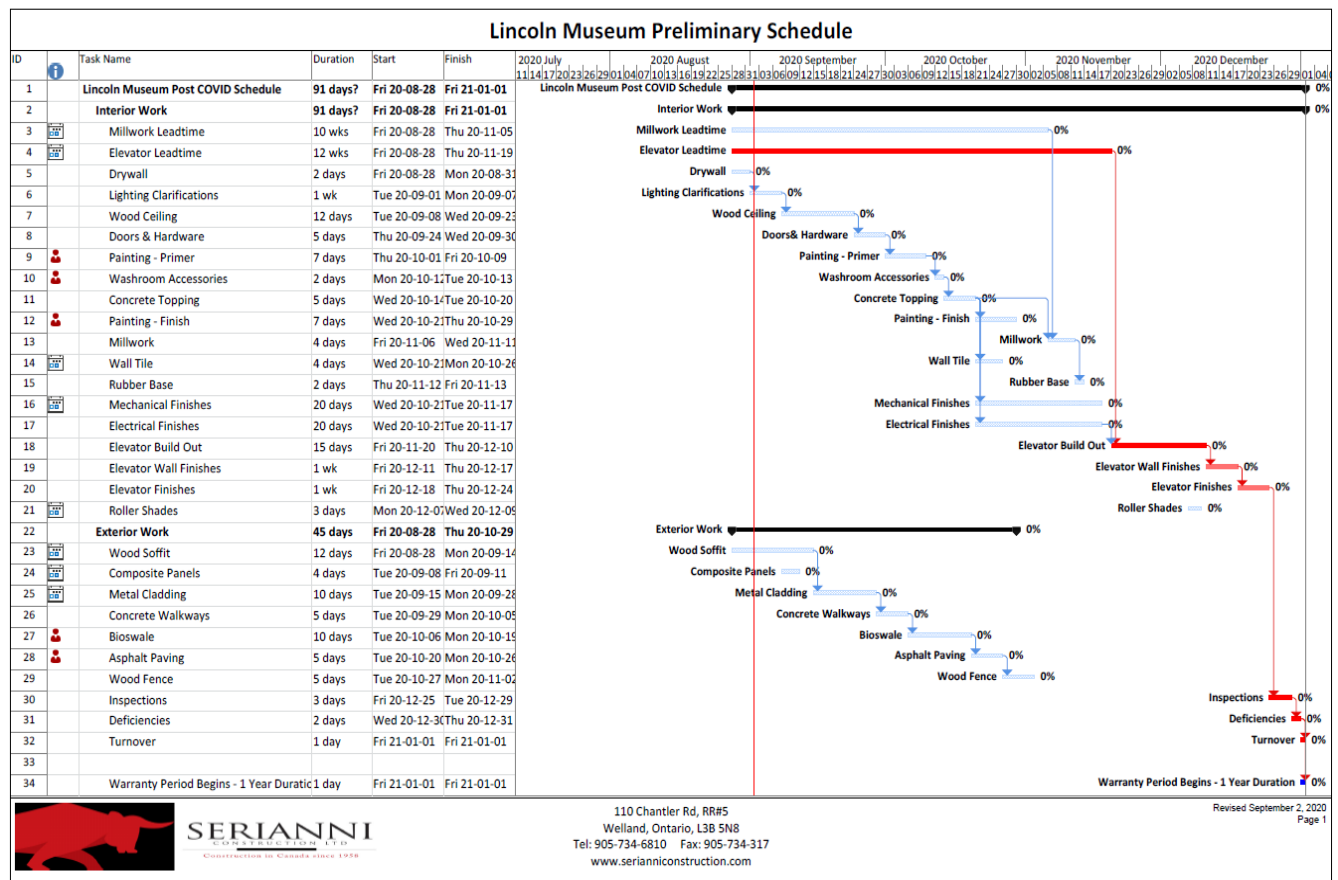
Resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite ongoing assurances from our prime consultant and general contractor throughout this summer that substantial completion would be realized well before the end of 2020, we have experienced work setbacks that have now negatively impacted the project schedule. Late yesterday, the Town received notice from its General Contractor (GC), Serianni Construction Limited, that following the successful completion of the final 'readiness check' by its industrial control systems integration firm, the new museum elevator has only now officially been put into production and requires a 12 week manufacturing lead-time. With an anticipated holiday shutdown in December, this could conceivably result in a mid to end of February delivery and install date.

Further background on this most recent and very impactful delay is rooted in a critical electrical component delay which occurred earlier this summer. The switchgear (main power system), a vital component for this project and scheduled to be delivered in June, was in mid-summer revised to be onsite by the end of August. As this date approached and passed the GC informed the Town that this component had been delayed as a result of global supply chain challenges resulting from many manufacturers not being able to scale to full capacity following the pandemic shutdowns and an ongoing shortage of raw materials. It was discovered that this critical component was being manufactured in Mexico and the United States and that despite missed targets for delivery, its arrival was still expected at any time.

Ultimately, the switchgear arrived onsite on October 13, 2020 and was installed and inspected by October 26th. The main power to the building was immediately scheduled to follow and was finally connected by NPEI on November 2, 2020. Unfortunately, Town staff only learned last week of the related chain of events resulting from the delayed switchgear arrival and subsequent main power connection by NPEI. Installation of the new elevator was planned to commence before the end of this month, per the GC's schedule below and estimated to take approximately six weeks.

Subsequently, with the recent rise in COVID cases over the past several weeks, the GC has also taken extra precautions to both carefully coordinate and limit the number of workers /different trades permitted on the jobsite thus also impacting the previous mid-fall project end schedule and the final reporting date in December.

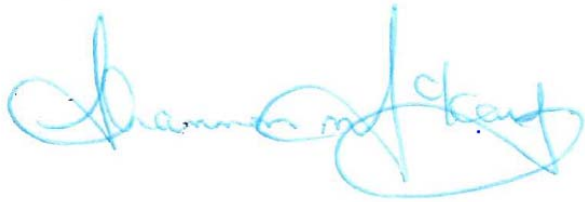
At present, the Team has confirmed that the project is 77% complete with upwards of an additional 15% of remaining project work expected to be completed before the December break/holidays. Below, the current project schedule as provided to the Town by the GC will shortly be updated to reflect the 12 plus week elevator production lead time. However, given the unforeseen delays in recent weeks, it is safe to assume that additional delays could be experienced and ultimately push this major construction project completion into the middle of Q2 2021.



Recent project progress pictures are included below for review.

Marian, please do not hesitate to advise if you have any follow-on questions or concerns about the Town of Lincoln's request and or the current status of the Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre development project.

Sincerely,



Shannon McKay, B.A., PMP
Director, Community Services, Town of Lincoln

Cc: Michael Kirkopoulos, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Lincoln
Mayor Sandra Easton, Town of Lincoln
Regional Councillor Robert Foster, Niagara Region

Project Progress Photos

August 2020

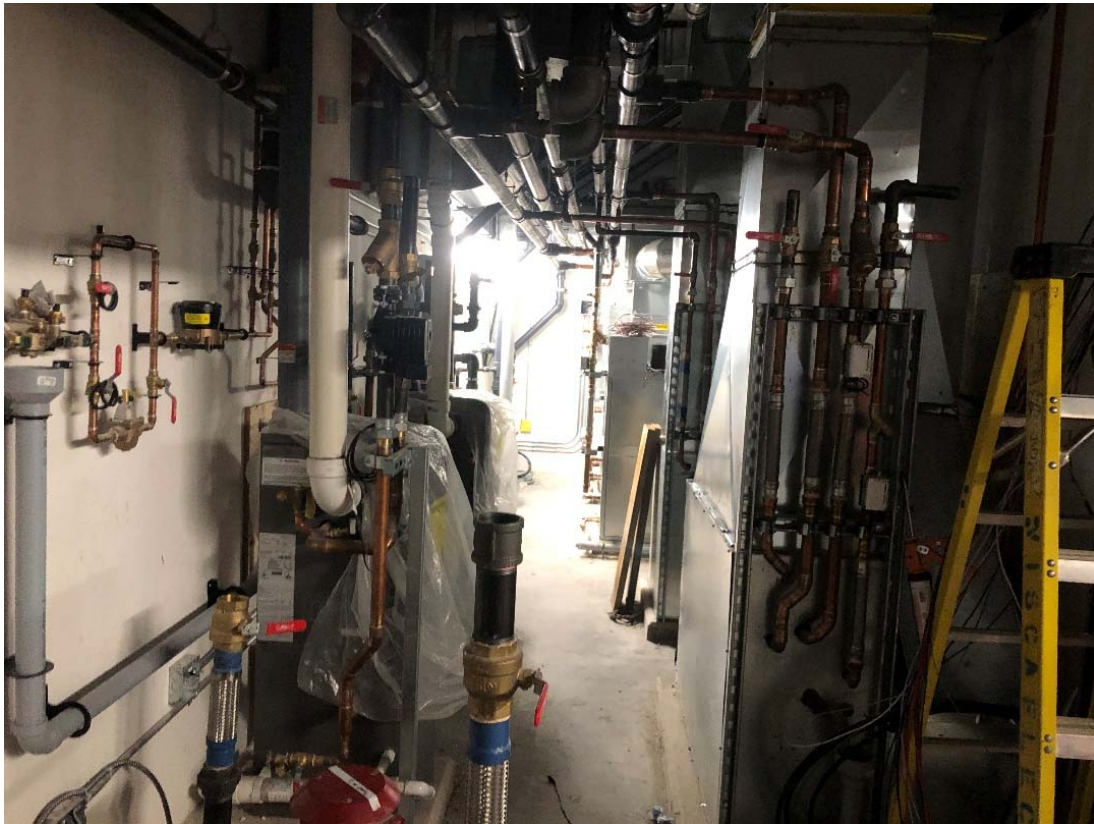


September 2020



October 2020





MEMORANDUM

ED 17-2020

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Economic Development

Date: December 9, 2020

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Valerie Kuhns, Acting Director, Economic Development

Economic Development

Current Status of Operations

This memo is the Economic Development Division's monthly update on our response to COVID-19 and business continuity. As previously reported, Economic Development's work is focused on leading planning for business recovery, through the Economic Rapid Response Team (ERRT) and the implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan. Actions in the Economic Recovery Plan are aimed at supporting our local businesses and are carried out in collaboration with the local Economic Development offices.

Regional Economic Development actively participates in the REOC and is collaborating with the Internal Organizational Recovery table as well as the Community Recovery Planning table to ensure that there is coordination and communication between the three recovery planning groups. We are providing input into the discussion about the economic indicators that will be used to monitor recovery.

Service/Operational Changes

We continue to monitor how best to respond to COVID-19 and maintain our business continuity throughout this time. There have been no operational changes in the last month, other than a realization that the team will be working from home in the longer term.

Significant Initiatives or Actions Taken

Campaign to support local business

At the time of writing this report, Economic Development is responding to the motion brought to Regional Council on November 18th and working with Communications to develop a campaign to support buying local. Feedback from the local Economic Development offices has been that we should compliment the existing buy local campaigns that are already running in their communities. A plan is being developed to support and amplify those campaigns. We are also working with the Chair's office and government relations staff on the advocacy ask in the motion.

Support to Businesses

An investment has been made in the expansion of the Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBECS) in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls to broaden their services across the entire region. They work directly with businesses to provide them with advisory services and information to assist in their recovery and help build resilience. Marketing support has also been provided to the SBECS in developing and managing the tools to host webinars including the Zoom webinar platform, Eventbrite for ticketing and the development of a calendar of events on the [Niagara Canada website](#)

The Niagara Canada website has received an overhaul on the [COVID-19 business support page](#) to capture all recovery information and sites. Sections include: COVID News; Recovery Support; Provincial and local resources; Resilient Niagara Stories; Financial support and Niagara PPE Provider directory. Website page views were 22,861 during the last 30 days, which is an increase of 2,790 over the same time last year. There were 256 returning visitors to the website and 3,971 visits in the last 30 days, up by 23.21% on last year.

Business Updates

The biweekly ERRT calls to our EDO colleagues, BIAs, Chambers and industry associations are being used as a communications channel, working with Public Health, to get information out to the business community. Most recently to solicit feedback on the Section 22 order and provide support to businesses by sourcing and sharing Section 22 information through telephone, email and website inquiries.

Open In Niagara Tool

Work is ongoing to transition the 'Open in Niagara' website to a permanent business directory to support buy local and domestic supply chain opportunities. This will include incorporating GIS information. In Phase one our existing database of 10,000+ businesses will be incorporated and it will be made easier to navigate. In Phase two a user experience will be built as well as a self-serve portal.

Resilient Company Profiles

We are developing profiles of 10+ Niagara companies that have successfully pivoted in these challenging times. To date almost all of the municipalities are represented with businesses from a range of sectors from manufacturing to agriculture to hospitality. These profiles will be featured on our website and will be shared by the EDOs.

Funding to Support Businesses

An application has been made by Niagara Region, on behalf of the ERRT and in partnership with Venture Niagara, to the Tourism Adaption and Recovery Fund. This fund is administered by Fed Dev Ontario. If approved, the fund would provide grants to tourism-dependent businesses to help them with the costs to adapt and stay in business during the shoulder and off season 2020/2021. At the time of writing this report we are waiting to hear if our application has been successful. In the meantime, the processes and documents are being developed to roll the funding out to businesses immediately. All of this is done in collaboration with our EDO colleagues.

Marketing support is being provided to Venture Niagara to promote the next round of RRRF (Regional Relief and Recovery Fund) which provides interest free loans to businesses.

Business and Economic Research and Analysis

As data becomes available for recent months, we are able to provide research and analysis updates to assist businesses and organizations in planning during these uncertain times. These reports include an Economic Update and the Impact of COVID-19 on investment and development in Niagara. These reports have also been provided, with presentations, to PEDC.

An investment is being made by Economic Development to purchase Equifax data which will provide an indication of the most financially vulnerable industry sectors, as a result of COVID-19. Once analysed, a report will be developed and will be shared with the EDOs and stakeholders.

Trade and Investment

FDi meetings are ongoing virtually, focused on the U.S. market and the U.K., working with a lead generation consultant who provides pre-qualified leads. In the U.S. 19 meetings have been completed to date, with follow up. There are 3 more meetings scheduled, with a target of 60 in 2020. The work was stalled due to COVID-19 in the spring so this campaign will run into 2021. In the U.K. 3 meetings have been completed with 6 more scheduled and a target of 15 meetings before the end of 2020.

Working with the Hamilton Niagara Partnership 15 meetings are anticipated to be held virtually in Florida. It is anticipated that this contract will be completed by the end of 2020. It was delayed for one month by the U.S. election.

The Foreign Trade Zone coordinator works to support the local export community. A webinar was developed to help businesses attend trade shows virtually. 'Building Meaningful Connections over Virtual Platforms' was held on November 5th, 65 people registered and 41 attended. The content of the webinar was directed at helping Niagara's trade community adapt to the travel restrictions and challenges due to the continued spread of COVID-19, with a specific focus on providing tools to help our trade community conduct business online and create sales through virtual platforms. This was very timely as two days before the webinar the Federal government announced a new investment into the CanExport Grant. This program offers SMEs up to \$75,000 in funding for specific types of expenses to explore new opportunities to sell their products and services outside of Canada.

Working with the region's EDO offices and our local trade commissioner, help is being provided to Niagara's PPE suppliers to join Global Affairs - Trade Commissioner Service: [Canadian COVID-19 Capabilities Directory](#). The Canadian COVID-19 Capabilities Directory shows what Canada has to offer in the fight against COVID-19 to potential buyers around the world. Two local businesses are currently preparing applications.

Operational Outlook

1 month

- Support municipal 'Buy Local' campaigns.
- Continue to provide information through website and social media to businesses.
- Resilient company profiles on website and promoted through ERRT.
- Funding from Tourism Adaption and Recovery Fund promoted and grants distributed to businesses (dependant on approval by Fed Dev Ontario).

3 months

- Implementation of Economic Recovery Plan completed.
- 'Open in Niagara' website expanded into a permanent regional business directory.
- Review work practices depending on Niagara Region recommendations and Public Health advice.

6 months

- Longer term strategic economic development planning started (depending on COVID-19).
- Continue to monitor economic indicators to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the local economy compared to previous years and determine where resources could best be utilized to maximize ongoing economic development programming.
- Review work practices depending on Niagara Region recommendations and Public Health advice.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Valerie Kuhns
Acting Director, Economic Development

MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 28-2020

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Planning and Development Services

Date: December 9, 2020

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Doug Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning and Development Services

Community and Long Range Planning

Current Status of Operations

In January, a presentation and report will be brought forward to Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) on the Climate Change Work Program. This will include an overview and update to the work program and directions with respect to climate modeling and projections in Niagara.

Last summer, the Region's Employment Work Program was delayed at PEDC's direction to allow work by the City of St. Catharines to be advanced. That has now occurred, and the Region will be reporting to PEDC on employment, along with other matters, in early 2021.

Also in the New Year, staff are anticipating receipt of key inputs from its consultants on land needs and affordability. This will allow staff to advance our work on these subjects, for presentation to local municipal staff, local and Regional Councils, key stakeholders and the public.

Official Plan policy development is continuing. Our intention is to provide Council with a comprehensive report in spring 2021. This will be a lengthy report that set out how all components are interrelated. It may include policies on subjects that are sufficiently advanced, such as aggregates, regional structure, employment (as noted above), housing, and secondary planning. This report will also provide information relating to environmental options.

The above-described Spring Report will be comprehensive and detailed. In January, we will provide a detailed report outline of what is forthcoming in that Spring Report.

Development Planning & Approval Services

Current Status of Operations

The following temporary, short term adjustments have been made to Development Planning & Approval Services as of November 5, 2020:

- Pat Busnello – Acting Director Development Approvals
- Lola Emberson – Acting Manager Development Planning

Development Planning & Approval Services continues to adapt to ensure the delivery of core development review functions including: review and comment on all development applications from a Provincial and Regional perspective, coordinating and analyzing internal review/comments from Urban Design, Environmental Planning and Development Engineering for a “one-window” Regional response.

The following development volumes were received by the department during October:

- Planning Applications (includes zoning, subdivision, site plan etc.) - **28**
- Engineering Applications (includes servicing reviews, site plan, etc.) - **14**
- Private Septic Applications - **43**
- Pre-consultations – **45**

The total volume of formal applications (**85** - excludes pre-consultations) represents a marginal decrease of **five** applications or approximately **6%** compared to October 2019 (**90** applications). October 2020 volumes also experienced a minor decline from September 2020 volumes of **101** applications (16 fewer or approx. 16%). Minor fluctuations in application volumes from month to month is anticipated, and this current routine fluctuation is not indicative of an economic downturn or other event such as the lockdown during the early stages of the pandemic where significant declines occurred (e.g. March decline in planning applications received was approx. 37%).

The new Regional Woodland Conservation By-law was approved by Regional Council in October and will come into effect on January 31st, 2021. Responsibility for enforcing the by-law, as well as the position of Regional Forester, will be transferred back to the Region from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA). The NPCA has

been notified of the termination of the service level agreement relating to the bylaw and recruitment for the Regional Forester has been initiated.

Infrastructure Planning & Development Engineering

Current Status of Operations

Development Engineering

We are continuing to respond to development applications with engineering comments, legal agreements for road works, and processing Environmental Compliance Approvals (ECA) under the Transfer of Review program for new sanitary and storm sewers. Additionally, we are continuing with Stormwater Management (SWM) review, Transportation review/meetings, and Water & Wastewater (W&WW) review/meetings as it relates to development applications and inquiries. We are working on the SWM Guidelines Project with Wood Consulting Engineers and assessing schedule/deliverables to adapt to current situation. We are participating in the MECP sessions on the proposed changes to the Consolidated Linear Infrastructure ECA Process for the entire sanitary or stormwater management system. Once fully implemented this will result in changes and new processes for all local municipalities and the Region for the two-tiered sanitary (wastewater) system and stormwater management system in Niagara.

Infrastructure Planning

We are reviewing the proposals received for the 2021 W&WW Master Servicing Plan (MSP) Update project in consultation with W&WW team. This is an important project for the Region and all local municipalities with urban water and sanitary sewer services. It will require significant effort, analysis, and consultation with the majority of work to be completed by end of 2021. The resulting growth capital water and wastewater projects are an essential input for the Development Charges Background Study and By-law update.

Collectively, there are ongoing corporate wide-efforts to coordinate long range planning/growth with infrastructure planning projects (2021 W&WW MSP update) and the upcoming Development Charges Background Study & By-law update.

Development Industry Liaison

We are continuing with the review of the potential build out scenarios for the urban areas in collaboration with planning group. This is necessary for the 2021 W&WW MSP update to evaluate servicing implications and supporting infrastructure. We are leading the development application process for the Linhaven and Gilmore Long Term Care (LTC) Redevelopment Projects and coordinating with St. Catharines, MTO, and other review agencies to ensure that site plan application can be approved and the timelines associated with this project remain on track (Government funding is tied to this as well). Participating with development industry meetings (NHBA) to understand impacts and restrictions from COVID to residential development industry and housing stock.

Private Sewage/Septic Systems Program

The Private Sewage System group (responsible for Part 8 of the Ontario Building Code) is continuing to receive and respond to septic permit applications, inspections, development applications, special requests and complaints.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Doug Giles, BES, MUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Ecological Land Classification Mapping Project

Planning and Economic Development Committee
PDS 33-2020

December 9th, 2020

Karen Costantini – Planning Analyst



making our mark

NIAGARA

OFFICIAL PLAN

PDS 33-2020

Ecological Land Classification Mapping Project

**December 9, 2020 – Presentation to Planning and
Economic Development Committee**



Overview

- New Niagara Official Plan
 - Mapping of the natural systems for the new Plan will require several sources of data to be compiled; a detailed methodology; and technical criteria for features to be established
 - The Ecological Land Classification (ELC) mapping project is an update to natural area mapping for the Region and is one data source that will contribute to the mapping of the natural systems
 - The exact application and criteria that will be applied to the ELC data is dependent on the natural systems options frameworks that have yet to be selected through the Natural Environment Work Program



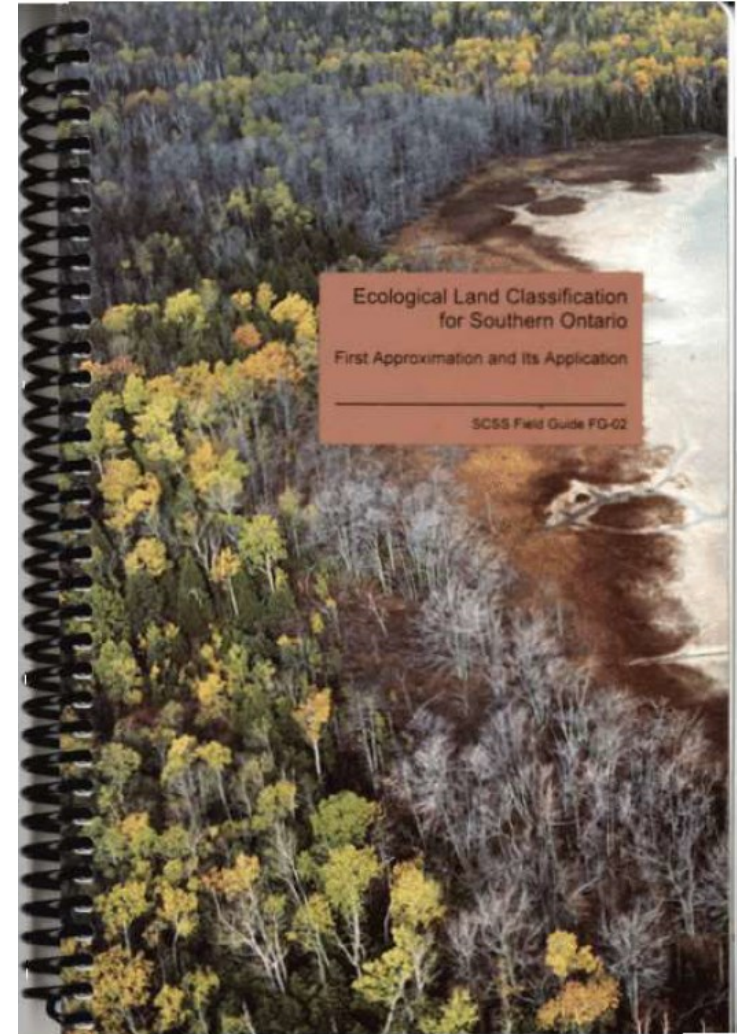
Overview

- Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario (MNRF)
 - Provides a comprehensive and consistent approach to describing, inventorying, and analyzing vegetation communities
- Project Framework
 - Natural Areas Inventory Project (NPCA, 2006 – 2009)
 - Completion of Community Series (ELC) mapping for watershed jurisdiction
 - Update to the NAI data, in collaboration with the NPCA
- Greenbelt Foundation
 - Partial project funding through the Resilient Greenbelt funding stream



Ecological Land Classification Protocol

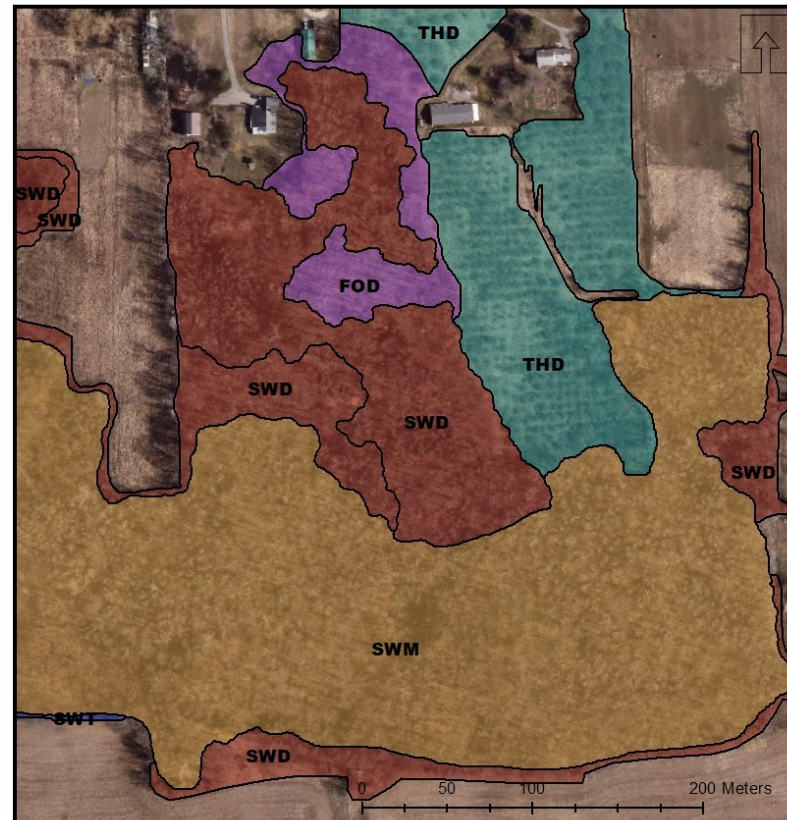
- Comprehensive and consistent province-wide framework for ecosystem description, inventory and interpretation
- Classifies areas into distinct landscape units
- Designed for use at varying scales (hierarchical framework)
- Completed by a certified ecologist or other practitioner



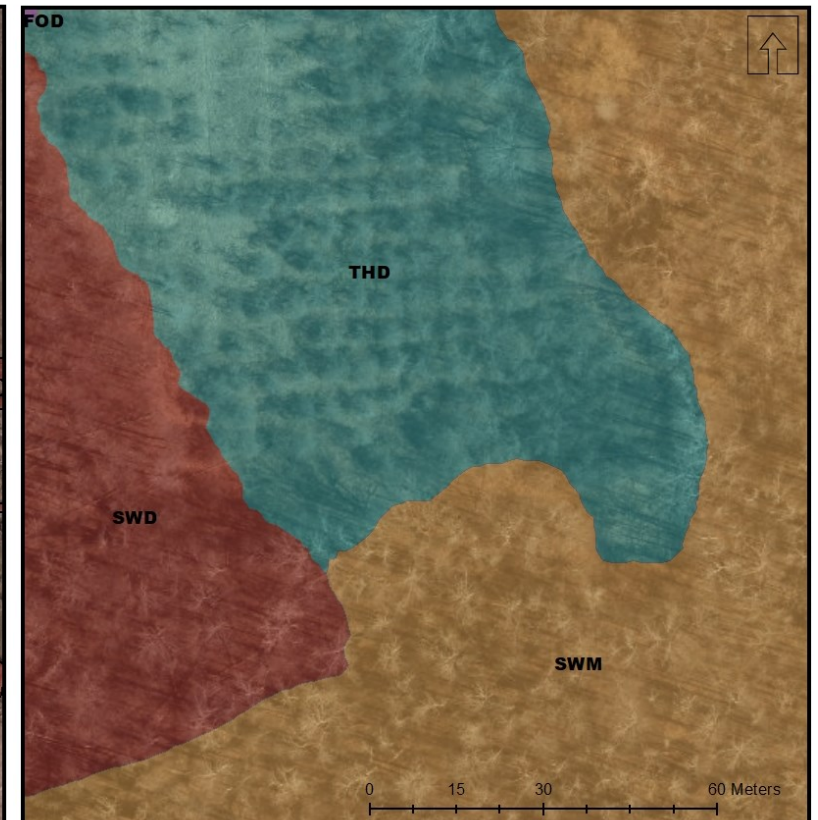
ELC Mapping



Aerial Imagery



Community Series Map



1:1,000 Scale

Field Verification Program

- 12 municipalities (August 24th to September 21st, 2020)
 - Urban and Rural areas – 1233 polygons verified
- Frameworks:
 - Collaborative with Regional, Local and NPCA Staff
 - Consultant only



Preliminary Data

- 27,166 polygons in dataset
- 50,987 ha of natural communities (27.1% of Region's land area)
- 18 community classes
- 54 community series

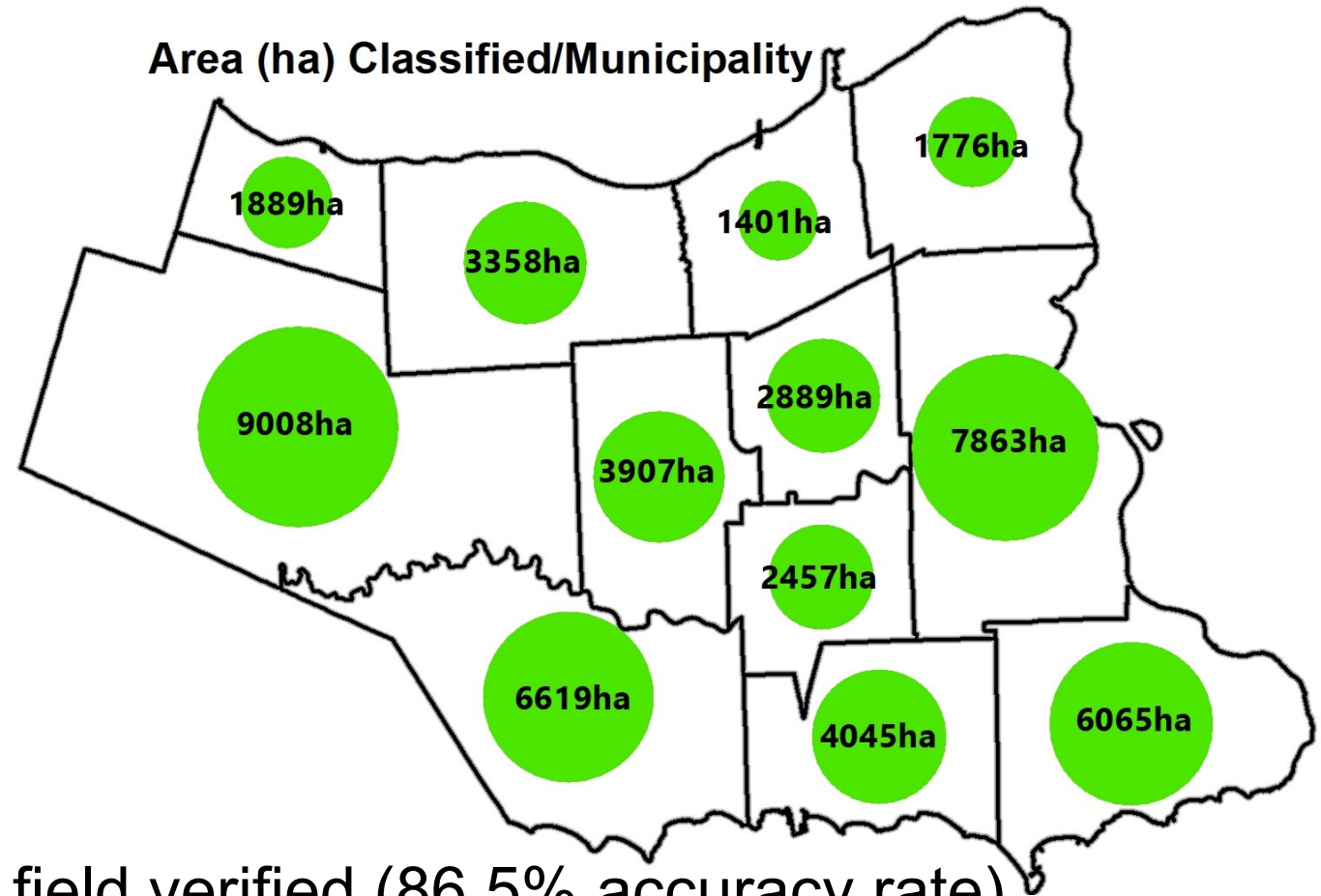
Community Class	Percent of Inventoried Area	Total Communities Identified
Agricultural	1.26%	609
Bluff	0.07%	28
Bog	0.90%	3
Cliff	0.09%	14
Forest	21.27%	5496
Hedgerow	1.68%	1625
Marsh	5.79%	3328
Meadow	8.09%	3052
Open Water	0.52%	75
Rock Barren	0.04%	20
Sand Barren and Dune	0.01%	4
Savanna	0.32%	92
Shallow Water	0.44%	115
Shoreline	0.37%	94
Swamp	49.46%	7788
Talus	0.04%	17
Thicket	6.70%	2973
Woodland	2.72%	1725



Preliminary Data

- 18.8% (35,515 ha) of the Region is 'wooded' communities
- 15.6% (29,213 ha) of the Region is wetland cover

There is overlap between the composition of each of the above



- 1233 polygons successfully field verified (86.5% accuracy rate)
 - 47 distinct community series, varying from 1 to 115 polygons of each community series



Future Use

- Mapping for the new Niagara Official Plan
 - Natural Heritage System
 - Water Resource System
- Environmental planning review
 - Development review
 - Stormwater management
 - Regional Forester
- NPCA
 - Restoration program
 - Land acquisition strategy
 - Watershed report card (2022)



Subject: Ecological Land Classification Mapping Project

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 33-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 33-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Area Municipalities, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and the Greenbelt Foundation.

Key Facts

- This purpose of this report is to inform Council of the process, and completion of, the Region-wide Ecological Land Classification (ELC) mapping project.
- This project was undertaken in collaboration with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) and with funding from the Greenbelt Foundation through the *Resilient Greenbelt* funding stream.
- ELC is a provincially-accepted approach for mapping natural features. In addition, this project included a field verification exercise which involved participation from Local and Regional planning staff and staff from the NPCA.
- The ELC mapping exercise was undertaken primarily to support the environment work program for the new Niagara Official Plan. However, the data will also have supplementary uses by the Region's environmental planning team and the NPCA.
- The ELC mapping is not the natural heritage system for the Region. ELC is a data source that will form the basis for several of the features included in the natural heritage system.

Financial Considerations

The costs associated with the ecological land classification mapping project were accommodated within the Council approved project budget for the Niagara Official Plan, with additional funding from the Greenbelt Foundation under the *Resilient Greenbelt* funding stream.

Analysis

As part of the new Niagara Official Plan, maps and schedules are being updated for all sections of the Plan. These mapping updates require inputs from numerous data sources.

In Niagara, there are several sources of natural heritage mapping, including Provincial, NPCA as well as Regional datasets. Each serving a different purpose and each with a different level of accuracy. Updates to several of these individual datasets are required to move forward with the mapping of the natural heritage and water resource systems.

Accurate inventory and assessment of natural areas and features is critical to environmental planning and processes. PDS 32-2019 (November 6, 2019) recommended that an ELC mapping dataset was the preferred option for identifying natural areas and information across the Niagara Region, as this method has a range of benefits associated with natural environment planning.

Beginning in 2006, the NPCA initiated the “Natural Areas Inventory” (NAI) project, in coordination with the Region, local naturalist clubs, and area municipalities. A major element of the project was the completion of comprehensive ELC ‘community series’ level mapping of natural areas. Updates to this data set continued through 2012, however, the bulk of the mapped data was derived from 2006 aerial imagery analysis. Natural environments are dynamic and constantly changing; as a result, significant changes to the landscape including development and succession since 2006 are not reflected in the dataset.

An update to the NAI data using high-resolution aerial imagery formed the approach for this project. A consultant was retained in spring of 2020, and the project has recently been completed. The NPCA has collaborated and provided technical feedback on this project, and Regional staff intend to provide a copy of the final data to the NPCA for their use.

Ecological Land Classification Approach

The ELC system is an industry-accepted methodology, which provides a comprehensive and consistent approach to describing, inventorying, and analyzing vegetation communities. ELC mapping is required to be completed by a certified ecologist or other practitioner.

ELC mapping can be undertaken at several different scales. For this exercise, the community series level was determined to be appropriate for the mapping update. This level of ELC is the most detailed level of characterization that can be produced from aerial imagery interpretation without the requirement of site visits at each location.

Simplified, the community series interpretative process involves creating a polygon-based spatial dataset, then analyzing and imbedding the polygons with classification codes representative of the feature. Coding for the community series is assigned through analysis of substrates, topographic features, history, cover values, and plant form and classified as one of 62 distinct community series types.

Field Verification Program

Community series level ELC does not require in-field site analysis. However, this project endeavoured to go beyond the minimum requirement and include a field verification component to foster an education of the ELC methodology and ensure a higher degree of confidence in the data amongst our local and agency partners.

A field verification exercise was completed between August 24 and September 21, 2020, within each municipality, and included verification of features inside and outside of urban boundaries. Each community was observed for characteristics including species present, wetland tolerance of species present, canopy cover, presence of standing water, presence of coniferous trees and evidence of disturbance or succession. The verification program was carried out under 2 frameworks:

1. Multi-Agency Collaborative Field Exercise

12 field sessions were held in a collaborative group setting which engaged Regional, NPCA and local staff from the 12 municipalities. These sessions generated participation from local planning staff in 11 of the 12 sessions, NPCA staff at 11 of the 12 sessions, and multiple Regional staff and ELC certified consultant team members. Overall, 25 different individuals participated in 1 or more of these sessions.

Local planning staff were invited ahead of time to identify any naturalized areas in their municipality for field review. Additional sites were selected with consideration for ease of access, parking safely, and allowing space for socially distant discussion with a group of 5 to 8. Municipal site visits included a variety of community types to provide a varying overview of the possible natural features present across the landscapes.

2. Consultant Field Exercise

The project consultant completed several additional field exercises. Field verification sites were selected from a randomized subset of the data with consideration of site accessibility and from polygons within 25m of a road with a low interpretation rating, meaning, those polygons in the spatial dataset that had been tagged as having lesser confidence in the community series code assignment from aerial photo interpretation.

Results

More than 27,000 polygons were derived or updated, across the Niagara Region through the mapping exercise. Fifty-four different community series classifications were identified covering a total of 51,618ha of land. The majority composition of the naturalized areas were; Swamp (49.46%), Forest (21.27%), Meadow (8.09%), Thicket (6.7%), Marsh (5.79%) and Woodlands (2.72%). Composition of natural areas, and the percentage of overall municipal area covered by the dataset, varied by municipality. The following table identifies the total area of land (ha), and the corresponding percentage of total land area within each municipality that was classified through the data.

Municipality	Area Classified (ha)	% of Municipality
Niagara Falls	7862.64	36.69%
Port Colborne	4044.73	32.58%
St. Catharines	1400.98	14.00%
Thorold	2889.29	32.59%
Welland	2457.37	28.99%
Fort Erie	6065.36	36.34%
Grimsby	1888.98	27.41%
Lincoln	3357.84	20.28%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	1775.71	13.17%
Pelham	3906.79	30.74%
Wainfleet	6618.89	30.18%
West Lincoln	9007.85	23.14%

Region-wide, the data identified 18.8% (35,515 ha) of the Region is 'wooded' communities with canopy cover (woodland, forest, swamp, plantation, treed). Additionally, 15.6% of the Region is wetland cover. It should be noted that this includes treed wetlands, which are included under woodland cover, and as a result, the two coverage types should not be expected to equal the total natural cover for the Region. It is also of note, that some direct comparisons of changes from the original dataset to the

updated data product are not possible due to several differences in the community coding methodology and classifications used, as well as the spatial difference between the Region's land area and the NPCA regulation area.

During the field exercise, 1,233 polygons representing 47 distinct community series interpretations were verified across the Region. The final accuracy rate for the verified polygons was 86.5%. The completion of the field review reaffirms that aerial interpretation is accurate at this level, and provides context for planning and policy decisions. The accuracy rating for the field exercise was expected to be lowered by the significant amount of polygons selected for review based on a low interpretive rating from the mapping exercise. Other factors influencing the accuracy rating included under estimation of absolute cover type as a result of analyzing spring imagery, and change in series code based on the cover type (e.g. mixed woodland to coniferous woodland).

Intended Use

The ELC dataset will provide a wealth of natural areas identification information. As previously noted, the ELC mapping itself is not the natural heritage system for the Region; it is a data source that will form the basis for several of the features that need to be mapped in the new Niagara Official Plan. No policies are developed based on the ELC dataset alone. For example, this dataset will provide the spatial information required to identify woodlands in the Region, but criteria still need to be determined and applied to derive significant woodlands. The data also has the capability to be used to identify additional features such as non-significant woodlands, non-evaluated wetlands, grasslands, etc.

Regional environmental planning review functions, including stormwater management review, will benefit and make use of the updated dataset for review of development files and when making land-use planning related decisions. In addition, staff will use the mapping when developing supporting guidelines and strategies targeted at enhancing the Region's natural heritage system. The mapping will also be frequently used by the Regional Forester to support decision-making, and can be considered as a candidate for the Region's open data initiative.

The NPCA intends use the data and derived statistic information to support their restoration program to aid prioritization and project targeting to areas that support clearly defined ecological objectives for the landscape. Additionally, the data will provide input and decision support value to the NPCA's land acquisition strategy, and will be used to update the Watershed Report card, which will be published again in early 2022.

Alternatives Reviewed

N/A

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report is being brought forward in alignment with Objective 3.2 Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship:

“A holistic and flexible approach to environmental stewardship and consideration of the natural environment, such as in infrastructure, planning and development, aligned with a renewed Official Plan.”

Other Pertinent Reports

- PDS 32-2019 - Natural Environment Work Program – Phases 2 & 3: Mapping and Watershed Planning Discussion Papers and Comprehensive Background Study
- PDS 3-2020 – Ecological Land Classification Mapping Update
- PDS 26-2020 - Natural Environment Work Program – Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Option

Prepared by:

Karen Costantini M.A.
Planning Analyst
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Doug Giles, BES, MUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Sean Norman, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner, and reviewed by Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Community Planning, and Isaiah Banach, Acting Director, Community and Long Range Planning.

Niagara Official Plan- Consultation Update

Planning and Economic Development Committee
PDS 35-2020

December 9, 2020

Dave Heyworth, Official Plan Policy Consultant



making our mark

NIAGARA

OFFICIAL PLAN

PDS 35-2020

Niagara Official Plan Consultation Update

**December 9, 2020 - Presentation to Planning and
Economic Development Committee**



Layers of Consultation

- Public - Virtual PICs & Surveys, Planning Advisory Committee
- Virtual Stakeholder Workshops
- Local Planning Departments
- Decision Making Bodies



Consultation Findings

- Many participants are interested in several topic areas of the Niagara Official Plan recognizing the interrelationships between topic areas.
- There is some understanding that growth management, infrastructure and the natural environment can not be considered in isolation of each other. However this is essential to understanding the Niagara Official Plan, and we will need to strengthen this message moving forward.
- The role of regional versus local planning for various policy sections will need to be clarified moving forward.
- Managing growth properly is the key to good planning for all the interrelated topics of the Niagara Official Plan.
- A comprehensive consultation report will be provided in the next several months for the Natural Environment Work Program that analyses the input received through the virtual PICs along with all the other input received through the 2nd Point of Engagement in greater detail.



Virtual PICs

PICs	Attendance	Questions
Natural Heritage System Options	68	64
Water Resource System Options and Watershed Planning	55	40
Growth Management (regional structure, land needs, growth allocations, settlement area boundary review, housing)	79	41
Employment lands, Urban Design, District & Secondary Plans	35	7
Agriculture, Aggregates and Archeological Master Plan	57	15
Transportation, Servicing, and Storm Water	38	44
TOTAL	332	211



Surveys

- Employment Policy Survey - 97 Participants
- Growth Management - 217 Participants
- Current - Natural Environment Watershed Planning
- Vision & Directives Survey - November/December



Planning Advisory Committee

- 8 citizens
- Professional background –business, agriculture, environment, engineering, planning
- Provide input & review policy
- Meetings ongoing - often bi-monthly



Stakeholder Engagement

- Area Planners
- Stakeholder groups - developers, agricultural & environmental
- Agencies - Province, NEC, NPCA, NPC



Indigenous Consultation

- Meeting with local Indigenous Communities & Treaty Rights groups
- Areas of Interest - archaeology, natural environment, climate change, housing
- Sharing portal established for information sharing



Decision Making Bodies

- Local Council Presentations
- Regional Council Workshops - February 2020
- Local Council Workshops - 1st Quarter 2020



Managing Growth Challenge & Opportunity

- Recognize the heterogeneous communities in Niagara while accommodating the growth that is coming.
- Create thriving complete resilient communities.
- Assist in addressing affordable housing and age in place issues.
- Protect our significant natural heritage and water systems which identify where not to develop.



Subject: Niagara Official Plan - Consultation Update

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 35-2019 providing an update on consultation for the Niagara Official Plan since March 2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 35-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA).

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on consultation which has taken place on the Niagara Official Plan since the last update provided in March 2020.
- The consultation strategy for the Niagara Official Plan is multi-layered, and includes consultation with the public, stakeholders, local planning departments and decision-makers.
- Overall, most participants have shown an interest in several topic areas of the Official Plan and recognized the interrelationships between topic areas.
- Our engagement showed that managing growth is the key challenge and opportunity. This includes recognizing the heterogeneous communities in Niagara while accommodating the growth that is coming; create thriving complete resilient communities; assist in addressing affordable housing and aging-in-place; address our changing climate and protect our significant natural heritage and water systems.

Financial Considerations

Council approved the resources to complete the New Official Plan over a 5 year period as part of the 2017 Budget Process.

The completion of the necessary background studies and preparation of the Niagara Official Plan along with appropriate consultation will require significant staff resources.

Analysis

Public Consultation

The Planning Department had to reconsider the delivery of consultation given the COVID pandemic. However, the use of virtual consultation methods along with the ability for citizens to call staff for discussion has been successful.

Since the last consultation update, public consultation has occurred through virtual Public Information Centres (PICs) and on-line surveys.

On-line surveys are demonstrating that they reach a broader audience and gather input from a wider demographic and participation across all municipalities. Virtual PICs allow attendees to bring forward questions and discussion on specific topics of interest resulting in more detailed discussion. Together, both of these formats are attracting more participation and complementing each other.

Virtual PICs

During the months of September/October 2020, six virtual PICs were held on key topic areas of the Official Plan. The following metrics are associated with these PICs:

PICs	Attendance	Questions
Natural Heritage System Options	68	64
Water Resource System Options and Watershed Planning	55	40
Growth Management (Regional structure, land needs, growth allocations, settlement area boundary review, housing)	79	41
Employment lands, Urban Design, District & Secondary Plans	35	7
Agriculture, Aggregates and Archeological Master Plan	57	15
Transportation, Servicing, and Storm Water	38	44

PICs	Attendance	Questions
TOTAL	332	211

Sessions lasted from approximately 90 minutes to two hours. Each session started with a staff and/or consultant presentation of 30-60 minutes followed by questions and answers. Participants could ask questions by typing and submitting questions or by calling-in. A recording of each virtual PIC, a copy of the presentation, and a table with input received in comment form and answers to questions that could not be provided during the sessions due to time constraints or need for further analysis are also posted on the Niagara Official Plan webpage.

A summary of the input received at the virtual public webinars is provided in two formats. The first is an outline of key themes raised through questions/comments for each session attached as **Appendix “1”**. The second is the detailed questions and comments (as submitted) received for each of the six sessions attached as **Appendix “2”**.

We highlight the following overall themes:

- Many participants are interested in several topic areas of the Niagara Official Plan recognizing the interrelationships between topic areas.
- There is some understanding that growth management, infrastructure and the natural environment cannot be considered in isolation of each other. This is essential to understanding the Niagara Official Plan, and we will need to strengthen this message moving forward.
- The role of regional versus local planning for various policy sections will need to be clarified moving forward.
- Managing growth properly is the key to good planning for all the interrelated topics of the Niagara Official Plan.
- A comprehensive consultation report will be provided in the next several months for the Natural Environment Work Program that analyses the input received through the virtual PICs along with all the other input received through the 2nd Point of Engagement in greater detail.

Online Surveys

Two online surveys, an Employment Policy Survey and Growth Management Survey have been conducted. Surveys were available online for approximately 1 month and were promoted through social media and stakeholder e-mailing to gather input.

Employment Policy Survey

There were 97 respondents to the Employment Policy Survey with participation largely reflective of the stakeholders consulted through the Region's Employment Strategy work. All municipalities were represented in terms of responses relative to location of residence and work.

Key themes extracted from the survey are provided in **Appendix "3"**. Many of these themes extend beyond the scope of the land use policy parameters of the Niagara Official Plan. However survey results will be shared with the Region's Economic Development and Transportation Divisions. The land use related themes are as follows and will be addressed by the employment program for the Official Plan:

- Niagara should prioritize municipal servicing and infrastructure for employment uses, including proactively providing servicing to vacant employment sites to make them more marketable.
- Employment development and redevelopment should be integrated within existing communities wherever possible and should blend with community character.
- Employment uses should be located with similar employment uses.
- Niagara's commuters have limited transportation options to get to work and would consider using an alternative means of travel, other than private vehicle, to get to work if it were reasonable and accessible.
- Niagara should encourage employers to promote transportation demand management practices and reduce surface parking spaces where possible.
- Employer needs, such as physical assets and building space, may shift as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Jobs that have transitioned to work-from-home jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic may remain as such after the pandemic.

Growth Management Survey

The recent Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan resulted in the need for further feedback on key areas of the Growth Management Program from members of the public, local area municipalities, public agencies, and key stakeholders. One component of this was gathering input through the Growth Management Survey. A total of 217 participants responded to the survey and a total of 102 comments were received. Respondents were asked to rank key growth management and select preferred options between various growth management scenarios.

This item is covered in greater detail in a separate Report PDS 33-2020 (and the accompanying presentation) planned for December 9, 2020 Planning and Economic Development Committee.

Future Surveys

There will be other surveys conducted on major topic areas of the Official Plan. Regional Planning Staff have recently released a survey seeking feedback on the goals and objectives of the Niagara Watershed Plan project which is also being prepared in support of the Niagara Official Plan.

Report PDS 9-2020 was provided to Planning Committee in March 2020. This report summarized public consultation to date but also provided preliminary statements and key policy directives to acquire future public input on. Public input via a survey will be gathered on these statements in November/December 2020 so that Council can consider them as guidance in the finalization of key policy directives for the Niagara Official Plan.

Planning Advisory Committee

Planning staff gather input from an 8 member Planning Advisory Committee comprised of citizens with professional expertise in business, agriculture, environment, engineering and planning. The Committee last met virtually in September 2020 for updates and discussion on growth management, natural environment heritage and water system options as well as the then-planned PICs.

Stakeholder Engagement

Area Planners

Throughout September and early October, Regional Planning Staff met, individually, with all 12 local Planning Directors and Planning Staff to discuss growth management matters relating to land needs assessment and methodology, growth allocations, employment areas, settlement area boundary review and regional structure. These 12 one-on-one meetings also included an update and discussion on the Natural Environment Work Program including the identification and evaluation of natural heritage and water system options.

Stakeholder Groups

During the time that the virtual PICs were being undertaken, Regional staff were also undertaking the 2nd Point of Engagement for the Natural Environment Work Program which included: the PICs; virtual stakeholder workshops with the development, agricultural and environmental stakeholders; meetings with local planning staff; presentations to Provincial Planning Staff; presentation to the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC); presentation to the Agricultural Planning and Action Committee; presentation to the NPCA Board , PAC, and Staff; and Presentations to Niagara Escarpment Commission and Niagara Parks Commission staff. This results of this 2nd Point of Engagement will be presented to Council in January under a separate cover.

Regional planning staff have also discussed the growth management and natural environment work programs with the Niagara Homebuilders' group.

There was a presentation on the Niagara Official Plan and the natural heritage and water system options to Team Niagara representing the Economic Development Officers in the Region in November 2020.

Indigenous Consultation

Planning staff have twice met with Indigenous groups on the Niagara Official Plan. A sharing portal has been established to share background information on the Niagara Official Plan. Consultation with Indigenous Groups will continue on the expressed topic areas of interest.

Decision Making Bodies

In the first quarter of 2021, Regional Planning staff plan to organise online workshops with Regional Councillors and Planning Directors for each municipality to discuss growth management, natural environment and other areas of interest. This will provide an opportunity for decision-makers to have detailed discussion with staff on these matters.

To date, Planning staff have twice made presentations to local Councils on the Niagara Official Plan. In the second half of 2021, there will be a third round of presentations to local Councils on the Niagara Official Plan on Official Plan policy directions. Local municipalities are encouraged to inform their citizens to listen in on the presentations.

Official Plan Moving Forward

An Official Plan progress report is scheduled for January 2021. This report will outline how different sections of the Official Plan will be reported on going forward given the interrelationships of the sections of the Plan.

A key theme is the interrelated nature of the sections of the Regional Official Plan and managing growth. Managing growth is the challenge and opportunity to: recognize the heterogeneous communities in Niagara while accommodating the growth that is coming; create thriving complete resilient communities; assist in addressing affordable housing and aging in place; and protect our significant natural heritage and water systems.

Alternatives Reviewed

There are many approaches to consultation. The consultation strategy for the Niagara Official Plan is being done virtually because of the pandemic and is incorporating: topic specific, public sessions and public surveys; virtual workshops with stakeholders groups; Indigenous consultation; and virtual workshops with local and regional council members. Consultation has been and will continue to be a fluid process moving into the next stage of policy formulation stage.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Consultation on the Niagara Official Plan is an important process in supporting Council's priority as a Sustainable Engaging Government. The Plan will address Council's other priorities, being: Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth; Healthy and Vibrant Community; and Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning.

Other Pertinent Reports

PDS 1-2020 New Niagara Official Plan-Public Consultation Summary
PDS 33-2019 Growth Management Program Update for New Official Plan
PDS 9-2019 New Official Plan Consultation Timeline Framework
CWCD 421-2019 New Niagara Official Plan Updates

Prepared by:

Dave Heyworth
Official Plan Policy Consultant
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Doug Giles, BES, MUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

*This report was reviewed by Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Community Planning, and
Isaiah Banach, Acting Director, Community and Long Range Planning.*

Appendices

Appendix 1	Key Themes from Virtual PICs
Appendix 2	Submitted PIC Questions and Comments
Appendix 3	Employment Policy Survey Themes

Appendix 1 - Key Themes

Natural Heritage Systems Options-Key Themes

- Advocacy for the most protective options and that environmental protection be prioritized above other land-use planning objective of the Region and the new Official Plan.
- Request for clarification on the steps of the work program including why mapping at this stage of the work program only being conceptual and misconceptions regarding the identification of a preferred option. ;
- Concerns related to the prioritization of environmental protection versus developable urban land.
- The importance of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss
- Questions and comments on the goals and objectives of the Official Plan and Natural Environment Work Program as well as discussion on canopy, tree, and vegetative cover in the Region
- Questions related to who pays for environment impact studies and determines significance of features associated with development applications.
- Reinforcement for the protection of appropriate buffers and linkages
- Recommendation that tree planting and other private landowner stewardship policies be included in the new Official Plan

Water Resource System Options and Watershed Planning-Key Themes

- Concern over the implementation of policies for unmapped features and timing of when system mapping would be available.
- Requests to prevent ground water contamination by policies that regulate the types of development on highly vulnerable aquifers.
- The importance of integrating watershed planning and growth management was stressed from the perspectives of protecting water quality and natural features in the urban area and reducing sprawl.

Growth Management (Regional Structure, Land Needs, Growth Allocations, Settlement Area Boundary Review and Housing)-Key Themes

- Questions on the methodology for growth allocation
- How the environmental policy review and watershed planning will inform the growth management work.

- The relationship between targets and growth and whether growth can be halted if targets are exceeded.
- Concerns over protecting established neighbourhoods from intensification.
- Concern over urban expansions and how they are assessed through the preparation of the Niagara Official Plan
- Clarification on the definition of “affordable” housing and that planning for “age in place” includes providing housing for the older and younger age demographics.

Employment Lands, Urban Design, District and Secondary Plans-Key Themes

- Clarification on the role different employment areas serve.
- The suitability of brownfields relative to future employment or conversion to other uses.
- The role of heritage building in urban design.

Agricultural/Rural Lands, Mineral Aggregate Resources, Archaeology-Key Themes

- Questions on site specific issues on expected or submitted aggregate applications in Niagara Falls, Fonthill and Port Colborne.
- Questions around the administration of the Archaeological Management Plan.
- Clarification as to how development can take place on some agricultural lands and not on others.
- Clarification on the region’s approach to identifying prime agricultural areas.

Infrastructure-Water and Wastewater, Storm Water, Transportation-Key Themes

- The relationship between development charges and provision of infrastructure.
- Question regarding the use of low impact development standards for storm water management.
- Questions on transit route planning and the provision of housing along transit routes.
- Site specific questions pertaining to existing or planned treatment plants.
- Incorporating cycling in planning for streets and at a broader community level.

Appendix 2 - Submitted Webinar Questions and Comments

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Natural Environment - Natural Heritage System
Submitted Questions
When you consider your recommendation, I would ask you to consider: Do you in your work and life, simply do what is the minimum so that you do as little as possible OR do you do what is right to do (3C) and work to have the best possible scenario, problem solving, and outcome, now and for the future?
why are we talking about conceptual? is there a reason that the proposed mapping is not completed and not conceptual????
only conceptual?
Enhancement areas "MAYBE" used but these are not saved or mandated in 3B and can be ignored. Is that correct?
Without the linkages in place, you will have heat sinks and heat islands which will quickly make the natural areas dehydrate or swamp. Are you aware of what destruction has occurred in Oakville and other towns/cities when linkages within the natural water courses and natural vegetation areas was not considered or maintained?
How can you not map the required federal and provincial requirements with what you have now? Without that mapping of the current situation, there can be complete destruction and then is it 'oh sorry' we made a mistake. You need to map what is there currently for any habitat including fish.
In the introduction of your technical report you note that this work is essential for the preservation of the Region's natural heritage and water resources. What I was not able to find is a stated goal/objective for the natural environment component of the new OP. What is the stated goal?
I was also not able to find any performance criteria for the various options. So how will you evaluate if the policies are resulting in the desired outcomes for recommended options and shouldn't these performance criteria be included at this stage of evaluating options?
How does this planning relate to the current development in many communities throughout the region?
Covid 19 has shown us how important natural areas are to our health and well-being. These natural areas need to be where people live. Which option, 3b or 3c, do you feel would best ensure that these natural areas are protected.
In the North South background paper there was some discussion about moving from the 30 per cent forest cover goal to 23 per cent. What was suggested was York Region. Since the goal is to accomplish more forest cover this seems to be defensible. However, I am going to suggest some additional safeguards. One is that plantations, should be considered part of forest cover. Another is that there be periodic reviews perhaps annually to determine if success is actually being made in Niagara in increasing forest cover.
Why not map fish habitat?
Why isn't fish habitat being mapped?
Environment Canada says that a minimum of 30% forest cover is required for human and environmental health, currently Niagara has only 17.5% coverage. How do we end up with each of the options? Please choose 3C, the other options are inadequate.
The background paper is opposed to specific policies for Short Hills Provincial Park. However, this could provide a means to link and expand the various natural areas outside the park. Could such policies be put into the plan to enhance other significant natural areas such as the Wainfleet Bog and Humberstone Marsh?

How would buffer sizes be determined? They often seem to be arbitrarily set
What priority will Linkages have within the Settlement Areas where there is an underlying designation (ie. residential) and proposed development, to ensure that there is no detrimental effect to the integrity of the complete NHS? Will the Region set the minimum buffer width that local municipalities must include or consider in their OP's for site specific applications?
Last night Mr. Norman mentioned that 3C was restrictive. Could you explain why and to whom was it restrictive.
How will you address the scope and scale of a proposal and studies. It seems that the "studies" could be differentiated. For example, a garage for 1 car is very different than a greenhouse.
Who determines what features in a woodlot are considered SIGNIFICANT and what else can be done to ensure that wooded land and wetlands don't change their designaiton based on a developers desires.
Further to Sean's first response, in consideration of balance across the Region from various perspective (Environmental, Social, Economic, etc.) have you considered how the options for 3A/B/C, will freeze lands more lands than are currently available for development and speed up the need for urban boundary expansions into the rural areas in several of the Region's municipalities?
Could polices be reviewed to require peer reviews of development applications that impact the Natural Heritage System? Right now having such reviews is at the discretion of the regional planning commissioner.
Where fish spawning areas are eliminated/disturbed by development, what possible measures may the developer be required to do.
how would these options impact the streams running through Niagara on the Lake e.g. One,Two and Three Mile Creek and also the historic Paradise grove Grove
When you say that climate change is being considered throughout the overall plan (mentioned with one of the very first slides that includes a pie chart) are you saying that the region's current research and understanding on climate change (climate change discussion paper 2019) is a primary guiding principal? If so, why hasnt this been made clear on this slide in regards to all aspects of the plan?
Concerning enhancement areas in the map you showed as an example, enhancement areas largely occurred around the edges of woodlands. Wlould this not suggest that the buffers were not large enough to protect these natural areas. Therefore, why go for the minimum requirments for buffer? Make buffers manditory as suggested in 3C. Go for option 3C which are most protective of the natural areas.
If a developer is altering the tree canopy, is that same developer responsible for tree planting and restoration in the said subdivision?
Your consultant stated that this is the development of concepts. If that is true, why have you included preliminary preferred options in the Technical report that was presented to the PEDC/Council? It appears that you are narrowing the choices before you receive feedback/input from the consultation process.
The minimum buffer approach in agricultural areas could take agricultural land out of production. How will these competing interests be addressed?
Considering NHS and WRS as continuous systems, linkages are essential to analysis, protection and enhancement of features and must include settlement areas. I support 3C.
Have other municipalities chosen an equivalent to 3C? Should Niagara not select the best option?
Have you confirmed that the Provincial Natural Heritage System mapping is correct? Will these be done?
Does this planning also take into consideration current pollution whether industrial, residential, agricultural - how to exacerbate / improve?
If climate change is the over arching concern shouldn't a 30% canopy cover be a primary consideration?

Regarding the forest cover issues. Since agriculture plants also provide some of the environmental benefits of forest cover, how is Niagara's agriculture considered in assessing the required forest cover? Clearly there is substantial benefit to both air quality and wildlife species of having so much agriculture in the region, whether it is fruit trees or even vineyards.
Have the municipalities in the Region shown support toward any one of the Options and do they have any concern about losing money from development charges as this roles out and how that will impact tax payers?
Will the site specific studies be paid for by the developer? If so that introduces an extreme bias as reported in the Auditor Generals report on the NPCA. Do any of these options provide 100% protection for significant woodlands/wetlands/wildlife habitat/flooding mitigation?
How will cumulative effects be considered as proposals are assessed over time?
Is the goal of the NHS and WRS to provide the best protection for natural and water resources or to provide flexibility for developers?
In response to your comment tha Niagara should be exempt from striving for a 30% canopy because the cause is farming; Given that agriculture is important and it would take a fair bit of time that we really don't have to adjust how that is done to be more environmentally responsible, then doesn't it then make sense to limit all that housing deveolpment that is currently encroaching not only on green spaces but also on farm lands? The fact that farming is responsible for our low level canopy should not be used as the excuse, but should be seen as a challenge to be over come.
In the Technical report, under the evaluation criteria Ensure protection of the natural environment system, you state that Option 3C best ensures the protection of a region-wide N.H.S, including within settlement areas. If there is an option that ensures the best protection and provides a resilient and I would add healthy and sustainable natural environment why shouldn't we pursue that option (i.e Option 3c)?
In section 5.0 (page 53) of the technical report you identify preliminary preferred options based on the criteria noted on the prior pages. I assume the coloured circles are your recommendation for each specific evaluation criteria. Option 3C has 3 green circles and option 3B only has 2 and ¾, so can you help us understand the rationale for recommending Option 3B as a preliminary preferred option?
There is constant reference to promoting development in Urban Areas. However, we know that Urban areas are continuous areas, which include sensitive areas. Why is there an implication that the sensitive areas are open for development simply because they are zoned Urban?
Where can we find the provincial NHS mapping?
Reagarding Discussion Question #2: Why are we provided with two non-option options (1 and 2), two bare minimum options (3a and 3b) and only one substantial option (3C)? Why are there not more options that do more than the bare minimum?
In the cover letter supporting the Technical Report, it states, "The preliminary preferred options are the recommendations of the Consultant team and are supported by the professional opinion of Regional Planning Staff. The preliminary preferred options still require the input of the public, stakeholders, and Indigenous groups." My question is – you have already recommended preliminary options, so what type of information/input might cause you to reevaluate your recommended preliminary options?

This is so that you have my verbal question in writing - thanks.

Going beyond minimum standards

Major question - How much tree planting will be involved?

Sub question to that - Will there be Carolinian Forest included in that?

Tree planting is an excellent way of helping climate change such as,

- a carbon sink - whether a small area or a large area,
- the mental health that greenery provides residents (regardless of who or where the resident is) - and particularly within settlement areas (trees reduce heat sinks, trees help drainage, etc),
- improves wildlife as well as bird, wildlife, & fish habitats,
- improves shorelines (whether rivers, lakes, etc) as well as wetlands
- improves maintenance within agricultural lands,

to name a couple.

Essentially, is there a tree planting program?

Submitted Comments

Your maps are not clear. growth areas are a line across the map, but not an enclosed area identified. It is not clear what the growth plan area is.

You say your goal is to set DIRECTION. Your technical report says "Option 3C best represents a FORWARD thinking SYSTEMS APPROACH ..." Why would you choose anything BUT the BEST, forward-directed Option (C)?

Sometimes an area used for recreation and/or active transport may not include key natural heritage features and so not acquire planning protection. I would suggest that such areas should be added to the list

Given that the provincial standards are inadequate and constantly are being loosened in a time when the concerns and need for environmental action are increasing, how could any option other than 3c be a serious consideration? I see with my own eyes in Thorold the massive development taking place. For example, there is a proposal to develop 77.9 hectare parcel of land on the northside of Chippawa Parkway. I see development taking place on Beverdams road which is in the middle of wetlands. When do we get to hear the take of the indigenous community. Our canopy is only 17.5%. We need to do better and that must take priority over development especially in green field spaces.

I believe there is an oversight in not recognizing the Province's Growth plan is significantly flawed. It's a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to recognize regional geography, and limitations. Niagara Region is a perfect example that crystallizes the Province's Growth plan's deficiencies. Geographically, we are an island, surrounded on three sides by Water, which constricts, and conflicts with our ability to grow responsibly, as it pertains to rapid real estate growth, and population growth. This puts enormous pressure on local Environment features, and is currently being realized in Niagara.

How do you mitigate Municipalities with independent agendas? Who have no climate plan, and who are willing to work to overrule PPS and best practices?

(apparently this format restricts the length of questions/comments, so I will continue after the cut-off)

I appreciate the amount of time and effort that has gone into this. But why are these the only options presented? From the perspective of Environmental Conservation during a Climate Crisis, and with all due respect, none of these options are optimal or acceptable. I humbly request that staff go back to the drawing board and present a plan that more effectively addresses the urgency, and imminent impact of climate change. I cannot stress enough, that first and foremost, this needs to be visualized through the lens of climate change with applicable sense of urgency. This must be the top priority to preserve what we all love about Niagara. We cannot blunder our way through this, as recent Developer Violations at Thundering Waters clearly demonstrate. The options currently being presented and recommended by staff are not the best options for the Environment. And the most protective options offered, are at best a weak compromise, if our Natural Heritage is to be properly protected for future generations.

Not just regarding fish habitat there is a lot of problem with lands which could be corrected through Significant Wildlife Habitat designations. Mapping of these lands right now is largely limited to deer wintering areas. It seems that a lot of work has to be done.

regarding forest cover the NPCA did a study which should a large area in agriculturally zoned lands which is actually reverting to forests naturally. I don't know what the actual percentage of the landscape this is. From looking at these maps it seems quite substantial. If this area was known the goal of 30 per cent might seem more realistic. These lands will likely become mature forests eventually if the agricultural designations are maintained and the land is not urbanized.

the city of Toronto has a very good approach and it posted on the website. Hamilton is working on a Biodiversity plan. can this approach be utilized!!

Bill 68 requires municipalities to demonstrate how they will maintain, protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the municipality. The option that best meets this (3C) should be strongly considered by the Region.

Please ensure that all questions and answers, and those that cannot be answered within the time allotted, are answered and posted on the Region's website with the PIC background documents for full transparency.

Thank you!

Regarding Peer review the current system on relying on provincial agencies has recently been weakened by the reduction in the commenting role of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. (MNRF) Also two letters by MNRF which were critical of environmental work by developer proponents in the case of Thundering Waters were never released to council or the public. I also received them with the help of the now disbanded Local Planning Review Support Center. This pattern would seem to show that a stronger provision in the regional plan needs to be added regarding peer review.

Regarding claims that protection of natural areas would create pressures to expand urban boundaries most of these lands are already protected to some degree and excluded from development potential. The exclusion of lands as enhancement areas would likely be limited in scale. The urban boundaries are quite large, especially because of the expansion in Fort Erie just south of Niagara Falls (Douglas Town) which came out of a judicial battle and has yet it seems to be recognized in urban boundary capacity.

Paradise Grove is a good example of a savannah habitat. These need to be recognized and protected in the official plan review. Right now protected ECA lands are all forests.

How do I get on this committee (committees)? You seem to not have a member-of-the-public (or members). Despite the importance of experts, the public probably needs to be involved here - not just at public meetings like today.

My email is janetashleypollock@gmail.com

Great discussion. Thank you.

Thank you - a good & informative meeting.

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Natural Environment - Water Resource System

Submitted Questions

is modeling growth upwards in a livable style like Singapore has done being considered?

I'm a newcomer to Niagara. I'd like to know why we have development on top of highly sensitive aquifers and what impact that has.

when are you be able to provide the full mapping on not only the watershed mapping and the natural heritage system ?How can one comment on this without the true facts?

also have you looked at what the correlation is between the growth numbers that have been put forth by the province and the impacts of those numbers to these proposals?

I am not sure why you are seeking input from the general public at this evidently very preliminary stage of the proceedings. After sitting through almost three of these presentations, I conclude that either I am not intelligent or that these sessions are not useful to the average lay person. I would need several introductory tutorial in order to begin to understand what you all have been saying. I feel you are talking mostly to yourselves though there may be other listeners who do understand you. I think that the presentations are extremely conceptual (as you acknowledge), highly abstract, consisting mostly of "motherhood" statements, while admitting that nothing definitive is being proposed. I get no idea of what is being proposed on the ground, area by area so that I can tell you what I feel about it. Basically, will you tell me you will stop the further destruction of Niagara's natural resources? Simplistic question???

Question: I guess I am not allowed to ask verbally on Zoom? Why is there no recognition of the need to PROTECT OUR AQUIFER in the South Coast of Niagara??? The need to protect human drinking water is paramount. Sorry Ron Schenckenberger, there is NO concern of developers to protect our AQUIFERS.

how to deal with past construction for example culverts etc. that have negatively affected the flow rate. This is definitely been the case at the 12 mile creek located in reach 8 the east tributary from Tremont Dr to Highway 406. This has caused accelerated erosion on the embankments near existing large apartment buildings putting over 300 or more tenants at risk. What will be done about this?

Why would we exclude settlement areas? - Aren't those artificial boundaries for watershed planning as some of the features and indeed the impacts to the watershed extends into settlement areas.

Did I hear you correctly that WRS Option 2A will map floodplains outside of the settlement areas, but not with them?

As development continues, is it not important to require all subsequent development proposals to undergo cumulative impact assessments?

In terms of identifying and informing healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems would various Marsh Amphibian/Bird Monitoring surveys; Breeding Bird Surveys which have been conducted for decades be of use?

What solutions are being put forward at the 12 mile creek that have been negatively affected of the watershed in the area and erosion of the embankments. Specifically Reach 8 of the east tributary from Tremont Dr and Highway 406 have been negatively affected by accelerated flow rates. This has been caused by culvert construction for example that have caused accelerated erosion that has put some apartment buildings at risk (over 300-400 tenants). The City and the Region is aware of these problems for last twenty (20) years.

How polluted are we?

My sense is that this is being done to increase the population in the Niagara Region. This is due to people not being able to afford to live in the GTA. This means increase pollution and traffic on our highways. This pollution etc. impacts our water. This completion of this planning is a long way off - and developers are moving as fast as they can to develop areas that may be sensitive to our water. Will the province's desire to increase population in the Niagara region overtake the common sense that should result from this work?

The NPCA Watershed report card shows surface water quality with a "D" rating. Furthermore, this has been rated "D" since at least 2012 - which WRS option 2A or 2B will provide the greatest improvement in water quality?

What is going to be done to deal with new commercial and residential developments that are being proposed that will have negative long term effect on the water tributaries? There are many examples of garbage and pollution created by these developments but there has been no controls put in place to ensure our Niagara watercourse are maintained. What operational risk controls will be put in place to ensure there is no overdevelopment near the Niagara watercourses and flood plains. Also, will there be substantial penalties and enforcement put in place?

There was a substantial inventorying of natural areas, validated by field studies, called Nature for Niagara's Future - has this information been incorporated into your work?

There are streams that go through car wreckage yards in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie. Should not these streams be diverted from these areas to avoid future contamination?

It is excellent that the Region is taking a progressive stance with respect to meeting the policies outlined in the PPS 2017 for the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan. Thank you for acknowledging the NPCA and the RAP program as a valuable partner. Karst formations were mentioned as an area of potential future study, as a hazard area will the NPCA be involved with this study? Will a copy of the slide presentations be available after the meeting?

Last evening you mentioned that Fish Habitat would not be mapped, but there would be some sort of policy protection. How can policies be implemented to protect something that isn't mapped?

There are a lot of Karst areas in Smithville within the area being proposed for expansion. Are these areas being excluded from potential development, since Karst can be pathways for contamination.

Considering the Niagara Region's past performance and failing grade. Why wouldn't the best choice be to protect our Natural Heritage and Water Resources be paramount?

What do you see as the major long-term differences - impact-wise - between Options 2A and 2B?

Submitted Comments

Can't hear - please get closer to mike!

Comment - not question:

Ontario government has a watershed flow assessment tool - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/watershed-flow-assessment-tool>

as does Brock University

as does Ministry Northern Development and Mines, Ontario Geological Survey

Apologies, Karen, should have said, Brock University Earth Sciences

<p>Sidestepping drinking water, wastewater management, etc & their infrastructure ...</p> <p>How good are our water resources in Niagara region?</p> <p>Will the following be considered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as in recreation - fishing, swimming, shorelines/beaches, etc - as in flood control, water table - as in utilization by agriculture, industry, the Welland Canal, and urban developers - as in utilization by the indigenous population (hunting, fishing rights) - as in "how many exceptions?" - particularly ones that aren't efficient or safe or climate-friendly <p>and so on.</p> <p>It seems we haven't had a good report card score for a long time - we're pretty polluted.</p> <p>Really like the Goals & Objectives.</p>
<p>Reference material suggests that 2B is the better choice for water resources system for region-wide features because it includes settlement areas.</p> <p>It is essential to choose the best Option 2B which includes linkages in the settlement areas, appropriate for a continuous hydraulic/hydrologic WRS</p> <p>2B provides better protection for small linkages and features in and out of settlement areas as well as buffers.</p>
<p>I am concerned about the orange coloured areas marked for watershed studies based on future urban expansions. This is the first time I have learned of any urban expansions being considered through this plan review. On a need basis there is no reason for any urban expansions since this is supposed to be calculated on a regional basis. An attempt a few years ago to have an urban expansion in the Smithville area was rejected by the province since the rationale of a separate western need area was rejected by the province as a violation of both the Growth Plan and the PPS.</p>
<p>We NEED Niagara Region to protect our drinking water. Without CLEAN drinking water there is no reason for jobs...</p>
<p>The one area that I see an urban expansion concern is the Douglastown area of Fort Erie. This is because this area was essentially imposed by the province through the courts. A watershed plan re urban growth would be a helpful form of damage control.</p>
<p>Please suggest possible responsible uses for exhausted aggregate quarries where quarrying has been done into an aquifer.</p>
<p>Not sure how to speak in this call?</p>
<p>I was also shocked to see urban expansion areas proposed for north west Niagara Falls. Urban needs could be served within the urban boundaries in the Chippawa area. This is one of the reasons that the region is going ahead with the new sewage treatment plant here, so that infrastructure capacity problems in south Niagara Falls do not stop growth on lands which are appropriately zoned.</p>
<p>There was no discussion of strategies to clean up ground water contamination. This is a serious problem. Such situations on lands such as the former General Motors site are a big barrier to needed intensification. Seeing clean up costs as part of a strategy to curb ground water pollution is an important way to get action on this problem</p>
<p>appreciated you bringing forth my questions , however i never recieved an answer or commitment of when the mapping would be available.</p> <p>and to blame the provincial government is certainly a kop out!!!</p>
<p>I witnessed illegal dumping in Niagara Falls. This is known to the city council but nothing seems to be done about it. Could stopping such actions be part of a strategy to protect ground water.</p>
<p>I think that because contamination / pollution seems to be quite a concern, this portion of planning should address this issue. Please don't ignore your public.</p>

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Growth Management
Submitted Questions
How does the Region decide how much growth is allocated to any given municipality?
The planning is focusing on established communities. regions such as Wainfleet has no "established communities and based on your definitions will be excluded from the planning. West Lincoln also has minimal growth planned. Are these communities going to have support to maintain their infrastructure needs to allow the projected growth in the designated areas?
Are these current webinars available for future viewing?
will the reports to council in winter 2020/ 2021 confirm the amount of land needed for growth AND identify the locations where urban expansion is recommended?
thank you for an informative presentation, truly appreciate the detailed. Given how the focus is on creating complete communities, what is the region's plan on creating community benefit agreements with developers to ensure the communities where development happens receive the localized benefits they need specifically to their neighbourhood. Does the region have an official community benefit agreement policy as a strategy to include inclusive growth?
With regards to the housing growth needs versus employment land growth requirements, has it been taken into consideration that many residents coming to Niagara are retirees?
How is Specialty agriculture defined?
with 3 different mapping proposals , what would be the change in settlement areas and numbers between all three mapping proposals and whe will we see full and concise mapping instead of what has been proposed.
I am curious about how the environmental policy review will inform the urban land needs study specifically? Can you provide more information on how the impacts of the proposed policy framework and policies will be quantified?
As Planners determine the vacant land inventoryj/parcels within their own municipalities, and that information is provided to the Region to assist in developing allocation targets and density (# of persons per household/etc) of those parcels, what role does the Council of the municipal have in this process and can a Council request reconsideration of the allocation given to it? As the allocations to municipalities are "minimum targets", does a municipality have any ability to slow or stop development if targets are achieved earlier than 2051? As required in Amendment 1 of the Growth Plan, how are market forces now a requirement in determining land needs methodology and allocations within municipalities?
At the Natural Heritage session there were a number of identified areas where urban boundary expansion are taking place. One was Smithville, which I noted could result in negative environmental impacts because of the presence of Karst formations. There were at least two other urban boundary expansions which were identified. Two of these were in western Niagara Falls. Could all the areas where these expansions are being considered be mapped be clearly identified tonight. Could it be clearly indicated how people can be involved in what I believe from the previous meeting the watershed planning excercies which are guiding these excercies.
secondary question is: what is the region's community engagement strategy in hearing resident voices from equity seeking communities: BIPOC, persons without homes, etc.
when is the urban boundary line will be finalized?

Following up on the question by John Bacher, does the Region not have the authority to defer ALL urban expansion considerations to a date after the finalization on the Official Plan? I believe it should have this authority and as such NOT permit any expansions before that date.
How will the Niagara Region expect to reach the goals outlined by the province - and how well will the Niagara Region meet the goals
that is population goals supported by bi-partisan
Even though the province is predicting our growth related to an aging population.....is there any thought, activity, strategy to adjust this prediction to have a more "complete community" that include the younger demographic.
Talk about using the current infrastructure efficiently: the main water supply pipe is on Vansickle road, and the Niagara Health St.Catharines Centre had built for many years. Is any growth plan around the West end of St.Catharines around the Hospital?
Niagara-on-the-Lake is a very special place and as such has in the past been given a target of 15% intensification over about 26 years . However over the last five+ years we have been told that this is a minimum number of units and therefore we have seen staff recommendations and Council approvals of lots close to sensitive natural areas and in the Old Town Established residential areas quite regularly. My question is how do we protect our built and natural areas from these types of development as required under the heritage act and through provincial and regional and local environmental policies?.Gracia Janes
contamination of brownfields is a major barrier to good planning. Could strategies be developed to address these problems including financial assistance from senior levels of government? In the past there was no serious effort to estimate brownfield capacity. While the 30 year planning effort normally encourages sprawl, if it is assumed that some time in this period brownfields will be cleaned up it would encourage better planning.
How will you / do you define 'affordable' with regards to housing. It is a relative term. , so how do you plan to define and
re-define as you move through the years, and across the various municipalities.
With respect to my question.... Well I presented these concerns to the regions over a DECADE ago!!!! A lot of property owners have. What is the hold up with respect to getting some traction on this?
What are we DOING to keep these younger people here. Housing?? what about jobs strategy ??
Sorry i cant voice talk in. But, I would like to know how the Region of Niagara will allow building that is necessary to meet the provincial goals. We have to build
Can Mr.Giles explain the difference between HOUSING AFFORDABILITY and AFFORDABLE HOUSING one is subsidized and one isnt?
how will the region work with developers and builders to achieve housing affordability and remove roadblocks and delays that add to the cost of housing. More affordability =less affordable housing!!!
Submitted Comments

When the Niagara Region in the past was determining if any urban boundary expansion in the past, it determined this on a region wide basis. It seems that now already it has been determined that certain municipalities based on their own needs will need expansion. This seems to be a negation of region based planning. It seems to preclude encouraging filling in urban boundaries in municipalities like Fort Erie and Port Colborne before any urban boundary expansion takes place in Niagara.

There is an area known as Douglas Town in Fort Erie, which I believe has a lot of land for potential urban expansion. This is because a court over ruled municipal efforts to restrict growth here. Since land owners appear to have a right already to develop here, it would appear that watershed studies are urgently needed to restrain it in an orderly way. This area could also be a good alternative to urban expansions which would permit new site alterations on farmland and natural habitats.

We feel the lower level tiers of municipal govt are being resisting development that is needed to meet affordable housing needs

Jobs is what matters!!

there are aggressive needs, the province has dictated this

we have to meet the needs as dictated

only by box

this is a great need to meet the needs of the community

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has targeted NIMBY communities that refuse to allow 'undesirable' residents. This needs to change and we need to be inclusive

Thank you everyone. Excellent webinar.

Thursday, October 8, 2020

Employment Lands, Urban Design, District and Secondary Plans
Submitted Questions
It appears that heritage planning at regional level is moribund. Could concern with design, be a way to revitalize it?
The employment land map that showed three areas (Core plus two others). Could you explain how this was analyzed; are these all employment areas? Or will some that were described as Innovation/Knowledge have more flexibility in uses (especially mixed use)?
With regards to employment land requirements, are the previously utilized (but now vacant and abandoned) buildings/lands being considered for future use rather than remain in their current state and develop new areas?
is it preferred different types of employment (e.g. technology based companies vs tradition) be kept separate and grouped together or have a mix of employment types in an area?
Submitted Comments
One way that urban design could be used is to protect historic estate lots in Niagara on the Lake. Apart from heritage benefits these protect tree cover and the One Mile Creek. Regional guidelines could protect these areas in Niagara on the Lake, and perhaps similar areas in other parts of region where they exist.
I am from St. Catharines which still is governed by an obsolete 1965 transportation study. It would appear that design approach would be a way to make transportation less automotive centered by reducing street widths for example.
Thank you - short session tonight.

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Rural and Agriculture, Mineral Aggregate Resources, Archaeology
Submitted Questions
How does the upcoming brown road proposal by walker in south end Niagara Falls fit with regional official plan. And will rehabilitation of winding down Taylor quarry be a likely requirement of approval of new quarry?
Regarding the Fonthill Kame, can you please outline how the new Official Plan will recognize and embed the Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) for the Fonthill Kame?
What long term protection will the vulnerable aquifer thst stretches under Wainfleet, Port Colborne and Fort Erie from minineral aggregate operations
How will the Agricultural Policies impact lot creation?
Question in regards to AMP program. Which indigenous parties have being consulted in development of this plan as well are developers part of your consultation to gain their insight and recommendations.
In the presentation was it mentioned that the NR was using an agricultural consultant to help develop the official plan? If so, what firm or person is the consultant?
The new MNRF amendments have taken away the authority of local municipalities to restrict the depth of quarrying/pit excavation. However, the Municipalities still have the responsibility to protect the environment, including the groundwater/aquifers. Will the NOP recognize the difference between operations above, and below the groundwater table, i.e. recognizing that there are "dry pits" and "wet pits" and that they require different policies.
with respect to the archaeological mapping will there be a list of what types and age of artifact that will require designation
What role would the Region play in the process if archaeological features are discovered during construction? And will the archeological map be open to fine-tuning as time goes on?
How will the proposed AMP impact normal farm practices
I am so confused. Please explain the process of equitable application of the protection of prime agricultural area. We have prime tender fruit land at the bottom of the escarpment in Grimsby demolished for condensed housing, while useless clay land is being protected on top of the escarpment. We then see hamlets being allowed in some of the useless clay land area while other landowners, within the same area and with the same soil quality, being prohibited from land use change. This results in some taxpayer/landowners being disadvantaged financially without any clear equitable rationale.
Would you please give the E mail address for the panelists.
Has the Region considered completing a LEAR study, like other municipalities in the GGH have, instead of relying on the Provinces LEAR?
Does the Region consider Cannabis production to be an agricultural use? Will it allow zoning by-laws that conflict with the Farm and Food Production Protection Act?

Submitted Comments
Comment - really like that agriculture has been doing and will be doing diversity.

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Infrastructure, Water and Wastewater, Stormwater, Transportation
Submitted Questions
If I understand the NOP goal (enviornmental protections) why doesn't the Region map aquafers in our rural areas - well systems are risk for groundwater contamination or removing protective covers in quarries in our rural communities
Will the aquifer used by rural residents in Wainfleet, Port Colborne and Fort Erie be identified as a drinking water source in the ammended ROP?
Mr.Lambert, the new waste water treatment plant proposal costing comes in at 345 million dollars can you let me know how the costs would be recovered for this ? I.E benifit to exsisting and new growth I.E DC charges knowing that we are eliminating many pumping stations
Will the new Official Plan address the large increase in demand on water, effluent management and solid waste management created by the growth of the cannabis industry in the Region?
As far as quality of water being supplied to our homes, is that something that is handled by the individual municipalities, or is that something that falls under the Region?
Is there any water /wastewater servicing proposed for Wainfleet and is the capacity there for the build out of Rolling Meadows development in South Thorold?
thank you. Transit - does the plan support expansion of Regional transit routes? If so, what is the timing for expansion?
when the new waterwater treatment plant will start to function?
Why are there so many barriers to getting vegetative swales instead of conventional curbs and gutters? There is also a problem such in the old Town of Niagara on the Lake of these swales being converted to concrete curbs despite community opposition.
How could more progress be achieved in getting more roof gardens to reduce storm water runoff in Niagara. Some municipalities, notably Toronto has by-laws to encourage this. Could this be started in Niagara?
Can you share what the current impact our waste "sewage" water has on our lakes?
Can you explain how the development of the new OP will take into account the need to reduce carbon emissions in order to mitigate climate change?
How does the Regional plan promote housing options that allow for better public transit / active transportation?
Will Wainfleet be required to contribute to the cost of urban wastewater plans? There is no benefit to us!
Transit - does the plan support expansion of Regional transit routes? If so, what is the timing for expansion?
Does your mapping include the businesses that are licenced to take water, the amount allowed and if discharged, to where is it discharged and in what condition?
Parking lots are big generators of storm water. Could an effort be made to have some of this volume go into swales and other vegetative areas. Right now vegetative areas around parking lots do not receive water flow from them.
Are there plans to amalgamate the existing local transit operations with the current regional system and to establish a single transit service, similar to what has occurred in Durham and Waterloo for example?
Provincial policy restricts expansion of the water / sanitary network to certain situations - How often are these situations invoked to justify expansion? (e.g. Adjacent to settlement areas)

a biodiversity planning such as the City of Toronto can create needed habitats for storm water management in a natural way. riverine and buffers and stream edge and marshes, wetlands would help meet needed native habitats, will this be fully built in to the strategy????
Are there any current requirements for residential developers to include cycle and walking paths in their plans to make communities more sustainable?
How is the odor from waste water treatment plants monitored. Is there new technology to reduce the odor in the future?
Once the Official Plan has been finalized, is the language for directing each municipality 'shall', 'should', or a mix of both? (similar to what the region saw from the province)
Could the new sewage treatment plant in Niagara Falls have a forested buffer to reduce potential odour problems?
In Portland swales have been found to be complimentary to bicycle lanes. Could such an approach be developed in Niagara?
Has there been any talk from a regional level about removing/reducing parking minimums, or enforcing parking maximums, region wide? Is the region encouraging this?
how does the TMP correlate with the other parts of the OP considering we have no clear and concise mapping with regards to natural heritage areas and watershed mapping
Are local transit systems reassessing their schedules so a more reliable system is established to coincide with the increased schedules and investment of Regional Transit?
What is the process when a property in St Catharines has a change in the zoning and the property owner was not advised of this prior to the change? The property zoning had a negative effect on the value of the property and assessed value did not decrease. What should the property owner do to have this addressed and who should be contacted?
Is the Port Dalhousie water treatment plant going to be updated to handle the future increase in population due to the condominium growth in Port Dalhousie?
Is the cycling plan same as walking / hiking? Particularly (hopefully) if the routes are interconnected throughout the region.
What is the position of the group in regards to affordable rental development versus condominium development?
Is there a mechanism for community or organizations to make specific recommendations to the future OP?
Is the region considering any depaving initiatives as a means of improving biodiversity, permeability, and even food security (through urban farming)?
Will the group allocate funds for site specific damages to properties caused by the water shed and man made solutions that had a negative effect on a property? Or at least perform research
Do you actually have a committee made up of public members that you consult with - talk out with?
How often do you hold these forums?
Is there a defined list of waste water projects for the region based on priority
Is this the first time I heard of a specific Growth Management session?
Submitted Comments
We are pleased that there are no plans to expand water/waste water system in Wainfleet . Have spent considerable money to keep our septic systems up to date and do not support having to pay for additional waste water infrastructure that is not needed
All of the documents that are being sent out to individuals should be posted for others to review

Hurray more forums!!! I appreciate all your work on this plan and allowing the community to have a voice.

Appendix 3 - Key Themes from Employment Policy Survey

Key Themes from Employment Policy Survey

- “Jobs”, “Economic Diversity”, and “Skilled Labour Workforce” are the most commonly prioritized employment themes, with “Jobs” being consistently ranked as the highest priority amongst all themes.
- Niagara is a good place for skilled labour jobs, but its employers do not offer competitive wages compared to employers in the GTHA.
- Niagara must do more to attract employers that require skilled labour jobs and offer competitive working wages.
- Niagara is a good area to locate a new business and has amenities and infrastructure that is attractive to employers.
- Niagara should harness its existing economic strengths, while diversifying its economy by attracting new employers and economic sectors that it is typically not known for.
- Niagara must proactively plan for short- and long-term employment needs, including strategically protecting lands outside of urban areas for future employment opportunities.
- If given the choice, people would rather work in Niagara than in the GTHA.
- People who live in Niagara did not move here for its unique employment or economy, as job opportunities in Niagara can be found elsewhere in the GTHA.
- Niagara should prioritize municipal servicing and infrastructure for employment uses, including proactively providing servicing to vacant employment sites to make them more marketable.
- Employment development and redevelopment should be integrated within existing communities wherever possible and should blend with community character.
- Employment uses should be located with similar employment uses.
- Niagara’s commuters have limited transportation options to get to work and would consider using an alternative means of travel, other than private vehicle, to get to work, if it were reasonable and accessible.
- Niagara should encourage employers to promote transportation demand management practices and reduce surface parking spaces where possible.
- Employer needs, such as physical assets and building space, may shift as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Jobs that have transitioned to work-from-home jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic may remain as such after the pandemic.

Growth Management Survey Results

Planning and Economic Development Committee
Report # PDS 38-2020

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Alexandria Tikky, Planner, Long Range Planning



GROWTH MANAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Report No. PDS 38-2020 | Wednesday, December 9, 2020 / Planning and Economic Development Committee
Alexandria Tikky, Planner, Long-Range Planning Division, Niagara Region

Growth Management Survey Background



The **Growth Management Survey** was initiated to receive feedback on key growth management objectives and priorities.



The survey was posted on **September 14, 2020**. It was advertised on the Region's Twitter and Facebook pages and at the Growth Management public webinar.



The survey was live for one month and closed on October 14, 2020. It received a total of **217 responses** and **102 comments**.

Growth Management Survey Format

Three-Step Process

01

Respondents asked to rank key growth management priorities in order of importance

02

Respondents asked to rank statements associated with their selected areas of interest.

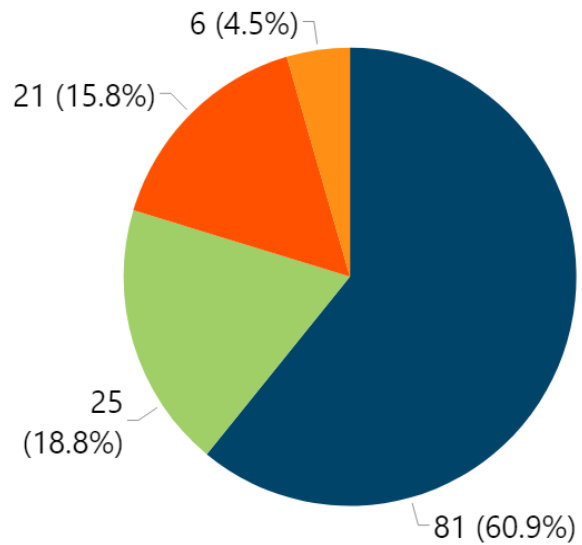
03

Respondents asked to select preferred options between growth management scenarios.

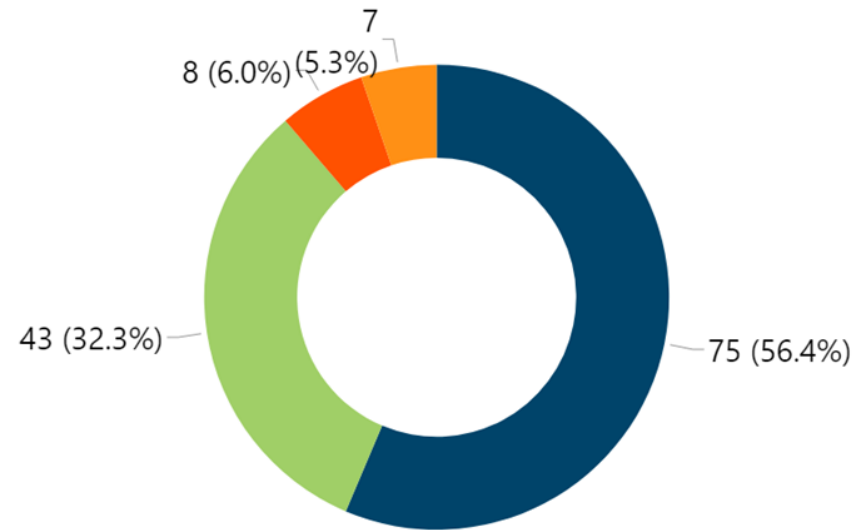
Respondent Demographics

Total Respondents: 133

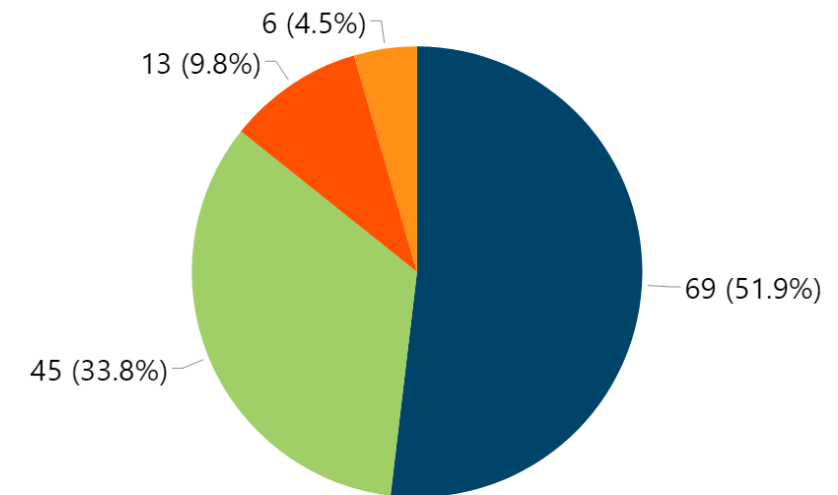
How long have you lived in Niagara?



How old are you?



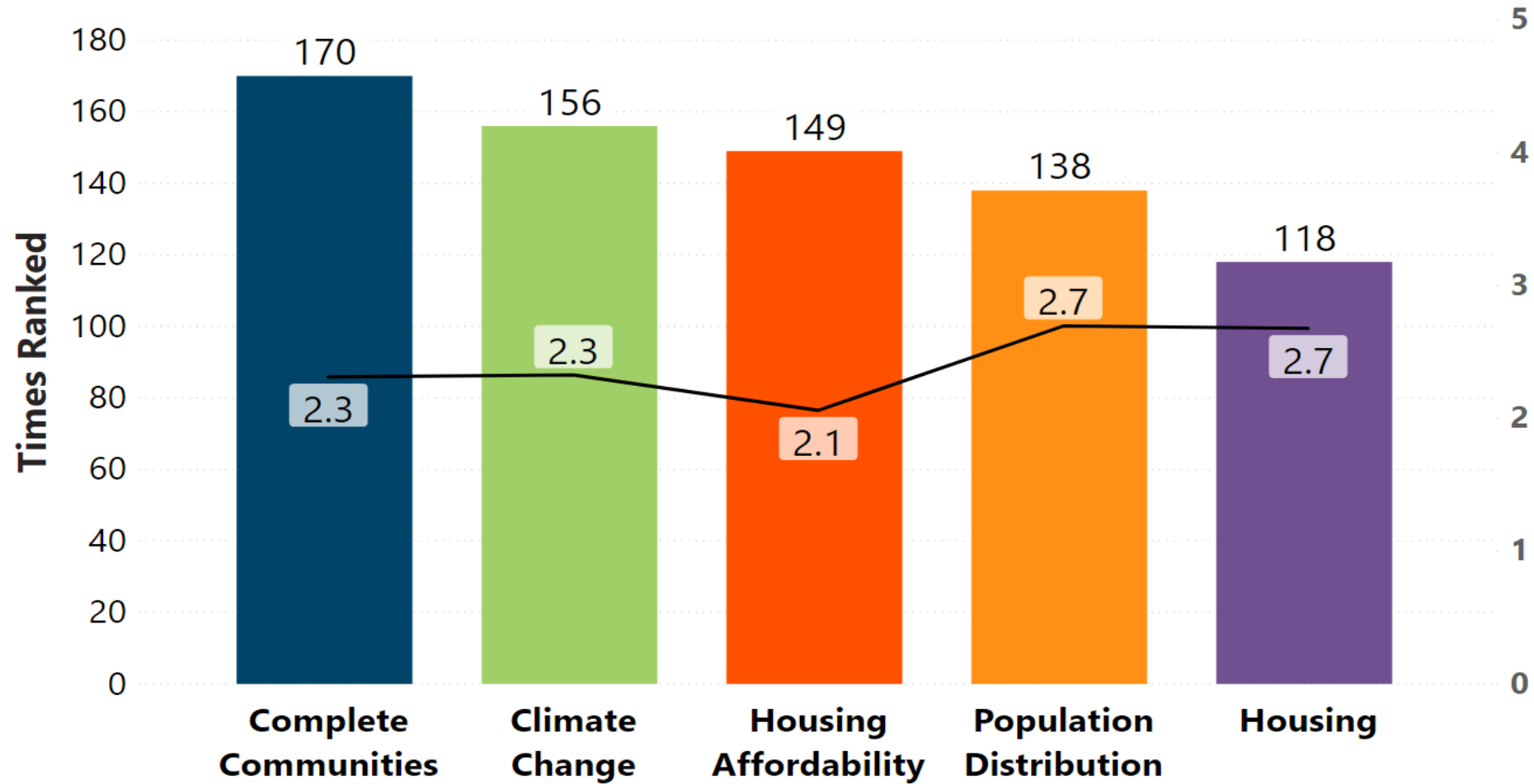
How many people live in your household?



Theme 1

Balanced level of interest between topic areas.

Growth Management Topic Priorities Ranking Results



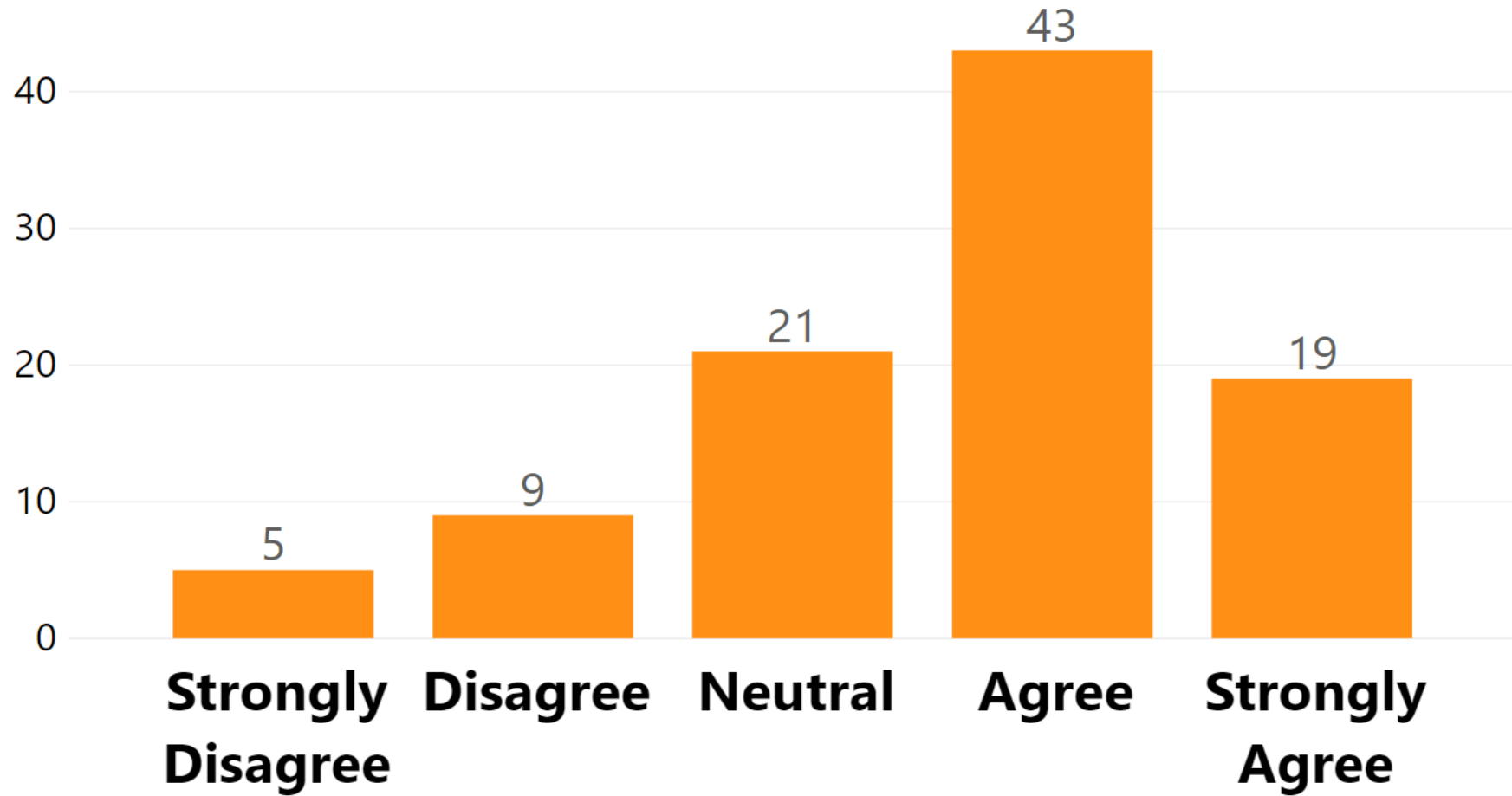
NOTE

A rank of "1" indicates highest priority. A rank of "5" indicates lowest priority of those ranked.

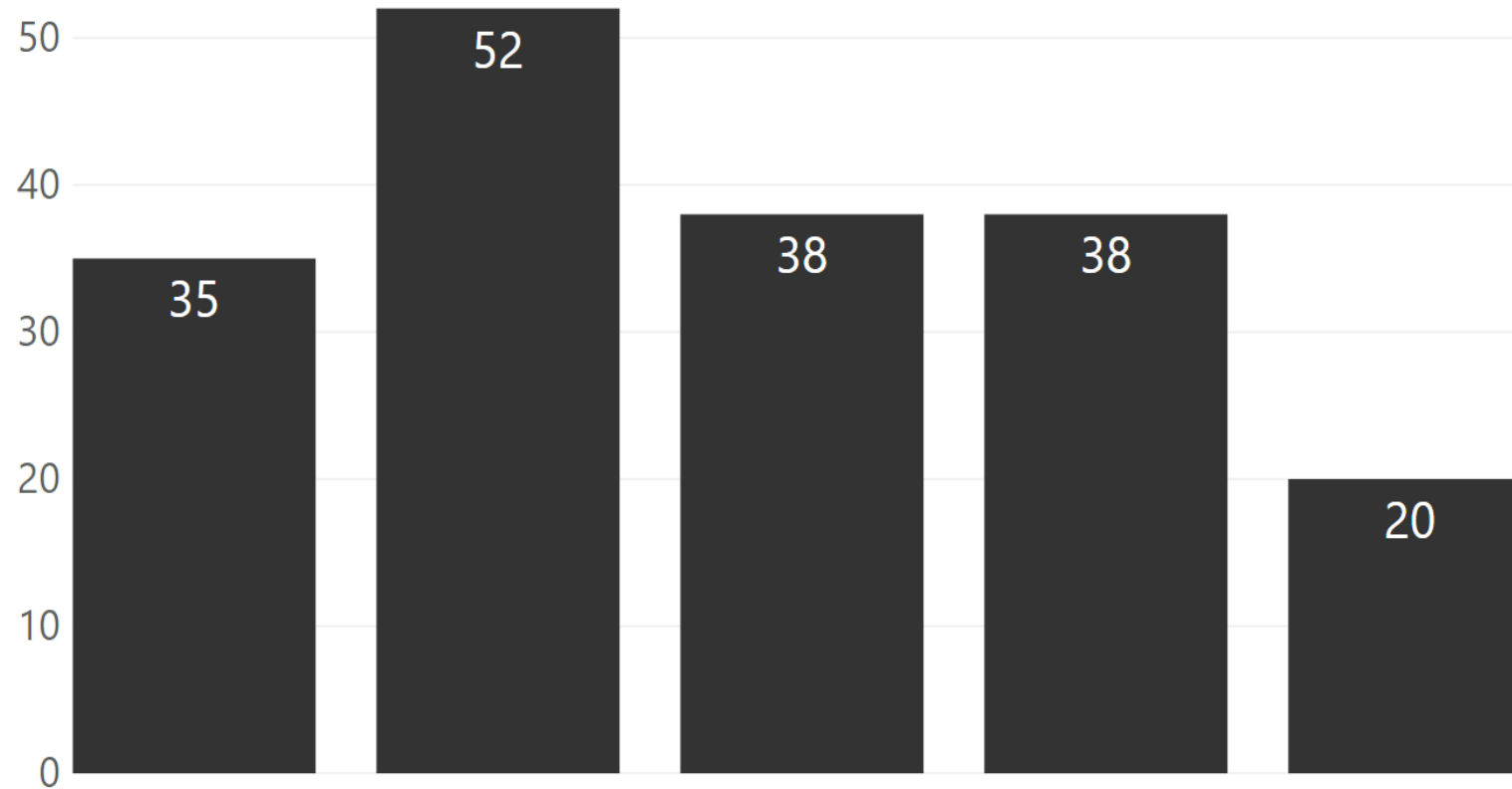
Theme 2

Public alignment with Region's key objectives and priorities.

Specific areas within municipalities should be identified to accommodate a majority of future population growth.



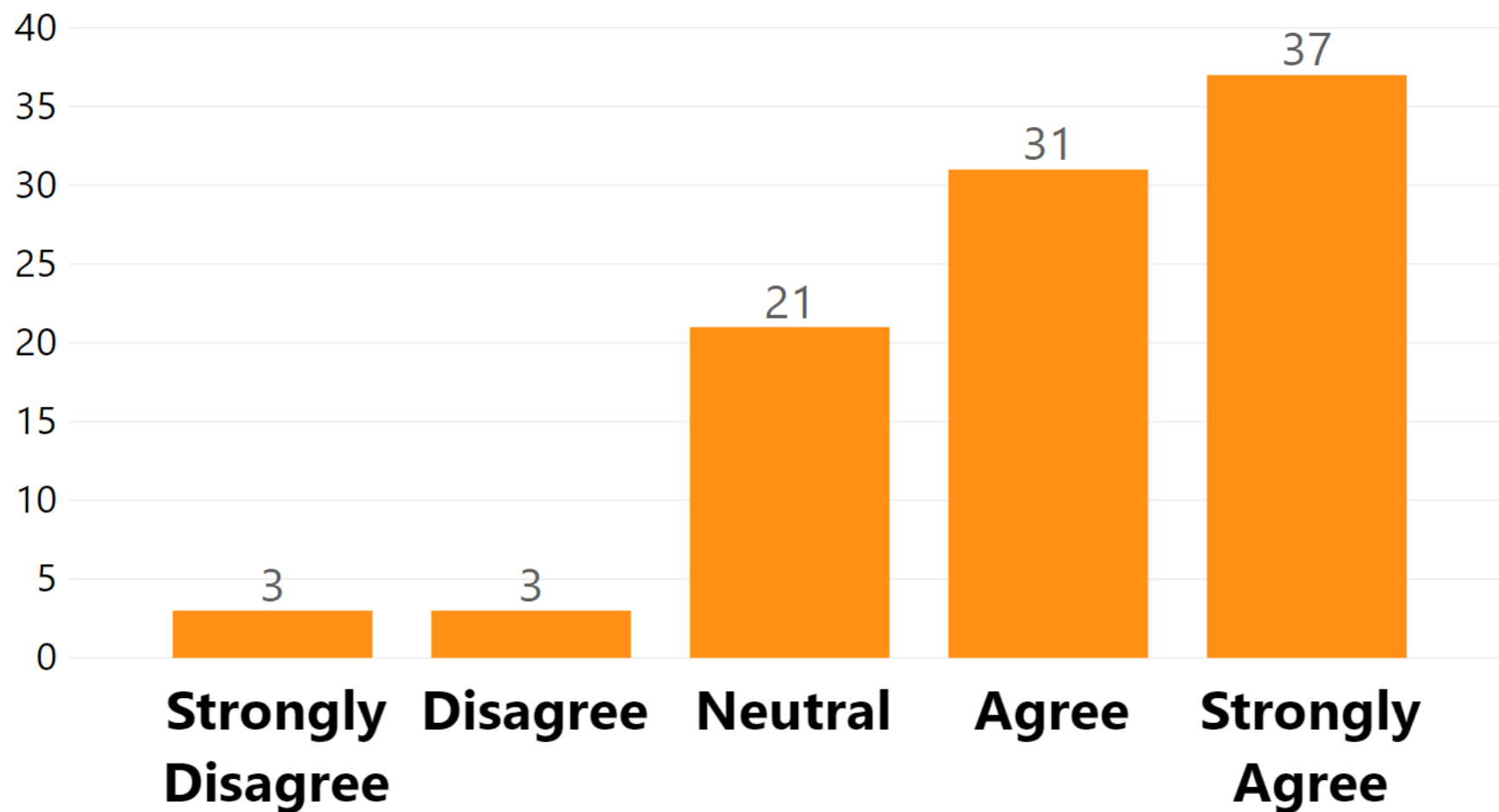
Where should population growth be directed in Niagara?



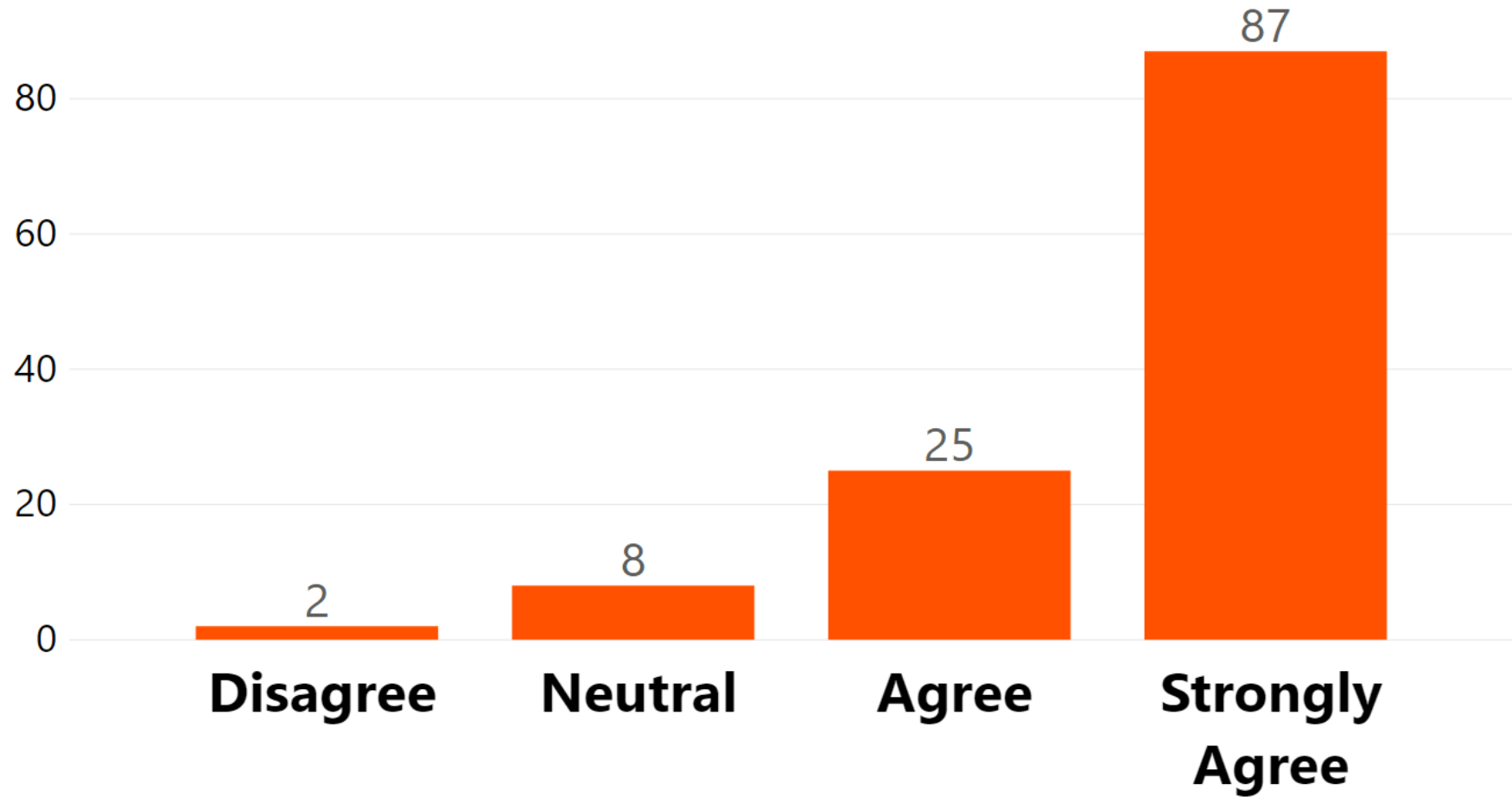
Strategic Growth:
Focus growth in core areas, such as major redevelopment, GO Stations, Downtowns.

Even Growth:
Balance densities throughout existing residential and commercial areas.

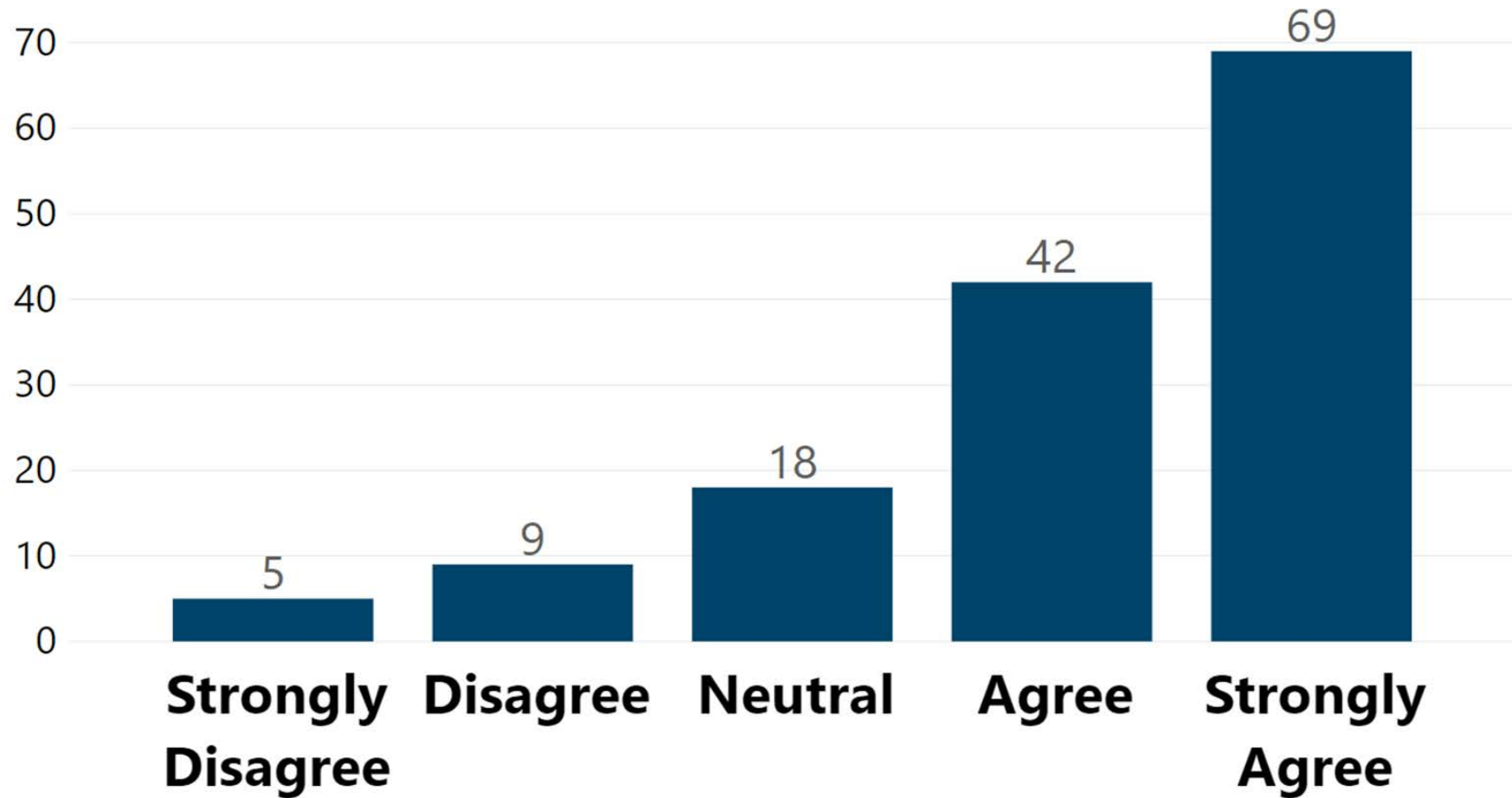
Detailed planning studies, such as secondary plans, should be undertaken to direct growth in the context of local priorities.



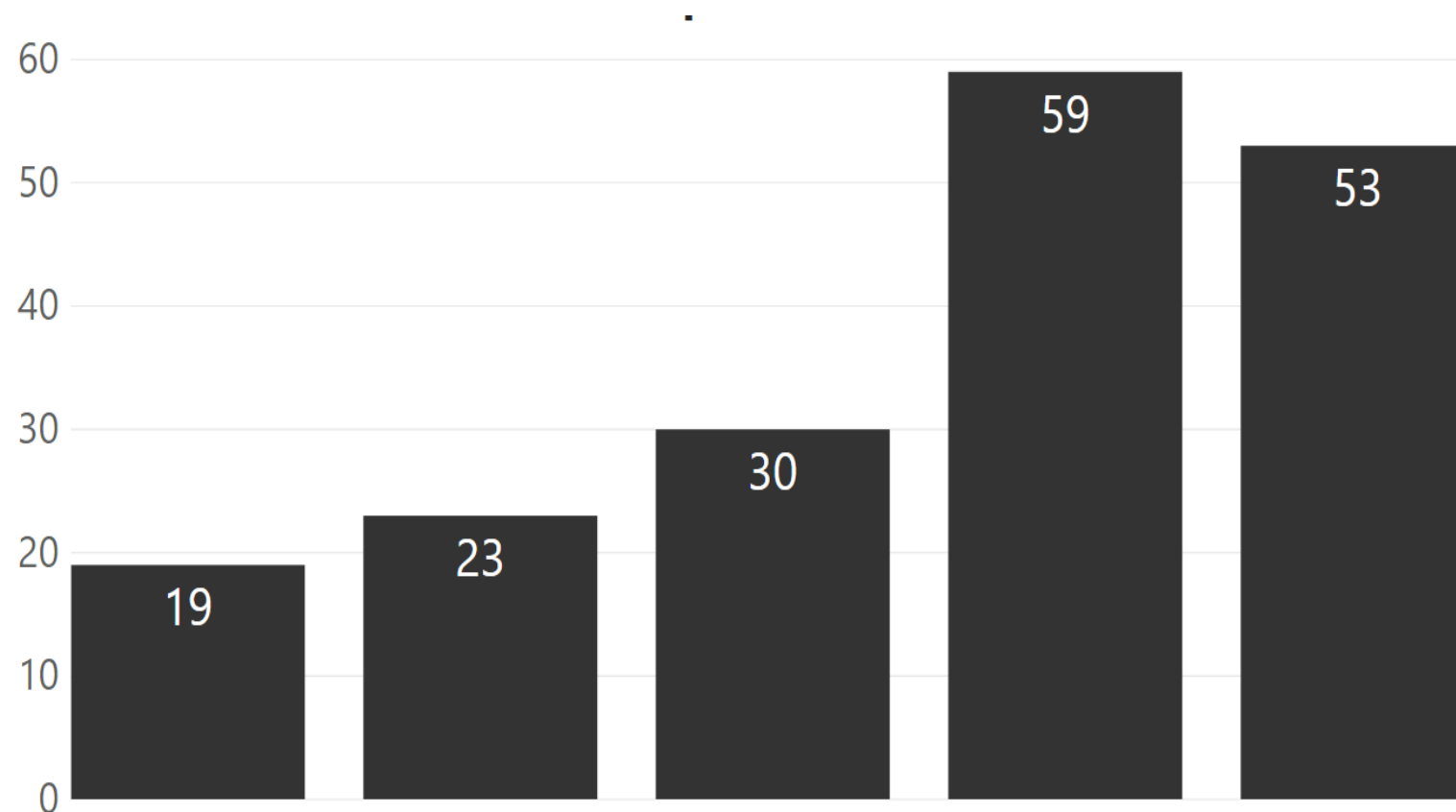
More affordable housing options are needed within my municipality.



Providing a diverse mix of housing, including affordable housing, is an important component in achieving a complete community.



Should neighbourhoods contain a variety of housing forms and options?



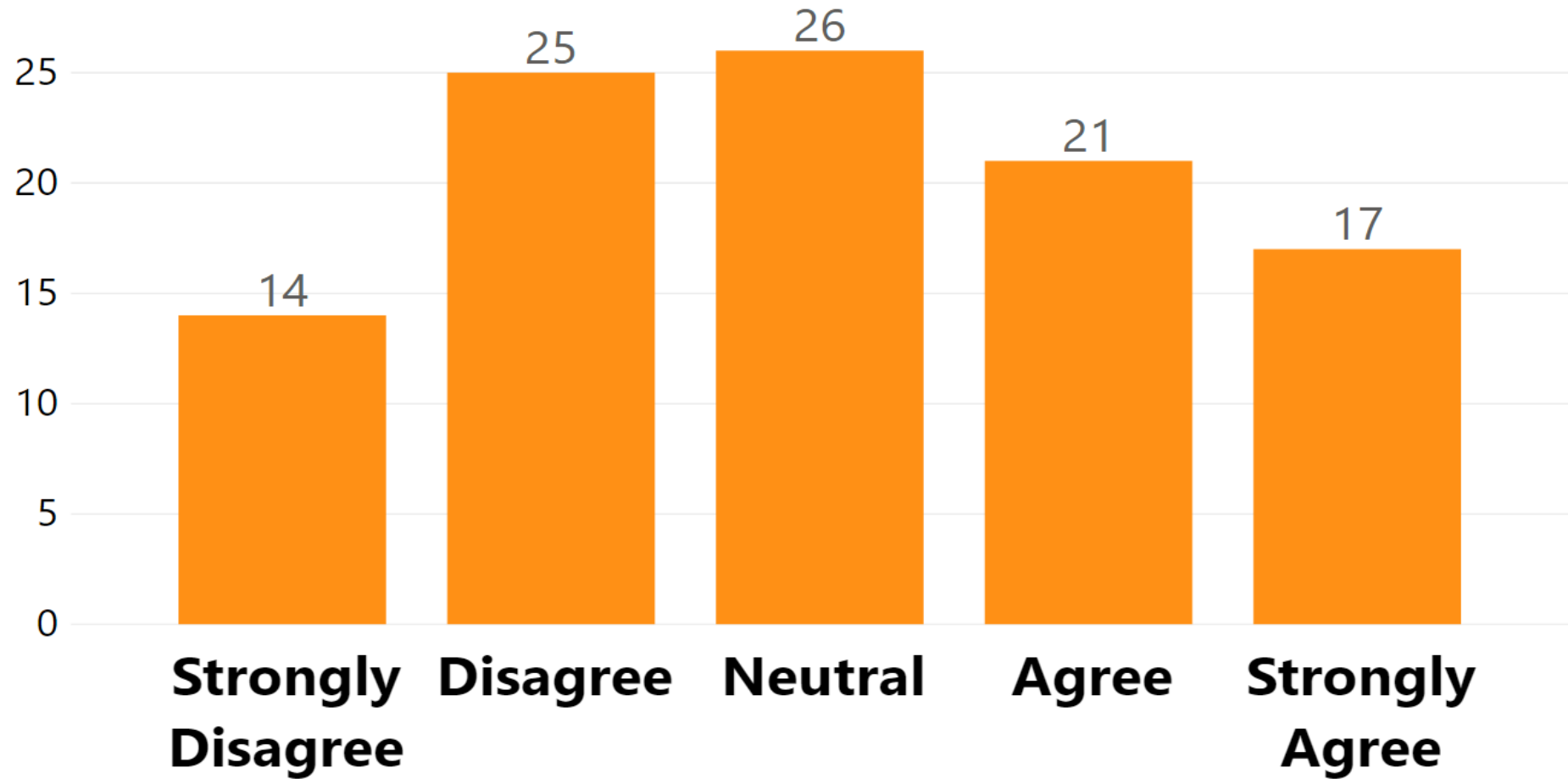
Maintain Housing Character:
Maintain form of existing communities; provides less housing options for residents.

Increase Options:
Develop a variety of dwelling types; provides more housing options for residents

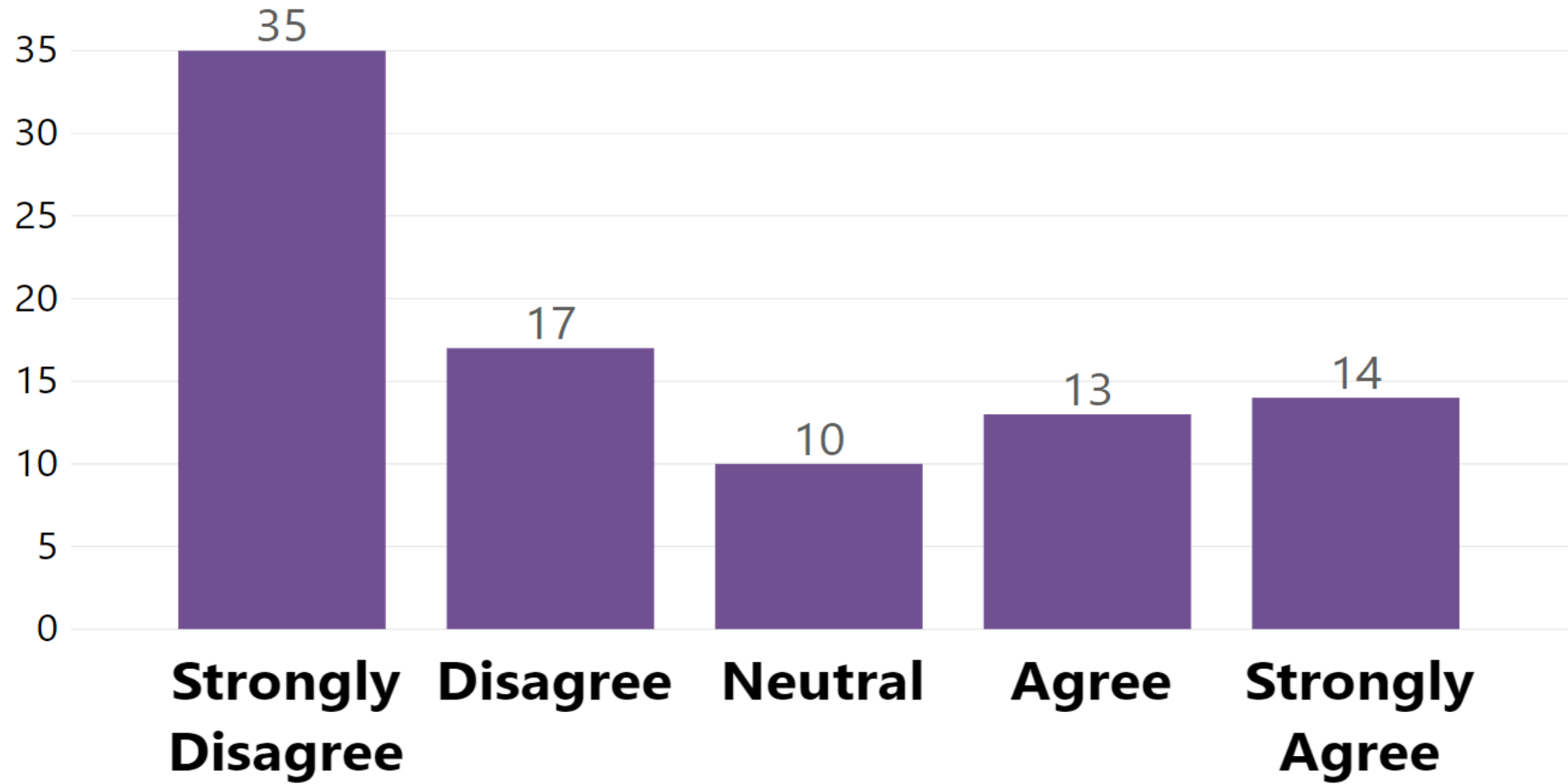
Theme 3

Opinions shift when asked about growth at a neighbourhood level.

Population growth has a positive impact on the community.



My neighbourhood would benefit from the introduction of well-designed, denser forms of housing.



Next Steps for the Growth Management Program



The survey results align with the existing growth management work program.



Staff will collaborate with Area Planners to ensure the new Official Plan and related strategies address concerns with growth on the local level.



Survey responses and comments received will be considered in the development of detailed policies for the new Official Plan.

Subject: Growth Management Survey Results

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 38-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That a copy of Report PDS 38-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to Local Municipal Planning Directors.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the results of the Growth Management survey.
- The survey was initiated to gather public input on the Region's growth management work program, including population distribution, housing, housing affordability, climate change and complete communities.
- The survey was live from mid-September to mid-October and received 217 responses and 102 comments.
- Survey results suggest the public is generally aligned with the Region's key growth management objectives and priorities.
- The feedback received on the Growth Management survey will inform the development of detailed policies for the new Official Plan.

Financial Considerations

The costs associated with hosting MetroQuest surveys are accommodated within the Council approved project budget for the new Official Plan.

Analysis

On September 14, 2020, Regional staff initiated a public survey to gather input on the Region's growth management work program. This Growth Management survey formed part of an extensive consultation strategy for the new Official Plan, as described in Report No. PDS 35-2020 (being advanced at this same December 9, 2020 PEDC meeting).

The survey was created using MetroQuest, an online public engagement tool geared towards urban and transportation planning. Using MetroQuest's unique features, the survey requested participant feedback through a three-step process:

1. Respondents were asked to rank key topic areas, including population distribution, housing options, housing affordability, climate change, and complete communities, in order of importance.
2. Respondents were asked to respond in agreement or disagreement with associated statements for their selected areas of interest.
3. Respondents were asked to select preferred options between various growth management scenarios.

Written comments could be provided at each step of the survey.

The survey was posted on the Region's website, and advertised on both the Region's Twitter and Facebook pages and during the Growth Management public webinar on October 7, 2020.

The survey was live for one month and closed on October 14, 2020 after receiving a total of 217 responses and 102 comments. The survey results are outlined in **Appendix 1** and comments received are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

The survey results demonstrate the following:

- Respondents showed a balanced level of interest between the topic areas of the growth management program.
- Responses aligned with the Region's proposed key growth management objectives and priorities, indicating that the Region should:
 - Direct new growth and development to strategic growth areas;

- Provide or facilitate the development of affordable housing options;
 - Utilize sustainability measures to mitigate the effects of climate change;
 - Utilize secondary plans and other detailed planning studies as an important tool for managing growth in local communities; and
 - Pursue the creation of complete communities, which include a mix of land uses, a range of housing types and densities, access to transportation options and open spaces, and consideration for placemaking and urban design.
- Responses were less supportive of growth when responding to survey questions posed at the household or neighbourhood level, rather than posed as broad objectives.

With input from the survey results, Regional staff will proceed with the development of detailed policies for the new Official Plan in line with the existing direction of the growth management work program.

Staff will continue to collaborate with Area Planners to ensure that Official Plan policies and related strategies can support municipalities in addressing concerns for growth within their local communities.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Consultation on the growth management work program and the new Niagara Official Plan is important to address Council's priority as a Sustainable Engaging Government.

The growth management work program will also address Council's other priorities, including: Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth; Healthy and Vibrant Community; and Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning.

Other Pertinent Reports

PDS 35-2020 Niagara Official Plan-Report on Virtual Public Webinars

Prepared by:

Alexandria Tikky
Planner
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Doug Giles, MES, BUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with David Heyworth, Official Plan Consultant and reviewed by Isaiah Banach, Acting Director of Community and Long Range Planning.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Growth Management Survey Results

Appendix 2 Comments Received on the Growth Management Survey

Growth Management Survey Results

Total Respondents: 217

Survey Hosts:



Survey Duration

Start Date: September 14, 2020

End Date: October 14, 2020

Prepared by:

Planning and Development Services
Community and Long Range Planning

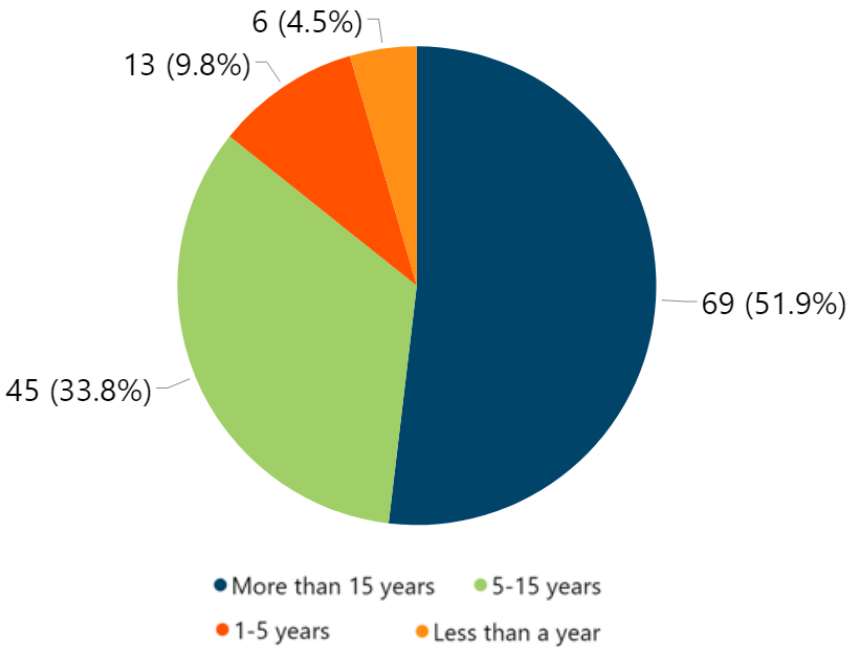
Respondent Demographics

Total Respondents: 133

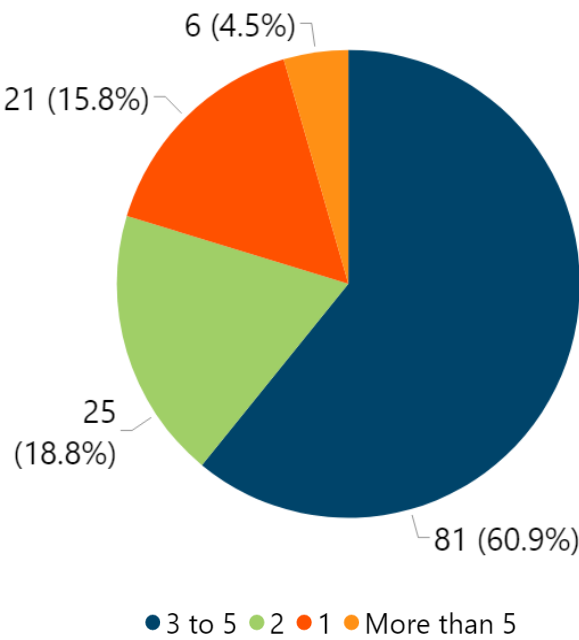
Important Notes:

- This was a voluntary and anonymous survey.
- Respondents could choose to answer all or some of the survey questions.

How long have you lived in Niagara?



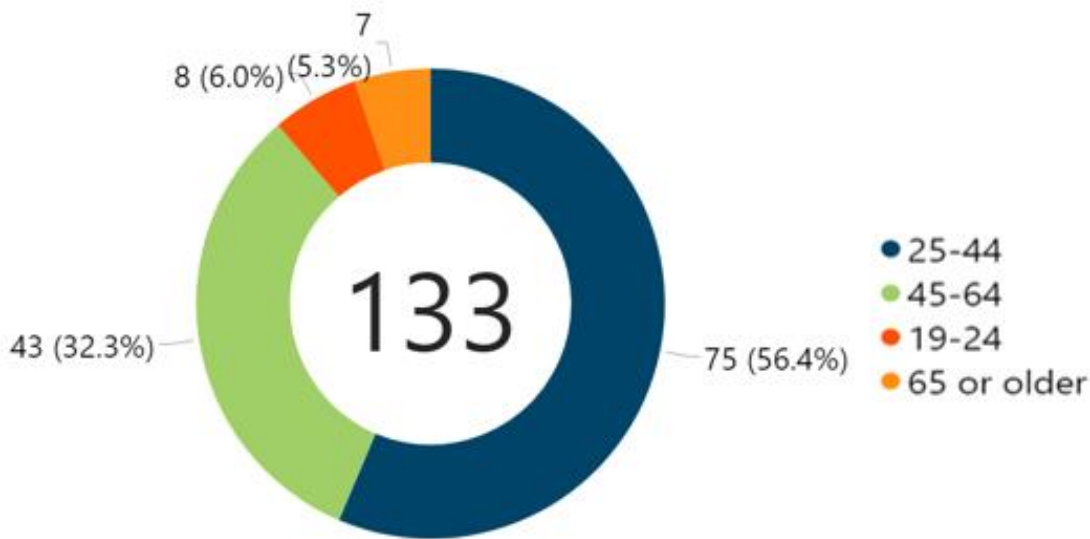
How many people live in your household?



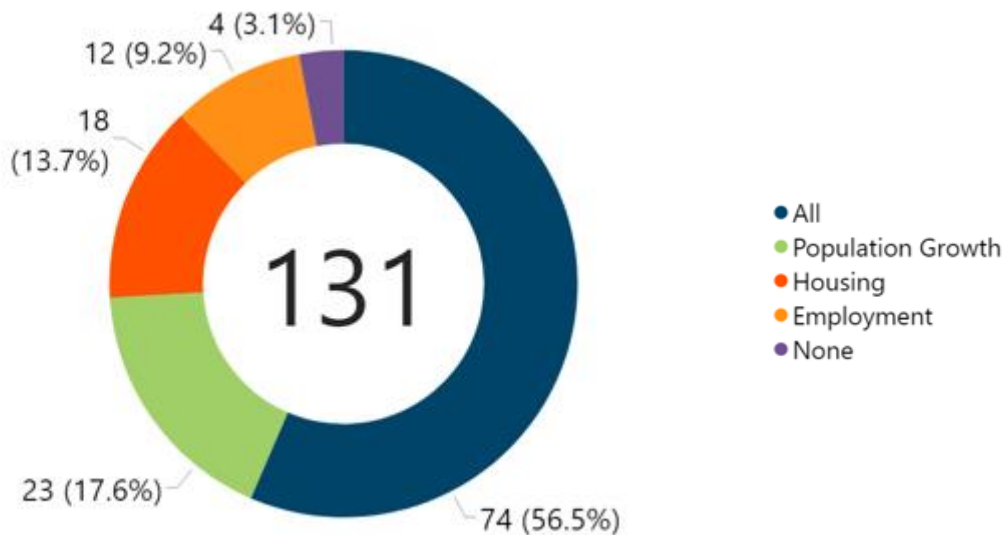
Respondent Demographics

Total Respondents:

How old are you?



Which issues are you most interested in?

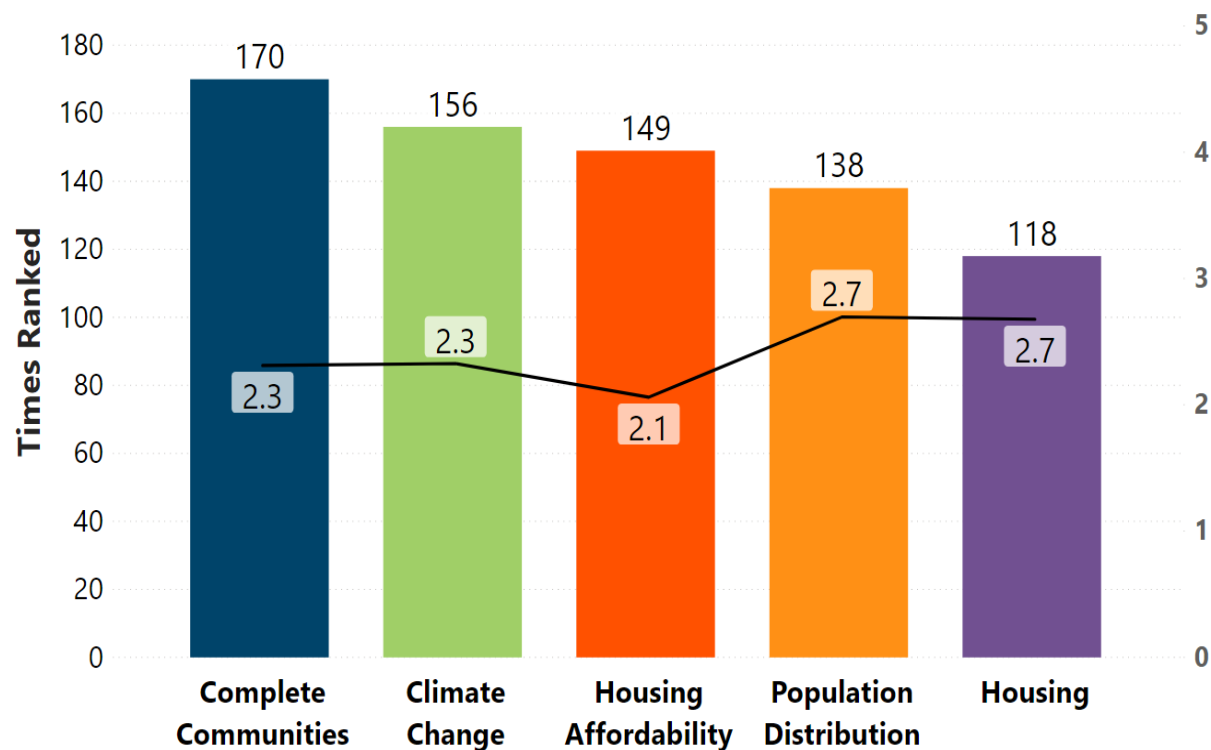


Growth Management Topics Priority Ranking

Important notes:

- 5 growth management topics were provided for respondents to rank by perceived priority.
- Respondents could rank up to a maximum of 3 growth management topics.
- A rank of “1” indicates highest priority. A rank of “5” indicates lowest priority of those ranked.

Please rank three of the following growth management topics by order of importance.



Growth Management Statement Rankings

Important notes:

- After selecting and ranking topic priorities, respondents were asked to rank statements associated with their indicated areas of interest.
- A “1 Star” ranking indicates the respondent strongly disagreed with the statement, while a “5 Star” ranking indicates the respondent strongly agreed.

3 Agreement Rating

Housing Complete Communities Housing Affordability

SCENARIO RATING

1) 2) 3) 4)

Providing affordable housing, is an important part of creating a complete community.

More about this

Agreement Rating
What to do

Let us know how strongly you agree with each of the following statements in your indicated areas of interest.
(**1 Star** indicates you strongly disagree with the statement, **5 Stars** indicates you strongly agree. Leave a comment to tell us what you think!)

1 2 3 4 5
Evaluate 5 items or more by rating each 1-5 stars

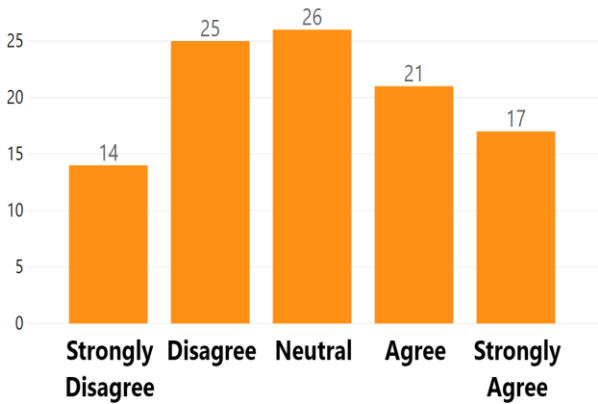
Optional Comment

Done More

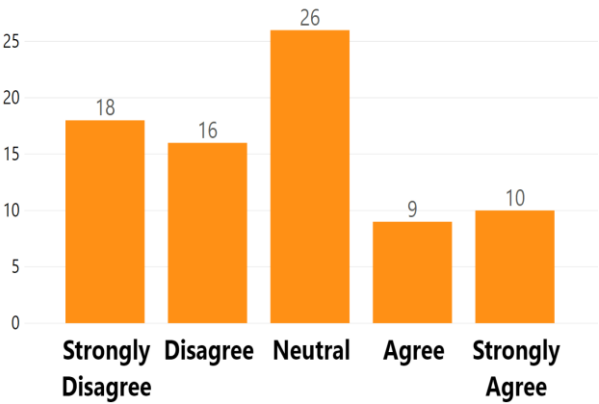
Previous Optional Comment Next

“Population Distribution” Priority Responses

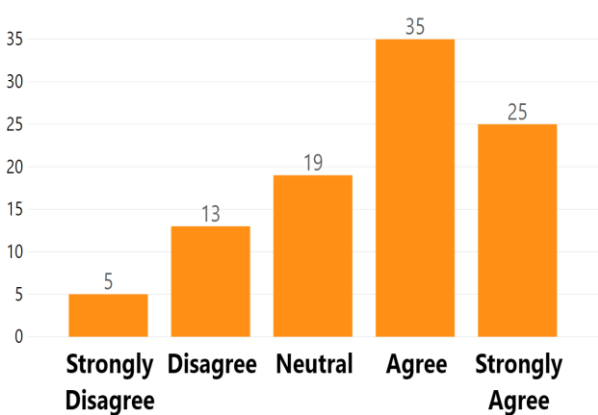
Population growth has a positive impact on the community.



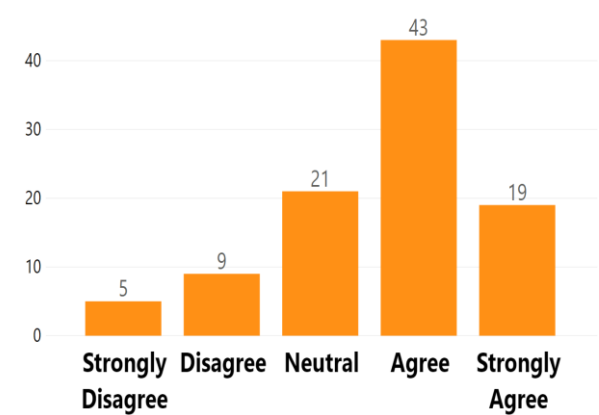
The Region should plan for municipalities to receive the same number of new housing units to accommodate its future population.



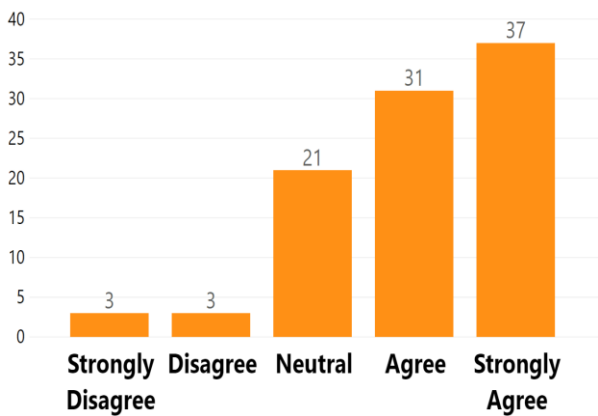
Population growth should be directed to areas that make better use of existing services and infrastructure.



Specific areas within municipalities should be identified to accommodate a majority of future population growth.

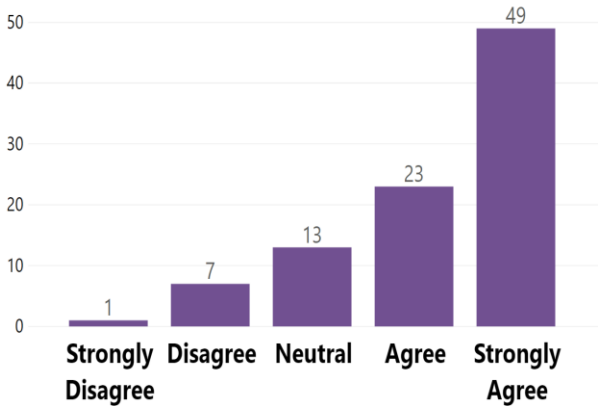


Detailed planning studies, such as secondary plans, should be undertaken to direct growth in the context of local priorities.

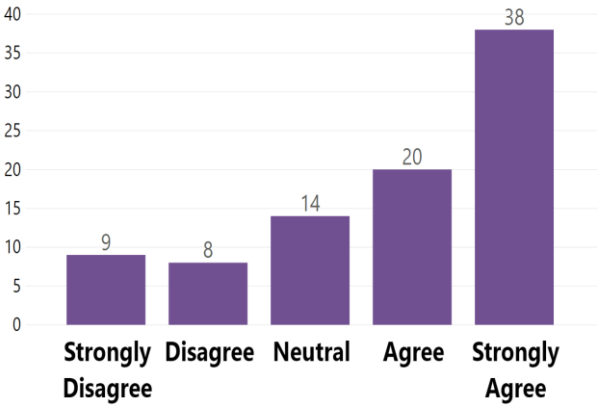


“Housing” Priority Responses

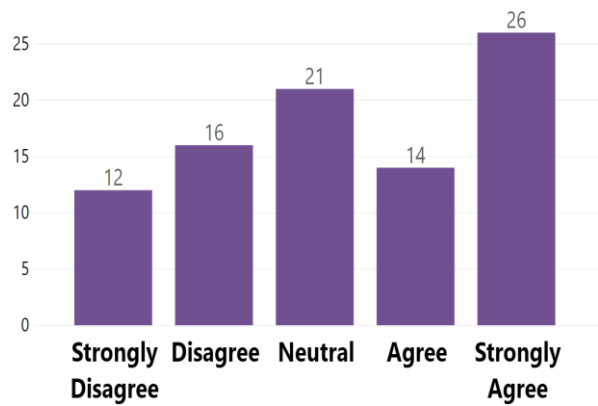
Neighbourhoods should contain housing for people at all stages of life and economic levels.



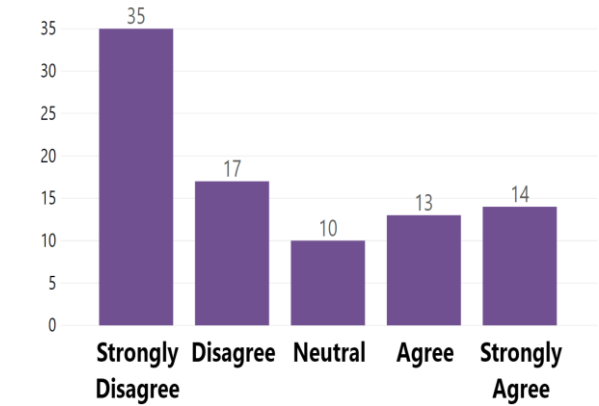
Neighbourhoods should contain a mix of housing types, including single-family detached dwellings, townhouses and apartments.



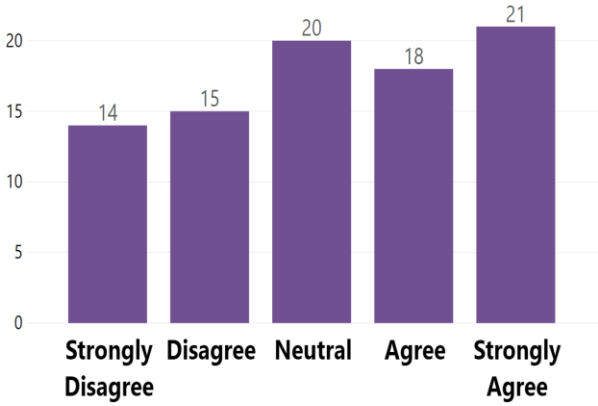
More dense forms of housing, such as multi-unit dwellings and apartments, is needed to house Niagara's future population.



My neighbourhood would benefit from the introduction of well-designed, denser forms of housing.

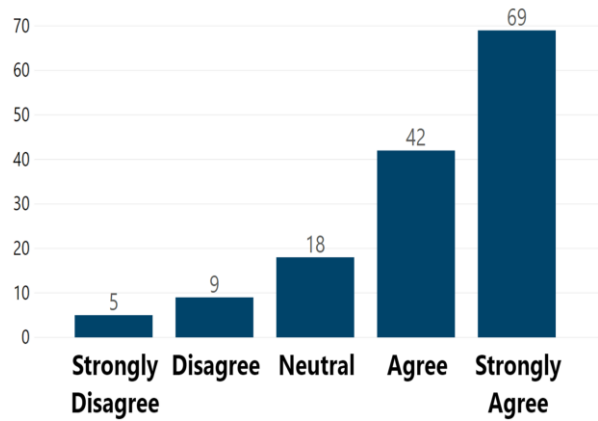


Adding new units to a basement, garage, or separate structure on an existing property is a good way to provide more housing options for the community.

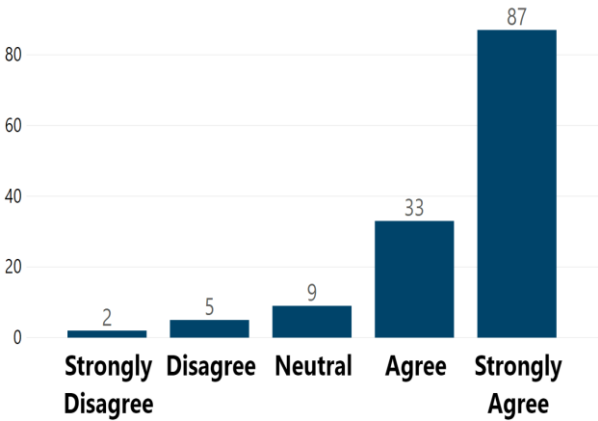


“Complete Communities” Priority Responses

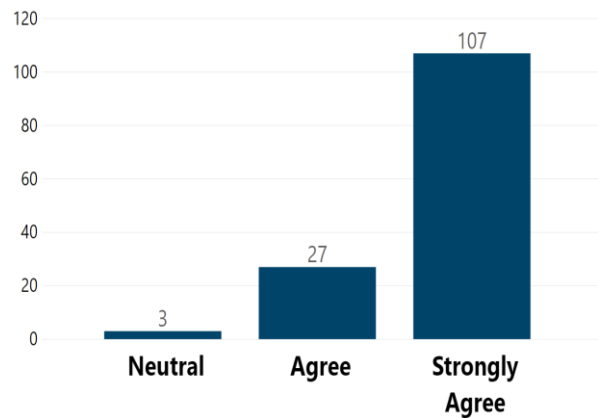
Providing a diverse mix of housing, including affordable housing, is an important component in achieving a complete community.



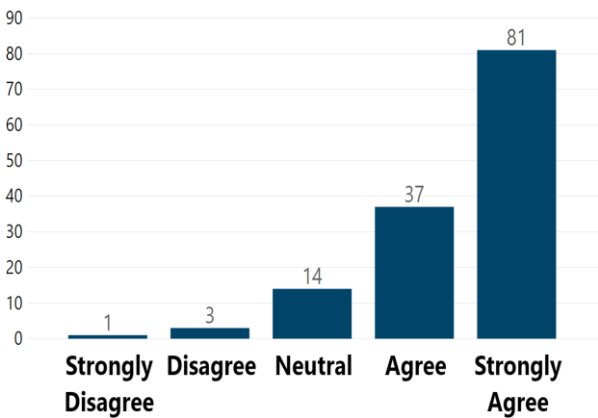
Providing a range of transportation options to reduce our reliance on cars is an important component in achieving a complete community.



Providing open space and recreational space is an important component in achieving a complete community.

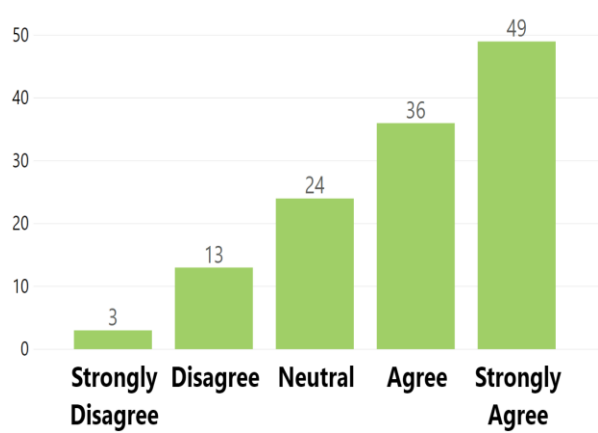


Having access to a variety of retail uses and public services and facilities is an important component in achieving a complete community.

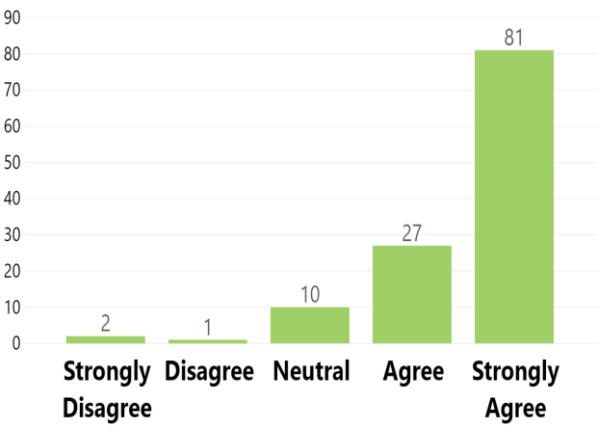


“Climate Change” Priority Responses

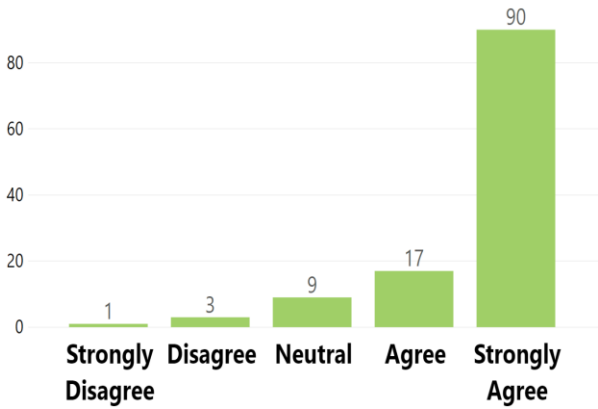
Population growth should be directed to built up areas to reduce the expansion of municipal infrastructure outside of urban areas.



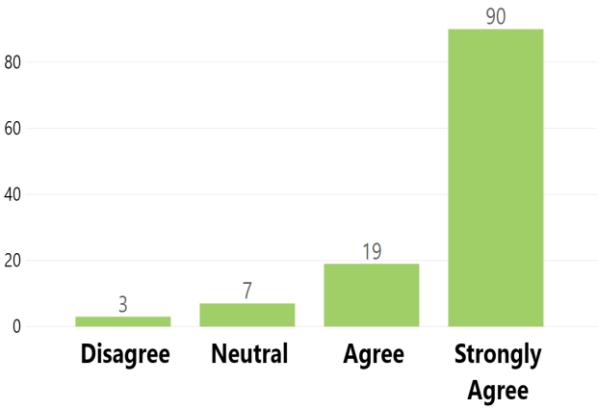
Communities should be planned with a mix of land uses and transportation options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Development should support the use of renewable energy systems in the community, such as geothermal, district heating, and solar power technology.

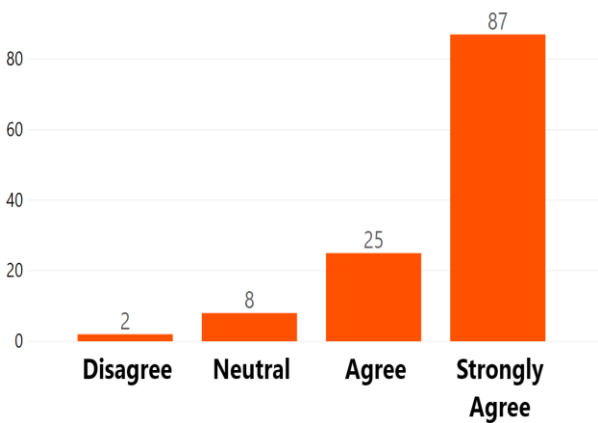


Development should utilize green infrastructure such as green roofs, permeable surfaces, natural channels, and increased tree cover, to reduce flooding.

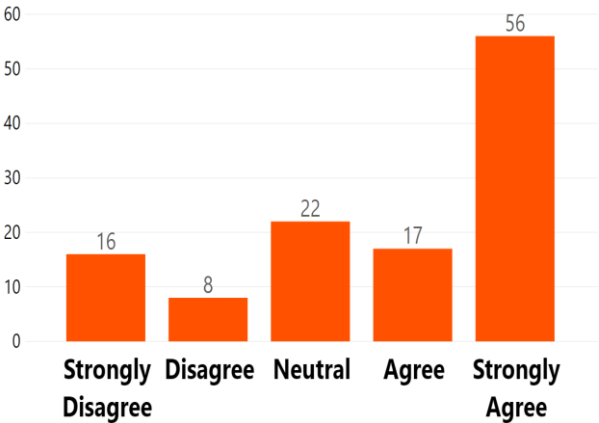


“Housing Affordability” Priority Responses

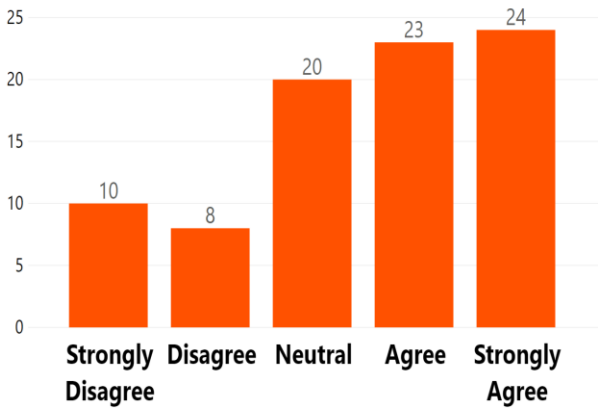
More affordable housing options are needed within my municipality.



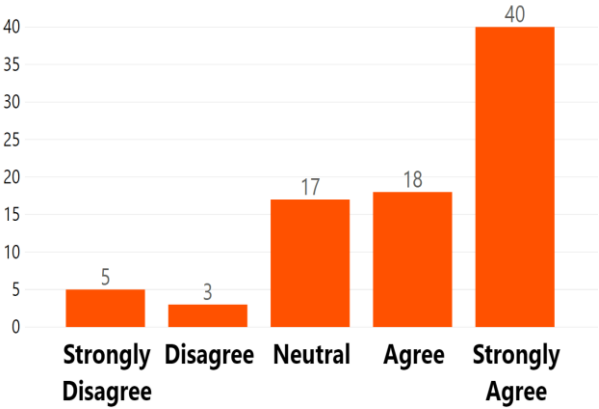
More rental housing options, such as multi-unit dwellings and apartments, are needed within my community.



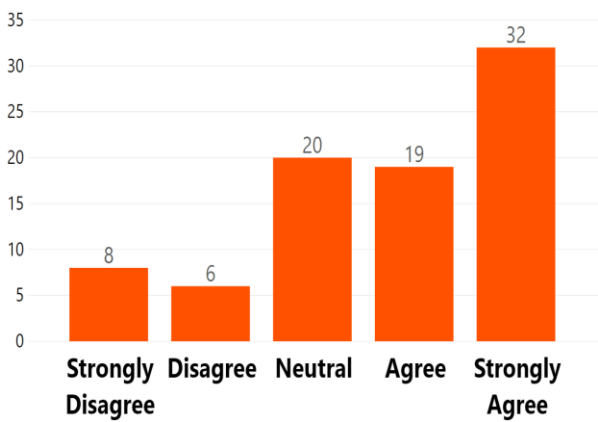
More dense forms of housing is required to enable seniors to live within my community.



A portion of all medium and high-density developments in my community should be dedicated to affordable housing.



Tax dollars should be used to develop or support the development of affordable housing.



Trade-Off Scenario Rankings

Important notes:

- The questions on the Trade-Off Scenario screen describe two opposing opinions on growth management planning.
- Respondents were asked to select the opinion they most agreed with. Selecting the arrow closest to the given scenario indicates strong agreement with that position.

4 Preferences

TRADEOFFS

Growth Density Distribution Housing Complete Communities

How should future growth be managed in the Niagara Region?
Choose the option that best shows which tradeoff you prefer

Develop at the edge of cities; higher servicing costs per home; more urban sprawl

Redevelop built up areas; lower servicing costs per home; less urban sprawl

Preferences
What to do

Indicate where you stand on each of the Tradeoff scenarios. Each image represents an opposing opinion in growth management planning.

Item 1 vs Item 2
Choose the option that best shows which tradeoff you prefer

Show your position on each tradeoff.

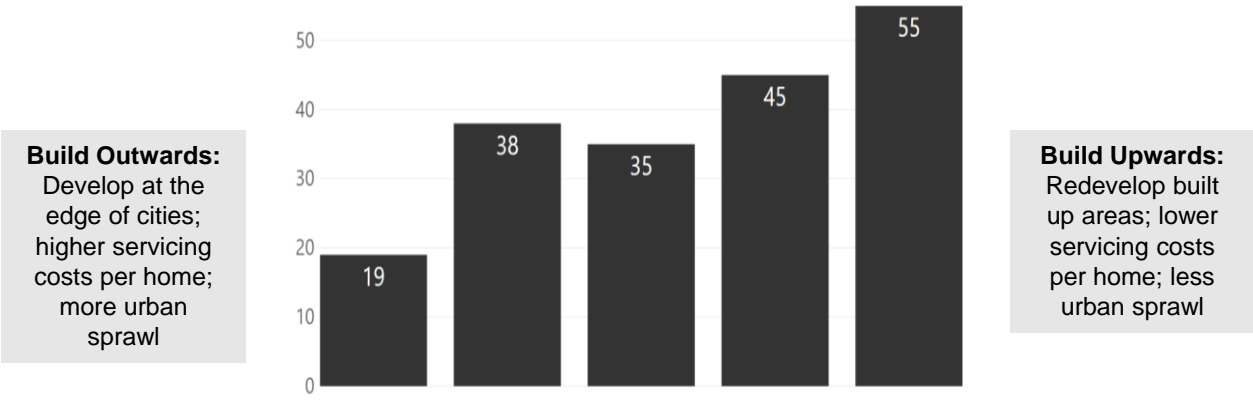
Done More

Build Outwards Build Upwards

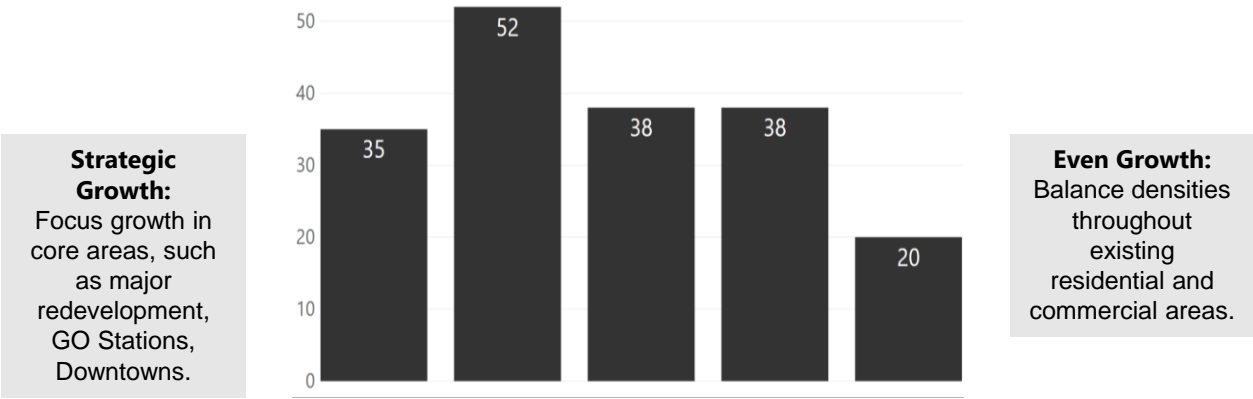
Previous Optional Comment Next Tradeoff

Growth Management Trade-Off Scenarios

How should future growth be accommodated in Niagara Region?



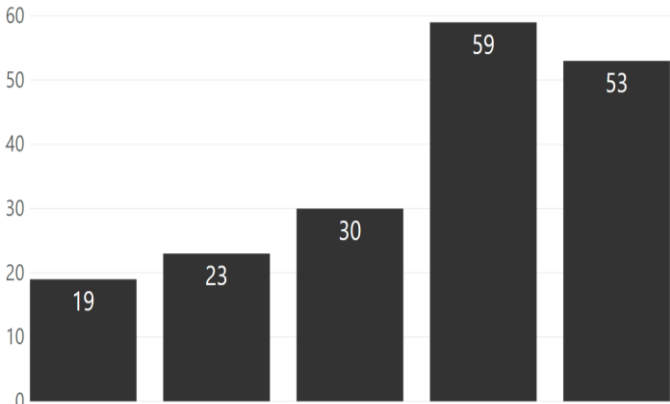
Where should population growth be directed in Niagara?



Growth Management Trade-Off Scenarios

Should neighborhoods contain a variety of housing forms and options?

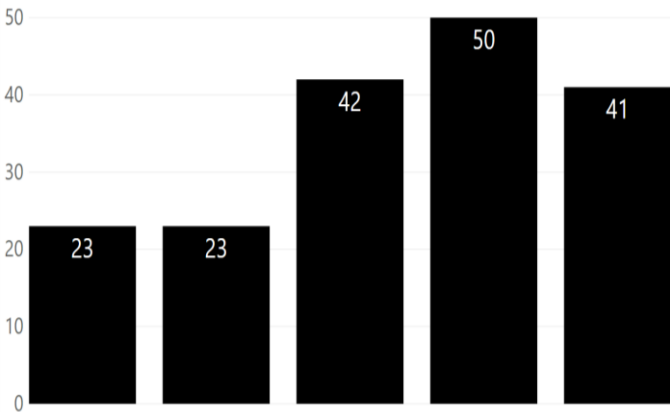
Maintain Housing Character:
Maintain form of existing communities; provides less housing options for residents



Increase Options:
Develop a variety of dwelling types; provides more housing options for residents

Should public funding be used to make our communities more attractive?

Development Implemented Public Realm:
Duty placed on private developments to invest in the public realm



Municipally Implemented Public Realm:
Duty placed on the Region and cities/towns to invest in the public realm

Growth Management Survey Comments Received

Survey Screen: Priority Rankings	
Question	Comments
Suggest another priority.	Access to outdoor amenity space i.e. parkland, trails, etc.
	Animal Habitat Protection
	Better paying jobs
	Convenience and Accessibility
	Preserve our heritage and Greenbelt
Rank Population Distribution.	Niagara has the best farmland in the world. It must be protected at all costs in order to help with Canadian food security. Population growth should be southern tier, on more marginal lands and must be accompanied by job growth, not merely commuter growth.
	Population in Grimsby is now too dense. Traffic congestion is a daily problem. With restricted arteries running through Grimsby surely the population cannot be increased.
	Too much of the woodland areas are being destroyed in the Niagara region. Soon for those of us that hunt there will be next to nowhere left.
Rank Housing Affordability.	Affordable housing is a need.
	Affordable housing that include 2 and 3 bedroom units should be provided. New development should not restrict "affordable" units to those that are less than 50m ² in size.
	Put a cap on the max amount big companies can charge for rent. Prices are astronomical right now based on a minimum wage salary. Even a 2 income at minimum wage is hard to afford these places.
	Take a look at California, housing is becoming unattainable by the average person and people are leaving in large numbers to places like Texas. We should be looking at how many policies and taxes have messed up California and how few policies and taxes are benefiting Texas as an example of what to do and what not to do.
Rank Housing.	No more town home subdivisions. No single car driveways. These all lead to parking on the street causing congestion and an unsafe community.
	The condo to be built in Main St is incomprehensible. Traffic is already congested. Too much traffic downtown deters people from going there.

Rank Complete Communities.	Complete communities will attract more people.
Rank Climate Change.	I don't know why this is such a strong point in politics these days... it's important that we take care of the environment around us, but everything has its up sides and down sides. Let the free market decide how we do things and let the individual home purchaser decide if they want to have green energy on their property, or a passive home.
	We should protect our parks, bench green space and waterfront. High density buildings such as the ones planned for Grimsby make sense in larger communities. I do not want to lose our waterfront, but do expect those areas to be developed. There needs to be a balance between housing, commercial, entertainment, green space and roads. The highway Toronto bound is backed up from Fruitland Road through Mississauga. What is the plan to expand the highway and Burlington Skyway? No one is interested in 4 hour commutes to and from.
	You can't have high density without affecting the environment. Increase carbon emissions, increase highway travel affecting bird migration, etc.
	You need infrastructure to support the growing population. Expand roads to accommodate cyclists and fix the crumbling main roads.

Survey Screen: Ranking Statements	
Question	Comments
Population growth has a positive impact on the community.	I love the diversity that growth will bring. But I am not going to sacrifice 10 years of traffic, congestion, bad roads, higher taxes, and so on. I moved to Grimsby in 1986 and we were just about. Today we are nearly doubled, but the area feels congested. How will adding more high density homes in a restricted area help? Developing the escarpment should not be an option. Mountain access is already slow and depending upon the season, dangerous.
	If additional taxes revenue used to fund an equivalent increase in infrastructure sure, happy to see the tax base increased. Must manage properly to ensure optimal use of funds.
	In the past perhaps, now, no! We are too full here, build somewhere else!
	It's too busy and congested. I moved away from the city to get away from dense populations.
	More people means more money to increase the quality of the town. Beamsville needs a facelift.
	Population growth can be positive if done correctly. What town council just approved in Grimsby at the Main and Elm development is an example of incorrectly. The traffic is already horrible on a good day. It's only going to get worse and there is no room to expand the street.
	This is true, as long as you aren't sticking large buildings anywhere you can fly them in order to house people. It has to be well thought out and run by the community for actual input (not just a formality, and ensuring there is adequate time for the community to respond). The community's feedback needs to be actually taken into account and not ignored or pushed aside to get projects completed quickly
	Too much takes away from small town feel and can negatively affect those already in these towns.
	We have too many people here. It is congested. Farm land is being removed to incorporate mass housing communities and subdivisions. We do not need more people here.
	While it can be good for the local economy, if done poorly without proper planning, using low end construction companies to save money we can do a lot of damage to our infrastructure

The Region should plan for municipalities to receive the same number of new housing units to accommodate its future population.	Optimization of existing housing and conversion of existing properties (condo or lofts from empty manufacturing or other facilities) should also be considered.
	The distribution of new expansion should be calculated by the town population divided by the regional population, and we all share the same identical percentage of growth. Not the same population growth
	This needs to be well thought out on a case by case basis, not just a numbers game!
Population growth should be directed to areas that make better use of existing services and infrastructure.	Where excess capacity exists.
Specific areas within municipalities should be identified to accommodate a majority of future population growth.	As long as public green spaces are included.
	Infill sprawl where possible.
	Niagara can't support more population growth. People are already unhappy and sick. Take care of what you have already first.
	Small communities should not be forced to grow. Cities should grow.
Detailed planning studies, such as secondary plans, should be undertaken to direct growth in the context of local priorities.	Community should have choice.
	Save the taxpayer some money and move some of this to proposed developments.
More rental housing options, such as multi-unit dwellings and apartments, are needed within my community.	It is better to make single family homes more affordable so people don't have to rent.
	The problem with rental housing is that the prices keep going up, to the point where it's arguably more expensive to rent than to own. If more rental housing options are made available, there'd need to be some form of pricing regulation to keep units affordable. Landlords in general seem to be buying up too much real estate and driving up prices of ownable homes as well. This is not sustainable. We need affordable rental housing AND affordable home ownership options.
	This area is crowded enough, please stop building apartments, where do you expect everyone to shop and park, its chaos here as it is with city people flocking here and rising the cost of living and rent! It's awful.
	Yes, please put more. However, none of the apartments that are going up in Grimsby by the lake are actually affordable rentals, especially for families.

More dense forms of housing is required to enable seniors to live within my community.	Just seniors? Density should be an option for all ages
	Yes, but can they be architecturally innovative. Have developers here ever been to another place? Beautiful dense affordable living is achievable. Not all buildings have to be brown and square.
A portion of all medium and high-density developments in my community should be dedicated to affordable housing.	They should all be affordable. There shouldn't be a stigma attached to a building as being "poor".
Tax dollars should be used to develop or support the development of affordable housing.	Taxes should not be raised to achieve this. Efficiencies should be found, and funds redirected for this initiative.
	The budget process should eliminate large tax increases and still allocate funds for affordable housing
	There should also be a tax on foreign and local owned empty rooms so we do not end up like with thousands of unaffordable empty units that could be used to house people.
	Yes, because tax dollars allow both municipalities and region to ensure "good planning". However, housing/retail/office developers should also "invest" in developing and supporting affordable housing. And, yes, the general public should be empowered to ensure that their tax dollars are working well.
Neighbourhoods should contain a mix of housing types, including single-family detached dwellings, townhouses and apartments.	Why would someone who currently owns a 3,400sq.ft. home want to be directly across the street from a semi or townhouse? You're negatively affecting them. Build net new neighborhoods with a good mix; that doesn't cause parking nightmares and clogged streets like Magnolia Drive in Grimsby as an example.
More dense forms of housing, such as multi-unit dwellings and apartments, are needed to house Niagara's future population.	Not in Grimsby.
	Only where appropriate!
	Rental apartments, yes. Neutral story or stacked townhomes NO.
My neighbourhood would benefit from the introduction of well-designed, denser forms of housing.	Creates too much chaos and congestion. A few rental apartments are needed but no condos, stacked townhomes etc. Niagara communities should be about land, large yards and staying away from the pollution of dense communities
	Nope!
	Well-designed is the key here.

Adding new units to a basement, garage, or separate structure on an existing property is a good way to provide more housing options for the community.	This is a great way to house people without building giant atrocities in low-level, old communities.
Providing a diverse mix of housing, including affordable housing, is an important component in achieving a complete community.	ALL housing should be affordable. No one deserves to be homeless. Low income/ affordable housing is often wen in a bad light and often can attract students and partyers. We need good housing and respectful neighbours on all sides of the economic spectrum.
	As long as it is zoned appropriately! A large building slapped in the middle of 10-year-old bungalows is ALWAYS a crappy idea!
	Historically, when Niagara has built low income housing, they've been grouped together creating low income areas in the community which wind up creating higher crime rates in specific areas and living in those areas by association you become labelled. I believe in blended complete communities not divided by rich and poor.
	Please stop allowing developers to say townhouses are affordable housing they are not for the average person anymore and way too expensive they are just a way for developers to get richer without actually using the space to help those who need rentals and community housing.
	We need more health care providers and a trauma centre in Niagara
Providing a range of transportation options to reduce our reliance on cars is an important component in achieving a complete community.	Investing in all kinds of alternate transportation is critical and these options should be robust such as dedicated safe bike lanes NETWORK, not just paint on the road. Because we want people to feel comfortable and use them.
	Make cats more affordable. If one prefers the mass transit route, make them cleaner and less crowded. Make them more efficient, faster, and direct.
	Number one priority. Less cars, close streets for biking and cycling. Learn from COVID
	Safety for pedestrians and cyclists priority..tougher speed limits
	Strongly agree! With older infrastructure on many of Niagara's roads, implementing very safe and organized bike lanes on busy corridors will reduce traffic and improve overall quality of life.

Providing open space and recreational space is an important component in achieving a complete community.	Beamsville needs more parks, park space, trails and paths, as well as park structures, splash pads and community spaces.
	Open spaces becomes green spaces that can increase tree cover, reduce water run-off, etc.
	Please make businesses put more tree coverage, the new storage place in Grimsby planted none from what I can see and the hideous new Pizza Hut so far hasn't planted any trees.
Having access to a variety of retail uses and public services and facilities is an important component in achieving a complete community.	Big box stores suck the life out of communities so just sticking a restaurant and a Costco in a treeless parking lot (sorry one dying bush) should not be considered a mixed use area for the community.
	Encouraging safe, car-free access to these retail locations is a must for community growth.
	Having access using bicycle or walking would be great as it will alleviate burden on roads.
	If it is done with good appearance in mind. Ontario Street in Beamsville needs an overhaul. It is quite ugly and there needs to be an injection of new buildings and facelifts to improve the quality and appearance.
	No big box stores. More mom and pop shops so we can support local.
Population growth should be directed to built up areas to reduce the expansion of municipal infrastructure outside of urban areas.	I'm all for development so long as it's not just selling off space to the highest bidder. Quality plans should be put in place and if an area is developed, there also needs to be a plan for quality community green spaces.
	It would be nice to space some of the growth out as St. Catharines is becoming very busy.
Communities should be planned with a mix of land uses and transportation options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	I moved to Grimsby in with the promise of a GO station being completed. I STILL have to commute to Toronto passing over the Skyway bridge, and a shovel hasn't even broken ground yet.
	With our booming population, we must have a reliable transit system, as well as walkable and bikeable corridors
	Yes! The recent NRT On Demand is an excellent example of this.

Development should utilize green infrastructure such as green roofs, permeable surfaces, natural channels, and increased tree cover, to reduce flooding.	I think Green infrastructure is extremely valuable as it reduces capital project cost such as storm sewers and also provides educational value to communities
	To a certain extend. Some green roof/ buildings take more energy to water, which out-weights the benefits of one.

Survey Screen: Trade-Off Scenarios	
Question	Comment
How should future growth be accommodated in Niagara Region? (Build Upward or Build Outward)	Agree (vs strongly agree) for 2 reasons: 1) because planning should always have flexibility and 2) because some undeveloped areas can be developed - but not at the expense of a natural-type (which helps towards mitigating climate change) nor at the expense of good, agricultural land. We also need self-sufficiency in growing our own food (i.e. local vs long-distance). Long-distance is often not so good at mitigating climate change
	Build upwards as long as shadow studies are completed. Building upwards has energy benefits for cost savings on heating and cooling when green energy is a key driving factor
	I'm a bit confused. I think it needs to be a mix of both building up and spreading it out
	Stop building!
Where should population growth be directed in Niagara? (Strategic Growth or Even Growth)	Agree (vs strongly agree). Again, a region/municipal plan needs to be flexible. I prefer a mix of all housing types "jumbled" together, but there also should be "work" and "play" mixed in it. The more-often-than not separating "live-work-play" has led to "dead zones" in many cities. Balanced mixture leads to healthier communities. And, yes, should include agricultural "work" areas as well.
	Don't make areas swarmed with people. Even them out more
Should neighborhoods contain a variety of housing forms and options? (Maintain Housing Character or Increase Options)	Character with different options, think outside the brown brick option
Should public funding be used make our communities more attractive? (Developer Implemented Public Realm or Municipally Implemented Public Realm)	Developers only seem to do the bare minimum in creating quality spaces. There needs to be much more emphasis on creating quality public spaces that also attract tourism, shopping, public money. Downtown Beamsville could use a big injection of investment to beautify, improve the look and quality.
	Funding should be shared - public, of course, is taxpayer dollars. However, developers should be engaged in this as well.
	Private development will not care what duty is placed upon them. They will do what they want.